

Essex Pension Fund Board	EPB/09/11
Date: 9 March 2011	

Independent Review of Pensions Administration

Report by the Independent Governance and Administration Adviser

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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Independent Review of Administration and note that a report will be provided to the June Board meeting with complete findings from the review.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress made to date on this review.

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3. Background

- 3.1 As part of the 2010/11 business plan, the Board asked the Independent Governance and Administration Adviser to carry out an independent review of the Fund's administration to provide an independent professional view in relation to the quality of service and any areas of improvement. This review covers areas including operations, communications and staffing within the Pensions Services and Investment Teams (though it specifically excludes anything directly related to governance or investment of funds).

4. Progress

- 4.1 The collection and collation of evidence for the review has now been completed and the findings are being documented for presentation to the Board in June. It is pleasing to note that the results are positive and that the key recommendations being drafted relate to areas where officers had already identified the need for review, including:
- The governance of the employers in the Fund (e.g. ensuring bonds are reviewed for admission bodies);
 - Updating the existing communications strategy.

5. Link to Essex Pension Fund Objectives

- 5.1 The review will assist Board members and officers in understanding whether their standards of administration fit with the EPF Governance, Administration and Communications Objectives as outlined in the Annex.

6. Risk Implications

- 6.1 The review will also assist in identifying any key risk areas in these areas.

7. Communication Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct communications implications.

8. Finance and Resources Implications

- 8.1 Officers have been involved in providing evidence to be considered as part of the review. This has been managed alongside business as usual.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 2010/11 Essex Pension Fund Business Plan – item 20 (detailing that this review will be carried out).

Annex A - Objectives

Administration

- Deliver a high quality, friendly and informative service to all beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and employers at the point of need
- Ensure benefits are paid to, and income collected from, the right people at the right time in the right amount
- Data is protected to ensure security and authorised use only

Communications

- Communicate in a friendly, expert and direct way to our stakeholders, treating all our stakeholders equally
- Ensure our communications are simple, relevant and impactful
- Deliver information in a way that suits all types of stakeholder
- Aim for full appreciation of the pension scheme benefits by all scheme members and prospective scheme members

Governance

- Provide a high quality 'gold standard' service whilst maintaining value for money
- Ensure the Pension Fund is managed and its services delivered by people who have the appropriate knowledge and expertise
- Evolve and look for new opportunities that may be beneficial for our stakeholders, ensuring efficiency at all times
- Act with integrity and be accountable to our stakeholders for our decisions, ensuring they are robust and well based
- Understand and monitor risk and compliance
- Continually measure and monitor success against our objectives
- Pursue socially responsible business practices