

Pensions Board

23 January 2018

Report title	Pension Board Workplan 2018/19	
Originating service	Pensions	
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Recommendations for decision:

The Board is recommended to:

1. Review and agree the proposed workplan of the Board for the period 2018/19
2. Confirm any specific training requests for the year 2018/19
3. Undertake the Pension Regulator's Trustee Toolkit and record its completion with the Trustee Management Officer.

Recommendations for noting:

The Board is asked to:

1. Note the training record for the Local Pensions Board for the year to date
2. Note the work on the Fund's statutory and operational policies to date.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval for the Local Pension Board (“The Board”) workplan for the forthcoming municipal year.
- 1.2 To present the Board’s training record for the year 2017/18 and to identify training needs for the year 2018/19.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Regulation 106(1) of The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 specifies that Local Pension Boards are responsible for assisting the Administering Authority to secure compliance with:
 - the Regulations;
 - other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS; and
 - the requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the LGPS, and
- 2.2 To ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS.
- 2.3 The National LGPS Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) provides advice and guidance for Administering Authorities and Local Pension Boards on the administration and management of the LGPS. Each year the SAB is required to submit its own workplan, objectives and budget to the Secretary of State for approval. During 2017/18 the SAB has been actively engaging with Funds on asset pooling; transparency reporting of investment costs; the impact of academisation; and scheme deficit management. This work together with the planned employer cost cap review is expected to continue into 2018/19 with an increased focus on data quality and the ability of Funds to meet the deadline for producing Annual Benefit Statements.

3.0 Workplan and work of the Fund to date

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix One is the proposed workplan for the Board for 2018/19. It has been designed in consideration of the work undertaken and requested by the Board and the Scheme Advisory Board to date as well as ensuring the Local Board’s responsibilities under the Act are met. The plan sets out the areas of work carried out and includes the action, frequency and purpose.
- 3.2 The workplan further notes the plan for Policy Review by the Board to review and consider the Fund’s statutory and discretionary policies ensuring the good governance of the scheme.
- 3.3 This year, the Fund has undergone a period of change as we draw closer to the creation of investment pooling in April 2018 as well as having undergone a change in its Senior Management and individual team structures to ensure it is well equipped to meet the drivers for change over the coming year and beyond.

4.0 Policy Review 2017/18

- 4.1 As part of the Board's 2017/2018 workplan the Board are required to review and consider the statutory and discretionary policies of the Fund, divided at each meeting.

Customer Engagement Strategy

- 4.2 Employees have been working to deliver the Customer Engagement Strategy and this year we have seen an increase in the number of member and employer events alongside the launch of the new member pensions portal. Work in this area continues to develop member and employer portal services and looks more broadly at our Digital Transformation. The fund is currently reviewing its Customer Engagement Strategy in line with the Digital Transformation Program which will significantly change the way we interact with our Customers. An overview of our Customer Engagement Plan for 2018 is attached at Appendix Two.
- 4.3 As noted in the Customer Engagement report, the Fund is implementing employer dashboards and changes to employer processes which will be launched in April 2018 as part of a wider Customer Engagement Strategy together with its program of Deferred Member Tracing. A renewed Strategy will be presented to the Board at its July meeting.
- 4.4 The Fund is keen to engage with its Customer on all levels and actively promotes its Customer Feedback Policy on its website and through the engagement activities we undertake. That policy seeks to ensure the Fund is always assessed by its Customers on the services it provides with analysis undertaken to determine continued improvement and to ensure the Fund adapts to the needs of its Customers. A copy of the Fund's latest Feedback Policy is attached at Appendix Three and are the Board are asked to review and approve the draft for publication on our website.
- 4.5 Further analysis of the feedback received is outlined in the Customer Engagement Update report.
- 4.6 The Fund actively promotes its internal teams as customers of each other and as well as improving the service for our customers, the Fund has undertaken a program of self-investment, implementing annual training programs for employees to develop skills highlighted in their annual appraisal and offering secondment opportunities for those wanting to develop their skills in new areas. This year the Fund also ran a successful summer placement program for university students. 9 students from across the West Midlands joined the Fund throughout August and September and played a key role in assisting with workloads across all areas of the Fund.
- 4.7 The Fund continues to look to the future of its workforce and has pledged to the City of Wolverhampton Council's Wolves in Work initiative to provide a number of graduate and apprenticeship posts. Recruitment for these is underway currently alongside a number of other roles to support and develop day-to-day Fund operations.

Local Pension Board Member Code of Conduct

4.8 Members of the Local Pension Board are expected to maintain high standards of conduct when undertaking their duties. On its creation in 2015, the Board adopted a Code of Conduct outlining that standard of behaviour agreeing to review it annually to ensure its continued relevance and compliance with the statutory expectation of Pension Board Members. A copy of the Code is attached at Appendix Four, it is not proposed to make any changes to the Code for the 2018/19 year.

5.0 Local Pension Board Training Record 2017/18

5.1 The Board are required to have the knowledge and capacity relevant to undertake their role as outlined in the Governance Regulations and throughout 2017/18 the West Midlands Local Pension Board achieved a total of 109.50 hours as at December 2017. This is expected to rise before the end of the municipal year. Attached at Appendix Five is an outline of the Board's training record which will be published in the Fund's annual report and accounts reviewed by the Scheme Advisory Board.

5.2 Recently the Fund has seen an increase in interest from the Pensions Regulator in the training and development of pension fund Trustees and Local Pension Board members. The Regulator recently issued its latest survey for LGPS funds asking the question of effectiveness and how it was monitored. The Fund are reviewing its Feedback policy to ensure Trustees and Local Pension Board members are adequately able to assess their effectiveness in their roles.

5.3 The Fund continually reviews its Trustee Training Program to ensure the Committee and the Local Pension Board receives up to date training on issues relevant to the LGPS. The Board are asked to provide Jane Hazeldine, Trustee Management Officer with their reported training hours for this quarter and to highlight any areas of identified training need in consideration of the proposed workplan for 2018/2019.

5.4 In line with the Regulator's expectation on training, the Board are asked to complete the Regulator's Trustee Toolkit available online, in time for the July meeting and to consider any training needs in line with the topics presented.

5.5 A full schedule of training will be presented to the Board's first meeting of the new democratic year in July 2018.

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 The Pension Board is provided for in the Fund's operation budget.

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 None

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 None

9.0 Environmental implications

9.1 None

10.0 Human resources implications

10.1 None

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

11.1 None

12.0 Schedule of background papers

12.1 Public Service Pensions Act 2013

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/25/contents/enacted>

12.2 The Local Pension Board workplan for 2017/18

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s35537/Pension%20Board%20Workplan%20201718.pdf>

12.3 CIPFA Knowledge and Skills

<http://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/publications/p/pensions-finance-knowledge-and-skills-framework--technical-guidance-for-elected-representatives-and-nonexecutives-in-the-public-sector>

12.4 The Pension Regulator Trustee Toolkit

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

13.0 Appendices

13.1 Appendix One
Workplan 2017/18

13.2 Appendix Two
Customer Engagement Plan 2018

13.3 Appendix Three
Customer Feedback Policy

13.2 Appendix Four
Local Pension Board Code of Conduct

13.3 Appendix Five
Summary of Pension Board Training hours to December 2017