



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

PENSIONS AND INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

Report of the Director - Finance and ICT

Derbyshire Pension Fund Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek Committee approval for the draft updated Complaints Policy for Derbyshire Pension Fund attached as Appendix 2.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Derbyshire Pension Fund (the Pension Fund/Fund) and each of the Fund's employing authorities, operate the Applications for the Adjudication of Disagreements Procedure (AADP) in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013.

However, the Pension Fund endeavours to resolve complaints received in relation to its administration of the LGPS before they reach the stage of an appeal under the AADP. Committee approved the Pension Fund's inaugural Complaints Policy (the inaugural Policy) in January 2020. The inaugural Policy was developed to provide assurance to members of the Pension Fund that all complaints would be considered properly and in a consistent manner. It was also developed to ensure that complaints are recorded consistently and that the Fund's effectiveness in dealing with complaints is monitored, with member feedback supporting the continued improvement of services.

- 2.1.2 The operation of the Fund's policy for complaints is underpinned by guidance for officers, and the Altair pension administration system

provides the functionality to record, escalate and monitor the progress of complaints within Fund members' individual records.

2.2 Complaints Experience

2.2.1 The Fund received 24 complaints during 2022/23 (excluding 7 initial complaints classed as requiring clarification of scheme regulations). All 24 complaints received a response within 10 working days.

Two of the above complaints progressed to the Application for Adjudication of Disagreements (AADP) procedure.

2.3 Review of Complaints

2.3.1 All complaints are reviewed on a monthly basis by the Fund's Performance & Backlog Group to ensure that they are being dealt with appropriately and to identify any trends in complaints which require addressing.

The number of complaints received by the Fund, together with a brief description of the subject of complaints, is included in the Half Year Pension Administration Performance Report to Committee (Administration Performance Report).

In the Administration Performance Report considered by Committee in April 2023, it was reported that complaints received during 2022/23 covered:

- Delays with payments of Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) paid to the Fund's in-house AVC provider, Prudential
- Delays with completion of transfers out of the Fund to alternative schemes
- Problems experienced by members following the transfer of their employment to an external contractor
- Requirement for evidence of interdependence with deceased scheme member to determine eligibility for co-habiting partner pension
- Incorrect estimated figures provided to member

The number of AADP appeals against Fund decisions is included in either the Half Year Pension Administration Performance Report or the annual Summary of AADP's & Ombudsman Escalations Report to Committee, with a detailed narrative on each of the appeals and escalations included in the annual summary report.

2.4 Draft Updated Complaints Policy

2.4.1 The Fund's policy on complaints has been reviewed and updated to take into account the ability of members to submit complaints via My Pension Online and to reflect the Fund's complaints' experience over the last three years. The step by step guide for Pension Fund members on how to complain has also been made clearer in the draft updated Complaints Policy.

3. Implications

3.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

4. Background Papers

4.1 Papers held by the Pension Fund.

5. Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1 – Implications

5.2 Appendix 2 – Draft updated Derbyshire Pension Fund Complaints Policy.

6 Recommendation(s)

That Committee:

a) Approves the draft updated Derbyshire Pension Fund Complaints Policy attached as Appendix 2.

7 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

7.1 The Pensions and Investments Committee is responsible for approving the Pension Fund's policies.

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Implications

Financial

1.1

Legal

2.1 The Pensions and Investments Committee has responsibility for reviewing and approving the Fund's strategy and policy statements in line with best practice under the terms of the Council's Constitution. The Committee must also ensure arrangements are in place for the Adjudication of Disagreements Procedure.

Human Resources

3.1

Information Technology

4.1

Equalities Impact

5.1

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

7.1