Agenda Item	**5**
Report No	**PC/13/26**

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: **Pensions Committee**

Date: **1 October 2026**

Report Title: **Training Policy and Training Plan 2026/27**

Report By: **Chief Officer, Corporate Finance**

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report sets out the training policy and plan for the Highland Pension Fund (HPF), applying to both officers responsible for supporting the HPF and members of the Pensions Board, Pensions Committee and Investment Sub-Committee.

1.2 It is essential that Pensions Committee, Pensions Board and officers have the requisite knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and comply with all the Scheme rules and regulations. HPF adopted the LGPS Skills and Knowledge Statement in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice Knowledge and Skills (2021) which is included in this report at Appendix 2.

1.3 The HPF training policy is set out in section 7 which incorporates the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework core areas (appendices 3 and 4). The HPF training policy also details the process for identifying training needs and the training delivery methods.

1.4 The Pension Regulator (TPR) requires that Pension Board members meet certain legal requirements that relate to their knowledge and understanding which include the following (section 8):

- a working knowledge of the scheme rules and of any policy document for the scheme
- knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions

New members must be able to demonstrate a basic level of knowledge and understanding within six months of their appointment.

TPR have extensive training resources available to support this aim including online assessments and the Public Service toolkit learning programme (section 9)

1.5 The report also includes information on the training delivered and attended by members in 2025/26 (section 10) and the training programme for 2026/27 (section 11). It should be noted that additional ad hoc training can be arranged on an individual and/or group basis as required.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to consider this report and note the following:

i. training delivered and attendance in 2025/26 (section 10 and Appendix 5)
ii. agree the training programme for 2026/27 (section 11)

3. Implications

3.1 There are resource implications of providing training which have been factored into the 2026/27 budget.

3.2 In terms of legal and regulatory implications, the HPF must comply with all Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) legislation and regulations, CIPFA guidance and TPR requirements, or the HPF could be non-compliant and in breach of Regulator requirements. It is a key requirement of the TPR General Code of Practice (GCoP) and the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills framework that the Pensions Committee and Pension Board have the requisite knowledge and understanding to fulfil their responsibilities.

3.3 The risk management framework is an integral part of the HPF's governance and there is a Pension Fund risk register which is regularly updated (update is provided at Agenda item 6, risk management update). One of the significant risks on this register is Knowledge risk, that members and officers are unaware of changes to LGPS governance, administration and investment matters and TPR requirements which results in a breach of legal and regulatory requirements. The implementation of a training policy and training plan helps to mitigate against this risk.

3.4 There are no Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, or people) or Gaelic implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4. Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 An impact assessment has been completed for this report, 21 September 2026. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.4 The Screening process has concluded that there are no impacts to be highlighted. Members are asked to consider the summary in Appendix 1 to support the decision-making process.

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening
Equality	no impact
Socio-economic	no impact
Human Rights	no impact
Children's Rights and Well-being	no impact
Island and Mainland Rural	no impact
Climate Change	no impact
Data Rights	no impact

5. Background

5.1 The HPF recognises the importance of training of Committee and Board members and officers in relation to Pension Fund matters. The HPF's Governance Policy Statement refers to the HPF's current policy with regard to training. Also, the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the HPF include a statement setting out governance compliance against the Myners effective decision-making principles.

5.2 An essential part of the good governance of the HPF is that all those involved in administering the scheme have the required skills and knowledge to fulfil their role. Pensions Committee members have a legal fiduciary duty to the scheme members and employer bodies, which is separate and distinct from their role as elected Highland Council Councillors.

5.3 There are a number of regulatory requirements specific to knowledge and skills which the HPF must comply with. These include the CIPFA LGPS Code of Practice Knowledge and Skills (2021), TPR GCoP and the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive II (MiFID II). Training attendance must be reported in the HPF Annual Accounts to comply with CIPFA requirements.

5.4 The CIPFA Code of Practice on Public Sector Pensions Finance Knowledge and Skills, and CIPFA's supporting Framework and guidance documentation has been formally adopted by the Pensions Committee.

5.5 HPF must also comply with the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive II (MiFID II) and to be categorised as professional clients under this legislation, must meet both qualitative and quantitative requirements to access the full range of investments. The qualitative requirements focus on a collective assessment of the expertise, experience and knowledge of the LGPS administering authority in relation to its investment decisions.

5.6 Arrangements for the regular training of members and officers are in place, with training delivered through a number of means which include:

- online training on the TPR website
- external seminars and events (in person, via video conference, webinars)
- training delivered as Committee agenda items
- other briefings and research material.
- officer training is planned and monitored through the Council's Employee Review and Development (ERD) framework.

5.7 TPR has set out requirements for individual Pension Board members to have the correct level of knowledge and understanding to undertake their role. The training policy with regards to Pension Board members is addressed separately in this document (section 8).

