



# **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL PENSION FUND**

## **TRAINING POLICY**

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This training policy documents the Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund (the Fund) responsibilities in relation to members and observer members of the Pension Fund Committee and Board.
- 1.2 The policy has been drawn up:
  - i To identify the level of knowledge and skills required by members, and
  - ii To outline the training arrangements for the Committee and members
- 1.3 This version of the Training Policy is to be approved by the Pension Fund Committee of Scottish Borders Council on 18 June 2026.
- 1.4 For the avoidance of any doubt, the term members in relation to this Policy will refer to all members of the Pension Board and the Pension Fund Committee irrespective of voting rights, as set out in the amendment to the Scheme of Administration agreed by Council on 28 November 2024.

## 2 Myners Principles

- 2.1 The desirability of pension fund decision making being overseen by persons with the right skills and expertise was recognised in 2001 in the UK Government's *Institutional Investment in the United Kingdom: A Review*, undertaken by Paul Myners and reaffirmed in the *Updating the Myne's Principles: A Response to Consultation* in October 2008
- 2.2 The revised Myners principles following the 2008 review are the accepted code of practice applying to local government pension funds throughout the United Kingdom and these principles apply to all pension committee members (elected and other appointments) and officers.
- 2.3 The first Myners principle explicitly states that:
  - i Decisions are taken by persons or organisations with the skills, knowledge, advice and resources necessary to make them effectively and monitor their implementation; and
  - ii Those persons or organisations have sufficient expertise to be able to evaluate and challenge the advice they receive and manage conflicts of interest.
- 2.4 The best practice guidance from CIPFA in relation to demonstrating this first principle indicates that *"the committee should ensure that it has appropriate skills and is run in a way designed to facilitate effective decision making. It should conduct skills and knowledge audits of its membership at regular intervals in relation to the scope of its work and the pensions issues that are most relevant. The adoption of a training plan and an annual update of training and development needs (including monitoring progress made) would represent good practice in demonstrating that the committee is actively managing the development of*

*its members. A statement should appear in the annual report describing actions taken and progress made.”<sup>1</sup>*

- 2.5 The Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) (Scotland) Regulations 2010 requires administering authorities to report the extent of compliance with this first Myners principle and the Fund does so as part of the Statement of Investment Principles

### 3 Governance Compliance

- 3.1 Guidance on governance matters and training has been issued between 2009 and 2014 by the Pensions Regulator, CIPFA and the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA). This training policy has been drafted in line with the collective guidance.

- 3.2 To underline the Fund's commitment to the CIPFA Code of Practice on Public Sector Pensions Finance Knowledge and Skills, the following policy statement has been adopted:

“The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff and members charged with the financial administration and decision making with regard to the Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to discharge the duties and responsibilities allocated to them”.

It therefore seeks to utilise individuals who are both capable and experienced and it will provide and arrange training for staff and members of the Pension Fund Committee and Board to enable them to acquire and maintain an appropriate level of expertise, knowledge and skills”

- 3.3 In addition, the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) issued guidance in relation to the Governance Compliance Statement in April 2011, establishing the best practice standard that administering authorities are required to measure themselves against. The standards established for training are as follows:
- i That in relation to the way in which statutory and related decisions are taken by the administering authority, there is a clear policy on training, facility time and reimbursement of expenses in respect of members involved in the decision-making process.
  - ii That where such a policy exists, it applies equally to all members of committees, sub-committees, advisory panels or any other form of secondary forum.
  - iii That the administering authority considers the adoption of annual training plans for committee members and maintains a log of all such training undertaken.
- 3.4 The Pensions Regulator's (TPR) General Code of Practice emphasizes the importance of effective governance and requires pension schemes to have training policies for their boards and committees. This code encourages regular reviews of training plans and maintains a comprehensive training and development plan for all members. The code also highlights the need for members to have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their duties.

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<sup>1</sup> CIPFA: Investment decision making and disclosure in the Local Government Pension Scheme. A Guide to the Application of the Myners Principles.

### 3.5 Nolan Principles

All members must comply with The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder:

1. **Selflessness:** Acting solely in terms of the public interest.
2. **Integrity:** Avoiding obligations to outside individuals or organizations that might seek to influence them.
3. **Objectivity:** Making decisions based on evidence and without bias.
4. **Accountability:** Being accountable for decisions and actions.
5. **Openness:** Being transparent and providing information.
6. **Honesty:** Being truthful and straightforward.
7. **Leadership:** Setting an example and promoting these principles.

