

# ITEM NO: 5(b)

## GREATER MANCHESTER PENSION FUND INFORMATION SERVICES WORKING GROUP

23 October 2009

Commenced: 9.15am

Terminated: 10.10am

Present: Councillor Middleton (in the Chair)  
Councillor Beeley  
Councillor Heffernan  
Councillor Pantall  
P Morris Director of Pensions  
G Dale Head of Pension Fund Administration  
S Budd Business Support Manager  
S Jessop Communications Officer

Apologies for absence: Councillor J Lane

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by Members of the Working Group.

### 2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Information Services Working Group held on 23 January 2009 were approved as a correct record.

### 3. GREATER MANCHESTER PENSION FUND: CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Head of Pensions Administration submitted a report which gave details of the GMPF Engagement and Consultation Strategy designed to help improve service delivery and outlined the results of ongoing surveys of the membership which contributed to action plans to improve inclusiveness, quality and value for money. By way of an example, consultation had taken place with members of the Fund who had retired in February to May 2009, and the results of this exercise were appended to the report for information.

Members of the Working Group congratulated the Head of Pensions Administration on the high level of satisfaction and low level of complaints which it was felt reflected ongoing practices of being responsive to issues raised by members supported by regular surveys of the membership.

### RECOMMENDED

**That the report be noted.**

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Pensions which was the annual report advising on membership amongst the ten local authority employers as at August 2009. It was noted that membership of the GMPF continued to be popular and the figures also indicated that it was more attractive to those working full time and less so to those working part time. Members discussed the interaction of state and private pension provision and cases where certain individuals who may expect to retire on means tested benefits could reduce their financial incentive to save for their retirement.

The Director of Pensions advised that a further consultation document was expected from Communities and Local Government (CLG) on the future of LGPS. He was keen that the GMPF contributed to that debate, e.g. via articles in the press, and it was his intention to arrange a training session for members when further details were available.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

**That the report be noted.**

#### **5. GREATER MANCHESTER PENSION FUND WEBSITE STATISTICS**

The Head of Pensions Administration circulated details showing the average visiting users per day to the GMPF website from May 2004 to September 2009. He reported on the website's continued expansion as an information source for members and employers.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

**That the report be noted.**

#### **6. DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT: CONSULTATIONS**

The Head of Pensions Administration reminded members of the recent Communities and Local Government consultation exercise on the future of the LGPS. This was to be followed up by a later consultation exercise to consider new ways in which the LGPS could be reformed. However, it now appeared unlikely that the second consultation exercise would be undertaken until after the general election.

The Head of Pensions Administration made reference to the recent amendments to the LGPS in relation to ill health retirements and the implications of these changes were discussed together with two illustrations of the impact on the scheme member, the employer and the Fund as administrator. The Director of Pensions had written to CLG to advise of the issues for employers that had arisen.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

**That the update report be noted.**

#### **7. PENSIONERS FORUM**

The Head of Pensions Administration circulated a summary of information and feedback from the Pensioners Forum which had been held on 9 October 2009. The event had been exceptionally well attended, with approximately 450 guests, and the feedback was very favourable.

It was explained that for the last 11 years the venue for the event had been New Century House, a facility operated by the Co-op Group. As of next year this facility would no longer be available to external clients and the search was underway for a new venue capable of accommodating over 400 seated around tables, an area for the exhibition stands plus occasional

seating for guests. A number of venues had already been suggested and each had pros and cons in terms of location, accessibility, transport links and car parking.

The Chair thanked the officers involved for arranging a well organised, informative and successful event and looked forward to receiving further details regarding the venue for the 2010 event.