

Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

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.

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](#).

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 in the same area 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 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 2023 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](#).

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

Arrangements in Place

Codes of conduct covering the behaviour of both members and officers, form part of the 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.

As required under 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 apply to members of the Local Pension Board, under requirements governed by the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations and the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

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

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

Procurement arrangements in place to comply with legislative requirements, good practice, achieve value for money and demonstrate accountability.

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. 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.

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.

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

Arrangements in Place

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. Arrangements for democratic support have been internalised from 1 April 2022 with a newly expanded Governance team in place providing an enhanced focus in this area.

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.

Areas for Improvement

- During the year, the Authority has identified some weaknesses in the application of procedures for management of appeals, resulting in delays for dealing with these in some cases. Work has been completed on addressing the delayed cases by March 2023 and this has been supported by centralising the oversight and co-ordination for this which is now undertaken by the Head of Governance and her team. There is a need to continue the progress in 2023/24 by completing a full process mapping exercise and updating of procedures to provide clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Arrangements in Place

The Authority seeks to be as open as possible with stakeholders, conscious that it is the steward of the savings of around 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 this, is used as one means of signposting information electronically.

This 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, meeting agendas and papers for the Authority, the various committees and the Local Pension Board are published online a week before each meeting and all meetings are open to the public, and also webcast.

Key decisions made by officers are formally recorded and details published on the website.

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

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Arrangements in Place

outline relevant risk considerations, so that these can be understood by decision makers. All reports must be reviewed and cleared by the statutory officers prior to submission to elected members for decision.

The Authority has in place clear protocols regarding its participation as a Partner Fund in 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, including a comprehensive annual review which considers the achievement of both the Authority's and the Partnership's objectives.

To ensure the views of stakeholders are considered in a systematic way by decision makers when relevant, the Authority has adopted a Communications and Consultation Strategy which provides a standard framework for engaging with stakeholders.

During 2022/23, a professionally qualified Communications Officer has been appointed, increasing the professional resource available to focus on our corporate communications with all our stakeholders.

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

Emphasis is placed on increasing the volume and improving the quality of interaction with employers and an employer forum session and surveys have been undertaken during the year. The Authority's website includes an area for employers and an employer newsletter is sent to all employers quarterly with updates on relevant information, training and events.

There is a current focus on monitoring the performance of employers in relation to data submission; including quality, timeliness and resolving queries; and reporting on this to the Local Pension Board.

The processes for engaging with and understanding the views of scheme members are also set out in the Communications and Consultation Strategy.

Interaction with scheme members includes offering appointments to meet with staff either through online / virtual sessions or in-person appointments at our office in Barnsley.

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 rolling customer satisfaction surveys which examine specific aspects of the service to scheme members, which also include information on learning and actions from this feedback.

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

Arrangements in Place

The Authority sets out a clear vision supported by specific objectives for achieving 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 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 work.

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. Work has continued during the year to develop new approaches to reporting the impact of various investments and the results of this will be reflected in future annual reports.

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 whenever possible. (Exceptions to this are limited and would include, for example, commercially sensitive market information that cannot be made public).

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 to consider 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

Arrangements in Place

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 are how the Authority agrees the relative priority and resource requirements of specific 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

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

Arrangements in Place

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 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.

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 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 considered. Strong budgetary control is evident, and managers are conscious of the need to demonstrate financial probity.

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 principles set out in 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

Arrangements in Place

The Authority has strong constitutional arrangements in place including an effective scheme of delegation, financial regulations and contract standing orders that 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. 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.

Further to decisions approved in previous years, the role of Monitoring Officer has been internalised (having been previously provided by an officer of Barnsley MBC) with the Authority's Head of Governance undertaking this role from 1 January 2023. Support for this individual officer is in place with a programme of mentoring from Barnsley MBC's Monitoring Officer, who is also the Authority's Deputy Clerk. Additionally, the Head of Governance is undertaking an accredited Diploma in Corporate Governance course delivered by CIPFA between March and September 2023.

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

The role of Treasurer or Chief Finance Officer (under s.73 of the 1985 Local Government Act), currently undertaken by an officer of Barnsley MBC, will be internalised from 1 April 2023, and will be undertaken by the Authority's Assistant Director – Resources who is CIPFA qualified and has performed the Deputy Treasurer role since 2019. This role holder has undertaken the CIPFA Chief Finance Officer Leadership Academy during 2022/23.

The Authority's statutory role holders – the Director as Head of Paid Service, the Head of Governance as Monitoring Officer and the Assistant Director – Resources as Chief Finance Officer, along with the Deputy Clerk will meet on a quarterly basis going forward.