6. The CIPFA Code and Framework

6.1 In order to ensure all members and officers involved in pension fund decisions are adequately trained, CIPFA has developed a Public Sector Pensions Knowledge and Skills Framework to support the Code. The CIPFA Code and Framework are seen as supporting the requirements of the Public Sector Pensions Act 2013 and TPR GCoP.

6.2 The CIPFA Framework supporting the Code of Practice is intended to have two primary uses:

1. as a tool for administering authorities to acquire and retain LGPS knowledge and skills, and to determine whether they have the right skill mix to meet their pension scheme management, governance and decision-making needs.
2. as an assessment tool for individuals to measure their progress and plan their development.

6.3 The CIPFA Framework sets out eight core areas of knowledge and skills for those involved in LGPS pensions finance (both members and officers):

1. pensions legislation and guidance
2. pensions governance
3. funding strategy and actuarial methods
4. pensions administration and communications
5. pensions financial strategy, management, accounting, reporting and audit standards
6. investment strategy, asset allocation pooling, performance and risk management
7. financial markets and products
8. pension services procurement, contract management and relationship management

6.4 An extract of the competency assessment for use by members has been included with this report at Appendix 4. Members can register on the CIPFA website (http://www.cipfa.org/) to download copies of the whole framework document or can contact the Pensions Manager/Principal Accountant for assistance in accessing a copy of the framework.

6.5 An online questionnaire has been developed by officers to support members to assess skills, knowledge and experience against the CIPFA Framework. If Pension Board/Pensions Committee officers require a link to be sent on in order to complete the assessment, please contact the Pensions Manager/Principal Accountant.

6.6 The CIPFA Framework recognises that all LGPS funds will differ, and each fund will wish to adapt the framework to suit their own requirements e.g. not all funds will be of a size, or take an investment approach, whereby all activities and knowledge are in-house. The framework acknowledges that some funds will choose to access certain types of expertise from external sources such as investment managers and investment advisers.

6.7 The key recommendations of the Code and Framework are as follows (HPF complies with both these recommendations):

1. Formal adoption of the CIPFA Framework as the basis for training and development of members and officers involved in pension fund finance matters.
2. Disclosure within the HPF Annual Report and Financial Statements regarding how the framework has been applied, what assessment of training needs has been

undertaken, and what training has been delivered against the identified training needs.

7. Training Policy

7.1 Pensions Board and Pensions Committee members should assess their training needs against the CIPFA Framework eight core knowledge and skills areas set out at paragraph 6.3. To assist with this, Pensions Committee and Pensions Board members can request the self-assessment questionnaire from the Pensions Manager or Principal Accountant (section 6.5). Training needs assessment and delivery will be based upon a group (Committee and Board) and individual (member/officer) approach depending on training requirements.

7.2 It is generally the case that most training will be delivered on a group basis, either at Committee and Board or through separate events to which all members will have the opportunity to attend. For this type of training, the training programme and assessment of needs will be based on a consideration of; new developments and legislation, topical/live issues, as well as member feedback and specific requests for training.

7.3 Group Needs and Training

Group training will be delivered through a variety of mediums including:

1. provided directly at Pensions Committee and Pension Board or Investment Sub-Committee through reports and presentations.
2. specific training sessions/conferences/seminars/visits/webinars, provided by e.g. Council officers, investment managers, investment advisors, national bodies such as CIPFA, NAPF, Scottish LGPS Group etc.
3. provision of and reading of relevant material e.g. research, briefing papers, website content, industry magazines, etc.

7.4 Individual Needs and Training

To support the identification of training needs and recognising some individuals may have specific requirements, and the CIPFA Framework provides a template for self-assessment (Appendices 3 and 4). As noted in section 6.5 a questionnaire to complete this self-assessment has been developed in house and can be requested.

A similar self-assessment process is integrated with the Council's Employee Review and Development (ERD) framework process to identify any specific individual officer training needs.

7.5 Having reviewed these learning assessment tools members may wish to approach the Pensions Manager to discuss any individual queries or training needs they may have identified. It is important that members appreciate that an in-depth understanding of all the core knowledge areas is neither assumed nor necessary. In many cases what the framework expects is only an *understanding* or *awareness* of the area, and knowledge of where more detailed knowledge could be sought e.g. members are not necessarily expected to have in depth knowledge of a matter, but a general awareness of the issue and understanding of where they might source further information if required.

7.6 An annual report on training will be considered by the Pensions Committee and Pension Board, to ensure that training needs are regularly assessed, and training arrangements developed which is this report.

8. Pension Board

8.1 The Pension Board was established from 1 April 2015 under the provisions of section 5 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and regulation 106 of the LGPS Regulations 2013.

