



hammersmith & fulham

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Pension Fund

Investment Strategy Statement 2023/24

1. Purpose of the Investment Strategy Statement

- 1.1. This is the Investment Strategy Statement (ISS) adopted by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Pension Fund (“the Fund”), which is administered by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Council (“the Administering Authority”).

Under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Pension Fund is required to publish this ISS. The regulations require administering authorities to outline how they meet each of the six objectives, aimed at improving the investment and governance processes of the Fund.

- 1.2. This statement addresses each of the objectives included in the 2016 Regulations:
- a) A requirement to invest fund money in a wide range of instruments;
 - b) The authority’s assessment of suitability of particular investments and types of investment;
 - c) The authority’s approach to risk, including the way in which risks are to be measured and managed;
 - d) The authority’s approach to pooling investments, including the use of collective investment vehicles;
 - e) The authority’s policy on how environmental, social or governance (ESG) considerations are taken into account in the selection, non-selection, retention and realisation of investments; and
 - f) The authority’s policy on the exercise of rights (including voting rights) attaching to investments.

- 1.3. The Pension Fund Committee (“the Committee”) of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Pension Fund oversees the management of the Fund’s assets. Although not trustees, the Members of the Committee owe a fiduciary duty similar to that of trustees to the council tax payers, who ultimately have to meet any shortfall in the assets of the Fund, as well as to the contributors and beneficiaries of the Fund.

- 1.4. The relevant terms of reference for the Committee within the Council’s Constitution are:

- To make all decisions under Regulations made pursuant to Sections 7, 12 or 24 of the Superannuation Act not otherwise falling to the Director of Finance to determine as set out in the officers’ scheme of delegation.
- The consideration and approval of the authority statement of accounts and annual report in accordance with the relevant Accounts & Audit Regulations made from time to time.
- To receive and consider the Auditor’s report on the governance of the Fund.
- To receive actuarial valuations of the Fund regarding the level of employers’ contributions necessary to balance the Fund.
- To have responsibility for all aspects of the investment and other management activity of the Fund.
- To agree the investment strategy and strategic asset allocation having regard to the advice of the fund managers and the investment consultant.
- To monitor performance of the Pension Fund, individual fund managers, custodians, actuary and other external advisors to ensure that they remain suitable.

- To determine the Fund management arrangements, including the appointment and termination of the investment managers, actuary, custodians and fund advisers.
- To agree the Investment Strategy Statement, the Funding Strategy Statement, the Business Plan for the Fund, the Governance Policy Statement, the Communications Policy Statement and to ensure compliance with these.
- To oversee and approve any changes to the administrative arrangements, material contracts and policies and procedures of the Council for the payment of pensions, and allowances to beneficiaries.
- To make and review an admission policy relating to admission agreements generally with any admission body.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant statutes, regulations and best practice with both the public and private sectors.
- To review the arrangements and managers for the provision of Additional Voluntary Contributions for fund members.
- To determine any other investment or pension fund policies that may be required from time to time, so as to comply with Government regulations and to make any decisions in accordance with those policies.

1.5. The Committee has responsibility for:

- Determining an overall investment strategy and strategic asset allocation, with regard to diversification and the suitability of asset classes to the Fund.
- Appointing the investment managers, an independent custodian, the actuary, the investment advisor(s) and any other external consultants considered necessary.
- Reviewing on a regular basis the investment managers' performance against benchmarks, portfolio risk and satisfying themselves as to the managers' expertise and the quality of their internal systems and controls.
- Monitoring compliance with the ISS & Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) and reviewing its contents.
- Reviewing social, environmental, governance (ESG) and ethical considerations policies, and the exercise of voting rights.

1.6. The Director of Finance, Director of Treasury and Pensions, officers and the appointed consultants and actuaries support the Committee. The day-to-day management of the Fund's assets is delegated to the investment managers.

1.7. This ISS will be reviewed at least annually, or more frequently as required, in particular, following valuations, future asset/liability studies and performance reviews, which may indicate a need to change investment policy, or significant changes to the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS).

1.8. Under the previous Regulations, the Statement of Investment Principles required administering authorities to state how they complied with the revised six investment principles as outlined within the CIPFA Pensions Panel Principles. Although not formally required under the 2016 Regulations, this information is given in Appendix A.

