



Glasgow City Council

Strathclyde Pension Fund Committee

Report by Head of Audit and Inspection

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INTERNAL AUDIT – Altair System

Purpose of Report:

To present the results of the Internal Audit review of the Altair System.

Note:

In most cases one of four opinions is expressed:

1. The control environment is satisfactory i.e. audit testing found no concerns with the control environment.
2. A reasonable level of assurance can be placed upon the control environment i.e. audit testing found no major weaknesses in the control environment but some improvements could be made.
3. A limited level of assurance can be placed upon the control environment i.e. improvements are necessary to ensure the control environment is fit for purpose.
4. The control environment is unsatisfactory i.e. significant improvements are required before any reliance can be placed upon the control environment.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

Glasgow City Council Internal Audit Section

Committee Summary

Strathclyde Pension Fund Office – Altair System

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the agreed Internal Audit plan we have carried out a review of the Altair system.
- 1.2 The Altair system is used by the Strathclyde Pension Fund Office (SPFO) to manage pension records and process pension calculations. The system is provided by Heywood Pension Technologies and is the most widely used pension administration software on the market. The Altair system also provides internet based Member Self Service functionality together with i-Connect, a secure portal which allows employers to send data submissions direct to the SPFO and to upload documents for processing.
- 1.3 The scope of the audit was to ensure there are adequate controls in place for the management of the Altair system and that these are operating effectively. The scope of the audit included a review of the key controls in the following areas:
 - Audit trails
 - Data storage arrangements
 - Business continuity planning / disaster recovery arrangements
 - Software licensing arrangements
 - System manuals and user guides, including staff training and awareness
 - Back up processes
 - User access and permissions management
 - Software updates and security patching
 - Inputs and outputs to/from the system
 - Error and exception reports

2 Audit Opinion

- 2.1 Based on the audit work carried out, a satisfactory level of assurance can be placed upon the control environment.
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3 Main Findings

- 3.1 We are pleased to report that the key controls are in place and operating effectively. We confirmed that the number of current users is compliant with the licensing terms and conditions.
- 3.2 We found that the system is up to date, and receives regular updates and security patching from Heywood, as well as regular security patching from CGI to the servers the system is stored on. An agreement was found to be in place with Heywood to provide technical support until 2030.
- 3.3 A Business Continuity Plan is in place that includes the Altair system, this was tested in February 2026 to ensure that the arrangements for the system are fit for purpose. CGI's disaster recovery plans, which are reviewed annually, were confirmed to include specific provisions for the Altair system.
- 3.4 Back ups were confirmed to be taken regularly, with incremental daily and complete weekly back ups being carried out by CGI, minimising the risk of significant data loss. Confirmation of these back ups is sent to Digital Services and any failed back ups are investigated.
- 3.5 Users and administrators were found to be adequately supported through an extensive suite of system manuals, training modules and internal procedure guides covering both general use and the more specific uses associated with the various teams in the SPFO that use the system. These training materials were found to be accessible to staff and kept up to date.
- 3.6 We found that users are required to complete a new user form which must be authorised by their manager in order to be added to the system. Arrangements are in place to ensure that user permissions are assigned appropriately and these are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain so. Strong password controls are also in place.
- 3.7 Appropriate technical data validation controls as well as adequate segregation of duties are in place for the inputs and outputs to/from the system. Error and exception reports are run regularly and subject to review. Controls were found to be in place to prevent users from processing tasks for immediate family members.

- 3.8 An appropriate audit trail recording before and after actions was found to be in place, and it was confirmed that this audit trail is reviewed on a regular basis.
- 3.9 The SPFO shares information from the Altair system with a range of organisations. Whilst data sharing agreements are in place for larger employers, such agreements have not been established with all smaller organisations. In 2023, the SPFO undertook an exercise to obtain agreements from all relevant organisations; this resulted in completed agreements being received from all local authorities and larger-scale employers, however a number of smaller organisations did not return the

required documentation. This gap represents a recognised risk, which has been recorded in the SPFO Risk Register and is being managed in accordance with the established risk management process. Therefore, no recommendation has been made in relation to this matter.

- 3.10 The audit has been undertaken in accordance with the Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK public sector.
- 3.11 We would like to thank officers involved in this audit for their cooperation and assistance.

Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	Internal Audit services are included within the Central Support Services cost.
<i>Legal:</i>	None
<i>Personnel:</i>	None
<i>Procurement:</i>	None

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.</i>	No specific proposals are included within this report.
<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>	No significant impact.
<i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.</i>	There are no equality impacts as a result of this report.

Climate Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:</i>	Not Applicable
<i>What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?</i>	Not Applicable
<i>Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?</i>	Not Applicable
<i>Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:</i>	None

5 Recommendation

5.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.