



TOWER HAMLETS

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Training & Development Policy

Introduction

This is the Training & Development Policy of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which is managed and administered by Tower Hamlets Council. The Policy details the training strategy for members of the Pensions Committee and Pension Board, and senior officers responsible for the management of the Fund.

This Training & Development Policy is established to assist Pensions Committee and Pensions Board members and senior officers in developing their knowledge and capabilities in their individual roles, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund is managed by individuals who have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills.

Tower Hamlets Council has delegated responsibility for the implementation of this Training & Development Policy to the Corporate Director, Resources.

Aims and Objectives

Tower Hamlets Council recognises the significance of its role as Administering Authority to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund on behalf of its stakeholders which include:

- over 20,000 current and former members of the Fund, and their dependants
- about 20 employers within the Tower Hamlets Council area or with close links to Tower Hamlets Council
- the local taxpayers within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

In relation to the governance of the Fund, the objectives are to ensure that:

- all staff and Pensions Committee Members charged with the financial administration and decision-making with regard to the Fund are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to discharge the duties and responsibilities allocated to them
- the Fund is aware that good governance means an organisation is open in its dealings and readily provides information to interested parties
- all relevant legislation is understood and complied with
- the Fund aims to be at the forefront of best practice for LGPS funds
- the Fund manages Conflicts of Interest appropriately

This Policy has been put in place to assist the Fund in achieving these objectives and all Pensions Committee Members, Pension Board members and senior officers to whom this Policy applies are expected to continually demonstrate their own personal commitment to training and to ensuring that these objectives are met.

To assist in achieving these objectives, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund will aim to comply with:

- the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks and

- the knowledge and skills elements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and The Pensions Regulator's (TPR) Code of Practice for Public Service Schemes

As well as any other LGPS specific guidance relating to the knowledge and skills of Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members or pension fund officers which may be issued from time to time.

This Training & Development Policy applies to all Members of the Pensions Committee, Pensions Board, including scheme member and employer representatives. It also applies to all managers in the Tower Hamlets Council Pension Fund Management Team and the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) (from here on in collectively referred to as the senior officers of the Fund).

Other officers involved in the daily management of the Pension Fund will also be required to have appropriate knowledge and skills relating to their roles, which will be determined and managed by the Pension Fund Manager and Investment & Treasury Manager and his/her team.

The advisers to the Fund that provides the day to day and strategic advice to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund are also expected to be able to meet the objectives of this Policy, as are all other officers of employers participating in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund who are responsible for pension matters are also encouraged to maintain a high level of knowledge and understanding in relation to LGPS matters, and Tower Hamlets Council will provide appropriate training for them.

This is considered separately in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Administration Strategy.

CIPFA and TPR Knowledge and Skills Requirements - *(CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework and Code of Practice)*

In January 2010 CIPFA launched technical guidance for Representatives on Pensions Committees and non-executives in the public sector within a knowledge and skills framework. The Framework details the knowledge and skills required by those responsible for pension scheme financial management and decision making.

In July 2015 CIPFA launched technical guidance for Local Pension Board members by extending the existing knowledge and skills frameworks in place. This Framework details the knowledge and skills required by Pension Board members to enable them to properly exercise their functions under Section 248a of the Pensions Act 2004, as amended by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

The Framework covers eight areas of knowledge and skills identified as the core requirements (which include all those covered in the existing Committee and nonexecutives' framework):

- i) Pensions legislation
- ii) Public sector pensions governance
- iii) Pension accounting and auditing standards
- iv) Pensions administration

- v) Financial services procurement and relationship management
- vi) Investment performance and risk management
- vii) Financial markets and products knowledge
- viii) Actuarial methods, standards and practice

CIPFA's Code of Practice recommends (amongst other things) that Local Government Pension Scheme administering authorities -

- formally adopt the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks (or an alternative training programme)
- ensure that the appropriate policies and procedures are put in place to meet the requirements of the Frameworks (or an alternative training programme);
- publicly report how these arrangements have been put into practice each year.

The Pensions Act 2004 and the Pension Regulator's Code of Practice

Section 248a of the Pensions Act 2004, as amended by The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 (PSPA13) requires Pension Board members to:

- be conversant with the rules of the scheme and any document recording policy about the administration of the scheme, and
- have knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions and any other matters which are prescribed in regulations.

The degree of knowledge and understanding required is that appropriate for the purposes of enabling the individual to properly exercise the functions of a member of the Pension Board.

These requirements are incorporated and expanded on within the TPR Code of Practice which came into force on 1 April 2015. It is expected that guidance will also be issued by the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board which will explain further how these requirements will relate to LGPS administering authorities.

