

Report To:	GMPF LOCAL PENSION BOARD
Date:	9 August 2018
Reporting Officer:	Sandra Stewart - Director of Pensions Emma Mayall – Pensions Policy Manager
Subject :	ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS & PROJECT PLANS
Report Summary:	<p>This report provides the Local Board with a summary of the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An update on the 2018/19 business planning objectives set by the Administration section - A summary of the other strategic or service improvement administration projects being worked on currently - Comments on regular and other items of work currently being undertaken by the section
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that the Board note the information provided within the report.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	Some projects and business plan items will incur costs. These are highlighted within the report and wherever possible, provision for these costs has been made within the budget.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Solicitor to the Fund)	Some business plan and project items are linked to statutory requirements. Carrying out the Guaranteed Minimum Pension reconciliation exercise is a HMRC requirement. Statutory requirements are also imposed by the Pension Regulator.
Risk Management:	Good business and project planning is essential when trying to deliver an excellent service at low cost. Failure to plan properly can lead to resources not being used effectively, additional costs being incurred and deadlines not being met.
ACCESS TO INFORMATION:	<p>NON-CONFIDENTIAL</p> <p>This report does not contain information that warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.</p>
Background Papers:	<p>The background papers used in this report are listed below.</p> <p>Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 http://lgpsregs.webdigi.co.uk/schemeregs/lgpsregs2013/timeline.php</p> <p>The Pensions Regulator Code of Practice 14 http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/codes/code-governance-administration-public-service-pension-schemes.aspx</p> <p>Further information can be obtained by contacting Emma Mayall, Greater Manchester Pension Fund, Guardsman Tony Downes House, 5 Manchester Road, Droylsden</p>



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1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Five key business plan items for the administration section were established in April 2018. This report provides the Local Board with an update on the progress made so far.
- 1.2 The section is working on a number of other projects in addition to these key business plan objectives. A brief summary of these is also provided within this report.
- 1.3 Details of a number of regular work items undertaken are included as part of this update report.

2. KEY BUSINESS PLAN ITEMS AND PROJECTS FOR 2018/19

- 2.1 Work is being carried out on the key business plan items and projects planned for this financial year, which are:

Ref.	Summary Title	Objectives
1	Structure review and staff engagement	To review and revise the structure of the administration section to ensure it is best placed to manage current and anticipated future workloads and projects. In addition, to ensure that all members of the team are fully engaged to deliver the best possible service.
2	Employer support	To improve the support provided to all fund employers, including improved communication, training, website and reference material and exchange of information
3	Member communication	To improve and develop our communication methods and increase our use of on-line tools (such as My Pension and on-line videos)
4	Altair developments and workflow reform	To maximise use of the Altair administration system, to ensure processes are as efficient as possible and enabling an excellent service to be provided to members. In addition, to review and reform the use of Altair workflow, to take advantage of system developments and improve management data output.
5	Move to monthly pay and contribution returns	To investigate a switch from receiving annual pay and contribution returns from employers to receiving them monthly, with a view to implementing this at some point in the future.

- 2.2 Significant progress has been made on four of the objectives since April.
- 2.3 Work on item 1, Structure review, has commenced. A new model for a revised team structure has been identified. Work on updating existing job descriptions and drafting documentation for evaluating new posts is currently underway.
- 2.4 For item 3, Member communication, the new My Pension module was successfully implemented at the beginning of July. Existing pensioners who had registered for the previous version were notified about the upgrade and Stockport MBC members were also notified when they were issued with their annual benefit statement at the end of July. All other active members will receive details of how to register with their annual benefit statements in August. Work will then commence in the autumn of notifying all remaining pensioners and deferred members.

- 2.5 Regarding item 4, the Director of Pensions and Pensions Policy Manager met with the Chief Executive and Group Client Director from Aquila Heywood in May and agreed to embark on a joint project to deliver a programme of change that will benefit both parties. Work on setting out the terms and objectives of this project will begin in the next quarter.
- 2.6 Significant progress has also been made with item 5, with the establishing of a testing platform to evaluate monthly returns software. The Pension Administration Working Group agreed in June that work should begin on the transition to monthly returns if the software evaluation work is completed successfully.

3. OTHER STRATEGIC AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- 3.1 The administration section is currently working on a number of other projects. The table below provides brief details of these together with any key points of note.

Ref.	Summary Title	Update
PR2	GMP Reconciliation	Work is continuing in line with the project timeframe. Response times from HMRC have slowed down recently, which was anticipated as the end of year deadline approaches. However, there are no concerns at this point that tasks will not be completed as planned.
PR9	Year-end processing	This project is now essentially complete, with only one or two minor tasks remaining.
PR11	Death grant process review	Work on reviewing and improving the process by which the beneficiaries of death grants are determined and paid has continued. The Death Grant Discretion Board has continued to meet each month to reach decisions on current cases, as well as identifying improvements to the overall process.
PR12 /22	Data and The Pensions Regulator (TPR)	Work has progressed on reviewing compliance against the Code of Practice 14 and other TPR related tasks.
PR23	Valuation 2019	A meeting was held in May with Hymans Robertson to discuss work that can be done in advance of the 2019 Valuation commencing. A number of actions were identified including the production and upload of files to test software. Testing software at an earlier stage will identify any issues with the data upload allowing sufficient time for any required software updates to be made in the January release.
PR33	GDPR	The new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into effect on 25 May 2018. All processes are being mapped and assessed to ensure compliance with Data Protection Regulations and that steps are taken to mitigate any risks of data breaches. A 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been drawn up to document formally the relationship between GMPF and its employers and to outline expectations relating to data.
PR35	Annual Report 2018	Work on the production the annual report 2018 has now been completed. A comprehensive timetable and work plan was drawn up, regular meetings took place and the deadline for issue achieved.

PR36	PASA accreditation	The Pensions Administration Standards Association (PASA) has an independently assessed accreditation programme to recognise high standards of administration. Officers will be working with PASA over the coming months to attain this accreditation. Further work has been undertaken on identifying the evidence that needs to be collated in order to demonstrate GMPF meets the required standards. GMPF have also consulted with Lothian Pension Fund on their experience of the accreditation process. Work on this will continue over the next quarter.
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4. UPDATES ON REGULAR WORK ITEMS

- 4.1 In general, day to day administration performance levels remain unchanged.
- 4.2 GMPF met with representatives from all 10 Local Authorities in June and July to discuss key items and performance. The aim of these meetings is to ensure that Local Authorities are aware of their responsibilities and to explore ways in which GMPF can best use the resources available to support Local Authorities. Areas of discussion included year-end, annual allowance, annual benefit statements, audit reports and regulatory changes. The meetings were also used as an opportunity to provide employers with a demonstration of the My Pension module.
- 4.3 Work has been taking place to ensure annual benefit statements for active members are issued before the end of August.
- 4.4 GMPF has also been involved in testing the next software release of Altair, due to be implemented in August.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 As set out at front of report.