

# Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

## Scope of Responsibility

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which include arrangements for the management of risk. Apart from employing its own officers and advisors the Authority also receives support services from officers of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) under the terms of a service level agreement.

The Authority's Local Code of Governance complies with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016. A copy of the Authority's code is on our website here, <https://www.sypensions.org.uk/Publications/Corporate-Policy> .

The Local Code and this statement are also supported by the Governance Compliance Statement which the Authority is required to produce under s 55(1) of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, which is also available on our website.

This statement explains how the Authority has complied with the code and meets the requirements of regulation 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 relating to the preparation and approval of an annual governance statement.

## The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and the activities through which it accounts to and engages with employing bodies, pensioners, contributors and other stakeholders. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk: it can only provide a reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is ongoing and is designed to identify risks to the achievement of the Authority's policies, aims and objectives. The system attempts to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised and how to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place during the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

## Outline of the Governance Framework

The Authority's framework of governance continues to evolve in line with best practice and is based upon the 7 Core Principles set out in the 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE guidance, *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework*. More details about the Authority's arrangements for ensuring compliance with each of the 7 Core Principles are set out in the Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance which is available here:

<https://www.sypensions.org.uk/Publications/Corporate-Policy>

### **Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the law.**

#### *Behaving with integrity*

The Authority has in place codes of conduct covering the behaviour of both members and officers, which form part of its constitution, with appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that action can be taken where transgressions are reported. For officers these are reinforced through a framework of values and behaviours, including specific management behaviours, which are reflected upon at individual level as part of the appraisal system. The Code of Conduct for officers was updated during 2020/21 and re-launched to staff

In line with the requirements of local government law elected members are required to complete declarations of interest which are publicly available and to declare any conflicts which might arise in discussion of specific matters at meetings of the Authority and its committees. Similar arrangements also apply to members of the Local Pension Board, although these are not governed by local government law, but by the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations and the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

Registers of potential conflicts, including personal relationships are maintained for staff and a register of gifts and hospitality is maintained for both staff and officers.

The Authority maintains a comprehensive policy framework in relation to issues such as fraud and corruption and has a Whistleblowing Policy in place should any individual wish to make a confidential disclosure, as well as complaints policies in relation to quality of service, and statutory appeals processes in relation to decisions made under the Pensions Regulations.

#### *Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values*

The Authority operates with an extremely strong value base in relation to ethical standards and values reflecting the seriousness of its responsibility as steward of the pension savings of a very large number of individual scheme members. This is reflected in the way in which the values and behaviours framework is central to both the Corporate Strategy and the appraisal process and the wider policy and constitutional framework covering issues such as recruitment and selection and procurement. The Authority also seeks to bring its commitment to these values into the role it plays within any partnership in which it participates, particularly the Border to Coast Pensions Partnership which is central to the delivery of its corporate objectives.

#### *Respecting the rule of the law*

The Authority ensures that it is aware, through the employment of specialist officers and advisers, of the statutory requirements which are placed upon it and takes steps to ensure that it complies with them in an open and transparent way. This includes the maintenance of an up to date Constitution which is regularly reviewed and includes definitions of both the Corporate Planning Framework and Pensions Policy Framework, together with terms of reference for committees and an appropriate scheme of delegation to officers.

The Authority maintains up to date job descriptions / role profiles for all posts within the organisation and ensures that it has appropriately qualified statutory officers in post who are able to operate in a way which complies with the relevant professional codes.

Formal records are kept of decisions taken by both officers and members together with the advice considered in making such decisions, and a committee secretariat, provided by Barnsley MBC under a service level agreement, supports the Authority's democratic processes ensuring compliance with the relevant regulations.

The Authority has a formal policy on the reporting of breaches of the relevant pension regulations and any breaches which occur are reviewed by the Local Pension Board at each of its meetings. The Authority also has clear and effective policies in relation to fraud and corruption and participates in the National Fraud Initiative.

## **Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**

### *Openness*

The Authority seeks to be as open as possible with stakeholders, conscious that it is the steward of the savings of nearly 170,000 individuals, working for close to 600 different employers. To this end it complies with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act and makes a considerable volume of information automatically and freely available through its website. The Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme which specifies the information published by the Authority and how to access it was updated during the year.