8.2 The regulations require that Pension Board members must meet certain legal requirements that relate to their knowledge and understanding. Members must:

- have a working knowledge of the scheme rules and of any policy document for the scheme
- have knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions

8.3 The Pension Regulator and CIPFA have produced material to assist with training needs assessment and the acquisition of the identified knowledge and skills which are described in the following sections. Pension Board members should use either or both of these learning resources, as required, to ensure they have the appropriate level of knowledge and understanding for their role.

8.4 An annual report on training delivered and attendance is noted by the Pensions Committee and Pension Board annually to monitor training.

9. TPR training requirements and resource

9.1 TPR is the UK regulator of work-based pension schemes. TPR works with trustees, employers, pension specialists and business advisers, giving guidance on what is expected of them.

9.2 The principal aim of TPR is to prevent problems from developing. TPR uses their powers flexibly, reasonably and appropriately, with the aim of putting things right and keeping schemes and employers on the right track for the long term.

9.3 The TPR website has information on public service pension schemes https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/public-service-pension-schemes/understanding-your-role

9.4 TPR also provides training resources. On the TPR website there is a learning assessment tool available which is a useful resource to help Pension Board members identify any training requirements.
https://trusteetoolkit.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=337

9.5 TPR also provides a free online learning programme called the Public Service toolkit which Pension Board members should complete, unless the equivalent training has already been completed. The Public Service toolkit covers the following areas:

- Conflicts of interest
- Managing risk and internal controls
- Maintaining accurate member data
- Maintaining member contributions
- Providing information to members and others
- Resolving internal disputes and
- Reporting breaches of the law

https://education.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/login/index.php

9.6 As part of the Pension Fund Regulations 2015, the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) commissioned a review of the Pension Board arrangements during 2017 and how these were operating. One of the recommendations from this review was, "*All Pension Board and Scheme Advisory Board members should be required to undertake the Pensions Regulator on-line training as part of their induction training.*"
http://lgpsab.scot/public-sector-pensions-governance-review/

9.7 These resources are freely available to all members and officers. Members should notify the Pensions Manager when this training has been completed.

9.8 TPR's GCoP was effective from 28 March 2024 and the "Knowledge and understanding requirements" section of GCoP includes links to the "Governance and of knowledge and understanding" module where it requires that, *the governing body, or pension board, can demonstrate that, as a group, they possess the skills, knowledge, and experience to run the scheme effectively. The governing body should:*

- *have a balance of skills and experience throughout the board and be able to demonstrate this*
- *be able to apply its knowledge to governing the scheme*
- *have enough skills to judge and question advice or services provided by a third party*
- *be able to identify and address skills gaps*
- *have enough understanding of industry good practice and standards to assess scheme performance and its service providers.*
- *keep records of the learning activities of individual members and the body as a whole*

- *be able to demonstrate steps it has taken to comply with the law*
- *have and maintain training and development plans to ensure that individual and collective knowledge and understanding is kept relevant and up to date.*

For new trustees, TPR states that they should "be able to demonstrate the basic level of knowledge and understanding needed to run their scheme within six months of their appointment".
https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/code-of-practice/the-governing-body/knowledge-and-understanding-requirements/governance-of-knowledge-and-understanding

9.9 GCoP requires that the governing body regularly carry out an assessment of skills and experience, with best practice being to regularly complete a formal audit of skills and experience.

10. Training Delivered 2025/26

10.1 While this report is primarily forward looking, in terms of future training requirements and policy, a record of recent training mapped against the CIPFA eight core competencies is at Appendix 5.

10.2 There were two in-house training events delivered during the year which focused on the HPF Governance and Administration and HPF Investments which were well attended. This training was delivered by officers to new Committee and Board members and also offered as refresher training to all Committee and Board members. These sessions were delivered as follows:

- 19 August 2025 HPF Governance and Administration Induction training
- 23 September 2025 HPF Investment training.

10.3 As new members join the Pension Committee or Pension Board, contact is made on an individual basis by officers to provide background info, sources of online learning and offer support and assistance. Individual sessions are set up as required with new Pension Committee or Pension Board members to discuss their role and provide information on the LGPS and HPF.

10.4 Investment Strategy training was provided at the following meetings of the Investment Sub Committee and covered the following:

- equity protection (7 May 2025, 17 December 2025)
- global equities (26 September 2025)
- property (16 March 2026)

10.5 Details of training delivered and attendance will be recorded by officers and used for the annual disclosure within the HPF Annual Report, in line with the CIPFA framework expectations. As noted in section 12 of this report, attendance at training will be reported in this disclosure on an individual basis.

11. Training Programme 2026/27

11.1 The following training programme is proposed for the remainder of the 2026/27 financial year and beyond.

11.2 The training programme can be revised to incorporate any required training based on member feedback following self-assessment of their individual training needs (para 6.4) or ad hoc training requirements. There may also be training needs identified as part of individual assessment of knowledge, skills and experience against the Knowledge and Skills Framework and training can be arranged as required.

