

The Highland Council

Pensions Committee – 1 February 2017

Agenda Item	7
Report No	PC/04/17

Risk Management Review and Update Report

Report by Director of Finance

Summary

This report provides an update on the Fund's risk register and compliance with the Pension Fund Regulator requirements on internal controls.

1. Background

- 1.1 In September 2015, a Risk Management Policy and Strategy was presented to Committee for approval and an update was provided on the risk register in September 2016.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the current risk register as at 31 December 2016 (section 3 and **Appendix 1**) and confirms compliance with the Pension Fund Regulator checklist on internal controls (**Appendix 2**).

2. Risk Management Policy and Strategy

- 2.1 The Fund has a commitment to maintaining a structured approach to risk management ensuring that the Fund effectively manages its risks in order to support the achievement of the Fund's strategy, aims and objectives. There is a Risk Management Strategy and policy in place and the risk register is reviewed regularly by officers and presented to the Pensions Committee.
http://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/3571/pensions_committee_and_board (Item 7)
- 2.2 The Pension Fund Regulator requires that each Fund has internal controls and processes in place for managing risks.
<http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/public-service-schemes/internal-controls-and-managing-risks.aspx#s15835>

3. Risk Register

- 3.1 The Fund's risk register was drafted by identifying the key objectives of the Pension Fund (key objective categories were Governance, Investments, Funding, Administration and Communications) and risks that would prevent these objectives being achieved. The next step was to score the risks as Red, Amber or Green depending on the impact and likelihood of the risk and taking into account any mitigating controls. The risk register was then circulated to the relevant officers for

comment.

- 3.2 In order to manage risk on an ongoing basis, the risk register is reviewed regularly and risks are added as required. Any red and amber risks on the risk register and action being taken to manage and address these risks will be reported to the Pensions Committee meetings on a regular basis. Members also have the opportunity to highlight any risks that they consider should be added to the risk register.

4. Review of Current Pension Fund Risks

- 4.1 As at the 31 December 2016, there were no red risks and four risks were identified on the Highland Council Pension Fund risk register as being the most significant for the Pension Fund. The extract from the risk register is at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The gross risk status for these risks is Amber, however taking into account mitigating controls, these risks are being actively managed and the residual risk status changes to Green.

5. Implications

- 5.1 The resource and risk implications are covered in the above report. There are no Legal; Equalities; Climate Change/Carbon Clever; Gaelic and Rural implications relating to this report.

6. Recommendation

Members are asked to note the updated risk register extract and compliance with the Pension Fund Regulator requirements.

Designation: Director of Finance
Date: 18 January 2017
Author: Catriona Stachan, Accountant

Appendix 1 – Updated Risk Register as at 31 December 2016

Objective area	Description	Risk owner	Gross risk rating (RAG)	Current controls	Date of assessment	Residual Risk status (RAG)
Governance	Ongoing risk of members and officers being unaware of changes to LGPS governance, administration and investment matters. Risk of non-compliance with Pension Fund Regulator requirements	Pensions Committee/Pensions Board/ ISC/Officers	A	Members and officers will avail themselves of appropriate training opportunities. The Highland Council Pension Fund (HCPF) follow CIPFA Skills and Knowledge framework to ensure staff adequately trained. Officers attend relevant LA peer group meetings (Pensions and Investment) and training. Investment advisor provides support as required. Self-audit being undertaken of the Fund's policies and processes against the Pension Fund Regulator requirements.	31/12/2016	G
Governance and Administration	Following voluntary redundancy exercise, risks associated with staff leaving which might lead to loss of knowledge, impact on service delivery. Also risks associated with ongoing organisation restructure. An early release scheme is ongoing in 2017.	Pensions Committee/Pensions Board/ ISC/Officers	A	Assessment was made of business requirements as part of voluntary redundancy approval process before releasing staff. Handover processes in place and organisation restructures underway to ensure knowledge is retained and key service deliveries are met.	31/12/2016	G

Objective area	Description	Risk owner	Gross risk rating (RAG)	Current controls	Date of assessment	Residual Risk status (RAG)
Investments	If investment return is below that assumed by the actuary in funding the plan this could lead to an increasing deficit and additional contribution requirements. The larger the level of mismatch between assets and liabilities the bigger this risk. This risk might be increased by volatile markets e.g. Brexit.	Pensions Committee/Pensions Board/ ISC/Officers	A	Diversified portfolio - ISC review portfolio performance quarterly. Investment Adviser provides ISC with advice. Asset Strategy review completed in 2014/15. Triennial Valuation completed which is linked with Funding Strategy and setting of SIP.	31/12/2016	G
Investments	If investment strategy is inconsistent with funding plan then it can lead to setting inaccurate employers contribution rates.	Pensions Committee/Pensions Board/ ISC/Officers	A	Asset Strategy review and triennial Valuation completed as concurrent exercises in 2014/15.	31/12/2016	G

Appendix 2 Public service - Internal controls checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate your scheme's internal controls.

<http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/docs/public-service-internal-controls-checklist.pdf>

Action	Notes	Yes/No
Do you have effective arrangements and procedures to ensure that the pension scheme is being run in accordance with the scheme rules and requirements of law?	Governance policy in place	Yes
Do you regularly review the arrangements and procedures?	Annually and will also review on an ad hoc basis when regulatory changes are introduced.	Yes
Do you have a process to identify risks?	Risk strategy and risk register in place	Yes
Do you have a process to evaluate risks?	Risk strategy and risk register in place	Yes
Do you have in place processes or controls to manage risks?	Risk strategy and risk register in place	Yes
Do you have a risk register to record all risks identified and action taken?	Risk strategy and risk register in place	Yes
Do you regularly review the risk register?	Risks added when these arise and six monthly review	Yes
Do you have a standing item on the pension board agenda to review scheme risks?	Reviewed bi-annually.	Yes

If you have answered no to any of these questions, you should review your processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Note: Public service pension schemes and legislation about the new governance and administration requirements are expected to come into effect in April 2015. www.tpr.gov.uk/publicservice

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