2. Objective 7.2 (A) – A requirement to investment fund money in a wide range of instruments

2.1. Funding and investment risks are discussed in more detail later in this document. However, at this stage, it is important to state that the Committee is aware of the risks it runs within the Fund and the consequences associated with these risks.

2.2. In order to control risk, the Committee recognises that the Fund should have an investment strategy that has:

- Exposure to a diverse range of sources of return; such as the financial markets, the manager's skill and the use of alternative investments which are less liquid.
- A diverse range of investible asset classes.
- A diverse range of approaches to the management of the underlying assets.

2.3. This approach to diversification has seen the Fund dividing its assets into four broad categories as shown in the table below:

Asset Category	Asset Allocation (%)	Review Range (%)
Equities	40.0	+/-3.0
Active	13.0	
Passive	27.0	
Low Risk Growth	25.0	+/-2.0
Buy and Maintain Bonds	15.0	
Multi-Asset	10.0	
Secure Income	20.0	+/-1.0
Infrastructure	8.5	
Illiquid Strategies	11.5	
Inflation Protection	15.0	+/-1.0
Ground Rents	7.5	
Affordable Housing	2.5	
Property (Long Lease)	5.0	

It is important to note that within each category, the Fund's underlying investments are not concentrated to one particular sector, thereby providing further diversification benefits. The asset allocation is regularly reviewed and subject to change depending on the prevailing investment conditions.

- 2.4. The Committee is mainly concerned about ensuring the Fund's long-term ability to meet pension and other benefit obligations, as and when they fall due. To this end, the Committee places a high degree of importance on ensuring the expected return on the assets is sufficient to do so and does not have to rely on a level of risk which the Committee considers to be excessive.
- 2.5. The Committee regularly reviews both the performance and expected returns from the Fund's investments to measure whether it has met, and is likely to meet in the future, its return objectives. The Fund currently has a negative cash flow position. This means that the contributions paid in by active members are less than the pension obligations paid out on a monthly basis. The Committee regularly monitors the Fund's cash flow position, and the impact investment income has towards mitigating this risk.
- 2.6. In addition to keeping its investment strategy and policy under regular review, the Committee will keep this ISS under review to ensure that it reflects the approaches being taken. At all times, the Committee takes the view that its investment decisions, including those involving diversification, are in the best long-term interest of the Fund's beneficiaries and seeks appropriate advice from investment advisors.

3. Objective 7.2 (B) The authority's assessment of the suitability of particular investments and types of investment

- 3.1. When assessing the suitability of investments, the Fund considers several factors:
- Expected return
 - Risk profile
 - Market concentration

- Risk management qualities provided by the asset when the whole portfolio is considered
 - Geographic and currency exposures
 - The extent to which the management of the asset meets the Fund's ESG criteria
- 3.2. Suitability is a critical test for whether or not a particular investment should be made. Each of the Fund's investments has an individual performance benchmark, against which their reported performance is measured.
- 3.3. The Committee monitors the suitability of the Fund's assets on a quarterly basis. This includes the monitoring of investment returns and the volatility of the individual investments, together with the Fund's expected level of returns and acceptable risk, the latter point being to ensure that risks caused by interactions between investments within the portfolio are properly understood. When comparative statistics are available, the Committee will also compare the Fund asset performance with those of similar funds.
- 3.4. The Committee relies on external advice in relation to the collation of the statistics for review.

4. **Objective 7.2 (C) The authority's approach to risk, including ways in which risks are to be measured and managed**