Date	**Event and Core Knowledge & Skills Areas Covered**	**Attendees/ Potential attendees**
29 Sept 2026	Briefing and training on the triennial actuarial valuation process and assumptions used (HPF Actuary, Hymans Robertson)	ISC Members PB Observers HC Officers
1 Oct 2026	"Ask the Actuary" informal Q&A session following Pensions Committee (HPF Actuary, Hymans Robertson)	PC Members PB Observers HC Officers
1 Oct 2026	ISC meeting - background session on the investment strategy review approach and Asset Liability Modelling (ALM) (HPF Actuary, Hymans Robertson)	ISC Members PB Observers HC Officers
1 Oct 2026	Investment training and briefing to be provided at Investment Sub Committee by Man Group (alternative risk premia investments) and Partners Group (private equity)	PC Members HC Officers

Date	Event and Core Knowledge & Skills Areas Covered	Attendees/ Potential attendees
24 Nov 2026	Committee Board & Member Training Event, taking place at the COSLA Offices, Edinburgh, on Tuesday 24 November. Can attend online or in person. Inform the Pensions Manager **by 24th October** if members plan to attend Catriona.Stachan@highland.gov.uk	PC Members PB Members HC Officers
16 Dec 2026	Investment training to be provided at Investment Sub Committee by Legal and General Investment Manager and another Fund Manager	ISC Members PB Observers HC Officers
2027	Climate scenario analysis training and workshop to explore the risks of climate change to factor into the actuarial valuation	ISC Members PB Observers HC Officers
March 2027	Investment training to be provided at Investment Sub Committee	ISC Members PB Observers HC Officers
Ongoing	Individual training using the Pensions Regulator modules https://trusteetoolkit.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=337	PC Members PB Members HC Officers
Ongoing	Various webinars provided by Fund Managers, Investment Advisor and the Actuary	PC Members PB Members HC Officers
Ongoing	Heywood (provider of the Pensions Administration system Altair) provide technical training to the Pensions Administration team	HC Officers

12. Reporting on training attendance

12.1 In accordance with the CIPFA guidance, “Preparing the annual report – Guidance for Local Government Pension Scheme Funds (2019)” the HPF annual report and accounts should include membership of each committee during the year with a matrix showing for each member:

- Voting rights
- Attendance at meetings
- Training received during the reporting period

12.2 In order to comply with the above guidance, the HPF Annual Report and Annual Accounts includes a matrix recording individual member attendance at meetings and training during the reporting period and also includes a list of all members and their voting rights.

Designation:	Chief Officer, Corporate Finance
Date:	18 September 2026
Author:	Catriona Stachan, Pensions Manager
Background Papers:	CIPFA Code of Practice: Public Sector Pensions Finance Knowledge and Skills, Pensions Regulator website

Appendices

Appendix 1	Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2	LGPS Skills and Knowledge Statement
Appendix 3	CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework for Members of Pension Committees
Appendix 4	Local Pension Boards: A Technical Knowledge and Skills Framework: Learning needs analysis and training requirements
Appendix 5	Details of training provided and attendance 2025/26

Appendix 1 Integrated Impact Assessment

About proposal

What does this proposal relate to? Policy

Proposal name: Training Policy and Training Plan 2026/27

High level summary of the proposal: The documents sets out the training policy for the Highland Pension Fund (applying to both officers responsible for supporting the HPF and members of the Pensions Board, Pensions Committee and Investment Sub-Committee

Who may be affected by the proposal? None

Start date of proposal: 01/10/2026

End date of proposal: 30/09/2027

Does this proposal result in a change or impact to one or more Council service? No

Does this relate to an existing proposal? No

Author details

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Responsible officer details

Name: Brian Porter

Job title: Chief Officer - Corporate Finance

Email address: Brian.Porter@highland.gov.uk

Sign off date: 2026-09-22

Equalities, poverty, and human rights

Protected characteristics

Select what impact the proposal will have on the following protected characteristics:

Sex: No impact

Age: No impact

Disability: No impact

Religion or belief: No impact

Race: No impact

Sexual orientation: No impact

Gender reassignment: No impact

Pregnancy and maternity: No impact

Marriage and civil partnership: No impact

Protected characteristics impact details:

Poverty and socio-economic

What impact is the proposal likely to have on the following?

Prospects and opportunities: No impact

Places: No impact

Financial: No impact

Poverty and socio-economic impact details:

Human rights

Which of the below human rights will be affected by this proposal? No human rights will be affected

What impact do you consider this proposal to have on the human rights of people? No impact

Human rights impact details:

Equalities, poverty and human rights screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to equalities, poverty and human rights? No impact

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Children's rights and wellbeing

What likely impact will the proposal have on children and young people?

