

PENSION FUND COMMITTEE – 1 DECEMBER 2017

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Report by the Director of Finance

Introduction

1. As agreed at the last meeting of this Committee this report has been amended to incorporate the information which has, previously, only been reported on an annual basis. It is to update members of current administration issues within the Pension Services team from both management and operational perspectives.

Performance Data / Data Quality

2. At the September meeting it was reported that there were inconsistencies in the Altair reports which meant that the statistics for overall workloads and work processed in / out of specification did not tally. The issue had been raised with our software suppliers who had responded saying that it would take some time for the changes to feed through to the output reports. The report went on to say that it was intended that as more robust reporting / data extraction is available from Altair that a more comprehensive set of tables will be provided to this Committee.
3. In preparing the statistics for this quarterly report it appears that the inconsistencies are greater than ever – this has again been raised with our software suppliers and verbal update will be given at the meeting.
4. For End of Year returns, the data as at 07 November 2017, shows that 10 employers have yet to make a return; the team are working with these employers to resolve the issues to enable the issuing of annual benefit statements.
5. Members will be aware that the team focus has been on the processing of employer's annual returns and the issuing of annual benefit statements, which is being closely monitored by The Pension Regulator. At the time of writing this report a total of 15,717 ABS have been issued which is just shy of 80% of the total due.
6. The Fund remains in contact with the Pension Regulator and a meeting is being arranged for early December.

Project Work

7. The table attached at appendix A details both current and planned project work for the team. The most pressing of these is the implementation of the

new data protection regulations to ensure that the Fund is compliant – there is a separate update paper on this agenda.

8. The implementation of administration to payroll would link the two elements of the pension software allowing staff to push details through to payroll using the system rather than paper. Since a new version of this product has been recently made available there are now some further checks to ensure that it has been fully tested before installation.

Complaints

9. The table attached at appendix B details the complaints received to date, which is an increase on the previous year. But to put this in to context is a very small proportion of the overall membership.
10. These are reviewed by managers for any trends or specific issues.

Write Offs

11. In line with the Scheme of Delegation Policy (last reviewed in June 2017), the approval for writing off outstanding debts is given by:

Pension Fund Committee	For amounts above £10,000
Service Manager – Pensions (in conjunction with Director of Finance)	For amounts between £7,500 and £10,000
Service Manager – Pensions	For amounts up to £7,500
Pension Services Manager	For amounts up to £500

12. All debts below £10,000 need to be reported to Committee following write off. This report provides the details of those debts written off in the last quarter.
13. In the current period, the Pension Services Manager has approved the write off of £46.62 chargeable to the pension fund in respect of seven cases where the member has died.
14. In the period March 2017 to December 2017 a total of £10,874.48 has been written off, in respect of 30 cases where the member has died plus one case of non-repayment.

Fire Service Pension Schemes

15. Pension Services also provide administration services to Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue in respect of the Fire Service Pension Schemes. Again the

reporting is not consistent with the previous report – a verbal update will be given at the committee meeting.

Staffing

16. This remains an issue with the team carrying 3 vacancies. Having been unsuccessful with direct recruitment, discussions are now being held with HR and Procurement to see if there is a way in which the team can take on staff, with pension experience, on a fixed term basis from an agency.
17. Also given the number of projects in progress and planned officers are looking at whether some specific consultancy e.g. from our software suppliers could help to move these forward more quickly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report**

Lorna Baxter
Director of Finance

Background papers: Nil

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