
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY REVIEW

Report by Service Director HR and Communications

JOINT MEETING OF PENSION FUND COMMITTEE AND PENSION BOARD

12 September 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a review on the Communication Strategy and provides an update on the review of forms and communication, including annual benefit statements. In line with the Pension Fund business plan the Strategy should be reviewed on an annual basis. This report discharges that requirement.**
- 1.2 There are no proposed changes to the Communication Strategy, this reflects the current position of the Fund and makes use of available technologies.
- 1.3 The Pension Fund website has proven to be a useful resource and has been visited on a regular basis. This continues to be updated to reflect the current Regulations and any relevant documents or news stories are published accordingly.
- 1.4 The Pensions Administration team have carried out a review of the supporting information provided along with the Annual Benefit Statements for this year. Work is ongoing to review processes and associated Forms.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Pension Fund Committee approve:**
 - (a) Notes that there are no changes to the Communication Strategy at this time**
 - (b) Notes the website performance over the last 14 months**
 - (c) Notes that work has commenced on the review of Forms and the Annual Benefit statement documentation has been reviewed prior to issue**

3 BACKGROUND

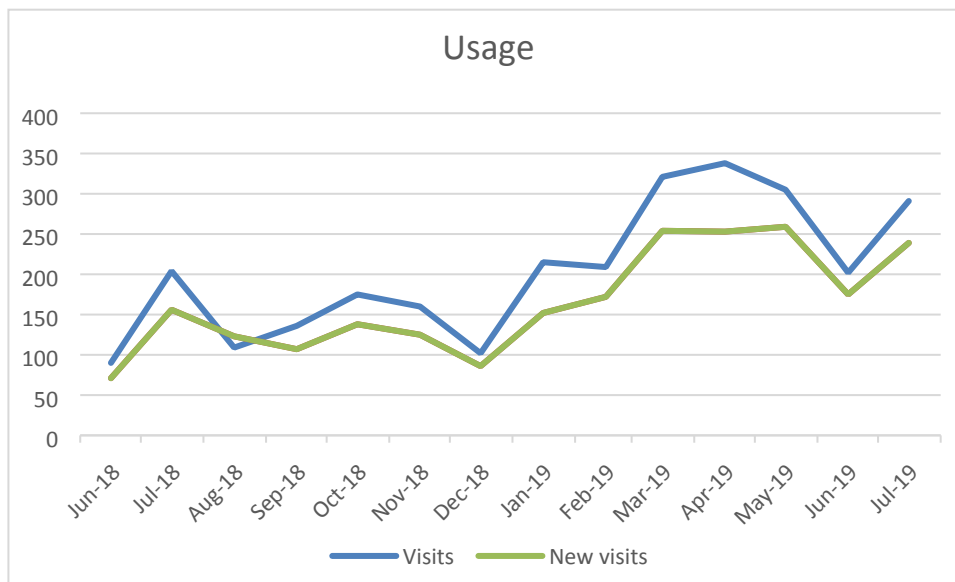
- 3.1 Regulation 59 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018 advises that an administering authority should have a Communications Policy. This should then be published by the administering authority.
- 3.2 In accordance with the Regulations the statement must be revised and published by the administering authority following a material change in their policy on any of the matters listed within Regulation 59.
- 3.3 The Pension Fund Business Plan also outlined a requirement to review the Communication Strategy and Action plan, including all forms and communication material, on an annual basis. Making sure that this is in line with best practice and technological advancements.

4 PENSIONS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY REVIEW

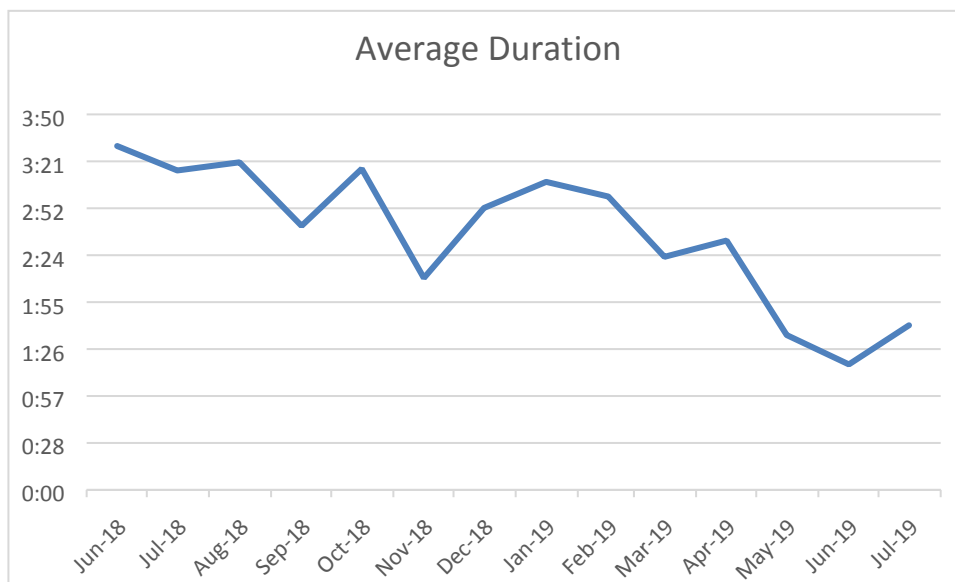
- 4.1 A review for the Communication Strategy has been carried out and based on current technology available to the Fund there are no proposed changes to the Strategy. The version approved at Committee on 30 November 2018 remains in force.
- 4.2 During 2018 the Pension Fund implemented a website (www.scottishborderscouncilpensionfund.org) was deployed. The website is managed and maintained by Hymans Robertson, with Officers able to upload documents and news stories as required.
- 4.3 Officers have obtained statistical information from the Website from June 2018 through until July 2019. The following graphic details the number of visits that there have been to the Fund Website.



The following graphic shows the usage of the website and if the visitor was a first time visitor, with the gap being repeat visitors.



The final graphic shows the duration of each visit.



- 4.4 Prior to the issuing of the Annual Benefit Statements the content was reviewed and updated to take account of current Regulations.
- 4.5 Officers within HR Shared Services are reviewing processes to make sure that they remain fit for purpose and make best use of currently available technology. As a consequence any forms and communication material are being update accordingly.

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 reporting framework to manage the operation of the Pension Fund and reflects the compliance with the best practice recommendations. Risks regarding the admission of any new employer organisation have been identified and form part of the considerations for admission to the Fund.

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 and any comments have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Clair Hepburn
Service Director HR and Communications

Signature

Author(s)

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

Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference: Joint Pension Fund Committee and Board 30 November 2018 and 13 June 2019

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

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.