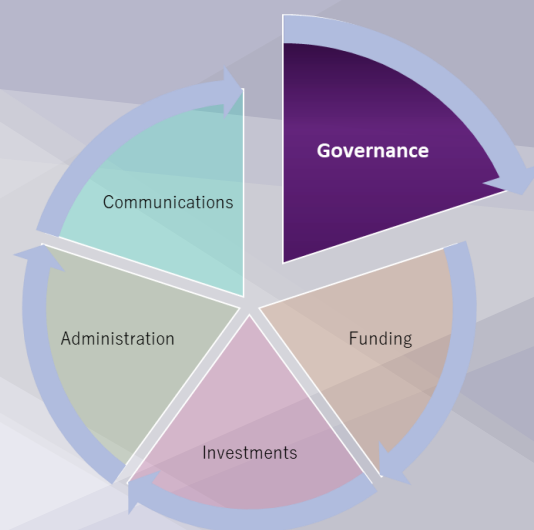


Essex Pension Fund

Business Continuity Policy

March 2021



Essex Pension Fund

Business Continuity Policy

Background and Introduction

This Policy defines the Business Continuity Planning arrangements and impact assessment for Essex Pension Fund.

The aim of the Business Continuity Policy is to reduce the effects of any incident or event that could disrupt critical activities of the Essex Pension Fund (“**the Fund**”) and ensure either the continuation or smooth return to business as usual by the development of a Business Continuity Plan.

Responsibilities

The Fund has a number of responsibilities that are set out in either statutory regulations or pension legislation. The Fund has a timetable of activities across different areas which are covered by Legal, Statutory, Regulatory and Accounting Practices, on a monthly, annual or tri-annual basis. These key activities must be completed at certain points in time.