This information includes a range of information on investment holdings, performance, the policy frameworks and responsible investment issues such as how shares have been voted. In addition the agendas and papers for the Authority, the various Committees and the Local Pension Board are published on line a week before each meeting and while in normal circumstances all meetings are open to the public meetings of the Authority are also webcast. Key decisions made by officers are formally recorded and details published on the website.

Due to the pandemic it has not been possible for meetings of the Authority, its committees and the Local Pension Board to be held in person. Meetings have been held virtually and have all been broadcast over the internet. Subject to the cost of doing so it is intended to continue the broadcasting of all meetings in future, while the continuation of virtual meetings will depend on decisions by the Government around changes to the law.

In order to promote clarity in the information provided to support decision making reports for decision making bodies follow a standard format which ensures that, for example, implications for the financial position of the Authority of a decision are clearly explained. In addition all reports for decision are required to outline relevant risk considerations, so that these can be understood by decision makers. All reports have to be "cleared" by the statutory officers prior to submission to elected members for decision.

In order to ensure decision makers can consider the views of stakeholders in a systematic way when necessary the Authority has adopted a Communications and Consultation Strategy which provides a standard framework for engaging with stakeholders.

### *Engaging comprehensively with employers and other institutional stakeholders*

All engagement with employers takes place within the context of the Communications and Consultation Strategy which requires the results of any consultation process to be reported back alongside the actions proposed following the consultation.

Resources have been specifically allocated to support engagement with employers in order to support the maintenance of a productive and supportive relationship between them and the Authority.

In addition the Authority has in place clear protocols regarding its participation in significant partnerships, the only one currently being the Border to Coast Pensions Partnership. Clearly defined roles are set out for each participant in the Partnership in its Governance Charter and the relevant legal agreements. Regular reports are provided to the Authority by officers on the activity and performance of the Partnership. The Authority's participation in the Partnership is also subject to a comprehensive annual review which considers the achievement of both the Authority's and the Partnership's objectives.

The increased availability of "video conferencing" technology due to the pandemic has increased the volume of interaction which it has been possible to achieve with employers and within the Border to Coast partnership over the past year. In terms of interaction with employers steps are being taken to build on the success of these developments while in the case of Border to Coast it is likely that more of a "mixed economy" approach will be developed in order to maximise the quality of interaction around the most significant issues.

#### *Engaging scheme members effectively*

The processes for engaging with and understanding the views of scheme members are set out in the Communications and Consultation Strategy which applies to scheme members in the same way as employers. In addition the Authority's complaints and appeals processes are available to scheme members in relation either to quality of service, or specific decisions made under the LGPS regulations. Information from the complaints and appeals processes forms part of the Authority's performance management framework and influences the development of policy, practice and processes, including specific projects reflected in the Corporate Strategy. As part of its assurance and scrutiny role the Local Pension Board receives a quarterly report outlining the nature of all appeals and complaints and the subsequent actions and learning as well as quarterly information on the results of various customer satisfaction surveys which examine specific aspects of the service to scheme members, which also include information on learning and actions from this feedback.

As a result of the pandemic interaction with scheme members was moved entirely on line, and this has proved successful and popular with members. Satisfaction survey data indicate that there has been no material change in levels of scheme member satisfaction with the quality of service as a result of the move to entirely remote interaction.

### **Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**

#### *Defining outcomes*

The Authority sets out a clear vision supported by specific objectives which assist in the achievement of that vision within its Corporate Strategy which is at the heart of its corporate planning framework. Delivery against these objectives and key quality of service standards is reported quarterly to members of the Authority within a comprehensive quarterly report, allowing action to be taken to address any variations if required. All activity is undertaken within a risk management framework which covers all aspects of the Authority's activity.

#### *Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits*

The Authority's Responsible Investment Policy sets out how it reflects the balance between economic, social, environmental and governance issues within its investment decision making process and the areas where it seeks to move partners within the Border to Coast Pensions Partnership to a shared position. Responsible investment is central to the

Authority's approach to the management of the funds for which it is responsible and it is an active participant in a range of initiatives which seek to support the achievement of its objectives in this area. The approach in this area has been further developed over the last year with the updating of the various elements of the policy framework, including a commitment to achieving net zero investment portfolios by 2030 and the agreement of a specific statement of beliefs in relation to responsible investment.

