

## **Pension Board**

**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2016

**Classification:** General Release

**Title:** Annual Benefit Statement Timeline 2016

**Report of:** Jo Meagher  
Head of Operational People Services

**Wards Involved:** All

**Policy Context:** Service Delivery

**Financial Summary:** Limited

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 As requested by the Pension Board, this report sets out details of the 2016 Annual Benefit Statement (ABS) current timeline.
- 1.2 The aim of people services is to ensure that our pension administration standards are consistently high. That data is accurately maintained, that information is provided to members in a timely fashion and that payments are made promptly.

### **2. Current Position**

- 2.1 Members have an entitlement to an Annual Benefit Statement (ABS) and should be provided with this by 31<sup>st</sup> of August for the financial year ending the previous 31<sup>st</sup> of March.
- 2.2 2015 was a particularly challenging year for the production of ABS. This was in part due to the fact that the introduction of the new Care scheme from 1 April 2014 complicated the end of year returns employers needed to make further calculations. This delayed employers within the fund making returns on time and increased the number of queries that our administrators Surrey County Council (SCC) had to go back to employers with before ABS could be provided.
- 2.3 In 2016 the majority of employers have submitted returns on time. The accuracy of the returns have improved as employers are understanding the requirements

of the LGPS in 2014 and have adapted their reporting systems to pick up both the old full time definition of pensionable pay and the new Care definition of pensionable pay that are vital to provide members with accurate figures in their ABS.

- 2.4 The major issue in producing the ABS in 2016 on time is for the main fund employer Westminster City Council (WCC). The end of year file for 2015/2016 is the first year that WCC's new payroll provider BT have produced a file on the back of a difficult year. The initial file from BT was produced late and subsequently a number of alterations were required to a large number of members and these were submitted to SSC on Friday July 29<sup>th</sup>.
- 2.5 People Services in conjunction with SSC determined that the records would need to be amended before the ABS files could be produced to ensure accuracy for members in this important document.
- 2.6 As at 12<sup>th</sup> August SSC are still on track to send out the ABS for WCC members by August 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 2.7 The pension board should note that this is intended to be the last year that members receive a paper ABS. The plan of People Services and SSC is that next year ABS will be available via the Member Self Service platform that will link to the Members Direct Pension Record. The members will need to request access and be given a pin to view their document online. Direct access should mean that members will be able to see their ABS quicker next year.
- 2.8 The Pension Board will be updated on this as People Services move forward with plans.

### **3. Summary**

- 3.1 Peoples Services will work with SSC to ensure accurate ABS are sent out as soon as possible and update the board at the next meeting.