## 4 Training

- 4.1 On joining the Committee or Board, members must attend a training session to understand the details of roles and responsibilities to allow them to participate in decision making or scrutiny of complex pension issues.
- 4.2 All members must complete the Pension Regulator Trustee Toolkit within 6 months of joining the Committee or Board.
- 4.3 An Induction File will also be provided to members when they start with the Committee or Board, and it will contain key documents relevant to the Fund and other information that is deemed useful. The members will be expected to use this information and have read the key documents.
- 4.4 A skills knowledge assessment will be undertaken annually for each member of the Committee and Board. The results from the assessment will be used to determine the content of annual training plans. In addition to the training plan, relevant conferences and Investment update opportunities will be made available throughout the year for all Board and Committee members.
- 4.5 Annual training plans will be prepared for the Committee and members that will be commensurate with their respective roles and responsibilities and will be aligned to the CIPFA Skills and Knowledge Framework contained in **Appendix A**.
- 4.6 A training log will be retained for each member in line with the best practice standard.
- 4.7 For the Pension Fund Investment and Performance Sub Committee an informal meeting of the Sub Committee with the Fund's external Investment Adviser immediately prior to the formal meeting will be held to enable all members of the Sub Committee to be appropriately briefed and better prepared to question the Fund Managers in depth following their presentation.
- 4.8 As part of their commitment to good scheme governance, Members, will be expected to attend at least two Committee meetings each year and two training sessions each year. The two training sessions are over and above any training given at the pre-meeting to the Pension Fund Investment and Performance Sub-Committee. It should be noted training sessions are awarded appropriate weighting according to their content. The Pension

Committee and Board Training-day would cover all annual training requirements. However, members are encouraged to attend seminars and conferences too.

4.9 Training Opportunities for the Committee and Board members will include the following events:

- i Internal training events;
- ii Seminars and conferences offered by industry wide bodies, e.g. the LAPF and PLSA annual conferences;
- iii Seminars and training events offered by the Fund's investment managers and advisors;
- iv Online training; and
- v Professional reading.

4.10 The Pension Regulator online toolkit ([tpr.gov.uk/public-service schemes](http://tpr.gov.uk/public-service-schemes)) is recommended for all Committee and Board Members, and completion of modules will be noted in the training register.

4.11 A formal record of attendance at meetings and training events will be maintained and published in the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts. Officers will identify appropriate training opportunities and bring these to the attention of the Committee and Board. Training and meeting attendance is reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure compliance from all members.

## 5 Reporting and Review Arrangements

5.1 CIPFA has recommended as good practice that the Pension Fund Annual Report includes a disclosure as to how the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework has been applied for the Fund, what assessment of training needs has been undertaken and what training has been delivered against the identified training needs.

5.2 The Annual Training Plans will be presented to the Committee and Board for review and agreement.

## 6 Reimbursement of Expenses

6.1 Councillors are remunerated for their expenses through the local government members responsibility allowances scheme. Other members can apply for reimbursement of reasonable expenses such as travel costs which have been incurred in relation to agreed training.

## APPENDIX A

### CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework

1. The training framework is based on the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework guidance which identifies six areas of knowledge and skills required as core technical requirements of those working in public sector pensions finance.
2. The six areas are:
  - i Pension legislative and governance context
  - ii Pensions accounting and auditing standards
  - iii Financial services procurement and relationship management
  - iv Investment performance and risk management
  - v Financial markets and products knowledge
  - vi Actuarial methods, standards and practices.
3. The framework will be used to assess knowledge and identify future training needs to ensure effective decision-making.
4. The levels of knowledge required is categorised as follows:
  - 1 In Depth
  - 2 Understanding
  - 3 Awareness
5. The Framework and Knowledge requirements are summarised as follows:

Training Framework	Members Knowledge Requirement
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> </ul>	3
Pensions accounting and auditing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and accounting regulations and requirement</li> </ul>	3
Financial Services procurement and relationship management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding public procurement</li> <li>• Supplier risk management</li> </ul>	2
Investment performance and risk management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund performance</li> <li>• Performance of Advisers</li> <li>• Performance of Committees</li> <li>• Performance of Support Services</li> </ul>	2
Financial markets and product knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment strategy</li> <li>• Financial markets</li> </ul>	2
Actuarial methods, standards and practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuations</li> <li>• Bulk Transfers</li> </ul>	2

## VERSION CONTROL TABLE

Version	Nature of Amendment	Date of Change	Author
2012 1.0	Creation of Training Policy	30 August 2012	Lynn Mirley
2012 2.0	Approved by Pension Fund Committee	13 September 2012	Lynn Mirley
2013 1.0	Updated for changes to Scheme of Administration	11 June 2013	Lynn Mirley
2013.2	Approved by Pension Fund Committee	18 June 2013	Kirsty Robb
2015.1	Update for revised Governance structure	18 June 2015	Kirsty Robb
2017.1	Inclusion of mandatory completion of Pension Regulator Trustee Toolkit	22 June 2017	Kirsty Robb
2019.1	Change to approval date	13 June 2019	Kirsty Robb
2024.1	Update for review and monitoring of Pension Board and Committee training & meeting attendance	20 June 2024	Jill Murray
2025.1	Updated to include: Section 3.4 TPRs General Code importance of Good Governance. Section 3.5 Nolan Principles	24 June 2025	Jill Murray
2026.1	Approved by Pension Fund Committee	18 June 2026	Jill Murray

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