Independent Advisers with suitable skills and experience are employed to support both the Local Pension Board and the Authority. Steps have also been taken during 2022/23 to increase training for members of the Audit Committee to enable them to provide more effective challenge. These have included briefing sessions on relevant topics before each meeting, an effectiveness review and training from CIPFA's Governance Adviser. In March 2023, the Committee agreed an updated Terms of Reference to be applied in the coming year which will increase the frequency of meetings to four per year, change the name to Audit and Governance Committee and to recruit for an independent member with relevant audit and risk knowledge and skills.

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. During 2022/23, the Governance team have applied a strong focus on this area, providing a range of support to members to ensure required training is completed. This has resulted in 100% completion by Authority and LPB members of the mandatory training requirements. Members have again participated in the National Knowledge Assessment (run by Hymans Robertson) in February 2023, the results from which will inform the 2023/24 Member Learning and Development Strategy, which will be targeted and bespoke.

For staff of the Authority, an appraisal system is used to manage individual performance, plan learning and development, and support the succession planning process which is in place in key risk areas. In October 2022, following a comprehensive review, the Authority approved an Organisational Resilience and Sustainability plan which includes the establishment of a range of additional resources and changes to reporting lines across the organisation, to be implemented over the course of the period to March 2025, designed to strengthen capacity, enhance capability and increase sustainability.

Ongoing learning and development plans for the Authority's workforce are devised annually to support the goals set out in individual appraisals and are kept under review throughout the year. 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.

Learning and development activity is further supported through access to online resources through a range of systems such as online reading rooms, SharePoint, modern.gov and LinkedIn Learning.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing arrangements are prominent and embedded across the organisation. An external Health & Safety adviser is retained, and the range of additional health and wellbeing support continues to grow each year, including workplace health checks and a range of webinars and other activities which target a variety of key physical, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing topics.

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

Areas for Improvement

- There is a need to continue the work in progress to improve the consistency and quality of staff appraisals and to support this centrally with provision of a range of learning and development opportunities.
- The appraisal process for the Director has also been identified for improvement in order to strengthen effectiveness of this process for accountability and a need to incorporate 360 degree feedback.

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

Arrangements in Place

Managing Risk

A risk management policy framework is in place reviewed annually by the Audit Committee. This framework sets out clearly the responsibilities for managing the risks facing the organisation, how they should be assessed and reported. The risk register is reviewed monthly 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.

The Governance team provide specific resource and focus to this area. During 2022/23, work has been carried out to identify and procure an integrated risk management and performance software system which will be implemented during 2023/24. This will enhance the Authority's arrangements by enabling more efficient recording and reporting of risk and performance and with input from various levels of management throughout the organisation. The implementation will also be supported by additional training for the relevant staff and managers.

Managing Performance

Arrangements for the reporting and monitoring of performance are in place, including clearly defined timetables for the reporting of information across the full range of activity, integrated with financial monitoring. Wherever possible, data is placed in the public domain and statutory reporting timescales are adhered to.

The Authority undertakes benchmarking of its cost base and performance across both the main streams of operational activity, pensions administration and investment.

The Authority welcomes external challenge and is due to commission a second Good Governance review to be undertaken during 2023/24 in line with the proposals set out in the Good Governance Project sponsored by the Scheme Advisory Board.

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

Arrangements in Place

A small team consisting of a Service Manager – Programmes and Performance, and a Projects and Performance Officer has been established under the Head of Governance during 2022/23 to bring an expert and dedicated resource to develop and enhance the performance management framework as well as applying project management methodology and control to the delivery of specific projects for meeting the Authority's corporate objectives.

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.

The Authority's Head of Governance is now the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), providing a dedicated resource, supported by the Team Leader – Governance, to work on the continuing development of the information governance framework.

The Head of Internal Audit acts as the Authority's Data Protection Officer and his work is supported by an annual programme of review activity to ensure compliance with the policy framework.

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

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.

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, available within the Governance section of the Authority's website, which sets out the work it has undertaken during the year. This committee will be re-named the Audit and Governance Committee from 2023/24, reflecting the importance of the committee's focus on all aspects of governance as well as audit matters.

The Committee is responsible for overseeing the work of Internal Audit, 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 2022/23 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."

Progress made in implementing actions agreed following audit reviews is reported to every meeting of the Committee and this helps to ensure that the control environment continues to be strengthened through the audit process.

