

## **WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

WILTSHIRE PENSION FUND LOCAL PENSION BOARD  
11 November 2021

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### **PENSIONER PAYROLL DATABASE RECONCILIATION PROJECT & NEW PENSIONER PAYROLL SYSTEM UPDATE**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide for the Committee's consideration, a further update on the detailed, and ongoing reconciliation project between the pension administration system (Altair) and pensioner payroll system (SAP) as well as the project to move across to an integrated pensioner payroll system.

#### **Background**

2. This paper provides an update on how the situation has developed since that meeting.

#### **Current situation**

##### Rectification project

3. The current situation of the rectification project is as follows, for the cases in scope:
  - a). There are now fewer than 100 cases still at 'stage 2' (where the pension administration system, Altair, is inconsistent with itself). Each case continues to take some time to correct and involves close working with the systems provider to remove complex errors. These errors need to be removed before the case can be properly assessed as part of stage 3, where a comparison is taken against SAP (the pensioner payroll system). In many, but not all cases, once the system error is resolved it is clear there is no under or over payment.
  - b). At the time of writing, officers have now initially been through all of the c1,000 cases that have already passed stage 2 and have peer reviewed around 425 of them, correcting and writing to members as necessary at the same time (completing stage 3 and 4). Note: Corrections to Altair or SAP can only take place once a case has been peer reviewed and not all cases have result in a change been needed to SAP or for the member to be notified.
  - c). As a general rule, officers are giving members around 8 weeks notification of any change to their payment amounts (with some exceptions for very small differences) to allow the member time to manage their financial circumstances.
  - d). For cases where SAP is correct and Altair is incorrect, these are being prioritised behind those cases where SAP is incorrect.
  - e). As anticipated, where the value of the change is relatively small, officers have mostly received no correspondence from members. For some of the larger differences, some members have expressed their dissatisfaction or their intention to make a formal complaint although only one case has now entered the formal Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) stage. However, it is too early to provide analysis of this in greater depth to show the likely outcome across all cases in scope.

f). Some member have also contacted Unison to complain, which have in turn contacted the Fund to find out more information. Whilst the Union did informally contact the Fund to ask some questions, officers have not heard anything further since that initial contact.

#### New pensioner payroll system update

4. The Committee approved the purchase of Altair Pensioner payroll and immediate payments (subject to compliance with procurement rules and contract) in June 2021, with intention to go live with the new integrated system in the Summer/Autumn of 2022
5. However, in consideration of the risks associated with the interdependencies with the Council's Evolve programme the s151 officer has decided to postpone the movement to an integrated pensioner payroll system until after the Evolve programme goes live. This pushes back the likely go live date of the integrated payroll system until mid to late 2023 at the earliest and quite possibly not until during 2024.
6. Due to this change in approach, officers are now engaging with the Evolve project to attempt to minimise the risks to pensioner payroll of that implementation and seek out opportunities to make improvements to the service in the short-term.
7. Furthermore, officers are also exploring a possibility of still proceeding with implementing the immediate payments aspect (one-off payments) which would still bring some efficiency and control improvements.

#### **Considerations for the Board**

8. Officers are continuing to take a highly cautious approach to going through cases to try to limit the chance of errors being made as part of this review; in many cases, there is a large amount of information to review and consider to reach a final view point and hence the timeframes for the completion of this project are relatively long and difficult to predict. It is possible that corrections could continue up to March 2022.
9. There are now four members of staff working on cases on a part-time capacity. However, the time that each person is able to dedicate to the project is dependant on being able to complete essential elements of their normal role.

#### **Environmental Impact**

10. There is no environmental impact from this report.

#### **Financial Considerations**

11. There are no financial considerations related to this update paper.

#### **Risk Assessment**

12. There are a number of material risks related to this project in general in terms of compliance risk, financial risk and reputational risk, officers have sought to manage this risk as best as is possible in the circumstances through their approach to this project.

#### **Legal Implications**

13. There is potential for a number of complaints (informal or formal), leading to quasi-legal issues resulting from undertaking stage 4 of this project. Conversely, a failure to correct known errors would also be considered a breach of legislation, creating further legal implications. Legal advice was taken on the paper presented to Committee in March 2021.

**Safeguarding Considerations/Public Health Implications/Equalities Impact**

14. There are no implications at this time.

**Proposals**

15. Officers ask the Board to consider the information held within this paper to provide any comments or recommendations that it may have.

**Andy Cunningham**

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