Which of the below children's rights will be affected by the proposal? No **children's rights will be affected**

Explain how the children's rights selected above will be affected:

Children's rights and wellbeing screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to children's rights and wellbeing? No **impact**

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Data protection

Will your proposal involve processing personal data? No

Data protection screening assessment

What change will there be to the way personal data is processed? No **personal data will be processed**

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Island and mainland rural communities

Does your proposal impact island and mainland rural communities? No

Island and mainland rural communities screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to island and mainland rural communities? No difference

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Climate change

Does the proposal involve activities that could impact on greenhouse gas emissions

(CO2e)? No

Does the proposal have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity? No

Does the proposal have the potential to influence resilience to extreme weather or changing

climate? No

Provide information regarding your selection above:

Climate change screening assessment

Have you identified potential impact for any of the areas above or marked any as not

known? No

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Appendix 2

LGPS Skills and Knowledge Statement

1. The Highland Council, as administering authority for HPF adopts the key principles of the Code of Practice on LGPS Knowledge and Skills.

2. The Highland Council, as administering authority for HPF recognises that effective management, governance, decision making and other aspects of the delivery of the LGPS can only be achieved where those involved have the requisite knowledge and skills to discharge the duties and responsibilities allocated to them.

3. The Highland Council as administering authority for HPF has in place formal and comprehensive objectives, policies and practices, strategies and reporting arrangements for the effective acquisition and retention of LGPS knowledge and skills for those responsible for the management, delivery, governance and decision making of the LGPS.

4. These policies and practices will be guided by reference to a comprehensive framework of knowledge and skills requirements such as those set down in the CIPFA LGPS Knowledge and Skills Framework.

5. This administering authority will ensure that it has adequate resources in place to ensure all staff, members or other persons responsible for the management, decision making, governance and other aspects of the delivery of the LGPS acquire and retain the necessary LGPS knowledge and skills.

6. This administering authority will report annually on how its knowledge and skills policy has been implemented throughout the financial year in the Fund’s annual report.

7. This administering authority has delegated the responsibility for the implementation of the CIPFA Code of Practice to the appropriate officer, who will act in accordance with the administering authority’s knowledge and skills policy statement, and, where they are a CIPFA member, with CIPFA Standards of Professional Practice (where relevant).

Appendix 3

CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework for Members of Pension Committees

Core Areas

With regard to the levels of understanding, these are as follows:

- An awareness is a recognition that the subject matter exists
- A general understanding is an understanding the basics in relation to the subject matter.
- A strong understanding is a good level of knowledge in relation to the subject matter (but not necessary at a detailed level)

1. Pensions legislation and guidance

General Pensions Framework

- A general understanding of the pensions legislative framework in the UK.
- A general understanding of other legislation that is relevant in managing an LGPS fund, e.g. freedom of information, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and local authority legislation.

Scheme-specific legislation

- A general understanding of the legislation and statutory guidance specific to the scheme and the main features relating to benefits, administration, funding, governance, communications and investment including:
  - a general understanding of the LGPS Regulations 2013
  - a general understanding of the LGPS (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016
- An awareness of the LGPS discretions and how the formulation of the discretionary policies impacts on the fund, employers and scheme members.
- A regularly updated awareness of the latest changes to the scheme rules and current proposals or potential changes to the scheme.

Guidance

- A general understanding of the requirements of statutory guidance from the responsible authority – MHCLG (England and Wales), SPPA (Scotland) or the Department for Communities (Northern Ireland).
- A general understanding of the requirements of The Pensions Regulator code of practice.
- An awareness of the requirements of guidance from the Scheme Advisory Board.
- An awareness of the requirements of guidance from GAD.
- An awareness of other guidance relevant to the LGPS, such as from CIPFA.

2. Pensions Governance

- An awareness of the LGPS regulations' main features, including any material developments and requirements relating to pension scheme governance.
- An awareness of statutory and other guidance in relation to pension scheme governance, including MHCLG statutory governance guidance, The Pensions Regulator code of practice, CIPFA/Solace, Scheme Advisory Board guidance and the Myners principles.

<u>Pension regulators, Scheme Advisory Board and other bodies</u>

- A general understanding of how the roles and powers of MHCLG, TPR, the Pensions Advisory Service and the Pensions Ombudsman relate to the workings of the scheme.
- A general understanding of the role of the Scheme Advisory Board and how it interacts with other bodies.

<u>General constitutional framework</u>

- A general understanding of the role of the administering authority in relation to the LGPS.
- A general understanding of the role of pension committees in relation to the fund, administering authority, employing authorities, scheme members and taxpayers.
- An awareness of the role and statutory responsibilities of the CFO and monitoring officer.