Application to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund

Tower Hamlets Council recognises that effective financial administration, scheme governance and decision-making can only be achieved where those involved have the requisite knowledge and skills. Accordingly it fully supports the use of the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks, and TPR's Code of Practice. Tower Hamlets Council adopts the principles contained in these publications in relation to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund, and this Training and Development Policy highlights how the Council will strive to achieve those principles through use of a Training Plan together with regular monitoring and reporting.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Training and Development Plan

Tower Hamlets Council recognises that attaining, and then maintaining, relevant knowledge and skills is a continual process for Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers, and that training is a

key element of this process. Tower Hamlets Council will develop a rolling Training Plan based on the following key elements:

- 1) **Individual Training Needs:** A training needs analysis will be developed for the main roles of Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers customised appropriately to the key areas in which they should be proficient. Training will be required in relation to each of these areas as part of any induction and on an ongoing refresher basis.
- 2) **Hot Topic Training:** The Training Plan will be developed to ensure appropriately timed training is provided in relation to hot topic areas, such as a high risk area or a specific area where decisions need to be made. This training may be targeted at specific roles.
- 3) **General Awareness:** Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers are expected to maintain a reasonable knowledge of ongoing developments and current issues, which will allow them to have a good level of general awareness of pension related matters appropriate for their roles and which may not be specific to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund.

Each of these training requirements will be focussed on the role of the individual i.e. a Pensions Committee member, a Pension Board member or the specific role of the officer.

The Pensions Committee agrees a training plan on an annual basis at the first meeting of the Municipal Year. The training plan is developed taking into consideration the needs of the Committee, the Board and officers to both enhance existing knowledge and skills and to develop new areas of understanding. This ensures that training is accessible to all Committee and Board members and key officers involved in the management of the Pension Fund.

Training will be delivered through a variety of methods including:

- In-house training days provided by officers and/or external providers
- Training as part of meetings (e.g. Pensions Committee) provided by officers and/or external advisers
- External training events
- Circulation of reading material
- Attendance at seminars and conferences offered by industry-wide bodies
- Attendance at meetings and events with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund's investment managers and advisors
- Links to on-line training
- Access to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund website where useful London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund specific material is available.

In addition London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund officers and advisers are available to answer any queries on an ongoing basis including providing access to materials from previous training events.

Initial Information and Induction Process

On joining the Pensions Committee, the Pension Board or the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Management Team, a new member or officer will be provided with the following documentation to assist in providing them with a basic understanding of London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund:

- The members' guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- The latest Actuarial Valuation report
- The Annual Report and Accounts, which incorporate:
 - The Funding Strategy Statement
 - The Governance Policy and Compliance Statement
 - The Statement of Investment Principles including the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund's statement of compliance with the LGPS Myners Principles
 - The Communications Policy
 - The Administration Strategy
- The administering authority's Discretionary Policies
- The Training Policy

In addition, an individual training plan will be developed to assist each Pensions Committee member, Pension Board member or officer to achieve, within six months, their identified individual training requirements.

Monitoring Knowledge and Skills

To identify if Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers are meeting the objectives of this policy we will:

- 1) Compare and report on attendance at training based on the following:
 - i. Individual Training Needs – ensuring refresher training on the key elements takes place for each individual at least once every three years.
 - ii. Hot Topic Training – attendance by at least 80% of the required Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers at planned hot topic training sessions. This target may be focussed at a particular group of Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members or senior officers depending on the subject matter.
 - iii. General Awareness – each Pensions Committee member, Pension Board member or officer attending at least one day each year of general awareness training or events.
 - iv. Induction training – ensuring areas of identified individual training are completed within six months.

2) Consider whether the objectives have been met as part of the annual self-assessment carried out each year which is completed by all Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers.

The key risks to the delivery of this Policy are outlined below:

- i. Changes in Pensions Committee and/or Pension Board membership and/or senior officers' potentially diminishing knowledge and understanding.
- ii. Poor attendance and/or a lack of engagement at training and/or formal meetings by Pensions Committee Members, Pension Board Members and/or other senior officers resulting in a poor standard of decision making and/or monitoring.
- iii. Insufficient resources being available to deliver or arrange the required training.
- iv. The quality of advice or training provided not being to an acceptable standard.

The Pensions Committee members, with the assistance of London Borough of Tower Hamlets senior officers and Pension Board members will monitor these and other key risks and consider how to respond to them.

Reporting

A report will be presented to the Pensions Committee on an annual basis setting out:

- i. The training provided / attended in the previous year at an individual level
- ii. Attendance at Pensions Committee and Pension Board meetings
- iii. The results of the measurements identified above.

This information will also be included in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund's Annual Report and Accounts.

At each Pensions Committee and Pensions Board meeting, members will be provided with details of forthcoming seminars, conferences and other relevant training events as well as a summary of the events attended since the previous meeting.

Costs

All training costs related to this Training and Development Policy are met directly by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund.

Approval, Review and Consultation

This Training and Development Policy was originally approved at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pensions Committee meeting of September 2015 and amendments to incorporate the requirements of the CIPFA Local Pension Boards Framework would be approved on 9th March 2016. This Training and Development Policy was also adopted by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Board at its first meeting. It will be formally reviewed and updated at least every year or sooner if the training arrangements or other matters included within it worth re-evaluation.

Further Information

If you require further information about anything in or related to this Training and Development Policy, please contact:

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