

St Sampson Parish Council

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Employer Discretions Policy

Summary

Cornwall Pension Fund requests all the Councils that belong to the Local Government Pension Scheme provide them with a Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Employer Discretions Policy and that this Policy is reviewed regularly.

The default position is that St Sampson Parish Council will not make any additional pension contributions to the LGPS scheme. However, in exceptional circumstances, where there is a financial and organisational benefit, the policy provides for the payment of discretionary benefits for early retirement, the award of additional pension, early retirement on compassionate grounds and flexible retirement.

SSPC may extend the 12 month limit for allowing active members to transfer benefits from previous pensionable employment into the Pension Fund if omissions have occurred in the provision of information to the employee in administering LGPS.

If SSPC exercises the discretions that will benefit an employee this will add to the pension costs which should be quantified before the Council proceeds.

Consideration of requests to exercise any discretions are to be considered, authorized and approved by the Parish Council.

Policy Details

1. Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (regulation 17)

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC's) allow employees to make additional payments to an insurance policy held with Standard Life.

St Sampson Parish Council's policy is not to contribute to an employee's AVC.

2. Early Payment of Retirement Benefits – Waiving Actuarial Reduction (regulation 30(8))

Employees with at least 2 year's LGPS membership can retire from age 55 and receive immediate benefit of their pension benefits. The default position is that the pension benefits payable are subject to an actuarial reduction (the amount an LGPS pension is reduced if it is taken before an individual's Normal Pension Age).

St Sampson Parish Council may choose to make good the actuarial reduction if there is a financial saving and benefit to the Council.

3. Early Payment of Retirement Benefits between age 55 and 60 – Transitional Provisions Regulations

Employees may retire early but this means a reduction in employee's pension benefits ('switching off' the 85 Year Rule) meaning no additional cost to the employer.

St Sampson Parish Council will not 'switch on' the 85 Year Rule for early retirement unless there is a financial saving and benefit to the Council.

4. Early Retirement on Compassionate Grounds (regulation 30(5))

St Sampson Parish Council will allow early retirement on compassionate grounds in exceptional circumstances, for example providing constant care for an immediate family member or extreme financial hardship.

5. Flexible Retirement (regulation 30(6))

St Sampson Parish Council permits flexible retirement only where there is a financial or operational benefit to the Council and providing that the employee's combined reduced earnings and pension do not exceed their pre-retirement earnings. The Council will not waive any actuarial reduction to an employee's pension in this situation and any pension costs must be recovered within 2 years.

6. Increase of Pension by Employer – regulation 31

St Sampson Parish Council does not grant an additional pension unless there is a definable benefit to the Council in so doing.

7. Transfer of Service into LGPS – regulation 100

If an employee has not been given any or sufficient details about the pension scheme or transfer option then St Sampson Parish Council may extend the 12 month time limit for allowing members to transfer pension benefits into the Cornwall Pension Fund.

8. Shared cost Additional Pension Contributions (APC)

Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) are a method where employees can 'buy back' pension which has been 'lost' when they have a period of authorised unpaid leave of absence. The employer contributes 2/3 of the cost of the APC contract when a member confirms, within 30 days of returning to work, that they wish to purchase this lost pension.

St Sampson Parish Council will not extend the 30 day deadline for a member to elect for a shared cost APC upon return from a period of unpaid absence.