<u>Fund-specific governance</u>

- A strong understanding of the roles, terms of reference and delegated responsibilities of the pension committee (including any sub-committees), the pension board and any other delegated responsibilities to senior officers.
- A general understanding of the stakeholders of the fund and the nature of their interests.
- A general understanding of who the key officers responsible for the management of the fund are, how the pension team is structured and how services are delivered.
- A general understanding of the fund's strategies, policies and other key documents.
- A general understanding of best practice risk management, including how that supports a structured and focused approach to managing risks. This should include how risk is monitored and managed and the fund's current key risks.
- A general understanding of how conflicts of interest are identified and managed.
- A strong understanding of how breaches in law are recorded and managed and, if necessary, reported to TPR, including each individual's personal responsibility in relation to breaches.
- A general understanding of the fund's knowledge and skills policy and associated training requirements.
- An awareness of the fund's process for dealing with complaints, including its internal dispute resolution procedure.

- A general understanding of how the effectiveness of the fund's governance is reviewed.

Service delivery

- A general understanding of the required budget and resources needed to manage and administer the fund.
- A general understanding of the annual business planning cycle and budget setting.
- A general understanding of the fund's key performance indicators and other performance measures.
- A general understanding of the fund's business continuity policy and cyber security policy across all areas of fund activity, including administration.

3. Funding strategy and actuarial methods

- An awareness of the LGPS regulations' main features, including any key developments and requirements relating to funding strategy and the setting of employer contributions, including associated guidance.
- A general understanding of the role of the fund actuary.
- A general understanding of the funding strategy statement (including employer funding flexibilities) and the expected delivery of the funding objectives.
- A general understanding of the key risks to the fund relating to the funding strategy.

Valuations

- A general understanding of the valuation process, including developing the funding strategy in conjunction with the fund actuary and inter-valuation monitoring.
- An awareness of the costs to the employer, including employer contributions and early retirement strain costs.
- An awareness of the different types of employers that participate in the fund
- A general understanding of the importance of employer covenant, the relative strengths of the covenant across the fund's employers and how this impacts the funding strategy adopted.
- A general understanding of any legislative and/or benefit uncertainty and the impact of this on the funding strategy.
- A general understanding of the scheme valuation and other work carried out by GAD and the impact this has on the valuation process (ie, the cost management process/ Section 13 report).

New employer and exits

- A general understanding of the implications of including new employers in the fund and of the exit of existing employers.
- A general understanding of the relevant considerations in relation to the different types of new employer, eg outsourcings, academies (if appropriate), alternative delivery models, and also the considerations in relation to bulk transfers.

4. Pensions communication and administration

- An awareness of the LGPS regulations' main features and requirements relating to:
  - administration and communications strategies
  - entitlement to and calculation of pension benefits
  - transfers in and out of the scheme
  - employee contributions
  - the delivery of administration and communications (including associated guidance).
- A general understanding of the fund's pensions administration strategy, including how it is delivered (including, where applicable, the use of third-party suppliers and systems), performance measures and assurance processes.
- A general understanding of the fund's communications policy, including how it is delivered (including, where applicable, the use of third-party suppliers and systems), performance measures and assurance processes.
- A general understanding of best practice in pensions administration, e.g. performance and cost measures.
- A general understanding of the fund's processes and procedures relating to:
  - member data maintenance and record keeping, including data improvement plans and relationships with employers for data transmission
  - contributions collection.
- An awareness of how the fund interacts with the taxation system in relation to benefits administration, including the annual and lifetime allowances.
- A general understanding of additional voluntary contribution (AVC) arrangements, including:
  - the AVC arrangements that exist
  - the choice of investments to be offered to members
  - the provider's investment and fund performance,
  - the payment of contributions to the provider
  - the benefits that can be received by scheme members
  - how and when the AVC arrangements, including the investment choices, are reviewed

5. Financial strategy, management, accounting and audit standards

- A general understanding of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and legislative requirements relating to the role of the committee and individual members in considering and signing off the fund's accounts and annual report.

- A general understanding of the various elements of income into and expenditure of the fund, including the operational budget.
- A general understanding of the cash flows of the fund and how risks are managed to ensure appropriate cash is available to pay benefits and other outgoings.
- A general understanding of the role of both internal and external audit in the governance and assurance process.

6. Investment strategy, asset allocation, pooling, performance and risk management

- An awareness of the LGPS regulations’ main features and requirements relating to investment strategy, asset allocation, the pooling of investments and responsible investments, including associated guidance.

Investment strategy

- A general understanding of the key risks that the fund is exposed to and how a fund’s investment strategy should be considered in conjunction with these risks.
- A general understanding of the risk and return characteristics of the main asset classes (equities, bonds, property) and the need to balance risk versus reward when determining the investment strategy.
- A general understanding of the role of these asset classes in long-term pension fund investing.
- A general understanding of the fund’s cash flow requirements and how these impact on the types of investments considered.
- A general understanding of the importance of monitoring asset returns relative to the liabilities and a broad understanding of ways of assessing long-term risks.

Total fund

- A general understanding of the importance of monitoring asset returns relative to the liabilities and a broad understanding of ways of assessing long-term risks.