- 4.1. The Committee recognises that there are several risks involved in the investment of fund assets, which include:
- **Geopolitical and currency risks:**
 - are measured by the value of assets (concentration risk) in any one market, leading to the risk of an adverse influence on investment values arising from political intervention; and
 - are managed by regular reviews of the actual investments relative to policy and through regular assessment of levels of diversification.
 - **Manager risk:**
 - is measured by the expected deviation of the prospective risk and return as set out in the manager(s) investment objectives, relative to the investment policy; and
 - is managed by monitoring the actual deviation of returns relative to the objective and factors inherent in the manager(s) investment process.
 - **Solvency and mismatching risks:**
 - are measured through a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the expected development of the liabilities relative to the current and alternative investment policies; and
 - are managed by assessing the progress of the actual growth of the liabilities relative to the selected investment policy.
 - **Liquidity risk:**
 - is measured by the level of cash flow required over a specified period; and
 - managed by assessing the level of cash held in order to limit the impact of the cash flow requirements on the investment cash policy.
 - **Custodial risk:**
 - Is measured by assessing the creditworthiness of the global custodian and the ability of the organisation to settle trades on time and provide secure safekeeping of the assets under custody.
- 4.2. Employer contributions are based upon financial and demographic assumption determined by the actuary. The main risks to the Fund are highlighted within the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS). The risks to the Fund are controlled in the following ways:

- the adoption and monitoring of asset allocation benchmarks, ranges and performance targets constrain the investment managers from deviating significantly from the intended approach while permitting the flexibility for managers to enhance returns.
 - the appointment of more than one manager with different mandates and approaches provides for the diversification of manager risk.
- 4.3. The investment management agreements constrain the manager's actions in areas of particular risk and set out the respective responsibilities of both the manager and the Fund.
 - 4.4. The Committee is aware that investment risk is only one aspect of the risks facing the Fund. The other key risk relates to the Fund's ability to meet the future liabilities, support the investment risk (i.e., the level of volatility of investment return) and underwrite actuarial risk, namely, the volatility in the actuarial funding position and the impact this has on contributions.
 - 4.5. The Committee is of the view that the diversification of the Fund assets is sufficiently broad to ensure the investment risk is low and will continue to be low. When putting in place the investment strategy, the Committee carefully considers both the individual asset risk characteristics and those of the combined portfolio to ensure the risks are appropriate.
 - 4.6. Estimating the likely volatility of future investment returns is difficult as it relies on both estimates of individual asset class returns and the correlation between them. These can be based on historic asset class information for some of the listed asset classes in which the Fund invests. However, for other private market and less liquid assets, it is much more difficult.
 - 4.7. The Committee is mindful that correlations change over time and at time of stress, it can be significantly different from when they are in more benign market conditions.
 - 4.8. To help manage risk, the Committee uses an external investment adviser to monitor the portfolio risk level. In addition, when carrying out their investment strategy review, the Committee can appoint different investment advisors to assess the level of risk involved.
 - 4.9. The Fund targets a return of 4.1%, in line with the latest triennial actuarial valuation provided by the fund's actuary. This investment strategy is considered to have a low degree of volatility.
 - 4.10. When reviewing the investment strategy on a quarterly basis, the Committee considers advice from their advisers and the need to take additional steps to protect the value of the assets that may arise or capitalise on opportunities if they are deemed suitable. In addition to this, the risk registers are also reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis.
 - 4.11. At each review of the Investment Strategy Statement, the assumptions on risk and return, and their impact on asset allocation will be reviewed.

5. Objective 7.2 (D) The authority's approach to pooling investments, including the use of collective investment vehicles

- 5.1. The Fund recognises the Government's requirement for LGPS funds to pool their investments and is committed to pursuing a pooling solution that ensures maximum cost effectiveness for the Fund, both in terms of return and management cost. The Fund's pooling arrangements meet the criteria set out in the Local Government Pension Scheme: Investment Reform Criteria and Guidance.
- 5.2. The Fund is a shareholder and participating scheme of the London Collective Investment Vehicle (London CIV) and joined the asset pool as part of the Government's pooling agenda. The London CIV was launched in December 2015 by the 32 local authorities within London

and has about £45 billion of assets under management, of which £14.3 billion is managed directly with 22 active funds as of 30 September 2023.

- 5.3. As at the 31 March 2023, the Fund had transitioned assets into the London CIV with a value of £908 million, equivalent to 71% of the fund's assets. The Fund continues to monitor the ongoing development of investment strategies available on the London CIV platform and will look to transition further assets as and when there are suitable investment strategies available on the platform that are compatible with the Fund's investment strategy and objectives.

