



LOCAL PENSION BOARD

24 SEPTEMBER 2024

REPORT TITLE:	GRANT THORNTON – THE AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT FOR MERSEYSIDE PENSION FUND
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF PENSIONS

REPORT SUMMARY

This report highlights the key findings and other matters arising from Grant Thornton's external audit of the financial statements of Merseyside Pension Fund for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Subject to the satisfactory completion of the outstanding audit work, Grant Thornton's anticipated audit opinion will be unqualified.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Pension Board be recommended to consider and note the report provided by the external auditor, Grant Thornton.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 There is a statutory requirement to audit the financial statements of Merseyside Pension Fund and to report to those charged with governance, who oversee the financial reporting process.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 There is a statutory requirement for this report. No other options are considered suitable.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Audit Findings Report, prepared by the external auditor, presents the findings and observations arising from the external audit of the Pension Fund accounts.
- 3.2 External audit are required to report on whether the Pension Fund's financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Pension Fund and its income and expenditure for the year; and whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.
- 3.3 External audit also report on whether other information published together with the audited financial statements and the Fund's Annual Report, is consistent with their knowledge of the organisation and the financial statements they have audited.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Merseyside Pension Fund is charged a fee for the external audit of the Fund's financial statements. The fee proposed is £137,384 and the final fee is to be confirmed as detailed within the Grant Thornton report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a statutory requirement for the accounts of Merseyside Pension Fund to be subject to external audit.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING; ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Grant Thornton complete a risk-based audit whereby they focus audit effort on those areas where they have identified a risk of material misstatement in the accounts.
- 7.2 If any concerns identified by Grant Thornton are not addressed by the Pension Fund and the Council, then there is a risk that the Council will not be able to meet its statutory requirements in respect of the Statement of Accounts.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There has been no consultation undertaken or proposed for this report. There are no implications for partner organisations arising from this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The content and/or recommendation contained within this report have no direct implications for equality.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The content and/or recommendation contained within this report have no direct environmental or climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The content and/or recommendation contained within this report have no direct implications for community wealth.

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APPENDICES

Merseyside Pension Fund Audit Findings Report 2023/24

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Local Pensions Board in accordance with Section 13.2 (l) of its Terms of Reference:

- (l) Review the outcome of internal and external audit reports

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
The Fund's Audit Findings Report is brought annually to this Board.	27 September 2023 28 September 2022 20 September 2021