

Subject	Member Learning and Development – Needs Assessment and Programme	Status	For Publication
Report to	Authority	Date	9 th June 2022
Report of	Director and Corporate Manager - Governance		
Equality Impact Assessment	Not Required	Attached	No
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1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on the assessment of learning and development needs and the plan to address the identified needs.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are recommended to:
- a. **Note the results of the Learning Needs Assessment process.**
 - b. **Approve the proposed learning and development plan set out in Appendix A.**

3 Link to Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 This report links to the delivery of the following corporate objectives:
Effective and Transparent Governance

To uphold effective governance showing prudence and propriety at all times.

4 Implications for the Corporate Risk Register

- 4.1 The actions outlined in this report relate to the risks identified around the effectiveness of the Authority and form part of the process of mitigating those risks.

5 Background and Options

- 5.1 In recent years there has been a marked increase in the scrutiny of LGPS Funds. The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 introduced new governance legislation, including the requirement for Local Pension Boards to be set up and extended the remit of the Pensions Regulator to public service schemes as set out in its Code of Practice 14. Additionally, the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (“DLUHC”) and the Scheme Advisory Board have emphasised the need for the highest standards

of governance in the LGPS. For English and Welsh Funds, the Good Governance review includes specific recommendations regarding knowledge and understanding and training. All these measures are aimed at ensuring that all involved in the governance of LGPS Funds can evidence they have the requisite knowledge, skills and commitment to carry out their role effectively.

- 5.2 As part of work to ensure that the Authority is directing resources to the appropriate areas of learning and development need earlier this year members of both the Authority and Local Pension Board were asked to complete a knowledge / needs assessment online using a tool provided by Hymans Robertson. New members and members who were previously unable to complete the assessment will have been taken through it on a 1:1 basis prior to this meeting. Given the commonality of previous responses it is not anticipated that this will result in a material change in the priorities identified but it will provide a comprehensive evidence base for future decision making. This activity supports the Member Learning and Development Strategy agreed last year in which members of both the Board and the Authority committed to the Pensions Regulator's benchmark of an average of 20 hours learning and development activity per year.
- 5.3 The assessment results indicate common needs across both the Authority and Board around investment performance and risk management, pensions accounting and audit standards and actuarial methods etc and financial markets and product knowledge. There was also some need identified around procurement and relationship management although from an officer point of view given that members are not now directly involved in procurement decisions (as might previously have been the case for investment managers) this is not a high priority. In addition to the above generic issues there is a need for members to be kept up to date on specific issues which affect the Authority in a way that provides sufficient knowledge to question and challenge as necessary.
- 5.4 Set out at Appendix A is the proposed learning and development plan for the year, which has been constructed reflecting both the results of the assessment and knowledge of issues which will come forward over the next couple of years. Additionally, some issues such as product knowledge are better addressed in formats other than the training which can be directly provided by the Authority. This might be through attendance at the Border to Coast conference or viewing the Border to Coast insight videos which are easily available and have been signposted for members. In addition members are encouraged to attend external events and sign up for the monthly LGPS Live webinars and details of these are regularly circulated, while the Members' Handbook provides a useful basic reference source.
- 5.5 The Authority is required to include details of learning and development activity undertaken by members in the Annual Report and given that with the development of more free activity such as webinars it is increasingly important that members record their activity, and work will be undertaken this year to make facilities available which allow this to be done and for the results to be easily collated.

6 Implications

6.1 The proposals outlined in this report have the following implications:

Financial	The plan outlined in this report can be resourced within the resources allocated for member training which historically have tended to be underspent.
Human Resources	None directly
ICT	None
Legal	None
Procurement	None

George Graham

Jo Garrison

Director

Corporate Manager - Governance

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Member Learning and Development Strategy	SYPA Member Learning and Development Strategy June 2021.pdf (sypensions.org.uk)