The table below details the investment assets held by the Fund, that are invested with the pool as at 31 March 2023:

Asset Class	Availability on LCIV	Investment with LCIV
Global Equities		
MSCI Low Carbon Fund (LGIM)	Contract negotiated on behalf of LCIV clients	£399.8m
LCIV Global Sustain (Morgan Stanley)	Yes	£185.9m
Multi Asset		
LCIV Absolute Return (Ruffer)	Yes	£232.3m
Fixed Income		
LCIV Global Bonds (PIMCO)	Yes	£90.1m

- 5.4. The Fund has committed capital to alternative investment strategies such as property, infrastructure and illiquid debt. The cost of exiting these strategies early would present a material negative financial impact for the Fund. As such, the Fund will continue to hold these investments outside of the London CIV pooling structure to maturity, at which point, the Fund will assess the viability of making such investments within the pool, subject to availability and the Fund's asset allocation.
- 5.5. The Committee is aware that transitioning certain investment assets to the London CIV could incur significant costs. While it is the expectation of the Fund to make use of the London CIV for the management of most of the Fund's assets in the longer term, the Committee recognises that transitioning from the current structure to the London CIV will be a protracted exercise spread over several years to ensure that unnecessary costs are not incurred.
- 5.6. The Fund reviews its investment strategy at least once every three years, an exercise which considers the suitability of each investment within the portfolio, including an assessment of transition and investment opportunities with the London CIV.

Governance structure of the London CIV

- 5.7. The governance structure of the London CIV has been designed to ensure that there are both formal and informal routes to engage with all the London boroughs as both shareholders and investors. The governance structure of the London CIV includes a Shareholder Committee which acts on behalf of the Shareholders as a consultative body. It comprises of 12 Committee Members made up of eight Local Authority Committee Chairs (or Leaders of London Local Authorities), four Local Authority Treasurers and the Chair of the Board of London CIV. It also comprises of two Non-Executive Directors and as two further nominated observers, a Trade Union representative and a Local Authority Treasurer. This arrangement replaced the Pensions CIV Sectoral Joint Committee (PCSJC) as confirmed in a letter to the Fund dated 13 June 2018. In addition, the London CIV hosts an AGM each year and a general meeting to approve the London CIV's budget. The Fund attends these meetings with the Chair of the Pension Committee representing the Fund.

5.8. As an AIFM, London CIV must comply with the Alternative Investment Manager Directive (“AIFMD”) and falls under the regulatory scrutiny and reporting regime of the Financial Conduct Authority (“FCA”). This includes the requirement for robust systems and processes and for these to be documented appropriately in policies and manuals. Risk management is a particular focus for the FCA and London CIV has developed a risk framework and risk register covering all areas of its operations, including fund management. This is achieved through a combination of the London Councils’ Sectoral Joint Committee, comprising nominated Member representatives from the London boroughs, and the Investment Advisory Committee formed from nominated borough officers, which includes both London borough treasurers and pension officers from several boroughs. At the company level it is the Board of Directors that is responsible for decision making within the company, which includes decisions to appoint and remove investment managers.

6. Objective 7.2 (E) How environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are taken into account in the selection, non-selection and retention and realisation of investments

6.1. The Fund recognises environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors as central themes in measuring the sustainability and impact of its investment decisions. Failure to appropriately manage these factors is considered to be a key risk for the fund as this can have an adverse impact on the fund’s overall investment performance, which ultimately affects the scheme members, employers and local council taxpayers.

6.2. The United Nations (UN) has established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a blueprint to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. These goals aim to address the challenges of tackling climate change, supporting industry, innovation and infrastructure, and investing in companies that are focused on playing a key role in building that sustainable future.

6.3. While it might not be practical for any organisation to achieve all the SDGs solely by itself, the Fund has developed a Responsible Investment policy that targets several of the UN’s SDGs that are aligned with the Fund’s investment values.

6.4. The Fund, alongside its administering authority employer, has committed itself to achieving carbon neutrality by the year 2030. This commitment demonstrates the Fund’s intention to act as a responsible investor and will increasingly play a fundamental role in fund’s asset allocation and investment manager selection processes.

6.5. The Fund maintains a policy of engagement with all its stakeholders, including those operating in the investment industry. It is broadly recognised that in the foreseeable future, the global economy will transition from its reliance on fossil fuels to the widespread adoption of renewables as the main source of energy production. The impact of this transition on the sustainability of investment returns will be continually assessed.

