ITEM NO: 15

Report To:	**Pension Fund Management Panel & Advisory Panel**
Date:	4 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	Peter Morris, Executive Director of Pensions
Subject :	**PERFORMANCE STANDARDS IN THE PENSIONS OFFICE**
Report Summary:	The Panel & Advisory Panel first established performance standards for the Pensions Office in 1995. This report proposes a revised list to apply from 2011/12 onwards.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the performance standards detailed in the report be adopted.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Solicitor to the Fund)	The administering authority needs not only to apply the Regulations, but to apply them efficiently and effectively. Adherence to performance standards is part of good administration.
Risk Management:	Adherence to standards will reduce the likelihood of complaints.
ACCESS TO INFORMATION:	**NON-CONFIDENTIAL** **This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.**
Background Papers:	There are no background papers to this report. For further information please contact Ged Dale, Head of Pensions Administration, Pensions Office, Manchester Rd, Droylsden, M43 6SF, Tel 0161 301 7227, email ged.dale@gmpf.org.uk

1. REPORT

1.1 The Panel and Advisory Panel first established performance standards for the Pensions Office inn 1995. These have since been reported in each Annual Report.

1.2 Some items that were included in the original standards no longer apply. As an example, short service ill-health retirement grants no longer exist. But other items have been introduced to the Scheme, for example divorce related work.

1.3 A review of performance standards has been carried out, with a proposed new list being contained in Section 2 below.

1.4 The standards do not state how long a task should take, but rather the *maximum* time a task should take. To illustrate this point, Standard 18 states that a new retirement will be processed within five days of all information being received, for a retirement that has already taken place. However if the pension to lump sum election form (which is often the final piece of the jigsaw) is received from the member on Payroll deadline day, other work will be set aside so that the retirement will usually be processed that day.

1.5 The standards aim to take into account providing a good service, whilst allowing the time to do the job properly. A fairly routine retirement with an annual pension of £5,000 and a lump sum of £20,000 represent benefits with a capital value of £120,000. Others will have a capital value in excess of £1,000,000. Accuracy is therefore of vital importance.

1.6 For scrutiny purposes, half-yearly reports of performance will be made to the Information Services Working Group.

2. PROPOSED STANDARDS

(1) Letters / e-mails / general queries to be answered or acknowledged within 5 days.

(2) New starters to be processed within 10 days of receiving the information from the employer.

(3) Changes in details to be processed within 10 days of receiving the information.

(4) All telephone calls to the Helpline to be answered if received within office hours.

(5) Pensions Forecasts for deferred members to be issued before 31 May.

(6) Pensions Forecasts for active members to be issued within 5 months of year end 31/03 where the year end returns are received on time.

(7) Estimates for divorce purposes processed within 10 days.*****

(8) Non LGPS transfers in to be processed within 15 days**.***

(9) Non LGPS transfer out quotations to be processed within 10 days.*

(10) Non LGPS transfer out payments to be processed within 10 days.*

(11) Internal transfers, including concurrent transfers, to be processed within 10 days.

(12) Refund payments requested with 10 days.

(13) Deferred benefits calculated on receipt of leaving papers within 10 days.*

(14) Annuity quotations calculated within 5 days.

(15) Additional regular contributions illustrations calculated within 10 days.

(16) AVC amendments notified to employers within 10 days.

(17) Benefit options for new retirements to be sent to the member within 10 days of receipt of the retirement notification, or within 20 days of the retirement date if papers are received in advance.

(18) New retirement benefits to be processed for payment within 5 days of receiving all necessary documentation, or within 10 days of the date of retirement if received in advance.

(19) Deferred benefits for payment to be processed within 5 days of receiving all the necessary documentation, or within 10 days of the date of retirement if received in advance.*

(20) Notifications of death to be processed within 5 working days.

(21) Dependants' pensions to be processed for payment within 5 working days of receiving all necessary documentation.

(22) Death grants processed for payment within 5 days of receiving all the necessary documentation, or within 5 days of the due date if later.

(23) Retirement lump sums processed for payment by Payroll within 5 days.

(24) Pension payments recalled by BACS for all deaths notified to us before noon on the eve of payday.

(25) Changes to bank details to be made when notified before the payroll cut off time.

***** assuming all the necessary documentation or information has been received.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that the performance standards detailed in the report be adopted.