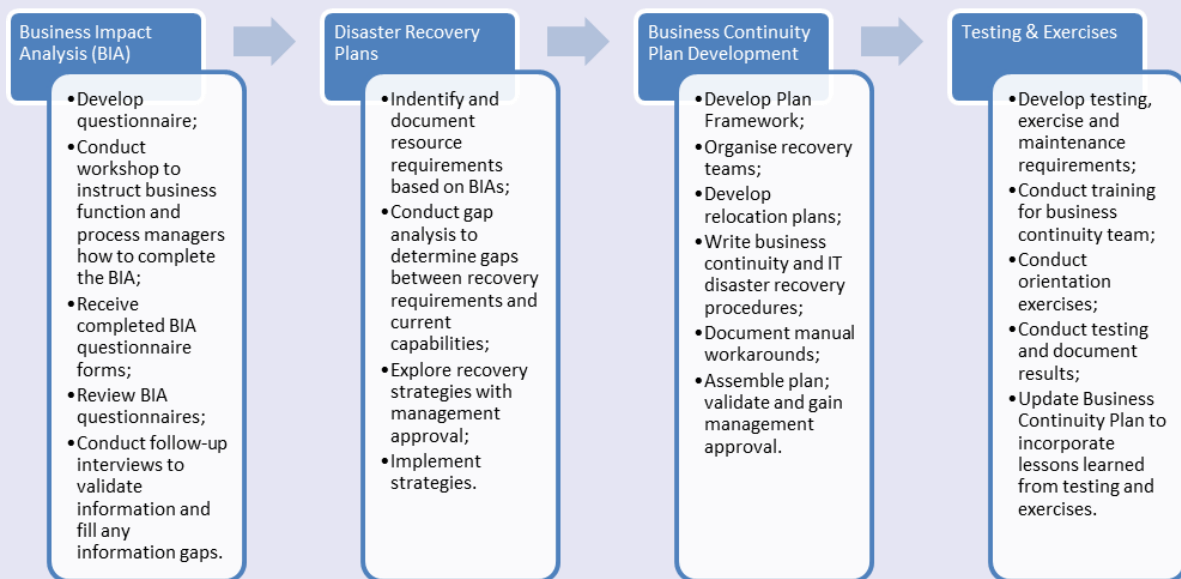
Essex Pension Fund

Business Continuity Policy

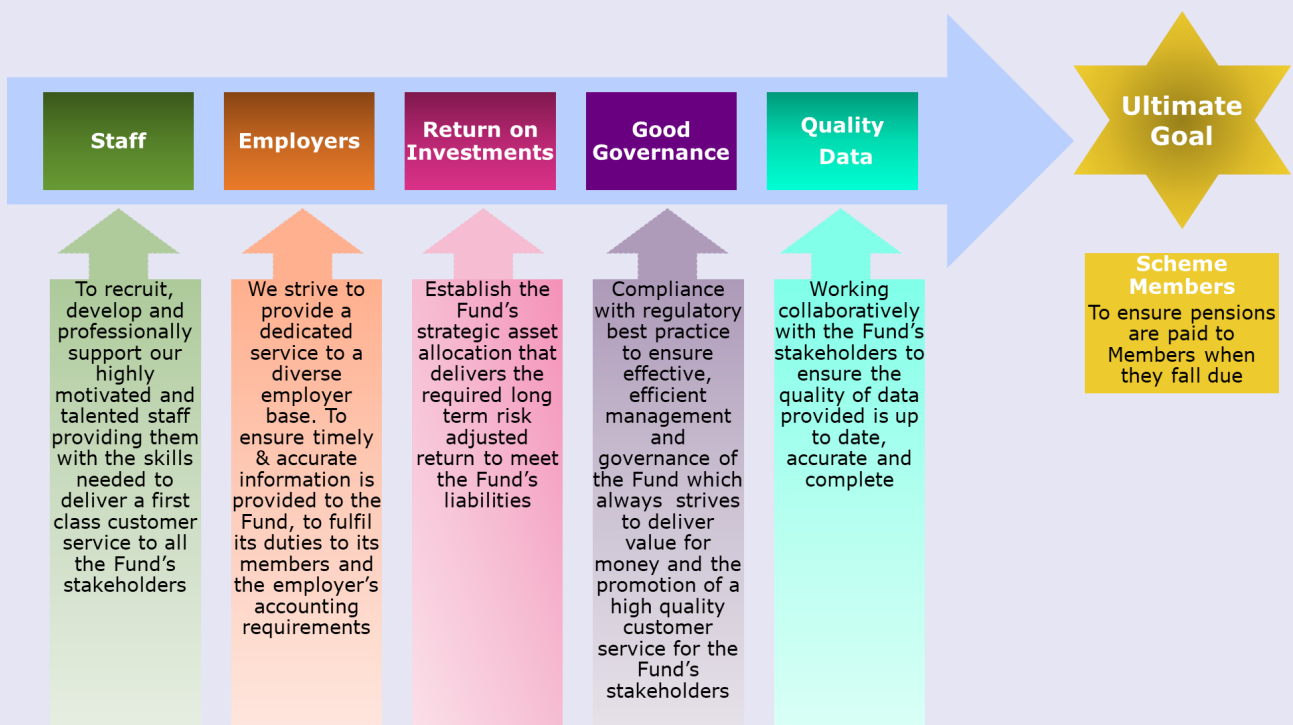
Objective

The objective of the Business Continuity Policy is to ensure that there are procedures in place to minimise impact and disruption should key systems / people / buildings become unavailable.

The process to achieve this objective is illustrated below:



The strategic goals of the Fund are detailed below:



Essex Pension Fund

Business Continuity Policy

Business Continuity Plan

The Business Continuity Plan will bring together the following areas: the Business Impact Assessment, Disaster Recovery and Testing Schedule.

Business Impact Assessment

A Business Impact Assessment is a process that allows the Fund to identify critical business functions and predict the consequences a disruption of one of those functions would have. It also allows the Fund to gather information needed to develop disaster recovery plans and limit the potential loss of service, reputation, income etc.

The Business Impact Assessment has been developed by Fund Officers in consultation with the Essex County Council Business Continuity Champion, Disaster Recovery Team and the Fund's Independent Governance and Administration Adviser (IGAA).