Performance of the committee

- An awareness of the Myners principles and the need to set targets for the committee and to report against them.
- An awareness of the range of support services provided to the committee, who supplies them and the nature of the performance monitoring regime.

Responsible investment

- An awareness of the latest developments and requirements in the area of responsible investment.
- An awareness of the UK Stewardship Code and the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment (UNPRI) and whether the fund is a signatory of these.

- A general understanding of the fund's approach to responsible investment, including how views on environmental, social and governance issues are incorporated into the fund's investment strategy.

Risk management

- A general understanding about how to manage and reduce risk and lessen the impact of risk on assets when it arises, including climate risk.

7. Financial markets and products

Financial markets

- A general understanding of the primary importance of the investment strategy decision.
- A general understanding of the workings of the financial markets, the investment vehicles available to the pension fund and the nature of the associated risks.
- An awareness of the restrictions placed by legislation on the investment activities of LGPS funds.

MiFID II

- A general understanding of MiFID II requirements relating to the knowledge of decision makers.

8. Pension services procurement, contract management and relationship management

Understanding public procurement

- An awareness of the main public procurement requirements of UK and EU legislation and the use of national frameworks within the context of the LGPS.

Fund suppliers

- Awareness of the key decision makers in relation to the fund's procurements.
- A general understanding of the fund's suppliers and providers and their roles in the management of the fund.
- An awareness of how the fund's suppliers are monitored, including:
  - the Myners principles
  - the need for strategic objectives for investment consultants.

Supplier risk management

- A general understanding of the nature and scope of risks for the pension fund and of the importance of considering risk factors when selecting external suppliers and providers.
- A general understanding of how the pension fund monitors and manages the performance of their external suppliers and providers, including business continuity and cyber risk.

Appendix 4 Local Pension Boards: A Technical Knowledge and Skills Framework: Learning needs analysis and training requirements

Do I possess...?	Rate my skills 1 – no knowledge 5 – highly skilled	Training requirements	Training plan (sources and timing)

1 – Pensions legislation		
A general understanding of the pensions legislative framework in the UK.	1 2 3 4 5	
An overall understanding of the legislation and statutory guidance specific to the scheme and the main features relating to benefits, administration and investment.	1 2 3 4 5	
An appreciation of LGPS discretions and how the formulation of the discretionary policies impacts on the pension fund, employers and local taxpayers.	1 2 3 4 5	
A regularly updated appreciation of the latest changes to the scheme rules.	1 2 3 4 5	
2 – Pensions governance		
Knowledge of the role of the administering authority in relation to the LGPS.	1 2 3 4 5	
An understanding of how the roles and powers of the DCLG, the Pensions Regulator, the Pensions Advisory Service and the Pensions Ombudsman relate to the workings of the scheme.	1 2 3 4 5	
Knowledge of the role of the Scheme Advisory Board and how it interacts with other bodies in the governance structure.	1 2 3 4 5	
A broad understanding of the role of pension fund committees in relation to the fund, the administering authority, employing authorities, scheme members and taxpayers.	1 2 3 4 5	
An awareness of the role and statutory responsibilities of the treasurer and monitoring officer.	1 2 3 4 5	
Knowledge of the Myners principles and associated CIPFA and SOLACE guidance.	1 2 3 4 5	
A detailed knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of pension board members.	1 2 3 4 5	
Knowledge of the stakeholders of the pension fund and the nature of their interests.	1 2 3 4 5	
Knowledge of consultation, communication and involvement options relevant to the stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5	
Knowledge of how pension fund management risk is monitored and managed.	1 2 3 4 5	
An understanding of how conflicts of interest are identified and managed.	1 2 3 4 5	

Appendix 4 Local Pension Boards: A Technical Knowledge and Skills Framework: Learning needs analysis and training requirements

Do I possess...?	Rate my skills 1 – no knowledge 5 – highly skilled	Training requirements	Training plan (sources and timing)

An understanding of how breaches in law are reported.	1 2 3 4 5	
3 – Pensions administration		
An understanding of best practice in pensions administration eg performance and cost measures.	1 2 3 4 5	
Understanding of the required and adopted scheme policies and procedures relating to: • member data maintenance and record-keeping processes • internal dispute resolution • contributions collection • scheme communication and materials.	1 2 3 4 5	
Knowledge of how discretionary powers operate.	1 2 3 4 5	
Knowledge of the pensions administration strategy and delivery (including, where applicable, the use of third party suppliers, their selection, performance management and assurance processes).	1 2 3 4 5	
An understanding of how the pension fund interacts with the taxation system in the UK and overseas in relation to benefits administration.	1 2 3 4 5	
An understanding of what AVC arrangements exist and the principles relating to the operation of those arrangements, the choice of investments to be offered to members, the provider's investment and fund performance report and the payment schedule for such arrangements.	1 2 3 4 5	
4 – Pensions accounting and auditing standards		
An understanding of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and legislative requirements relating to internal controls and proper accounting practice.	1 2 3 4 5	