6.6. The Committee is committed to playing an active role in the transition to a sustainable economic and societal environment. To that end, the Fund will continue to seek investments that match its pension liability profile, while having a positive impact on society. The Fund is of the view that greater impact can be achieved through active ownership and lobbying for firms to change and utilise their resources sustainably.

6.7. The Committee recognises that it has a fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of the scheme’s members to ensure that their benefits are honoured in retirement. Such responsibility extends also to making a positive contribution to the long-term sustainability of the global environment. ESG integration into the Fund’s investment decision processes aims to mitigate the associated investment risks, while enhancing investment returns for the Fund, thereby safeguarding members’ futures.

Policy implementation – Selection process

- 6.8. The Committee delegates the individual investment selection decisions to its investment managers. In doing so, the Fund maintains a policy of non-interference with the day-to-day decision-making processes of the investment managers. However, as part of its investment manager appointment process, the Committee assesses the investment managers' abilities to integrate ESG factors into their investment selection process. This includes, but is not limited to:
- evidence of the existence of a responsible investment policy;
 - evidence of ESG integration in the investment process;
 - evidence of sign up to relevant responsible investment frameworks such as the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment (UNPRI) and the Stewardship Code;
 - commitment to addressing the challenges posed by climate change;
 - a track record of actively engaging with stakeholders to influence best practice;
 - an ability to appropriately disclose, measure and report on the overall impact of ESG decisions made
- 6.9. As part of its investment manager selection process, the Committee will obtain proper advice from the Fund's internal and external advisers with the requisite knowledge and skills; this will be supplemented by regular training.
- 6.10. Investment managers are expected to follow industry best practice and use their influence as major institutional investors and long-term stewards of capital to promote best practice in the companies/projects in which they invest. Investable companies will be expected to comply with all the applicable laws and regulations in their respective markets as a minimum.

Policy Implementation – Ongoing engagement

- 6.11. While it is still quite difficult to quantify the impact of the less tangible non-financial factors on the economic performance of an organisation, this is an area that continues to see significant improvements. Several benchmarks and disclosure frameworks exist to measure the different aspects of available ESG data which include carbon emissions, diversity on company boards and social impact. It is apparent that poor scoring on these ESG factors can have an adverse impact on an organisation's financial performance. It is therefore important for the appointed investment managers to effectively assess the impact such factors may have on the underlying investments.
- 6.12. The Fund's officers will continue to engage with the investment managers on an ongoing basis to monitor overall investment performance, including ESG considerations. This can be implemented in several forms which include but are not limited to:
- regular meetings with investment managers to assess investment performance and the progress made towards achieving ESG targets;
 - reviewing reports issued by investment managers and challenging performance where appropriate;
 - working with investment managers to establish appropriate ESG reporting and disclosures in line with pension fund's objectives;
 - contribution to various working groups that seek to positively influence the reporting of industry standards on ESG metrics;
 - actively contributing to the efforts of engagement groups such as the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), of which the fund is a member.
- 6.13. The Fund's officers will work closely with the London CIV (through which the Fund will increasingly invest) in developing and monitoring its internal frameworks and policies on all issues which could present a material financial risk to the long-term performance of the Fund.

This will include the London CIV's ESG frameworks and policies for investment analysis and decision making.

- 6.14. Fund officers will report on the Fund's investment performance, including an update on the ongoing ESG performance, to the Committee at least once every quarter. This will include a review into the Fund's progress towards achieving its ESG targets.
- 6.15. In preparing and reviewing its Investment Strategy Statement, the Fund will consult with the relevant stakeholders including, but not limited to:
 - pension fund employers;
 - local pension board;
 - advisers/consultants to the fund;
 - investment managers.

Policy Implementation - Training

- 6.16. The Committee and the Fund's officers will receive regular training on responsible investment. A review of training requirements and needs will be carried out at least annually. Training is intended to cover the latest updates in legislation and regulations, as well as best practice with regards to ESG integration into the Fund's investment process.

