

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Pension Fund Panel and Board
Date:	26 March 2021
Title:	Governance: Pension Fund Panel and Board meetings
Report From:	<i>Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources</i>

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Purpose of this Report

1. This report introduces changes to the calendar of meetings for the Panel and Board, starting from the 2021/22 municipal year.

Recommendation

2. That the Panel and Board note the changes to Panel and Board meetings starting for the 2021/22 municipal year.
3. That the Panel and Board recommends to County Council that its Terms of Reference are amended as shown in Annex 1, and approves that corresponding changes are made to the Pension Fund's Representation Policy.

Background

4. For a number of years the Pension Fund Panel and Board have met seven times a year, with meetings generally scheduled for 3 hours. In most meetings the committee consider papers covering both the governance and investments of the Pension Fund, as well as hearing presentations from and then questioning the Fund's investment managers. Whilst the meetings have successfully transitioned to virtual meetings through the Coronavirus pandemic, there continues to be a pressure from the number of items on some agendas. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources' officers and officers from Legal Services and Democratic and Member Services (DMS) have considered the current arrangements and options for improvements.

5. Alongside these meetings, internal training sessions are provided for the members of the Pension Fund Panel and Board and Audit Committee. There are no plans to change the arrangements for internal training sessions.

2021/22 Municipal year new approach

6. Starting for the 2021/22 municipal year it is intended that Panel and Board meetings should specifically focus on reports on the necessary governance and investment issues required for the management of the Pension Fund. The number of Panel and Board meetings will therefore reduce to four per year, once a quarter.
7. To enable the Panel and Board to fulfil their role of scrutinising the Pension Funds investment managers, specific briefings will be arranged for Members to hear presentations and question the investment managers. There will be a programme of six to seven briefings a year for Members to see the Pension Fund's full roster of investment managers. As these briefings are informal, no decisions can be taken. If decisions are required or as a means of escalation an investment manager is required to present to a formal meeting of the Pension Fund Panel and Board, this will be arranged.
8. Both the quarterly meetings of the Pension Fund Panel and Board and briefings with investment managers will be scheduled for about 2 hours, therefore resulting in a similar overall time commitment for Members in comparison to the current schedule of seven 3 hour meetings.
9. Following the successful adaption to virtual meetings of the Panel and Board it is intended that Members' briefings with investment managers will continue to be virtual. This will reduce travelling for both Members and the Fund's investment managers, many of whom are not based in the UK.
10. The Pension Fund's officers will work with their counterparts in DMS to arrange additional dates for meetings or briefings in the 2021/22 Municipal year. The dates for meetings already scheduled for 2021/22 will be kept and used for either formal meetings or briefings.

Pension Fund Panel and Board Terms of Reference

11. The Panel and Board's Terms of Reference require a minor change to reflect the reduced number of formal meetings. In addition, the opportunity is being taken to update the Terms of Reference to align with the County Council's other committees and remove the requirement for Members to give 5 days notice in order for a substitute to attend the meeting in their place. Members should continue to give as much notice of possible if they cannot attend a meeting and have asked a substitute to attend in their place and inform DMS.

The changes to the Terms of Reference are shown in Annex 1. The changes to the Terms of Reference need to be approved by County Council and reflected in a corresponding update to the Pension Fund's Representation Policy.

REQUIRED CORPORATE OR 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 of the ongoing management of the Hampshire Pension Fund.	

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.)

DocumentLocation

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

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 the proposals in this report as the proposals do not directly affect scheme members.