The importance of internal control is well-embedded across the organisation and officers ensure a strong and effective working relationship is maintained with both Internal and External Audit, including regular liaison meetings and ensuring independent access is available to the Audit Committee Chair and members.

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

Arrangements in Place

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 and monitoring against the operational budget, along with monitoring of investment performance, is reported quarterly to the Authority. 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.

Areas for Improvement

- Business continuity arrangements are in place, and well documented in relation to ICT in particular, but there is a need to review and update the full range of documentation and procedures in this area.
- There is a need to make better use of management information in reporting on and managing performance to centralise the work required to produce this, enhancing the robustness of the process and freeing up the time of service managers so that they can focus on interpreting the results and taking appropriate action in response.
- There is an increasing number of backlogs in pension administration processes, and it is now clear that previous assessment of these and actions in place to address them have not been effective. Therefore, a new and improved approach to understanding root causes is required in order to inform the development of a comprehensive and evidence-based plan of action to tackle the existing backlogs and ensure prevention of these in future.
- The Local Code of Corporate Governance was last fully updated in 2019 and is now due for review.

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

Arrangements in Place

The Authority seeks to be open and transparent in all its activities, seeking to minimise the amount of information that must remain confidential.

A substantial amount of information about the Authority's services and activities is published on its website: 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 and the public parts of meetings of the Authority, its 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 provides clear signposting to the information which is publicly available and where it can be found.

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

Arrangements in Place

The Authority regards telling its story as a key activity, to report and demonstrate its performance, achievement of value for money and effective stewardship of scheme members' savings. 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.

The Authority has continued to publish its audited accounts and annual report in advance of the statutory publication deadlines every year, ensuring that information for stakeholders is provided on a timely basis to promote effective accountability.

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.

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 reviews progress on implementation of actions agreed following audit reviews carried out by both internal and external audit and potentially other review agencies when the Scheme Advisory Board's Good Governance reforms are introduced.

The Authority embedded the recommendations made in Hymans Robertson's 2021 review of its governance, pre-empting the Good Governance standards. This included taking action to bring the statutory roles of Treasurer and Monitoring Officer in-house as detailed above in relation to Principle E. A further independent review of governance is due to be undertaken in 2023/24.

All 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. 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.

Governance Action Plan 2021/22 – Progress Update

The table below sets out the actions identified for improvement and development in last year's Annual Governance Statement and the progress made against these during 2022/23.

Action Plan 2021/22	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Progress Update 2022/23
Full review of the Constitution to be commissioned using legal advisers	Head of Governance	Mar 2023	<p>Completed</p> <p>This review was commissioned by the target date and is substantially complete as of March 2023, with the fully revised Constitution due to be presented for approval to the June 2023 Authority meeting.</p>
Changes to appraisal documentation and appraisal year, additional training for managers and move to an online system	Assistant Director – Resources & HR Business Partner	Jun 2023	<p>Partially Completed, Partially Carried Forward</p> <p>Changes to documentation, appraisal year and additional training were all implemented, with the appraisal year now running from January to December.</p> <p>There is a need to continue embedding arrangements in this area and to transfer from using SharePoint to using a new HR System for the online process in the coming year.</p>
Review of business continuity arrangements in light of the move to the Authority’s own premises and to fully document arrangements beyond those specifically related to ICT which are already documented	Assistant Director – Resources	Mar 2023	<p>Carried Forward</p> <p>This action has not been completed during the year as planned due to impact of resourcing shortfalls, including unplanned absences, and pressure from other priorities. It will be carried forward to be completed in 2023/24, using external resource to support the work as required.</p>
Organisation Resilience & Sustainability - Prepare medium term proposals addressing succession planning and resilience for implementation over the Corporate Strategy period	Director	Dec 2022	<p>Completed</p> <p>The proposals were approved in October 2022 and are being implemented according to the timelines set out in the plan. A tracker is in place to monitor progress on implementation of each proposal.</p>
Project Management - Implement arrangements to support individual project managers with scoping, planning, delivering and reporting on corporate strategy projects	Service Manager – Programmes & Performance	Mar 2023	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Good progress made during 2022/23, with recruitment to two new roles focused on projects and performance in 2022, providing practical and expert support to a number of specific projects throughout the period since then.</p> <p>A project management methodology framework and document set are in development to be fully rolled out in 2023/24 with further guidance and support for staff as required.</p>