7. Objective 7.2 (F) The exercise of rights (including voting rights) attached to investments

- 7.1. The Fund recognises the importance of its role as good stewards of capital and the need to ensure the highest standards of governance, promoting corporate responsibility in the underlying companies in which it holds its investments. The Committee has delegated the Fund's voting rights to its investment managers who are required and expected, where practical, to make considered use of voting in the interests of the Fund.
- 7.2. Through its participation as a member of the London CIV, the Fund continues to work closely with other LGPS funds in London to enhance the level of engagement with both the investment managers and the underlying companies in which it invests.
- 7.3. The Fund is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), a leading collaborative shareholder engagement group in the UK. The LAPFF regularly issues voting alerts to investment managers on behalf of its members. Investment managers are encouraged to vote in accordance with these alerts where possible or provide an explanation as to why they are unable to do so. The Fund's membership in the LAPFF helps in magnifying the voice and influence of pension fund assets owners.
- 7.4. Further information on the ongoing voting and engagement activities of the Fund are covered in the Fund's Responsible Investment Policy. The Committee expects investment managers, including the London CIV pool company, to comply with the Stewardship Code (2020) and this is monitored on an annual basis. Additional information regarding the fund's approach are included in Appendix A and B.

Feedback on this statement

Any feedback on this Investment Statement is welcomed. If you have any comments or wish to discuss any issues, please contact:

Tri-Borough Pensions Team

pensionfund@lbhf.gov.uk

Decision Making

Regulation 12(3) of The Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2009 requires an administering authority to report on its compliance with the six Myners Principles, in accordance with guidance given by the Secretary of State. The guidance for the Local Government Pension Scheme is set out in the CIPFA publication "*Investment Decision Making and Disclosure in the Local Government Pension Scheme in the United Kingdom 2012*".

The Fund aims to comply with all of the Myners' Principles, recognising it is in all parties' interests if the Fund operates to standards of investment decision-making and governance identified as best practice. It is therefore important for the Fund to demonstrate how it meets principles and intends to achieve best practice.

The Secretary of State has previously highlighted the principle contained in *Roberts v. Hopwood*, for pension funds whose administering bodies exercise their duties and powers under regulations governing the investment and management of funds:

"A body charged with the administration for definite purposes of funds contributed in whole or in part by persons other than members of that body owes, in my view, a duty to those latter persons to conduct that administration in a fairly business-like manner with reasonable care, skill and caution, and with a due and alert regard to the interest of those contributors who are not members of the body. Towards these latter persons the body stands somewhat in the position of trustees or managers of others".

The Myners' Principles are widely accepted to be in support of this approach. The principles, together with the Fund's position on compliance, are set out below:

Principle 1 – Effective decision making

Administering authorities should ensure that:

- decisions are taken by persons or organisations with the skills, knowledge advice and resources necessary to make them effectively and monitor their implementation; and
- those persons or organisations have sufficient expertise to be able to evaluate and challenge the advice they receive while also managing any conflicts of interest.

Full compliance

The Hammersmith & Fulham Council (the Council) has delegated the management and administration of the Fund to the Pension Fund Committee (the Committee). The Committee meets at least quarterly. The responsibilities of the Committee are described in section 1 of the Investment Strategy Statement (ISS).

The Committee is made up of elected members of the Council who each have voting rights. Representatives from the admitted and scheduled bodies, as well as the trade unions may attend as observers.

The Committee obtains and considers advice from the Fund's officers, appointed actuary, investment managers and advisors. Investment managers are appointed in accordance with the scheme's regulations and the scope of their activities are specified in detailed investment management agreements and regularly monitored. Business plans are presented to the Committee annually and progress is monitored on a quarterly basis.

Several of the Committee members have extensive experience of dealing with investment matters and training is made available to new members when they are appointed to the committee.

Principle 2 – Clear objectives

The Fund should set investment objectives that consider the following factors:

- the funds overall pension liabilities
- the potential impact of investment risks on local council tax payers
- the strength of the covenant for non-local authority employers
- the attitude towards risk of both the administering authority and the scheme employers

These should be clearly communicated to advisors and investment managers.

