

Subject	Member Learning and Development Strategy 2023/24	Status	For Publication
Report to	Authority	Date	08 June 2023
Report of	Head of Governance		
Equality Impact Assessment	Not Required	Attached	No
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1 **Purpose of the Report**

To provide members with a forward look at arrangements for 2023/24 within the Members Learning and Development Strategy. To provide a training plan to address the needs identified from the national knowledge assessment completed in 2022/23.

2 **Recommendations**

2.1 Members are recommended to:

- a. **To approve the Members Learning and Development Strategy 2023/24 set out at Appendix A.**
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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.

Given the nature of the activity undertaken by the Authority it is crucial that elected members undertake appropriate learning and development to enable them to undertake their roles effectively. There are a range of regulatory requirements and accepted governance standards in this area with which the Authority needs to comply.

4 **Implications for the Corporate Risk Register**

4.1 The actions outlined in this report specifically address the identified risk contained within the corporate risk register in relation to the knowledge and skills of elected members.

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 The Pension Regulator issues a code of practice relating to the governance and administration of public service pension schemes. The code sets out the standards expected by the Regulator together with the principles, examples and benchmarks to use to assess whether Pensions Authority Members have sufficient knowledge and understanding for them to effectively carry out their role.
- 5.3 The Code of Practice states 'Schemes should establish and maintain policies and arrangements for the acquisition and retention of knowledge and understanding for their pension board members. The governance team have taken responsibility for ensuring that a framework is developed and implemented.
- 5.4 Shortfalls in member capacity and development are likely to attract adverse reports from external auditors and the Government under the new requirements.
- 5.5 As part of the governance enhancements 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 national knowledge needs assessment provided by Hymans Robertson. 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 between 15 and 25 hours learning and development activity per year.
- 5.6 The assessment results indicate common needs across both the Authority and Board around investment performance and risk management, pensions accounting and audit standards and financial markets and product knowledge. In addition to these 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 encourage rich discussion and challenge as necessary.
- 5.7 The Authority is required to include details of learning and development activity undertaken by members in the Annual Report and given the range of opportunities available including free webinars for example, it is increasingly important that members record their activity. Therefore, work will be undertaken this year to provide a facility for members to do this more easily and for the results to be easily collated.
- 5.8 Appendix A sets out the proposed Learning and Development Strategy for the 2023/24 year, which has been constructed to reflect both the results of the assessment and the known issues which will come forward over the next couple of years.
- 5.9 The commitment made by Members to participate in learning and development to further develop their understanding of the Pensions Authority is appreciated, given their already busy primary role within their respective Districts.
- 5.10 The individual induction plan for any new member of the Authority will be constructed on the basis that they should complete the Hymans Robertson *LGPS Online Academy* mandatory training within their first three months of membership. New members will also be supported to undertake the LGA's LGPS Fundamentals course during their first year of membership.

- 5.11 All internally sourced training is also made available to Trade Union Observers and members of the Local Pension Board as is access to appropriate external events.
- 5.12 Members are asked to review the Learning and Development Strategy and approve the 2023/24 training plan within it.

6 Implications

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

Financial	The strategy and L&D provision outlined in this report can be resourced within the budgets allocated for member training.
Human Resources	None directly
ICT	None
Legal	None
Procurement	None

Jo Stone, Head of Governance

Monitoring Officer

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection