

Subject	Member Learning and Development Strategy 2025/26	Status	For Publication
Report to	Authority	Date	13 March 2025
Report of	Head of Governance and Corporate Services		
Equality Impact Assessment	Not Required	Attached	No
Contact Officer	Jo Stone Head of Governance and Corporate Services	Phone	01226 666418
E Mail	jstone@sypa.org.uk		

1 Purpose of the Report

To seek Authority approval for the Members Learning and Development Strategy 2025/26.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are recommended to:

- a. **Approve the Members Learning and Development Strategy 2025/26 and training plan therein 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 and the Local Pension Board, it is vital that members are provided with and undertake appropriate learning and development to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. There are a range of regulatory requirements and accepted governance standards in this area with which the Authority and LPB 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 Authority and LPB members.

5 Background and Options

5.1 Members of the Authority and the Local Pension Board (as well as the Authority's officers) have an obligation to ensure that they have a level of knowledge and

understanding of the issues with which they are dealing to allow them to make properly informed decisions. There are some clear requirements on this that we must follow and there has been an increasing level of scrutiny over recent years. The Scheme Advisory Board's Good Governance review included specific recommendations regarding knowledge and understanding and training.

- 5.2 The Government's recent consultation, *LGPS Fit for the Future* – included specific proposals in relation to requirements for knowledge and understanding for all those involved in the management of LGPS funds and pays particular attention to the need to align the requirements placed on Committee members (the Authority in our case) with those already placed on Local Pension Board members. There are also proposed requirements for the administering authority to replace the current Governance Compliance Statement with a new Governance and Training Strategy and to set out within this how their training and assessment policy will ensure that the knowledge requirements are met.
- 5.3 The Pensions Regulator's General Code of Practice sets out the standards expected by the Regulator together with the principles, examples and benchmarks to use to assess whether Pensions Authority and LPB Members have sufficient knowledge and understanding for them to effectively carry out their role.
- 5.4 The Code of Practice states: "Members of governing bodies required to have knowledge and understanding should invest enough time in their learning and development, alongside their other responsibilities and duties. Governing bodies should provide the necessary training and support". The governance team have responsibility for ensuring that a suitable and effective framework for this is in place.
- 5.5 Shortfalls in member capacity and development are likely to attract adverse reports from external auditors and result in non-compliance with areas of the TPR's General Code of Practice.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 The commitment made by Authority and Board Members to participate in learning and development to further develop their knowledge and understanding is appreciated, given their already busy primary roles.
- 5.8 The Member L&D Strategy provides for individual induction plans for any new member of the Authority or Local Pension Board. To support the delivery of training on the foundations regarding LGPS, arrangements require that all members should complete the Hymans Robertson *LGPS Online Learning Academy* (LOLA) core training within their first three months of membership, with a refresher every two years and with ongoing completion of current issues modules when these are added. New members are also supported to undertake the LGA's LGPS Fundamentals course during their first year of membership. This offers options for in-person or online attendance. The Authority and Local Pension Board members participated in the National Knowledge Assessment during 2024/25 and the results of the national assessment have been reviewed and used to inform the Strategy for 2025/26.
- 5.9 The Member Learning and Development Strategy for 2025/26 is attached at Appendix A. There have been no substantive changes to the strategy itself compared to the previous year, whereas the proposed training plan for 2025/26 included within it has been developed to meet the needs of members informed by a range of factors including member requests and feedback, the aforementioned national knowledge assessment results, recommendations from the independent review and the known

issues that members will be asked to scrutinise and/or make decisions on over the forthcoming year.

- 5.10 The Local Pension Board reviewed the Learning and Development Strategy at their February meeting and recommended it to the Authority for approval.

6 Implications

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

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

Jo Stone

Head of Governance and Corporate Services & Monitoring Officer

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection