

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) (T&F)

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) (T&F)
Link Officer/s:	Jill Douglas
Action Plan Agreed:	June 2022

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.

Recommendation 1:	<p>That an ongoing programme of awareness raising be established to encourage take-up of the Pension Scheme including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •promotion of the scheme to younger members of staff •increasing awareness of options contained in the Scheme (such as 50/50 section, allowing staff to benefit with reduced contributions) •emphasising that scheme members benefit from significant employer contributions
Responsibility:	HR
Date:	July 2022 and ongoing
Agreed Action:	<p>HR have attended the following services' team meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Residential Social Care • Highways Supervisors Team Meeting <p>to explain the LGPS and also the benefits of AVCs. Feedback has been good and there was an increase in AVC take up. It is proposed to undertake more of these sessions and the following are planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catering Supervisors Meeting • Highways and Care for Your Area employee Appraisal Day. • Setting the Scene <p>Auto enrolment will take place in July 2022 and we are currently reviewing information that will be sent to employees who are not in the scheme and will be auto enrolled (employees then need to opt out if they don't want to be in the LGPS). We will also arrange information sessions for employees targeting those employees/areas where employees are not in the LGPS</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	A greater take up of the LGPS and AVCs.

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Evidence of Progress (January 2023):	<p>HR have attended all of the Community Services away days (nine in total) and discussed pensions and the benefits of AVCs. The feedback has been good with an increase in take up of AVC plans from 135 in August 2021 before the shared cost scheme was launched to 240 in November 2022, see Appendix 2.</p> <p>In relation to auto-enrolment on 1 July 2022 96 people who met the criteria for auto-enrolment were re-enrolled. So far 61 people have opted back out the scheme and 35 have stayed in.</p> <p>As part of auto-enrolment 28 people were moved back into the main scheme from the 50/50 scheme. So far 13 have opted back into the 50/50 scheme and 15 have remained in the full scheme.</p>
Assessment of Progress (January 2023): (include explanation if required)	<p>Engagement with employees across the authority, and particularly those who do not have ready access to the intranet, has increased in the last three months. With the recent review of the Communications team which moved Employee Engagement into HR it is planned to continue with more drop-in sessions around pension and other employee benefits.</p> <p>1 – Fully Achieved</p>
Evidence of Impact (January 2023):	<p>Increase in the number of employees accessing the AVC scheme. Number of employees who have remained in the scheme following auto-enrolment.</p>

Recommendation 2:	That the information the Council sends to new starters on membership and benefits of the LGPS be reviewed.
Responsibility:	HR/Employee engagement
Date:	September 2022
Agreed Action:	<p>The employee benefits leaflet has been updated to promote LGPS membership.</p> <p>We will also review corporate and service induction to improve promotion of the LGPS.</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	Increased membership of LGPS amongst new starters.
Evidence of Progress (January 2023):	<p>Employee Benefits intranet pages and booklet have been reviewed. Review of corporate induction taking place with new Chief Executive early in the New Year. Improved promotional information available to new starters.</p>
Assessment of Progress (January 2023): (include explanation if required)	1 – Fully Achieved
Evidence of Impact	Increased LGPS membership.

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(January 2023):	
Recommendation 3:	<p>That the Council liaise with Teesside Pension Fund to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •urgently review the quality of the information provided to staff to ensure that it is both comprehensive and in plain English (including improvements to the presentation of the information contained in the Annual Benefit Statement) •develop a range of promotional materials in an easy-to-understand format
Responsibility:	HR/XPS
Date:	October 2022
Agreed Action:	XPS/Teesside Pension Fund have been extremely busy with end of tax year information and we are liaising with them to determine the most appropriate time to meet with them to review their information and also contact with existing LGPS members. We are collating issues with communication and service to us as an Employer and LGPS members in order that we can raise with XPS ideally at a meeting with them.
Agreed Success Measure:	Better understanding of the benefits of the LGPS, communication and service.
Evidence of Progress ((January 2023):	<p>We have made contact with Teesside Pension Fund (TPF). They have recently set up an Employer Engagement Team and we have met with one of the team to discuss the issues that we have had in the past.</p> <p>Our new contact was very receptive to our concerns and has provided us with responses to many of the points we raised.</p> <p>She also passed on some of our concerns to the other teams.</p>
Assessment of Progress (January 2023): (include explanation if required)	<p>We have arranged a further meeting and have scheduled training for the HR team on pensions and awareness sessions for employees.</p> <p>TPF have also provided links for videos for employees around annual and lifetime allowances which have been uploaded.</p> <p>Further promotional material, information and training to be progressed.</p> <p>1 – Fully Achieved</p>
Evidence of Impact (January 2023):	Improved intranet information received. Training session arranged for the new year. Further meetings to take place in the New Year to discuss improvements to information.

Recommendation 4:	<p>That Middlesbrough Borough Council be requested, as the administering Authority, to include in any future contract for the administration of the Pension Scheme, a requirement for information and promotional material to be clear and easy to understand.</p>
Responsibility:	XPS/MBC/HR

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Date:	Ongoing
Agreed Action:	Request sent to MBC
Agreed Success Measure:	Improved clarity in pension information
Evidence of Progress (January 2023):	<p>The creation of a new Employer Engagement Team should assist with this and our contact did confirm that she is working on a new guide to the pension scheme and the 50/50 part of the scheme.</p> <p>The Teesside Pension Scheme website is being updated and the guides are improved.</p> <p>We have also been given the contact details for the contact within Middlesbrough who manages the contract with XPS.</p>
Assessment of Progress (January 2023): (include explanation if required)	<p>Improved working relationship with the TPF Employer Engagement Team. Contact has been made with Middlesbrough to discuss concerns. The re-procurement of the TPF administration has been delayed and XPS have been given a contract extension – further discussion to take place in the New Year with TPF Employer Engagement Officer and MBC.</p> <p>1 – Fully Achieved</p>
Evidence of Impact (January 2023):	Guides on the TPF website have been improved and improved promotional material provided by XPS.

Recommendation 5:	That Human Resources review the use of temporary employment contracts with each Directorate to determine whether a permanent contract could be more appropriate (as this change would result in more employees being auto enrolled into the scheme).
Responsibility:	HR
Date:	Ongoing
Agreed Action:	<p>Workforce Profile Reports for 2021/22 have now been prepared which details use of temporary employees. This information will be shared with Directorates and discussed with Directorate Management teams.</p> <p>In addition, during any service review/restructures HR question the reasons for temporary contracts and do suggest changes if appropriate.</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	Reduced use of temporary contract and potential increase in LGPS membership.
Evidence of Progress (January 2023):	<p>This is an ongoing process with services which HR will continue to monitor and discuss with managers.</p> <p>Whilst casual workers are not automatically enrolled in the pension scheme, they will be if they are employed for more than 3 months and meet the other criteria.</p>

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	The workforce profile information relating to temporary employees who are accessing the scheme is quite favourable. Details of employees on temporary contracts and numbers in the scheme is attached at Appendix 3.
Assessment of Progress (January 2023): (include explanation if required)	Further work is needed on use of temporary/casual workers generally, but we are seeing an increase in membership of the LGPS 1 – Fully Achieved
Evidence of Impact (January 2023):	Decreased numbers of temporary employees and increased numbers of employees enrolled in the LGPS.

Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1 Fully Achieved	2 On-Track	3 Slipped	4 Not Achieved
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