

## **Essex Pension Fund Communications Policy**

Report by the Compliance Manager in consultation with the Independent Governance & Administration Adviser (IGAA)

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### **This Report is for noting**

### **Executive Summary**

This Report provides an overview of the changes made to the Essex Pension Fund Communications Policy since its approval in March 2020.

It is proposed that Board Members discuss the Policy and the training video which was viewed prior to the meeting and provide feedback to Fund Officers.

## **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide the Board with the revised Essex Pension Fund Communications Policy.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Board provide comments on the revised Essex Pension Fund Communications Policy and training video to Fund Officers for consideration and onward submission to the Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board (PSB).

### **3. Background**

3.1 Regulation 61 of the LGPS Regulations 2013 requires each Administering Authority to prepare, maintain and publish a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with:

- Scheme Members;
- representatives of Scheme Members;
- prospective Scheme Members; and
- Scheme Employers.

In particular the statement must set out its policy on:

- the provision of information and publicity about the Scheme to Members, representatives 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.

3.2 The statement must be revised and published by the Administering Authority following a material change in their policy.

### **4. Review undertaken**

4.1 The Communications Policy was last reviewed by the PSB in 2020 and it was agreed that the Policy would be reviewed every three years or sooner if the communications arrangements or other matters included within it merit reconsideration.

4.2 The Fund's digital progression was accelerated by the increase in demand during the Covid-19 pandemic and has led to the need for a full review of the Communications Policy to ensure it properly reflects how the Fund is currently communicating with Stakeholders and how it plans to do so going forward, aligning with the recent publication of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

4.3 Fund Officers, in consultation with the IGAA, have produced the draft Communications Policy at Appendix A for comment by the Board.

4.4 Fund Officers will review the Policy and training video in line with the comments received ready for onward submission to the PSB.

## **5. Link to Essex Pension Fund Objectives**

5.1 Reviewing and updating the Communications Policy will assist the Board in achieving the following Fund objectives:

- Communicate in a friendly, expert and direct way to our Stakeholders, treating all our Stakeholders equally;
- Ensure our communications are simple, relevant and have impact;
- Deliver information in a way that suits all types of Stakeholder; and
- Aim for full appreciation of the pension scheme benefits and changes to the scheme by all Scheme Members, prospective Scheme Members.

## **6. Risk Implications**

6.1 Failure to review and update the Communications Policy could result in:

- A lack of clarity around the respective roles of the Fund and Employers leading to data issues and delays in collecting contributions and paying benefits to scheme members; and
- Failure to seek continual improvement in the Fund's communications leading to the Fund not meeting its communications objectives.

## **7. Communication Implications**

7.1 The Communications Policy will be published on the Fund's website when approved by the PSB.

7.2 The Communications Policy training video will be made available on the Fund's YouTube channel.

7.3 Other than ongoing reporting to the Board, there are no communication implications.

## **8. Finance and Resource Implications**

8.1 None.

## **9. Background Papers**

- 9.1 EPF Three Year Business Plan, PSB 04a, 18 March 2022.
- 9.2 PAB Annual Workplan, PAB 04, 18 March 2022.