



City of Westminster

Superannuation Committee

Date:	28th November 2012
Classification:	For Publication
Title:	Pension Communications and Engagement Strategy update
Report of:	Acting Director of Human Resources
Wards Involved:	Not Applicable
Policy Context:	Communicating and engaging with LGPS stakeholders
Financial Summary:	There are no financial implications arising from this report
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1. Summary

- 1.1 Human Resources (HR) are committed to ensuring that current employees, ex-employees and all other stakeholders understand, and where appropriate are able to take advantage of the benefits associated with, membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- 1.2 To drive this commitment HR have in place an active communications and engagement strategy. This report provides an update in respect of that strategy, providing an overview of the actions taken with the outcome achieved along with a summary of future commitments and actions.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2011/12 following discussions with stakeholders HR committed to a review of the way we communicate and engage with our employees, ex-employees and others regarding the benefits of membership of the LGPS. This led to a

two year communications and engagement strategy subsequently agreed by the Superannuation Committee.

3.2 In particular target audiences for the strategy have been those employees who have opted out, pensioners, and current employees wanting to know more about Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs).

3.3 The strategy is also in place to communicate the anticipated scheme changes when the detail is available.

4. Action Plan update

4.1 Individual Pensions Surgery Sessions.

4.1.1 Sessions were held earlier in the year with all slots booked. As a result of demand more surgeries will be held on the 19th November and again all slots have been booked. The LPFA attend all the sessions at no cost to WCC. Employees attending sessions have provided positive feedback regarding their greater understanding of AVCs, death grants; proposed changes to the scheme etc. 83% who attended reported that they now have better information to manage their pension. More sessions will be held in early 2013 and schools and admitted bodies have been offered sessions.

4.2 Open House Sessions on Scheme changes

4.2.1 HR has plans to run up to eight lunch time/evening open house sessions at City Hall and Lisson Grove during the year 2012/13. These sessions will concentrate on proposed scheme changes with particular emphasis on the impact of continued benefits. These sessions will be available to both members and non-members of the scheme. Being open house in nature they will not address personal issues, but will be flexible to enable employees who work outside of normal office hours to attend.

4.2.2 In addition it is envisaged that HR will attend sessions with admitted bodies.

4.2.3 HR is still waiting for full details of the proposed LGPS changes due for implementation from April 2014.

4.3 Employee Newsletter.

4.3.1 A newsletter has recently been sent to all deferred pensioners and pensioners, has been published electronically for existing staff and is included in the schools bulletin for schools staff. This communicated information on changes in the way in which the fund is managed, provided updates in respect of the website, pensions increases, details of fund contacts, a calendar of relevant events, and reminders about how to obtain information on line.

- 4.3.2 It highlighted the importance of ensuring that the LPFA is updated with change of address, e-mail address and telephone. Wherever possible the newsletter was sent electronically.
- 4.4 Life Time Allowance
- 4.4.1 The LPFA will be sending an update letter by the end of November to all members who are affected or near the LTA limits. Additional written information and one to one advice will be given annually to high earners via the pension surgeries. The LPFA continues to provide advice to people impacted by the LTA outside of the above.
- 4.5 Telephone advice
- 4.5.1 Outside of the pension surgeries, the open house sessions and the newsletter a telephone advice service for members, non-members, deferred pensioners and pensioners is available via the LPFA.
- 4.6 Admitted Body Forum
- 4.6.1 A session was conducted on 12th November with the LPFA, with seven admitted bodies attending. Auto Enrolment, New scheme changes and end of year, Westminster Website and data matching were covered during the workshop. The emphasis on advertising the website and newsletter to their staff was a key message. A feedback survey has been produced and sent to the attendees.
- 4.7 Westminster Pensions website
- 4.7.1 This has been developed and can be found at:-
<http://www.yourpension.org.uk/Agencies/westminster/> ; this is continuously updated and will communicate changes to the scheme. On at least three occasions during each year the website will be brought to the attention of all staff. All leaflets and publicity material are constantly reviewed and refined. The website has been active since April 2012 and feedback has been positive. HR continues to promote the website and reference in letters to members. October figures show 1.505 successful hit rate requests for pages to date.
- 4.8 Additional Voluntary Contribution
- 4.8.1 The AVC provider, AEGON gave a presentation in July 2012 promoting the benefits of Additional Voluntary Contributions and the tax benefits of subscribing. They also gave information about the investment options available. The aim is to increase participation from employees which we have noticed since holding this session. We plan to hold another presentation next year with AEGON.
- 4.9 Pensioners Fund Member Panel
- 4.9.1 Two meetings have been held since forming this panel. The task of the panel is to review our communications with current and prospective members of the scheme to encourage simplification and clarity of wording. The next meeting is being held on 16th January.

4.9.2 Amongst the agenda items recently discussed was the potential for pensioners to participate in a pensioner's video for Youtube that could also be located on the website, and contributions to the newsletter and the AGM.

4.10 Face to face Information Campaign

4.10.1 HR are planning an information pack which will contain details on the Westminster Newsletter, Auto Enrolment and proposed scheme changes, it will be introduced via a desk which will be created in City Hall reception for a period of time .In addition a circular via the WIRE has been distributed to staff attaining the interest in producing a pre-retirement course.

4.11 Auto Enrolment

4.11.1. WCC plan is to auto enrol on 1st July 2013. It is estimated that around 700 people will need to be entered into the scheme. A separate report containing the background and our recommendations has been produced for the Superannuation and Investment Committee.

4.12 Annual General Meeting

4.12.1 Kingsway College has now been booked for 20th May 2013 to hold this event. Advance information has been sent via the newsletter which included a request for feedback to gauge interest. A poll of employees has been set up on the WIRE asking staff if they would potentially attend an event like this. Around 130 staff said they would or possibly would attend the event. Guest speakers need to be confirmed and also agenda agreed nearer the time. We will also be looking at having stalls to drive engagement with other services at the AGM which will include AEGON.