Pension Fund Committee

City of Westminster

Date:	**29th June 2023**
Classification:	**GENERAL**
Title:	**LGPS Projects & Governance Update**
Report of:	**Diana McDonnell-Pascoe** Pension Project and Governance Lead, People Services
Wards Involved:	**All**
Policy Context:	**Service Delivery**
Financial Summary:	**None**

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to update the Pension Committee on the various projects and governance activities being undertaken by the Pensions and Payroll Team to improve the administration of the City of Westminster Pension Fund (COWPF) Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

2. Current Projects

2.1. Statutory Projects

2.1.1.   Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP)

We have successfully launched the GMP Project Board, chaired by Claire Weeks, Head of Operational People Services and attended by management and technical experts from both Hampshire Pension Services and Mercer Ltd as well as me, Sarah Hay and Harbinder Manku, Contracts Manager supporting. At the time of writing, we have had two

successful Project Boards with the third happening on Wednesday 28th June 2023.

We are pleased to tell the Committee that there has been full engagement from all parties, the GMP Project has restarted properly and based on current engagement we foresee the governance of the project running more smoothly in future. I can confirm that on, 30th May 2023, and as per the project plan, Hampshire Pension Services sent the 2023 post-PI data to Mercer Ltd who are now processing the data, again, in line with the project plan. I will verbally update the Committee after the next Project Board on 28th June.

2.1.2.   McCloud

We have successfully engaged with Oracle and a third-party contractor, Claremont, to start the process of obtaining the data set we need to process. We met with the database software engineers on 7th June 2023 to discuss our requirements and we are confident that they will be able to deliver the data set we need.

We are still processing the Westminster and City West Homes data sets and are working with Blue Planet Software to refine the last part of the BT Agresso data. The City West Homes data is still being completed manually.

There are 37 employers in the scheme, including Westminster, and there are 24 returns to date which is a return rate of 65% approx. We expect this to improve further going forward.

Hampshire Pension Services have started the initial checks on the data received and have completed over 50% of checks as of 30th May 2023. They are also preparing a proposal, based on Scheme Advisory Board guidance, on how they will treat data from employers that either provide poor data or send no data. We will review the proposal when we receive it

and update the Committee as to how the partnership intend to complete the project.

2.1.3.   Pensions Dashboards

As per the government decision on 2nd March 2023, the pension dashboard programme has been given extra time to allow for connections and IT infrastructure to be built. The connection deadline has been extended to 31st October 2026 however, we may connect earlier than this date.

Hampshire Pension Services have engaged Civica as their Integrated Service Provider (ISP) to manage this project and make the connections work.

2.2. Non-Statutory Projects

2.2.1.   Pension Website Review

We are currently focusing on the user research element of the project and have gained a experienced user researcher who will be conducting interviews with selected users which we will then use to streamline the design of the website.

Originally, we were going to do the user research and then work with the design team but on the advice of the researcher we are going to design in tandem. We expect this collaboration to facilitate a speedier design and completion. We will demonstrate the website at the October Pension Fund Committee meeting.

3. Governance

3.1. External Audit

We are expecting the audit with Grant Thornton to happen in July. We had an audit planning meeting in April 2023 to identify lines of communication and plan out the way of working.

3.2. Internal Audit

We had our fourth of four annual quarterly meetings for FY22/23 with Internal Audit on 18th April 2023. They are pleased with our plans to improve governance, e.g., through formal project planning and logging and contract monitoring being put in place.

4. Summary

4.1. The Guaranteed Minimum Pension project is back underway and is running to plan. The governance has been improved and the first milestone has been achieved. There will be a verbal update to the Committee after the next Board meeting on 28th June 2023.

4.2. The McCloud data sets are still being compiled to send to Hampshire and we have had success in engaging with Oracle and a third-party supplier, Claremont, to access the final tranche of Westminster data. HPS are drafting a proposal, based on Scheme Advisory Board guidance, on how to apply the remedy to poor data sets or instances of no data sets from Employers.

4.3. The Pensions Dashboard programme deadline has been extended to 31st October 2023. HPS have engaged Civica to be their integrated service provider for the project.

4.4. The Pension Website is in the user research / early design phase and there will be a demonstration of the website at the next Committee meeting.

4.5. The External Audit is expected in July. We expect greater collaboration with Grant Thornton post a planning meeting that was held in April 2023.

4.6. Internal Audit have completed their fourth of four quarterly audits in FY22/23. We are still developing the governance piece and there are happy with our progress to date.