

Subject	Review of the Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy	Status	For Publication
Report to	Pensions Authority	Date	8 th June 2023
Report of	Director		
Equality Impact Assessment	Not Required	Attached	No
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1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To secure approval by the Authority of the updated Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy following consultation with stakeholders.
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2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are recommended to:
- a. **Approve the revised Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy.**
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3 Link to Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 This strategy links to the delivery of several of the corporate objectives, in particular Customer focus and Listening to our stakeholders, because the Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy is focussed on detailing the range of ways and reasons why we consult, communicate and engage with our customers and stakeholders as well as highlighting any risks that would affect us in meeting any of the objectives listed below.

Customer Focus

To design our services around the needs of our customers (whether scheme members or employers).

Listening to our stakeholders

To ensure that stakeholders' views are heard within our decision making processes.

Valuing and engaging our Employees

To ensure that all our employees are able to develop a career with SYPA and are actively engaged in improving our services.

4 Implications for the Corporate Risk Register

- 4.1 The actions outlined in this strategy address the landscape around who the Authority will consult, communicate and engage with customers and stakeholders and how we will know if this has been a success. As a result maintenance of the strategy (which is a statutory requirement) addresses risks around regulatory compliance and failure to follow due process when considering new policies.

5 Background and Options

- 5.1 The Authority currently reviews the Consultation and Communications Strategy annually, with any smaller changes being made on an ad hoc basis throughout the year. Given that the strategy is relatively static it is proposed to extend the review period to every two years.

- 5.2 Changes made in this review which reflects a larger revision of the document included the following:

- Generic text changes to fit our corporate style, checking of grammar and punctuation.
- Adding in new sections around communication types, methods, frequency and whether these were digital or non-digital.
- The inclusion of a table detailing our target audiences and the different key messages we would communicate them across the different communications channels we provide.
- The addition of a key risks section looking at what elements would stop this strategy being delivered.
- The inclusion of new communications activities such as the hybrid member sessions held at Oakwell house for 2022/23.

The changes also included a new layout removing the traditional two column layout in most areas and the addition of images and tables to break up the amount of text, making the document easier to read.

- 5.3 Following the initial rewrite of the strategy, the draft document was then sent out to 151 members of our Focus Group for consultation in mid-February 2023. 21 people replied and a summary of their comments can be found below:

Most people who fed back agreed that it made sense to include Engagement in the title of the document as these activities were mentioned within the document.

Some came back with text and grammatical errors.

Most agreed it was a comprehensive and well written document, although some argued it was too long and a condensed version would be better. This however wouldn't be possible as there are legal requirements for what this document needs to contain, and a condensed version wouldn't meet these.

Some questioned if we needed the extended version history page and could this be made shorter.

A few members welcomed the addition of diagrams and tables to break up the content and make it more visually appealing.

One person raised the question of us moving to a more digital approach and asked if we are considering an App as part of future plans.

Other raised issues around mypension and asked if this is how we want people to access their information could it be made more user friendly and responsive for smartphones as not everyone has a laptop.

5.4 Small amends around some of the text and grammar in the document were made following the feedback the Focus Group provided and are included in this latest version of the document.

5.5 At its meeting on 27th April 2023, the Local Pension Board were asked to review the Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy and in particular to consider whether any significant areas are not captured. Points raised by the Board included:

- A couple of confusing references in relation to the frequency of review, these have since been explained and the wording amended to avoid any further confusion relating to this. Any revisions suggested will be discussed and incorporated into the final version of the document that will go to the Authority Meeting in June for final approval and sign off before being published on our website.
- Other points were raised around how the Authority assesses the effectiveness of the strategy. In response it was explained that we have access to a Data Analysis Reporting Tool to help assess effectiveness such as how many members receive paper or digital copies of the newsletters and how many members access their online accounts. We are currently unable to report on numbers looking at annual statements or retirement calculations but is something we will investigate.
- We were also asked about employer communications as this section seemed focused on administration issues/staff and a question was asked if we are missing more senior staff at employers, as these members may be those who are potential members of the Local Pension Board and we agreed that we will take this point away and consider this for the future and look at ways we could increase engagement with them.
- A final question on the day related to engagement with employers and providing more communications for them to use with employees about the pension

scheme. This is something we are looking to develop and offer to them later in the year.

- 5.6 The revised strategy aims to make best use of the professional communications resources that are now available within the Authority to support the overall delivery of our services.

6 Implications

- 6.1 The proposals outlined in this report have the following implications:

Financial	None directly from this report. Specific new initiatives may have financial implications which will be dealt with as part of the budget process as necessary. It is intended to identify a specific budget for communications activity within the existing budget and reflect this in the Strategy in future.
Human Resources	None directly from this report
ICT	None directly from this report
Legal	None directly from this report.
Procurement	None directly from this report.

George Graham

Director

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
None	N/A