


<b>Essex Pension Fund Advisory Board</b>	<b>PAB 04</b> 
<b>Date: 20 September 2023</b>	

## **Essex Pension Fund Advisory Board (PAB) Annual Workplan**

Report by the Head of Fund Compliance and Governance in consultation with the Independent Governance and Administration Adviser (IGAA)

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### **Executive Summary**

#### **Report Type: Governance**

This Report provides an update on the work undertaken in regard to the Essex Pension Fund Advisory Board (PAB) Annual Workplan which was approved by the Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board (PSB) at their 22 March 2023 meeting.

The update shows that one of seven tasks should be completed after this meeting with four more in progress.

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

- 1.1 To provide the Board with a progress update on the work to be undertaken by the Board as detailed in the PAB Annual Workplan.

## **2. Recommendations**

### **2.1 That the Board note:**

- the content of the progress report at Appendix A;
- the deadline to complete the Survey in regard to the Funds website is 30 November 2023; and
- the presentation in regard to the Review of Risk.

### **2.2 That the Board review:**

- the Policy for Recording and Reporting Breaches of the Law, at Appendix B for onward transition to the PSB; and
- the Fund Achievements at Appendix C for onward transition to the PSB.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 At the 22 March 2023 PSB meeting, the PSB approved the Fund's Three-Year Business Plan which incorporated the second edition of the PAB Annual Workplan.

### **4. PAB Annual Workplan**

- 4.1 The PAB Annual Workplan identifies upfront key areas of activity that the PAB can assist and carry out throughout the year to support the work activities of the PSB and Fund Officers.
- 4.2 The areas of activity include:
- Breaches of the Law – to assist in the review of the Policy;
  - Website Review – to assist in the development of the Fund's new website;
  - Investment Strategy Statement (ISS) Review – to provide feedback on the Draft ISS as part of the stakeholder consultation;
  - Fund Achievements – to develop a summary of Fund Achievements;
  - Management of Risk – to assist the Fund in its review of the Risk Strategy, Cyber Policy and Business Continuity Policy;
  - The Pensions Regulator's (TPR) new Code of Practice – to ensure compliance with the new Code of Practice; and
  - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Statutory Guidance in regard to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) Good Governance Project – to ensure compliance with the Statutory Guidance.
- 4.3 The progress report against the Annual Workplan has been provided at Appendix A with further detail provided in the Sections below.

### **5. Breaches of the Law**

- 5.1 Fund Officers, in consultation with the Independent Governance and Administration Adviser (IGAA) have undertaken a light touch review of the Policy for Recording and Reporting Breaches of the Law due to the pending new Code of Practice to be issued by TPR.

- 5.2 An updated training presentation in regard to Breaches of the Law will be provided to PAB Members at their 20 September 2023 meeting.
- 5.3 In addition to tweaks of wording and some presentational amendments, the key changes to the Policy include:
- a new section titled 'Fund Procedures' to show how the Fund monitor the breaches recorded in the Breaches Log; and
  - a footnote to highlight that the Policy has been reviewed in line with the guidance contained in TPR Code of Practice 14 which is due to be replaced by the new Code of Practice.
- 5.4 The revised Policy has been provided at Appendix B for the Board to review for onward transition to the PSB for approval.

## **6. Website Review**

- 6.1 Fund Officers have issued surveys to PSB, Investment Steering Committee (ISC) and PAB Members to seek their views on what they would like from the new website.
- 6.2 From the feedback received so far:
- the majority have stated they would definitely utilise a Member only section where Board/Committee Members could log in to view Agenda Packs, Training Plans etc;
  - the majority have also stated that they feel they would find this section of the website very useful;
  - the majority also felt that an investments page to state the latest update in regard to the Fund's Investments would be somewhat useful; and
  - if the training videos created by the Fund were held on this website, the majority would be more inclined to watch them.
- 6.3 PAB Members are reminded that this survey does not close until 30 November 2023 so if they have not yet provided their view to Fund Officers, there is still time to take part.
- 6.4 The Fund are also in the process of surveying Essex Pension Fund staff.

- 6.5 In addition, the Draft Website Specification was presented to the PSB at their 20 September 2023 meeting for approval.

## **7. Fund Achievements**

- 7.1 The first draft of the Fund Achievements was presented to the PAB at the 05 July 2023 meeting to encourage discussion and feedback to be provided to Fund Officers.
- 7.2 It was agreed that a tweaked version of the Fund Achievements should be issued to the SAB as an appendix to the PAB Annual Report. This was issued to the SAB on 12 July 2023. The SAB Secretariat have confirmed that this would be issued to the Compliance and Reporting Committee on 23 October 2023 for comment.
- 7.3 Feedback discussed at the 05 July 2023 meeting was taken on board and amendments were made with the second draft issued to PAB Members for further review and comment. With no further comments received, the final draft has been provided at Appendix C for sign off for onward transition to the PSB for approval.

## **8. Management of Risk**

- 8.1 Fund Officers, in consultation with the IGAA, have discussed the timeline and scope for this piece of work which includes the review of the Fund's:
- Risk Strategy;
  - Cyber Policy; and
  - Business Continuity Policy and Plan.
- 8.2 The planned scope and timeline will be presented to the PAB at the 20 September 2023 meeting.

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

- 9.1 Provide a high-quality service whilst maintaining value for money.
- 9.2 Ensure the Fund is managed and its services delivered by people who have the appropriate knowledge and expertise.
- 9.3 Act with integrity and be accountable to our stakeholders.

- 9.4 Deliver a high quality friendly and informative service to all beneficiaries and employers at the point of need.
- 9.5 Continually measure and monitor success against our objectives.
- 9.6 Ensure our communications are useful and easy to follow.

## **10. Risk Implications**

- 10.1 Failure of governance arrangements to match up to statutory requirements and recommended best practice leads to financial loss and reputational damage.

## **11. Communication Implications**

- 11.1 The PAB Annual Workplan is published on the Fund's website.
- 11.2 Other than ongoing reporting to the Board, there are no communication implications.

## **12. Finance and Resource Implications**

- 12.1 None.

## **13. Background Papers**

- 13.1 PAB Annual Workplan, PAB 09, 05 July 2023.
- 13.2 EPF Three Year Business Plan, PSB 04a, 22 March 2023.
- 13.3 PAB Annual Workplan, PAB 04, 22 March 2023.