The Authority's decision making on key issues of this sort is transparent with appropriate decisions either taken in public meetings or published and supporting information placed in the public domain where possible, although it is impossible for market sensitive information to be placed in the public domain.

The Authority actively engages with groups seeking to influence its policies in different ways and uses its Communication and Consultation Strategy to seek views on issues where appropriate and it considers differing views when making decisions.

Beyond the investment sphere the Authority maintains an Equality and Diversity Scheme to guide its approach to the delivery of fair access to its services for any individual with a protected characteristic.

#### **Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**

##### *Determining interventions*

The Authority's officers ensure that when making decisions elected members have access to as much objective information as possible as well as to the views of appropriately skilled and experienced independent advisers where specialist areas such as investment strategy are under consideration. Where members require additional information officers agree specific timescales for its provision. The corporate planning process and the medium term financial strategy provide the means by which the Authority agrees the relative priority and resource requirements of specific interventions.

##### *Planning interventions*

The Authority has a well-defined and robust corporate planning framework with the review cycle linked at a high level to the major cyclical events impacting its operations (principally the triennial actuarial valuation of the Pension Fund). This framework is supported by well-established consultation arrangements ensuring that stakeholder views can influence plans where appropriate and a risk management framework that ensures that both risks to service delivery and risks impacting the assets and liabilities of the Pension Fund can be addressed holistically.

A robust framework for monitoring the delivery of all the various plans and strategies is in place with a comprehensive quarterly report including both financial and performance information presented to the Authority on a quarterly basis with more detailed reports covering pension administration presented quarterly to the Local Pension Board and on investment performance to the Authority. These reports highlight deviations from plans and identify and assess the risks relevant to the achievement of objectives as well as including information around feedback received and how it has been acted on.

##### *Optimising achievement of intended outcomes*

The Authority's medium term financial strategy and corporate strategy draw on inputs from both stakeholder feedback mechanisms, the views of elected members and the Senior Management Team's assessment of developments in the wider external environment in

order to direct resources to address priority areas. The medium term financial strategy examines both the Authority's operating budget and the financial position of the Pension Fund ensuring that all areas of cost and income are fully taken into account.

In addition given the centrality of being a responsible investor to the way in which the Authority invests the Pension Fund regular publicly available reports are provided to the Authority detailing responsible investment activity undertaken and the outcomes achieved through this activity. These include summaries of the Fund's votes at company annual meetings. As part of this approach the Authority subscribes to the FRC's Stewardship Code which requires investors to report to stakeholders in a clear way on how they have managed the funds for which they are responsible.

### **Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**

#### *Developing the entity's capacity*

The Authority is very aware of both its cost base and performance and undertakes benchmarking of both of these across both the main streams of operational activity (pension administration and investment). The Authority has also opened itself up to external challenge through undertaking an independent review of governance in response to work being undertaken nationally by the Scheme Advisory Board and through the appointment of an independent adviser to the Local Pension Board in order to assist the Board in providing more robust challenge to officers.

The Authority's Human Resources Strategy also explicitly addresses the way in which the Authority plans and develops its workforce requirements.

#### *Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals*

The Authority has strong constitutional arrangements in place including an effective scheme of delegation, financial regulations and contract standing orders which define which individuals can take which decisions. These arrangements are subject to regular review.

Clear role profiles are in place for all posts within the organisation, which are linked to a consistent organisational design framework. The Director's role profile is agreed with elected members and this and the Constitution clearly set out the dividing lines between member and officer responsibilities. Means of maintaining regular dialogue between the Director and the Chair are agreed with each Chair on their taking office.

A Learning and Development Strategy is in place for elected members supported by the allocation of specific time within the overall programme of meetings. This strategy is set within the context of the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework and has regard to the requirements of the Pensions Regulator and provides access to both in house and external events as well as on-line learning and specific reading materials. A targeted induction programme is provided for new members. Members are asked to annually assess their learning needs and develop their own learning plans. These arrangements have been reviewed over the last 12 months and proposed changes will be considered by the Authority and the Local Pension Board early in 2021/22.

