

# **TRAINING POLICY**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This policy statement details the training agenda for members of the Pensions Committee has been drawn up to meet their needs in relation to training.

1.2 In addition to the Training Policy both the Convener and the Vice Convener of the Pensions Committee have been provided with description of their roles and provides further details of training requirements. Appendix I provides a description of both roles.

## **2. Training Programme**

2.1 Training is provided to members of the Pensions Committee in respect of the following:

### **2.1.1 Scheme Governance**

- LGPS - Status and Legal Framework
- Role of Elected Members
- Advisors and their Role
- Actuarial Valuation and Funding Strategy Statement
- Statement of Investment Principles
- Myners Principles

### **2.1.2 Investment Strategy**

- Asset Classes
- Risk
- Investment Structure
- Investment Management and Performance Monitoring

### **2.1.3 Support Services**

- Custody Services
- Service Organisation
- Role of the Head of Finance
- Role of the Pensions Manager and Pensions Section

## **3. Scheme Documentation**

3.1 On joining the Pensions Committee, a new member will received the following documentation:

- Copy of the guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- Actuarial Valuation and Funding Strategy Statement

- Copy of the Governance Statement
- Copy of the LGPS Scheme Regulations
- Copy of the Fund's compliance with the Myners Principles
- Copy of the Statement of Investment Principles

#### **4. Training Agenda**

4.1 Training is ongoing for elected members, however it would normally consist of the following:

- it is expected that each Committee member receives at least 2 days of training each year
- all members are invited to attend training courses suitable for their needs
- members are invited to attend employer and scheme member events hosted by the Pension Fund
- members will be given the opportunity to attend Seminars and conferences that are offered by industry wide bodies, specifically the LAPFF annual conference, LGC conferences and NAPF conferences, these provide a general appreciation of the pension industry
- on-line training
- members will be given the opportunity to attend seminars and training events offered by the Fund's investment managers and advisors
- in addition fund officers are available to answer any queries from Committee members.
- use of the member secure area of the Pension Fund website [www.nespf.org.uk](http://www.nespf.org.uk)

4.2 In line with the CIPFA guidance 'Trustee Knowledge and Skills Framework', Appendix II outlines a framework for the degree of knowledge and skill expected of the member. A copy of the full CIPFA guide can be found on the member secure area of the Pension Fund website at [www.nespf.org.uk](http://www.nespf.org.uk)

#### **5. Review arrangements**

5.1 A report will be presented to the Committee on an annual basis detailing:

- training provided in the previous year
- those elected members who attended the various training sessions
- seminars and conferences held in the previous year
- which seminars and conferences were attended by elected members and by which members

#### **6. Reimbursement of Expenses**

6.1 All training costs are met directly by the Pension Fund.

## Convener of the Pensions Committee

Strategy and operations of the Pension Fund; the proper administration of the Pension Scheme by the administering authority; the performance of the Fund, its advisors and agents; and the proper governance of the Committee and the Fund.

### PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Convener of the Pension Committee to determine, after taking the advice of the Head of Finance and other advisors:
  - a) The investment strategy of the Fund or Funds for which the Pension Committee is responsible
  - b) The contribution rates of the employing organisations whose current and retired employees are members of the LGPS
  - c) The appointment of investment and actuarial advisors and other third party services
  - d) The Governance Framework
  - e) The communication strategy of the Fund or Funds
2. And to monitor:
  - a) The performance of the investments, the pensions administration service, the advisors and agents of the Fund and of the Committee itself
  - b) The costs of running the Pension Fund and Scheme
  - c) Comments and feedback from stakeholders
3. And to approve:
  - the annual report and accounts of the Fund(s)
  - Audit reports on the performance of the Pension Fund Service
  - Statements on Investment Principles, Governance, Administration and Communication
  - The Risk Register and an annual risk analysis
  - The medium term business plan and annual updates
  - Training and development plans and updates
  - Discretions given by statute and regulation to the Pension Committee in relation to benefits under the LGPS
4. Work with the Head of Finance and other officers and advisors to plan an effective work programme for the Pension Committee
5. Report to the administering authority and other employers, as stakeholders, using practical and appropriate means of communication, to give assurances about the Fund's financial statements, risk management and internal control mechanisms

6. Receive regular briefings from the Head of Finance and other advisors in order to understand the context and import of forthcoming issues

## PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
1. Educational	Appropriate financial experience and training.  Knowledge of pension funds and schemes.	Demonstrable evidence of knowledge kept up to date.
2. Work Experience	Political awareness in numerous political environments.  Chairing high level partnership meetings achieving effective outcomes.  Operated for 5 years at a senior level.  Experience of risk and performance frameworks.	Previously chaired a pension committee or similar.
3. Abilities, Intelligence & Special Aptitudes	Chairing skills.  Influencing and consensus building.  Listening skills.  Able to assimilate complex information.	Mathematical/statistical literacy.  Knowledge of public sector and local government finance.
4. Adjustment & Social Skills	Ability to establish good working relationships with councillors, officers and advisors.  Able to direct discussions in politically sensitive environments.  Able to command respect and demonstrate strong leadership.	Diplomacy and tact.

Requirement	Essential	Desirable
	<p>Assertive in pursuing the correct course of action.</p> <p>Able to work effectively with colleagues who may have different levels of experience and understanding.</p>	
5. Motivation	<p>Enthusiastic, not easily deterred and able to convey enthusiasm to others.</p> <p>Committed to the objectives of the Pension Scheme and Fund(s).</p>	
6. Equal Opportunities	<p>Understanding and commitment to promoting equality of opportunity with an understanding of the pension context.</p>	

**The vice convener of the Pension Committee will also receive a copy of this guidance**

## **Compliance with the Job Description**

### **1. Pensions Legislative and Governance context**

1.1 The pension's landscape is characterised by a complex legislative framework. In addition to the legislation of individual schemes, there are industry-wide statutes that apply in whole or in part to public sector schemes, including the way in which schemes interact with state pensions etc.