Disaster Recovery

Disaster recovery is the process of resuming normal operations following a disruption of services by regaining access to data, hardware, software, networking equipment, resources, buildings, power and connectivity.

Disaster recovery plans have been set up to cover the five key areas of business detailed below:

Governance

The Compliance Team are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Governance arrangements in place for the Fund's Boards and Committee (Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board (PSB), Essex Pension Fund Advisory Board (PAB) and Investment Steering Committee (ISC)). They also monitor the Fund's achievements against objectives, by the management of risk and performance made against Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

Funding

The Employer Team responsibilities involve liaising with employers to ensure they are aware of their statutory obligations to their employees and the Fund and ensure pension contributions are paid within the prescribed time limits. The Employer Team also liaise with the Fund's Actuary to ensure the Fund meets actuarial and accounting requirements.

Investments

The Fund's Investment Strategy is determined by the ISC. The Investment Team are responsible for implementing the strategy and supporting the ISC in its role of monitoring the performance of the Fund's external investment managers. As at March 2020 the Fund had assets of over £6.6bn. The Investment Team also co-ordinate the production of the Annual Report & Accounts.

Essex Pension Fund

Business Continuity Policy

Administration

The Administration Team administers the benefits of over 172,000 individuals in the Fund. This involves the day to day operations including: the calculation and payment of scheme benefits, the imaging and indexing of post and documents, the maintenance of member records and explaining scheme rules and benefits, discuss concerns or answer questions from scheme members and employers either face to face, over the phone or by email.

The Pensioner Payroll Team are responsible for paying over 47,000 pensioners each month with a monthly payroll of over £17 million.

The Fund is also responsible for the administration of other public sector schemes: The Firefighters Pension Schemes and the Police Pension Schemes. These are funded independently by individual Service Level Agreements (SLA) with each Authority.

The Systems Team are responsible for managing all aspects of UPM (Pension Administration Software), including document, profile, security and process management. In addition, the Team manage online portals including Member Online (for Scheme Members) and Pensions Online (for Employers) and provide support to users.

The Team liaise with employers and their payroll providers to onboard all new members and leavers of the scheme, processing monthly and end of year returns, pensions increase and annual allowance. They also generate the annual benefit statements.

In addition, the Team also provide relevant data for statutory bodies as needed, including for valuations.

Communications

The Technical Hub ensure the correct interpretation of current and new scheme regulations, and wider pensions legislation, to ensure our systems and processes remain fit for purpose. The Team liaises regularly with our peers and attend regional and national meetings to ensure we both influence and keep up to date with scheme developments.

The Team are also responsible for development, implementation and oversight of the Fund's Communications Policy.

Testing Schedule

Fund Officers have produced a Testing Schedule which is a live document. Testing verifies the effectiveness of the Fund's Business Continuity Plan, provides training for test participants on what to do in a real scenario and identifies areas where the plan needs to be strengthened. The Testing Schedule is regularly actioned, monitored and updated.

Essex Pension Fund

Business Continuity Policy

Risks

The Fund has a Risk Register which links to numerous activities outlined in the Business Continuity Policy and Plan. All risks are monitored and updated on a continuous basis and can be found on the Fund's website <https://www.essexpensionfund.co.uk/essex-pension-fund/about-us/forms-and-publications/#collapse-2>.

Monitoring and Reporting

The Business Continuity Policy is reviewed on a three-yearly basis and the Plan will be monitored at regular intervals by the Fund with testing exercises and results reported to the PSB and PAB. Lessons learned from the exercises will be incorporated into the Plan. In addition, the Fund reports on specific measures in relation to Business Continuity agreed by the PSB, these are contained in the Fund's Scorecard which is regularly reported to the PSB and PAB.

Further Information

If you require further information about this Policy, please contact:

Amanda Crawford, Compliance Manager, Essex Pension Fund
Email – Amanda.crawford@essex.gov.uk

Jody Evans, Interim Director for Essex Pension Fund
Email – Jody.evans@essex.gov.uk

Essex Pension Fund
Seax House
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1QH