

Pension Fund Committee

9th October 2020

Report by: Head of Pensions

Subject:	Cambridgeshire Pension Fund - 2020-21 Communications Strategy
Purpose of the report	To present the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Communications Strategy for 2020-21
Recommendations	The Committee is asked to approve the Communications Strategy
Enquiries to:	Cory Blose – Employer Services and Systems Manager cblose@northamptonshire.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 requires the Pension Fund to prepare, maintain and publish a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with members and scheme employers.

61. (1) An administering authority must prepare, maintain and publish a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with:

- (a) members;*
- (b) representatives of members;*
- (c) prospective members; and*
- (d) scheme employers.*

(2) In particular the statement must set out its policy on:

- (a) the provision of information and publicity about the scheme to members, representatives of members and scheme employers;*
- (b) the format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity; and*
- (c) the promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employers.*

(3) The statement must be revised and published by the administering authority following a material change in their policy on any of the matters referred to in paragraph (2).

- 1.2 The Communications Strategy forms part of that policy as required by regulation 61 above.

- 1.3 The Communications Strategy has been reviewed and updated and the Committee is asked to approve the Strategy. The main changes are summarised in the following section of this report and the draft document has been included as **appendix 1**.

1.4 The Communications Pan for 2020-21 has also been included as **appendix 2** for information. So far this year, along with the usual newsletters, surveys, guides and web updates, the following communications have been delivered:

- COVID-19 FAQs, webinar and dedicated web pages.
- Valuation results, new contribution rates, and new online process for submitting returns (email, news articles, and user guide).
- Employer training/communications on:
 - Year end activities
 - Employer responsibilities
 - Calculating pensionable pay
 - Discretions policy
 - i-Connect and monthly submissions
 - Tapes and outsourcing
- More engaging new starter communications.
- New employer database and contact refresh.
- Annual benefit statement communications and online pension account promotion.
- Employer consultation on:
 - Changes to the statutory underpin
 - Funding Strategy Statement
- Generating interest for Local Pension Board vacancy.

2. Summary of changes

2.1 The Communications Strategy has been updated with some minor changes to ensure that current membership figures, Fund objectives, stakeholders and date references are up to date.

2.2 The Fund's Digital Communication Strategy, which was approved by the Pensions Committee on 14th January 2020, has also been incorporated.

2.3 The table below highlights the key changes to the strategy:

Section	Change	Detail
2	Final paragraph of regulatory framework is new	Funds need to write to members informing them of their intention to move to digital communications and offer them the option to opt out.
2	Disclosure updated with a digital example	Using secure portals to exchange data with third parties. Highlights where to find our full privacy notice.
2	Equality expanded to cover accessibility	Provides examples of how we provide communications in different formats and details how our website is accessible.
2	New section added on digital communications	Details the rationale and benefits of moving towards digital communications.

Section	Change	Detail
2	New column added to table under 'Implementation of communication key objectives'	Shows the ways in which we're implementing our communication objectives digitally.
2	Three new subheadings have been added under 'Methods of communication and key messages for stakeholders'	This has been expanded to provide details on how we're using electronic notifications, skype and secure web portals as part of our communications strategy.

3. Relevant Pension Fund objectives

Promote the scheme as a valuable benefit. *(Objective no 12)*

Deliver consistent Plain English communications to stakeholders. *(Objective no 13)*

Provide scheme members with up to date information about the scheme so they can make informed decisions about their benefits. *(Objective no 14)*

4. Finance & resources implications

4.1 There are no direct finance and resource implications of approving this strategy, however, the communication activities themselves will have costs and resource application which will depend entirely on the final specification of each communication activity. Any project related costs associated with delivering these activities have been built into the business plan and ongoing communication costs are picked up in the administration budget.

4.2 A move towards electronic communications should save costs in the long run.

5. Risk management

5.1 The Fund is required by legislation to prepare, maintain and publish a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with members and scheme employers.

5.2 The risks associated with not having a communications strategy have been captured in the Fund's risk register as detailed below.

Risk No	Risk mitigated	Residual risk
6	Information may not be provided to stakeholders as required.	Green
14	Failure to administer the scheme in line with regulations and guidance	Green

5.3 The full risk register can be found at the following link:

[Pension Fund Risk Register Hyperlink](#)

6. Communication implications

Direct communications	Not applicable
Website	The approved communications strategy will be published on our website
Internal communications	The approved communications strategy will be distributed internally to officers.

7. Legal implications

7.1 Not applicable

8 Consultation with key advisers

8.1 Consultation with the funds advisers was not required for this report.

9. Alternative options considered

9.1 Not applicable

10. Background papers

10.1 The Digital Communications Strategy was shared with the committee on the 12 December 2019.

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1 – Cambridgeshire Pension Fund – 2020-21 Communications Strategy.

11.2 Appendix 2 – Cambridgeshire Pension Fund – 2020-21 Communications Plan.

Checklist of Key Approvals

Is this decision included in the Business Plan?

Will further decisions be required? If so, please outline the timetable here

Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy framework?

Has this report been cleared by Section 151 Officer? Sarah Heywood – 24/09/2020

Has this report been cleared by Head of Pensions? Mark Whitby – 16/09/2020

Has the Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee been consulted? Councillor Rogers – 24/09/2020

Has this report been cleared by Legal Services? Fiona McMillan – 18/09/2020