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## **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

**Report by Chief Financial Officer**

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### **JOINT PENSION FUND COMMITTEE AND PENSION FUND BOARD**

**14 September 2017**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the Communication strategy for the Pension Fund which will improve engagement with its members and enhance the availability of information via the establishment of a website for the Pension Fund.**
- 1.2 The Business plan approved on 22 June 2017 agreed to the development of a Communication strategy and establishment of a web site for the Pension Fund.
- 1.3 The overarching communication strategy is detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report and covers communication with all stakeholders.
- 1.4 The implementation of the communication strategy and its website is proposed to be undertaken via a procurement under the Norfolk framework. The key dates of the procurement are detailed in paragraph 4.6.
- 1.5 Under the procurement a shortlist of bidders will be asked to present to Members of the Pension Fund Appointment Sub-Group with the final recommendations being presented to the Joint Pension Fund Committee and Pension Fund Board on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

#### **2 STATUS**

- 2.1 Due to competing deadlines and the information gathering required for this report the consultation procedure was not complete prior to issuing the report to Committee. Comments received during the consultation will be highlighted at the meeting

### **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**3.1 It is recommended that the Pension Fund Committee;**

- (a) Agrees the Communication strategy as detailed in paragraph 4.2;**
- (b) Agrees the use of the Norfolk Framework for the procurement;**
- (c) Agrees the timetable as detailed in paragraph 4.6; and**
- (d) Notes a further report and update will be provided at future meetings.**

## **4 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

- 4.1 The Business Plan approved on 22 June 2017 by the Joint Pension Fund Committee and Board agreed to the action to "Develop and implement an effective communication strategy for the Pension Fund"
- 4.2 The overarching communication strategy for the Pension Fund is proposed below:
- To Communicate clearly with all Pension Fund Stake holders;
  - To highlight the benefits of membership and maximise participation in the Fund;
  - To encourage/inform members of the options open to them in planning their retirement;
  - To provide clear information regarding the Fund's performance, investments and governance arrangements; and
  - To ensure members can access high quality information regarding their pension.
- 4.3 Information is currently available via the Scottish Borders Council website including the Annual Report, Statement of Investment Principles, Minutes of meetings etc. They are however not all contained in one area and are at times difficult to locate.
- 4.4 A number of other LGPS Funds currently have dedicated websites for their Funds including Falkirk, Tayside, Lothian and Strathclyde. The websites provide full details of the Fund for all stakeholders including Members and Employers. The websites for a number of the Funds are hosted by Hymans Robertson who supply and update the scheme information for changes in legislation.
- 4.5 It was agreed within the Business Plan on 22 June 2017 that the Scottish Borders Pension Fund would establish a similar web presence to provide a similar high quality single point of reference for all stakeholders regarding the Pension Fund. It is proposed this is hosted and maintained by an external provider, due to the resources and complexity of the information required for the web site.

- 4.6 To ensure best value in the appointment of the provider it is proposed the Norfolk framework is used. This framework allows for a streamlined process of procurement due the work previously undertaken for companies to be included in the framework. The table below details the proposed timetable for the procurement

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Completion of procurement documentation	10 November 2017
Issue of tender documents	30 November 2017
Deadline for clarification questions	5 January 2018
Issue responses to clarifications	12 January 2018
Deadline for tenders	31 January 2018
Bidder Presentations	TBA
Tender Evaluation	16 February 2018
Recommendation to Pension Fund Committee	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2018

- 4.7 The Pension Fund Appointment Sub-Group with Officers will undertake the evaluation and provide a recommendation to the Joint Committee and Board on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

- (a) To allow the Fund to utilise the Norfolk framework there is a one off joining fee of £1,500. This will allow the Fund access to undertake any procurement under the framework for "Pensions Administration Support Services". This cost will be fully met from the Pension Fund.
- (b) The establishment of a website will incur one off set up and recurring maintenance costs. The set up costs are estimated at £20k and the recurring costs estimated at £3k per annum. These costs will be fully met from the Pension Fund.
- (c) Once approved these costs will be reflected in the budget and projections shown in future "Budget Monitoring" reports

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

The communication strategy and its implementation is a key area of improvement identified in the Pension Funds risk register. The implementation of the strategy will provide improved mitigation on a number of risks.

### **5.3 Equalities**

It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

### **5.4 Acting Sustainably**

There are no direct economic, social or environmental issues with this report which would affect the Council's sustainability policy

### 5.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no direct carbon emissions impacts as a result of this report.

### 5.6 **Rural Proofing**

It is anticipated there will be no adverse impact on the rural area from the proposals contained in this report.

### 5.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation are required as a result of this report.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council is being consulted on and comments received will be reported at the meeting.

### **Approved by**

**David Robertson**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

**Signature .....**

### **Author(s)**

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### **Background Papers:**

**Previous Minute Reference:** Joint Pension Fund Committee & Board, 22 June 2017

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. The Treasury & Capital Team can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at: Treasury & Capital Team, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 OSA Tel: 01835 825016 Fax 01835 825166. email: [treasuryteam@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:treasuryteam@scotborders.gov.uk)