Full compliance

The aims and objectives of the Fund are set out within the Funding Strategy Statement and the Investment Strategy Statement. The main objective of the fund is to meet the cost of pension liabilities while minimising the fluctuations in the employer contribution rates, thereby keeping costs to council tax payers and admitted bodies at a reasonable level.

In order to ensure that the Fund's assets are sufficient to meeting its short-term and long-term pension liabilities, the Fund's investment strategy has been set to include a combination of income yielding and growth assets. The Fund's investment performance is measured against this objective on a quarterly basis. The Fund's investment strategy is also reviewed regularly.

Principle 3 – Risk and liabilities

The Fund should consider the form and structure of its liabilities. This includes:

- the implications for local council tax payers;
- the strength of the covenant for non-local authority employers;
- the risk of their default; and
- longevity risk.

Full compliance

The Committee, in conjunction with its advisers, agrees an investment strategy that is appropriate to meet the Fund's liabilities. A fund actuarial valuation is carried out every three years, with the most recent triennial valuation having been conducted in 2022. The investment strategy is designed to be well diversified, achieving the optimal risk adjusted return for the Fund.

An appropriate asset allocation has been agreed, which aims maximise the potential to close the funding deficit over future years. This is included as an appendix to the ISS.

Principle 4 – Performance assessment

Arrangements should be in place for the formal measurement of performance of the investments, investment managers and advisors. Administering authorities should periodically make a formal assessment of their own effectiveness as a decision-making body and report on this to the scheme members.

Full compliance

The Committee has appointed investment managers with clear index strategic benchmarks as a means of monitoring the investment manager's skill. Investment managers are held accountable for their underperformance against the appropriate agreed upon benchmark.

Manager performance is monitored on a quarterly basis and independent detailed monitoring of the Fund's investments is carried out by the Fund's investment adviser and custodian. Portfolio risk is measured on a quarterly basis and the risk/return implications of the different strategic options are fully evaluated.

The investment adviser is assessed on the appropriateness of the quality of the advice given which include the asset allocation recommendations and the performance of the funds on their rated list. The actuary is assessed on the quality and consistency of the actuarial advice received. Both the advisor and the actuary have fixed term contracts which when expired are tendered for under the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) procedures.

Principle 5 – Responsible ownership

Administering authorities should:

- adopt, or ensure their investment managers adopt, the Institutional Shareholders Committee Statement of Principles on the responsibilities of shareholders and agents.
- include a statement of their policy on responsible ownership in the statement of investment principles.
- report periodically to scheme members on the discharge of such responsibilities.

Full compliance

The Fund is committed to making full use of its shareholder rights. The approach used is outlined in Section 7 of the ISS. Authority has been delegated to investment managers to exercise voting rights on behalf of the Fund. Investment managers are required to report how they have voted in their quarterly reports.

The Fund intends on using its influence as a shareholder to promote corporate social responsibility and high standards of corporate governance in the companies in which it invests. The Fund's approach to this is outline in the ISS.

Principle 6 – Transparency and reporting

Administering authorities should:

- act in a transparent manner, communicating with stakeholders on issues relating to their management of investments, its governance and risks including performance against stated objectives.
- provide regular communications to scheme members in the form they consider most appropriate.

Full compliance

The Fund publishes an annual report each year which communicates the Fund's strategy and performance to stakeholders. Copies of the Investment Strategy Statement, Funding Strategy Statement and other policy documents are also made publicly available online on the Council's website.

All Pension Fund Committee meetings are open to members of the public, and agendas and minutes are also published on the Council's website.

Compliance with the Stewardship Code

Appendix B

The **Stewardship Code** is a set of principles or guidelines released in 2010 and updated in 2020 by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), directed at institutional investors who hold rights in United Kingdom companies. Its principal aim is to make shareholders who manage other people's money actively engage in corporate governance in the interests of their beneficiaries.

The Code applies to pension funds and adopts the same "comply or explain" approach used in the UK Corporate Governance Code. This means that it does not require compliance with principles but if fund managers and institutional investors do not comply with any of the principles set out, they must explain why they have not done so. The Committee has not formally adopted the latest version of the Stewardship Code. However, it expects any directly appointed fund managers and the pool company (London CIV) to comply and this is monitored on an annual basis.