Appendix 4 Local Pension Boards: A Technical Knowledge and Skills Framework: Learning needs analysis and training requirements

Do I possess...?	Rate my skills 1 – no knowledge 5 – highly skilled	Training requirements	Training plan (sources and timing)

An understanding of the role of both internal and external audit in the governance and assurance process.	1 2 3 4 5	
An understanding of the role played by third party assurance providers.	1 2 3 4 5	
5 – Pensions services procurement and relationship management		
An understanding of the background to current public procurement policy and procedures, and of the values and scope of public procurement and the roles of key decision-makers and organisations.	1 2 3 4 5	
A general understanding of the main public procurement requirements of UK and EU legislation.	1 2 3 4 5	
An understanding of the nature and scope of risks for the pension fund and of the importance of considering risk factors when selecting third parties.	1 2 3 4 5	
An understanding of how the pension fund monitors and manages the performance of their outsourced providers.	1 2 3 4 5	
6 – Investment performance and risk management		
An understanding of the importance of monitoring asset returns relative to the liabilities and a broad understanding of ways of assessing long-term risks.	1 2 3 4 5	
An awareness of the Myners principles of performance management and the approach adopted by the administering authority.	1 2 3 4 5	
Awareness of the range of support services, who supplies them and the nature of the performance monitoring regime.	1 2 3 4 5	

Appendix 5 Details of training provided and attendance 2025/26

Pensions Committee and Pension Board training	19/08/25 PC and PB Induction Training	23/09/25 PC and PB Investment Induction Training
Pensions Committee		
Cllr A Christie (from Dec 25)	N/A	N/A
Cllr S Coghill (from Dec 25)	N/A	N/A
Cllr J Hendry	✓	✓
Cllr B Lobban	OPT	OPT
Cllr P Logue (from Dec 25)	N/A	N/A
Cllr A MacKintosh	✓	✓
Cllr R MacKintosh	✓	✓
Cllr T MacLennan	OPT	✓
Cllr P Oldham	✓	OPT
Cllr M Paterson	OPT	OPT
Cllr T Robertson	✓	✓
Cllr R Gale (until Dec 25)	✓	OPT
Cllr L Kraft (until Dec 25)	✓	OPT
Pensions Board		
Cllr Birt (Highland Council) (from Dec 25)	N/A	N/A
Mr R Fea (Cromarty Firth Port Authority)	✓	✓
Cllr S Kennedy (Highland Council) (from Dec 25)	N/A	✓
Cllr N MacDonald (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)	OPT	N/A
Mr R Boyle (Unison) (from Mar 25)	N/A	N/A
Mr D MacDonald (Unison)	OPT	✓
Mr W Munro (Unison)	✓	N/A
Ms E Johnston (GMB)	OPT	OPT

OPT -Training was optional as this was induction training for new members. However, several long-standing members opted to attend training as a refresher.

N/A is Not Applicable as individual was not on Committee on that date

Investment Sub Committee	07/05/25 Equity protection (Aon)	26/09/25 Global equities (Dodge & Cox, Canaccord)	17/12/25 Equity protection (Hymans)	16/03/26 Global equities (Baillie Gifford) Property (Schroders)
Cllr R Gale (until Dec 25)	✓	✓		N/A
Cllr B Lobban	✓		✓	✓
Cllr P Logue (from Mar 25)	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓
Cllr A MacKintosh				
Cllr R MacKintosh	✓	✓		✓
Cllr P Oldham (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr M Paterson	✓			✓
Cllr T Robertson	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pensions Board				
Ms E Johnston (non voting)	✓		✓	✓
Cllr S Kennedy (from 16 Mar 26) (non voting)	N/A	✓	✓	

N/A is Not Applicable as individual was not on Committee on that date

Greyed out represents non-attendance.

Appendix 5 Details of training provided and attendance 2025/26

Date	19/08/25	23/09/25	07/05/25	26/09/25	17/12/25	29/11/24	Ongoing
Event	Pensions Induction and Refresher training	Pensions Investment Induction and refresher training	Equity protection (Aon)	Global equities (Dodge and Cox, Canaccord)	Equity protection (Hymans)	Global equities (Baillie Gifford) Property (Schroders)	General reading and research e.g. agenda reports and presentations, manager reports and briefings, magazines and other periodicals, online reading etc
CIPFA Core competencies							
1. Pensions legislation and guidance	✓	✓					✓
2. Pensions governance	✓	✓					✓
3. Funding strategy and actuarial methods	✓						✓
4. Pensions administration and communications	✓	✓					✓
5. Pensions financial strategy, management, accounting, reporting and audit standards	✓	✓					✓
6. Investment strategy, asset allocation, performance and risk management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Financial markets and products	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Pension services procurement, contract management and relationship management	✓						✓