

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker	Pension Fund Panel and Board
Date:	28 March 2024
Title:	Governance - Annual Internal Audit Report & Opinion 2023-24
Report From:	Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Operations

Contact name: Neil Pitman; Chief Internal Auditor

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Pension Fund Panel and Board with the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of Hampshire Pension Services' / Hampshire Pension Fund's frameworks of governance, risk management and control for the year ending 31 March 2024.

Recommendation

2. That the Pension Fund Panel and Board note the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Internal Audit Report and Opinion for 2023-24.

Contextual Information

3. In accordance with 'proper practices' as defined in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (updated 2017), the Chief Internal Auditor is required to provide a written report reviewing the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment.
4. The Annual Report for 2023-24 (attached as Appendix 1) provides the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion on the frameworks of governance, risk management and control for the year ending 31 March 2024.

5. The Pension Fund Panel and Board's attention is drawn to the following points:
 - I am satisfied that sufficient assurance work has been carried out to allow me to form a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment.
 - In my opinion frameworks of governance, risk management and management control are substantial and audit testing has demonstrated controls to be working in practice.
 - Where weaknesses have been identified through internal audit review, we have worked with management to agree appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for improvement.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

6. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
7. The climate change and carbon control mitigation tools were not applicable as the report relates to the in-house management of the administration of the pension scheme and therefore have a neutral impact on climate change.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	No
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	
Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Equality objectives are not considered to be adversely affected by this report.