1.2 Also of key importance is a knowledge of the governance frameworks that apply within the pensions industry (such as the Myners principles); within individual schemes (such as the LGPS Governance statement requirements); and within the organisations that administer the schemes (for example the CIPFA/SOLACE framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government).

***Full details of the scheme governance documentation and wider pension fund industry documentation can be found on the dedicated 'trustee' area of the Pension Fund website. In addition to this information regular training sessions are held for 'trustees' given by officers, fund managers, the scheme actuary and other advisors. In order to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the pensions landscape the Convener/Vice Conveners must commit to attending a minimum of two UK wide pension conferences per annum. Recommended is the NAPF Local Authority Conference held annual in May which covers all aspects of the LGPS and the Local Authority Investment Seminar held in the autumn giving a focus on investment management. Other events may arise during the year that would be of value to the Convener/Vice Convener of the Pension Committee will be brought to the attention of members by officers.***

***The Convener/Vice Convener should as a minimum receive a monthly update from officers covering:***

- ***Scheme Valuation***
- ***Administration Matters which are ongoing***
- ***Investment Matters ongoing***
- ***Pensions Market issues***
- ***Communication with employers and scheme members***

***Where appropriate this report should be accompanied by a meeting with Fund officers.***

### **2. Pensions accounting and auditing standards**

2.1 The accounting requirements and associated disclosures are complex and involve a large actuarial element. Consequently this demands an understanding of the regime at all levels within the finance structure in order to comply with the requirements and to communicate the requirements and their implications both internally and externally.

***Officers report annually to the Pension Committee on the scheme annual accounts. From 2011 the scheme accounts and audit have been separated out from the administering authority Financial Statement. The scheme auditor reports directly to the Pension Committee on the scheme accounts.***

### **3. Investment performance and risk management**

3.1 In the Local Government Pension Scheme and other schemes where contributions are invested and managed to meet future liabilities, understanding investment risk and performance constitutes a major element of the role of finance professionals. The skills required for managing and controlling investment activities are relatively specialised and at present there is no formal framework against which Funds can test their current skills and competencies.

***All investment performance and risk management is reported by the Fund custodian. Regular training sessions are given to all Committee members on understanding investment performance and risk reporting. Understanding investment performance and risk are key functions of the Convener and Vice Convener of the Pension Committee,***

### **4. Financial markets and product knowledge**

4.1 In those schemes with invested funds, an understanding of financial markets and products is fundamental. The depth of knowledge will depend to some degree upon the particular approach to investment management undertaken by the fund (The investment activities of LGPS funds for example can be split into two groups - those funds that use external managers to manage all of their investment portfolio and those that undertake some or all of their investment activities using in-house investment managers).

***The time given during the quarterly meetings of the Pension Committee to reviewing financial markets and product knowledge is limited. This fundamental knowledge should be updated regularly not only by the Convener and Vice Conveners, but all 'trustees' through attendance at least one investment conference per annum. There is a wide selection of national conferences such as the NAPF or the Local Authority Pension Fund Seminar held annually at Celtic Manor, however there are also a wide number of conferences hosted by fund managers to which 'trustees' are invited. Likewise attendance at such events as the LAPFF annual conference provides 'trustees' with an insight to future legislation that make impact on the companies in which we invest. A list of forthcoming conferences is reported quarterly meeting to the Pension Committee.***

### **5. Actuarial methods, standards and practices**

5.1 The scheme actuary holds a key position in the financial management of a pension scheme. A successful pension scheme financial manager will need to be able to do more than simply manage the relationship with their actuary. They will need to understand, at some levels in detail, the work of the actuary and the way

in which actuarial information is produced and the impact it has on both the finances of the scheme and the employer.

***The triennial valuation and funding strategy statement are two key documents in the governance of the scheme. A copy of both documents can be found on the secure 'trustee' area of the Pension Fund website. Through regular meetings with the scheme actuary (at least twice a year) the Convener/Vice Convener, will build up an understanding of the actuarial process and role and influence that key stakeholders such as the Convener and Vice Conveners have in the process. Discussions held with other LGPS 'trustees' on an ongoing basis will enhance this process.***

## Knowledge and Skills Framework

This framework identifies the level of knowledge required by members to ensure that they can carry out effective decision making in respect of the Fund.

### Level of knowledge required

1 – In depth, 2 – Understanding, 3 – Conversant

CIPFA Knowledge and Skills	Knowledge Requirement	
	Pension Committee	Pension Board
Pension legislative and governance context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General and Scheme Pension Legislation</li> <li>• Scheme Governance</li> <li>• Pension regulators and advisors</li> <li>• Legislative framework</li> <li>• Risk</li> </ul>	2	2
Pension accounting and auditing standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and accounting regulations and requirement</li> </ul>	2	2
Financial services procurement and relationship management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding public procurement</li> <li>• Supplier risk management</li> </ul>	2	3
Investment Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment Strategy</li> <li>• Financial Markets</li> </ul>	2	2
Investment performance and risk management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund performance</li> <li>• Performance of advisors</li> <li>• Performance of the committee</li> <li>• Performance of support services and advisors</li> </ul>	2	3
Actuarial methods, standards and practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuations</li> <li>• Outsourcing</li> </ul>	2	3