Action Plan 2021/22	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Progress Update 2022/23
Performance Management and Reporting – Introduce arrangements for the centralised production of performance information allowing managers to focus on interpretation and follow up action	Service Manager – Programmes & Performance	Mar 2023	<p>Carried Forward</p> <p>Some limited progress made during the year, although much remains to be taken forward in 2023/24.</p> <p>The implementation of an integrated risk and performance management software system in the coming year will be a key action to support this.</p>
Internal Governance - Update and refresh the arrangements around key processes such as procurement, information governance, decision recording and scheme of delegation	Head of Governance	Mar 2023	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Very good progress made during 2022/23 with the establishment of a full Governance team who have undertaken detailed work on all these areas, in liaison with Internal Audit and with guidance from CIPFA. This work has included developing the application of the Modern.Gov system for decision recording and reporting workflows.</p> <p>The work will continue in 2023/24 to finish off and roll out new guidance and documentation across the areas of procurement and information governance in particular.</p>
Reinvigorate staff engagement. Implement action plan developed following staff feedback	Senior Management Team	Mar 2023	<p>Completed</p> <p>Staff engagement has been reinvigorated during 2022/23 with a highly successful staff Away Day held in July 2022, development and implementation of an internal communication strategy, and the first ‘SMT Question Time’ twice-yearly event held in March 2023.</p> <p>The focus on staff engagement will of course continue going forward, with, among other things, the biennial Employee Survey due to be carried out in the summer of 2023 and another Away Day scheduled for September 2023.</p>

Review of Governance 2022/23 – Areas for Improvement & Action Plan

The table below sets out the actions planned to be undertaken during the forthcoming year to address the areas for improvement identified from this year’s review of governance effectiveness, along with any actions carried forward from last year as outlined in the progress update above.

Principle and Area for Improvement	Actions Required	Responsible Officer	Date for Completion
<p>A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</p> <p>Dealing with Appeals</p>	<p>Complete process mapping and implement fully updated procedures for appeals processing with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Provide guidance, training and support for relevant staff to support the above.</p>	<p>Head of Governance</p>	<p>July 2023</p>
<p>E: Developing capacity, including the capability of leadership and individuals</p> <p>Staff Appraisals and Development</p>	<p>Transfer online processes for annual appraisals to a new HR System and continue to embed the consistency and quality requirements by providing training for both line managers and employees.</p> <p>Recruit to new Business Support Officer role in the HR team to support Learning and Development strategy and provision across the organisation.</p>	<p>Assistant Director – Resources and HR Business Partner</p>	<p>Mar 2024</p>
<p>E: Developing capacity, including the capability of leadership and individuals</p> <p>Director Appraisal</p>	<p>Undertake a review of the Director Appraisal process and consider and commission appropriate external support arrangements that will seek to enhance the independence of the process and introduce the gathering of 360 degree feedback to inform the appraisal. Aim to implement new arrangements for the 2023/24 appraisal.</p>	<p>Assistant Director – Resources and Head of Governance</p>	<p>Oct 2023</p>
<p>F: Managing risks and performance</p> <p>Business Continuity</p>	<p>Complete a full review and refresh of business continuity procedures and documentation, with support from external experts as required.</p>	<p>Head of ICT</p>	<p>Jan 2024</p>
<p>F: Managing risks and performance</p> <p>Performance Management & Reporting</p>	<p>Introduce arrangements for the centralised production of performance information allowing managers to focus on interpretation and follow-up action.</p> <p>Implement new risk and performance management software system.</p>	<p>Head of Governance and Service Manager – Programmes & Performance</p>	<p>Oct 2023</p>

Principle and Area for Improvement	Actions Required	Responsible Officer	Date for Completion
F: Managing risks and performance Pensions Administration Backlogs	Complete thorough analysis of backlogs and the root causes of these. Complete comprehensive capacity planning exercises in Benefits Team and Customer Services. Based on the above, develop and implement a detailed action plan to tackle the existing backlogs and to put arrangements in place designed to prevent such backlogs building up going forward. This will require a significant amount of work over several months.	Interim Assistant Director - Pensions	Ongoing throughout the year. Progress to be reviewed on a regular basis
F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control Local Code of Corporate Governance	Complete a review and update of the Local Code of Corporate Governance.	Head of Governance	Jan 2024

Conclusion

To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements as defined above have operated effectively during the 2022/23 year. We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the areas identified for improvement to further enhance our governance arrangements. Progress in implementing these improvement actions will be monitored by officers and Internal Audit and through regular reports to the Authority and its committees.

We are satisfied that these steps will address the issues identified in our review of effectiveness and will assess their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

<p>Signed:</p> <p>Chair South Yorkshire Pensions Authority</p>	<p>Signed:</p> <p>Director South Yorkshire Pensions Authority</p>
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