

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Report by Chief Human Resources Officer

JOINT MEETING OF PENSION FUND COMMITTEE AND PENSION BOARD

30 November 2018

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report proposes the implementation of the Communication Policy for the Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund.**
- 1.2 The Pension Fund is required by the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018 to have an up-to-date Communication Policy, which is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 The Communication Policy looks to embed best practice in terms of communication with all stakeholders and provide access to accurate up to date information in the most effective manner, making use of technologies wherever possible.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Communication Policy as set out in Appendix 1 is approved.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Regulation 59 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018 advises that an administering authority should have a Communications Policy. This should then be published by the administering authority.
- 3.2 The information to be included in a Communication Policy should be as follows: -
- (a) An administering authority must prepare, maintain and publish a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with -
- Members;
 - Representatives of members;
 - Prospective members; and
 - Scheme employers.
- (b) In particular the statement must set out its policy on -
- The provision of information and publicity about the Scheme to members, representative of members and Scheme employers;
 - The format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity; and
 - The promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employers.

4 COMMUNICATION POLICY

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** contains the Communication Policy. The policy sets out the vision of the Pension Fund communications to make pension issues understandable to all stakeholders and promote membership of the Fund.
- 4.2 The overall aims and objectives include a move towards more digital communication methods with all being continually evaluated, assessed and redesigned where necessary to ensure their continuing effectiveness. This includes the desire to move towards members self-service.
- 4.3 Communications will be accepted and provided in different formats and the details for each method are detailed in the attached Policy, some of which, i.e. payslips and P60's will continue to be delivered in traditional format. Officers will look to utilise the newly implemented Fund Website to communicate information around the Pension Fund to all stakeholders.
- 4.4 The Pensions Administration team will continue to attend Roadshows or provide presentations to specific groups on request, a minimum period of 4 weeks' notice will be required for such event preparation. Fund members can continue to request face to face or telephone discussions with the Administration Team.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no financial implications relating to this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

This report is part of the governance framework to manage the operation of the Pension Fund and ensure compliance with the scheme regulations.

There is a risk that we may exclude groups as we look to move towards more digital communication channels, however, this is mitigated through the continuation of more traditional methods to ensure all audiences are covered.

5.3 Equalities

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

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no direct economic, social or environmental issues with this report which could affect the Council’s sustainability.

5.5 Carbon Management

No effect on carbon emissions are anticipated from the recommendation 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 either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation are required as a result of this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted in the preparation of this report and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Clair Hepburn
Service Director Human Resources

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Ian Angus	HR Shared Services Manager, 01835 826696

Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference:

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Contact us at Ian Angus, HR Shared Services Manager, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA; Tel: 01835 826696; Fax: 01835 825011; E-mail iangus@scotborders.gov.uk.