Investment objectives in the Investment Strategy Statement (“Statement”)

To provide a framework for the Pension Fund Committee’s beliefs, the Statement adopted by the Fund covers each of the following six objectives in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016:

- A requirement to invest fund money in a wide range of investments;
- The authority’s assessment of the suitability of particular investments and types of investment;
- The authority’s approach to risk, including the ways in which risks are to be measured and managed;
- The authority’s approach to pooling investments, including use of collective investment vehicles;
- The authority’s policy on how social, environmental or corporate governance considerations are taken into account in the selection, non-selection, retention and realisation of investments;
- The authority’s policy on the exercise of rights (including voting rights) attaching to investments.

This is the Core Belief Statement of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Pension Fund (“the Fund”).

The Statement is to set out the Fund’s key investment beliefs. These beliefs will form the foundation of discussions, and assist decisions regarding the Fund’s structure, its strategic asset allocation and selecting investment managers.

1. Investment Governance

- a) The Fund has access to the necessary skills, expertise and resources to manage the whole Fund, as well as internally managing a small proportion of the Fund’s assets, such as cash management.
- b) Investment consultants, independent advisors and officers are a source of expertise and research to inform and assist the Pension Fund Committee’s decisions.
- c) The ultimate aim of the Fund’s investments is to pay pension liabilities when they become due. The Committee will therefore take account of liquidity, cashflow generation and the long-term ability of the Fund to meet these obligations.
- d) The Fund is continuously improving its governance structure through bespoke training to implement tactical views more promptly but acknowledges that it is not possible to achieve optimum market timing.

2. Long Term Approach

- a) The strength of the employers’ covenant allows a long-term deficit recovery period and enables the Fund to take a longer-term view of investment strategy than most investors.
- b) The most important aspect of risk is not the volatility of returns, but the risk of absolute loss over the medium and long term. This would in turn impact the ability of the employers to make adequate contributions to meet the Fund’s liabilities.
- c) Illiquidity and volatility are shorter term risks which offer potential sources of additional compensation to the long-term investor. Moreover, it is important to avoid being a forced seller in short term market setbacks.
- d) Over the long term, equities are expected to outperform other liquid assets, particularly government bonds and cash.

3. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors

- a) Certain ESG factors are financially material and may therefore influence the risk and return characteristics of the Fund’s investments and the likelihood that the Fund’s objectives will be achieved. b) Well governed companies that manage their business in a responsible manner are less vulnerable to downside risk and may therefore produce higher returns over the long term.

- b) In order to improve corporate governance, where possible, investment managers should exercise the voting rights attached to the shares they own, as well as engage with management of the companies they invest in.
- c) Environmental, social and governance considerations form a part of the Pension Fund Committee's decision-making process when making investment allocations. Allocations to alternative investment asset classes, such as renewable infrastructure, offer the Fund opportunity to undertake a best practice approach to ESG investment considerations.
- d) Where the Fund invests in passively-managed funds which replicate benchmark indices, where possible the Pension Fund Committee will explore ESG-tilted indices.
- e) If an investment manager fails to adequately consider ESG issues, the Committee is prepared to disinvest assets from that manager.

4. Asset allocation

- a) Allocations to asset classes other than equities and government bonds (e.g., corporate bonds, private markets, property, infrastructure and renewable infrastructure) offer the Fund other forms of risk premia (e.g., additional solvency risk/illiquidity risk).
- b) Diversification across asset classes and asset types that have low correlation with each other will tend to reduce the volatility of the overall Fund return.
- c) In general, allocations to bonds are made to achieve additional diversification. When the Fund approaches full funding level, it may also use bond-based strategies to mitigate liability risks and thus dampen the volatility of the Fund's actuarial funding level.

5. Management Strategies

- a) A well-balanced portfolio has an appropriate mix of passive and active investments.
- b) Passive, index-tracker style management can provide low-cost exposure to equities and bonds and can be especially attractive in efficient markets.
- c) Active management can be expensive but can provide additional performance and diversification. Fees should be aligned to the interests of the Fund rather than performance of the market.
- d) Active management performance should be monitored over multi-year rolling cycles and assessed to confirm that the original investment process on appointment is being delivered and that continued appointment is appropriate.