For staff access is provided to on-going learning and development as necessary to support the goals set out in individual appraisals. In addition to competency based progression through the pension administration career grade this can include professional qualification training, external training courses and internally provided technical updates and system specific training. The career grade scheme for pension administration has been

comprehensively reviewed and revised during the year to make it more clearly competency based and better focussed on meeting the Authority's needs.

All learning and development activity is supported through access to on line resources through a range of systems such as on line reading rooms, SharePoint and modern.gov.

The Authority has an appraisal system in place that is used to manage individual performance and to support the succession planning process which is in place in key risk areas. Members of the Authority's Staffing, Appointments and Appeals Committee specifically considered succession planning for the Senior Management Team during the year.

Arrangements for Health Safety and Wellbeing have been strengthened and are overseen by a joint management and staff committee, as well as being supported by the HR policy framework. As a result of the pandemic significant emphasis has been placed on staff wellbeing including signposting resources and services which can support those who might be struggling with homeworking and also providing guidance to managers on managing staff remotely.

### **Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

#### *Managing risk*

A risk management policy framework is in place and was reviewed during the year by the Audit Committee which sets out clearly the responsibilities for managing the risks facing the organisation, how they should be assessed and reported. The risk register is reviewed on a monthly basis by the Senior Management Team with reporting on a quarterly basis to meetings of the Authority as part of the overall performance management framework, together with review and challenge by the Local Pension Board.

#### *Managing performance*

The Authority has robust and transparent arrangements for the reporting and monitoring of its performance in place including clearly defined timetables for the reporting of information which have been added to during the year by the introduction of improved financial monitoring. Wherever possible data is placed in the public domain and statutory reporting timescales are adhered to.

Where appropriate these arrangements are supported by the use of benchmarking information and other external sources of comparison data.

Members and the Local Pension Board are encouraged to seek improvements in the data provided and officers have encouraged challenge within the monitoring process from both the Local Pension Board and members of the Authority, including through the appointment of an independent adviser to support the Local Pension Board in order to ensure that it is not being guided by officers.

The Authority welcomes external challenge and has opened itself up to such challenge through commissioning an external review of its governance arrangements which reported during the year.

Assurance process are in place over the production of performance management information which ensure that the reports provided to different bodies are consistent.



The processes for generating and presenting information continue to be subject to constant review and improvement to make it both easier to report and to understand the information generated. The processes to replace a number of key systems over the coming year are intended to address issues centred on the degree of manual effort required to generate key pieces of financial and HR information.

#### *Robust Internal Control*

The Authority has an Audit Committee in place whose terms of reference are consistent with the relevant professional standards. The Committee has produced its own Annual report which is available here [insert link] which sets out the work it has undertaken during the year.

The Committee is responsible for overseeing the work of Internal Audit which is provided by Barnsley MBC's Internal Audit Service and in particular ensuring that the Internal Audit plan addresses key control risks facing the Authority. The Head of Internal Audit is required under the relevant professional standards to produce an annual opinion on the adequacy of the control environment. For 2020/21 this opinion is that "based on the systems reviewed and reported on by Internal Audit during the year to date, together with management's response to issues raised, I am able to give a reasonable (positive) assurance opinion regarding the effectiveness of the control, risk and governance environment."

The Audit Committee has instituted a process of reviewing the progress made in implementing audit recommendations to ensure that the control environment continues to be strengthened as a result of the audit process.

The Audit Committee has reviewed the policy framework for Risk Management during the year and approved updated policies in line with relevant professional standards and which are suited to the scale and nature of the organisation's activities.

While the Audit Committee's agenda covers the range of activity that would be expected it is not always able to provide the depth of challenge that is seen in comparable bodies. This is an area that needs some reflection and discussion with elected members and relevant stakeholders such as internal and external audit.

#### *Managing Data*

High quality data is central to the effectiveness of the organisation in its core function as a pension administrator. The Authority has a strong policy framework in place to ensure both the security and integrity of the large quantities of data which it holds. This includes the Authority's Director acting as the Senior Information Risk Owner and the Head of Internal Audit as the Data Protection Officer.

The Authority has received the Cyber Essentials + accreditation from government in relation to its arrangements for information security.

