



Pensions Committee

24 June 2015

Report title	Policy review 2015	
Originating service	Pension Services	
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree and approve the Pension Board Member Conduct Review Policy
2. Agree and approve the Employee Travel Policy
3. Agree and approve the Customer Feedback Policy
4. Agree and approve the Communications Strategy Statement
5. Agree and approve the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure
6. Note that there are no changes to the Administering Authority Policy Statement
7. Note that there are no changes to the Funding Strategy Statement

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To seek agreement from Committee for policies which detail how the Fund proposes to manage and operate certain areas of its business.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Each year Committee are asked to review and agree the Fund's operational policies. Some of these policies are required by statute. Others are adopted for operational purposes and to provide our members with information.
- 2.2 In conducting the annual review of the Fund's policies, the Fund needs to consider whether the current versions are still relevant to the work of the Fund, whether any new requirements have been imposed by legislation and whether the Fund is conducting its business in the most efficient way securing the best outcomes for our members.

3.0 Pension Board Member Conduct Review Policy (new)

- 3.1 This year, the Fund has seen a number of changes to the Governance structure with the requirement of a new Local Pension Board. With that legislative requirement came the need to draft and publish a protocol for dealing with allegations that pension board members have failed to meet their duties or that they have not declared a conflict of interest in matters they are discussing. (This is similar to the requirement on local authorities to have "Arrangements" for dealing with allegations of Councillor breaches of the Code of Conduct under the Localism Act.).
- 3.2 The policy provides for the Head of Governance to undertake an initial "informal" review of the allegation to consider its merit and the initial evidence. The Head of Governance may meet with the complainant and the pension board member to establish facts or request documentary evidence in support of the claim. Should the matter progress further, the Pensions Committee will be called to review the matter before it is reported to the Pensions Regulator.
- 3.3 Attached at Appendix One is a Pension Board Member Conduct Review Policy which details how the Fund will manage allegations.

4.0 Employee Travel Policy (new)

- 4.1 As the Fund looks to secure effective cost management and reduce investment fees, through becoming more active in its investment capabilities, it has appointed in-house specialists which in turn has created the need for the resumption of overseas travel and therefore a policy to monitor and manage it.

4.2 The policy restricts overseas travel to particular posts (Strategic Director of Pensions, Assistant Director, Investments and Active Investment Portfolio Managers) and imposes a duty on employees to ensure they adhere to the process for overseas travel including insurance, currency and lone working.

4.3 Attached at Appendix Two is an Employee Travel Policy which covers all aspects of travel undertaken by officers of the Fund (including travel for training and conferences).

5.0 Customer Feedback Policy (new)

5.1 This year the Fund has drafted a customer engagement strategy which includes the commencement of Customer Journey Mapping. Part of this engagement is to encourage feedback from our members, employers and stakeholders on the work of the fund and how we are received.

5.2 In light of this work it became apparent that the Fund also needed a Customer Feedback Policy which provided information to our customers on how they can contact the Fund to compliment, comment or complain about the service they have received. The policy sets out timetables for officers responding to this contact and how a customer can appeal a decision they don't agree with. The Fund also adheres to the City Council's policy on Persistent/Vexatious Complainants.

5.3 A copy of the Customer Feedback Policy is attached at Appendix Three.

6.0 Communications Strategy Statement (update)

6.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2005 provide the statutory framework from which the Authority is required to prepare a Communication Policy Statement.

6.2 An administering authority (or the Fund on its behalf) must prepare, maintain and publish a written statement which sets out its policy concerning communication with:

- members;
- representatives of members;
- prospective members; and
- scheme employers.

6.3 This year the Fund has begun its channel shift towards electronic working and the policy has been updated to reflect this move.

6.4 A copy of the policy is attached at Appendix Four.

7.0 Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) (update)

- 7.1 The Pensions Act 1995 (as amended) requires pension schemes to have in place an internal resolution procedure to manage disagreements or disputes relating to the pension scheme, its managers or Trustees and includes decisions made about a member or a decision not made that the member feels should have been made.
- 7.2 The West Midlands Pension Fund has had in place a policy for dealing with IDRP for a number of years and this has been updated to make it clearer for our members to use and follow.
- 7.3 A copy of the policy is attached at Appendix Five.

8.0 Other West Midlands Pension Fund policies

- 8.1 Every year as part of its policy review, the Fund considers whether there have been any changes or events that require the amendment to our policies. Apart from those changes outlined in reports, there are no amendments to the Fund policies.

9.0 Integrated Transport Authority Pension Fund Policies

- 9.1 Following the delegation in January from the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) to WMPF Pension Committee to undertake decisions with regards the management and administration of the ITA Pension Fund, Committee must also approve those policies and strategies drafted on behalf of ITA.
- 9.2 Due to the delegation, the ITA Governance Statement and ITA Communications Strategy have been removed and are replaced by WMPF's Governance Statement approved by Committee in March 2015 and by WMPF's Communications Strategy appended to this report.
- 9.3 The Funding Strategy Statement and the Compliance with Myners Principles statement are unchanged for this year.
- 9.4 The Fund is in the process of reviewing the Statement of Investment Principles with Mercers and this will be brought to Committee at its next meeting.

10.0 Financial implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications.

11.0 Legal implications

- 11.1 The Fund is required under regulations to produce, publish and keep under review various strategies and policy statements. These are designed to establish best practice and accountability in the management of the Fund's assets.

12.0 Equalities implications

12.1 There are no equalities implications.

13.0 Environmental implications

13.1 There are no environmental implications.

14.0 Human resources implications

14.1 There are no human resources implications.

15.0 Corporate landlord implications

15.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

16.0 Schedule of background papers

16.1 None.

17.0 Schedule of appendices

17.1 Appendix One: Pension Board Member Conduct Review Policy.

17.2 Appendix Two: Employee Travel Policy.

17.3 Appendix Three: Customer Feedback Policy.

17.4 Appendix Four: Communications Strategy Statement.

17.5 Appendix Five: Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.