The work of the Data Protection Officer is supported by an annual programme of review activity to ensure that the policy framework is being complied with.

An annual assessment of the quality of data held for pension administration purposes is undertaken and a data improvement plan is produced to ensure that any issues identified are addressed. Progress with delivering the data improvement plan is overseen by the Local Pension Board.

#### *Strong public financial management*

The Authority is steward of a very large pension fund and therefore strong financial management is crucial to its effective operation. A strong framework of budgetary control is

in place which has been enhanced in the last year with improvements in both budget preparation and financial monitoring. Key projects are required to operate within defined budgets which receive approval through the appropriate decision making processes.

The Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy defines various fiscal rules which constrain the growth in expenditure mirroring, to some extent, the constraints which apply to conventional local authorities through the council tax capping regime.

### **Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency and audit to deliver effective accountability**

#### *Implementing good practice in transparency*

The Authority seeks to be open and transparent in all its activities maintaining the minimum amount of information possible as confidential. Therefore the Authority publishes a very significant amount of information about its services and activities on its website [www.sypensions.org.uk](http://www.sypensions.org.uk) including for example details of investment holdings and voting records. The agendas and public reports for all meetings of the Authority, its committees and the Local Pension Board are published on the internet and the public parts of meetings of the Authority (and more recently of committees and the Local Pension Board) are webcast. The Authority's annual report also contains a significant amount of information on its activities in a more user friendly format. The Freedom of Information Publication Scheme has been updated during the last year and this provides clear signposting to the information which is publicly available and where it can be found.

The Authority took steps, as indicated elsewhere in this statement, to ensure that the pandemic did not negatively impact on the transparency of its operations.

#### *Implementing good practice in reporting*

The Authority regards "telling its story" as an organisation in terms of both its activity and the way in which it demonstrates both value for money and effective stewardship of scheme members' savings as a key activity. For key documents such as the Annual Report and Accounts the Authority follows the relevant professional codes in terms of the provision of information and seeks to go beyond them where possible, particularly in terms of presenting the information in a way which allows the reader to set information in the context of the Authority's work and easily understand it.

In order to promote greater understanding by stakeholders of its investment portfolios and support its goals in terms of decarbonisation of its investments the Authority has commissioned work which supports the production of an impact report for 2020/21 which will form part of the overall annual report.

The Authority uses the governance framework set out in the Local Code of Corporate Governance to ensure that the information provided in reporting is accurate and consistent and that the same standards are met by key partnerships such as the Border to Coast Pensions Partnership.

#### *Assurance and effective accountability*

The Internal Audit function operates under a charter which conforms to the relevant public sector internal audit standards ensuring that the Authority complies with the relevant professional standards.

The Audit Committee has adopted a process of reviewing progress with the implementation of audit recommendations to ensure that improvements are being delivered as a result of

work carried out by both internal and external audit and potentially other review agencies when the Scheme Advisory Board's Good Governance reforms are introduced.

In preparation for these reforms the Authority invited Hymans Robertson to conduct a review of its governance in the context of the proposed new standards, and is in the process of implementing its recommendations. The Authority has also appointed an independent adviser to support the Local Pension Board in providing effective challenge and scrutiny, and the Board is conducting its own review of its effectiveness for the first time.

All of these arrangements also apply to the way in which the Authority engages with various partners and a comprehensive process of gathering assurance from those managing money on behalf of the Authority is undertaken each year. In particular the Authority seeks to ensure that the activity undertaken on its behalf by the Border to Coast Pensions Partnership reflects the agreed Governance Charter which applies similar standards to the Authority's arrangements in the Partnership's unique context.

## Significant Governance Issues

The Covid-19 Pandemic has affected Britain throughout the period under review and continues to impact on the way people live their lives at the time of producing this statement. The restrictions on movement and contact between individuals have required the Authority to implement its business continuity arrangements to facilitate a situation where all staff are able to work from home, and put in place arrangements for virtual meetings of decision making bodies in line with emergency regulations issued by the Government. These arrangements were implemented with little disruption to services to scheme members, although productivity has been impacted to some degree.

The processes described above have identified the following governance issues for attention. Some of these are longer term issues and as such continue to feature from previous statements. The outcome of the Annual Governance Review suggests that the following significant governance issues need to be included in the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan. These are:

- The need to produce a consolidated Learning and Development Strategy for members of the Authority and the Local Pension Board in line with the recommendations made in the Hymans Robertson Review, reflecting clearer expectations on individuals in relation to the level of commitment required.
- The need to continue to strengthen internal governance, in the light of the forthcoming changes in the regulatory environment by implementing changes agreed to the arrangements for discharging the statutory officer functions.
- Continuing the emphasis on reporting from previous Annual Governance Statements to develop a standardised and regular approach to reporting on regulatory compliance.
- Adopting a standardised and appropriately scaled approach to project management applicable to all improvement projects and major regular processes (such as annual benefit statements) across the organisation.
- Adoption of an appropriately scaled set of continuous improvement tools to support and provide structure to the wide range of activity already taking place.
- A need to institutionalise some of the improvements in communications that have been forced by remote working and to formalise liaison arrangements with key

stakeholder groups such as the local authority leaders and the local authority finance directors.

- A need to reflect on any learning from our experience during the pandemic in relation to the staff welfare and wellbeing elements of our business continuity plan.
- The need to improve the processes for monitoring the application of key corporate processes such as appraisal across the organisation and ensuring the central recording of training records.
- A need to reflect on how the Audit Committee can be supported to provide more consistent challenge as part of its work.

The actions taken to date to address these have or will be reported to the Authority and the Audit Committee. Progress in monitoring the implementation of these improvement actions will be monitored by Managers and Internal Audit and through regular reports to the Authority and its Committees.

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| <p><b>Signed:</b></p><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><p><b>Chair<br/>South Yorkshire Pensions Authority</b></p> | <p><b>Signed:</b></p>  <p><b>Director<br/>South Yorkshire Pensions Authority</b></p> |
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## APPENDIX A

| <b>Annual Governance Statement Action Plan for Completion in 2021/22</b>                               |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Issue</b>   | <b>Action Required</b>  | <b>Responsible Officer</b>                                  | <b>Date for Completion</b>   |
| Need to set consistent learning and development expectations for the Authority and Local Pension Board | Produce a single Learning and Development Strategy covering both groups of members and identify additional resource to support its implementation   | <b>Director</b>   | <b>June 2021</b><br>(final adoption at the Annual Meeting of the Authority, following consideration by the Local Pension Board in April) |
| Need to review the Statutory Officer arrangements identified by Hymans Robertson                       | Agree a way forward with BMBC and secure the agreement of the Authority to any changes required as a result of this   | <b>Director</b>   | <b>March 2022</b>  |
| Need to continue to improve reporting and transparency   | Develop and implement a regular and standardised approach to reporting regulatory compliance.   | <b>Governance and Risk Officer</b>                          | <b>March 2022</b>  |
| Need to strengthen project management  | Develop and train appropriate staff in an appropriately scaled methodology and set of techniques and agree criteria to determine where the project management approach should be applied. | <b>Projects and Improvement Lead</b>                        | <b>March 2022</b>  |
| Need to develop a more coherent and consistent approach to continuous improvement                      | Adopt an SYPA continuous improvement approach and train key staff to use it to assist in delivering specific objectives   | <b>Projects and Improvement Lead</b>                        | <b>March 2022</b>  |
| Need to capitalise on communications changes and formalise links with key stakeholder groups           | Formalise member updates and institute regular updates for Leaders and local authority FD's focussed on their specific needs  | <b>Communications Officer in consultation with Director</b> | <b>March 2022</b>  |

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|--|--|---|-------------------|
| Conduct a review of the staff welfare related elements of the Business Continuity Plan in the light of the pandemic experience | Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee to carry out review and make recommendations to Senior Management Team | <b>Head of Finance and Corporate Services as Chair of the Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee</b> | <b>March 2022</b> |
| Improvements to the central monitoring and recording of information related to key processes.                                  | Implementation of new HR System to include facilities to support this.                                       | <b>Head of Finance and Corporate Services</b>   | <b>March 2022</b> |
| Need for the Audit Committee to deliver more consistent challenge  | Discuss issues with elected members and key stakeholders and develop proposals.                              | <b>Director</b>   | <b>March 2022</b> |