

**TOWER HAMLETS**

# **London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17**

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## Foreword by Cllr Andrew Cregan

The Pensions Committee, which I have the privilege to Chair has the responsibility for all aspects of the Pension Fund including managing the investments, ensuring governance arrangements are appropriate and scheme members and employers are kept informed of key information.

The Committee carries with it a considerable responsibility to ensure that the Pension Fund, which was valued at £1,126m at 31 March 2016 and has over 19,000 scheme members, is managed in an efficient and effective way.

Key areas of focus for the Committee during the year revolved around ensuring that the Fund is able to meet the challenges posed by Central Government around investment reform. To this end the Committee has been very supportive of the establishment of the London Collective Investment Vehicle (LCIV). The Committee fully support the development of the LCIV but believe its future success will depend on the extent of flexibility, rather than compulsion, if national government allows. The Fund has transferred some 31% of the fund assets onto the LCIV platform with the fund's three existing fund managers under what LCIV named CQC, that is **Commonality** of mandate, **Quantum** of assets under manager, **Conviction**, how committed to the manager and mandate boroughs are.

The Fund has also supported collaborative working more generally, playing a key role in the development the National LGPS Procurement Framework.

Compliance with The Pension Regulator's new Code of Practice featured strongly on the Committee's agenda during 2015/16. Although following the Code itself is not a legal requirement, it sets out how the Regulator expects the requirements of the Public Sector Pensions Act 2013 should be met. The Regulator has the power to take action where the provisions of the Act are not being met, and will use the Code as a core reference document in deciding on the appropriate action to take. The Committee has considered whether the management of the LB Tower Hamlets Pension Fund meets the standards set out in the Code through use of a compliance checklist, and ensured that appropriate policies and processes are being developed for the few areas in which the Fund has not yet achieved full compliance.

In accordance with the new regulatory requirement to have additional governance arrangement in place by creating a Pension Board to assist the Administering Authority, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, in ensuring compliance with regulations. This board has been established and in operation, the board annual report is enclosed in this report.

The Fund net cash flow position remains positive with contributions and transfers in outstripping benefits paid and transfers out by £4.3m plus a further net inflow from investment income of £14.3m. The Pensions Committee monitor this aspect of the Fund closely as they recognised the need for the Fund to be able to pay its liabilities as they fall due and the ongoing austerity programme affecting public services.

A funding update has been received from the Fund Actuary, advising a that the fund funding level has risen by 11% from 72% with corresponding estimated deficit £365m as at 31 March 2013 triennial valuation to 83% with corresponding deficit of £235m. This was largely as a result of asset performance being better than expected. And

the liability of the Fund shrunk from £1,293m as at 31 March 2013 triennial valuation to £1,361m as at 31 March 2016. Although equities have rebounded; bond yields are low potentially raising the valuation of the Fund's liabilities. However, it is worth noting that the Council is a long term investor and has a relatively secure long term income stream. Therefore, the Fund should be able to alter strategy that enables it to ride out periods of market underperformance and should not have to crystallise losses during market downturns.

The Investment Strategy allocates assets across a range of asset classes and further attempts to minimise exposure to significant movements within each asset class by appointing fund managers that pursue contrasting but complementary investment strategies. This approach ensures a diversified and balanced portfolio that targets steady and sustainable growth.

All asset classes except equity delivered a positive performance over the year resulting in an overall marginal decrease in the assets under management. There was volatility during the year, particularly with geopolitical concerns in the Ukraine and in the Middle East. The sharp falls in the oil price over the year, helped to boost markets and lower inflation, with even Europe starting to show some tentative signs of recovery by the year end. However, there remain concerns over the timing of any interest rate rises and the effect that this will have on bond markets and any wider implications for equity markets. For some time now, commentators have suggested that government bond markets look overstretched with bond yields remaining at low levels.

2015/16 was a difficult year for the Fund in terms of investment performance, resulting in a slight fall in the overall value of the Fund. Much of the poor performance was driven by the Fund's exposure to global equity markets which saw considerable volatility over the year, with particular concerns over stalling growth in China. The rout during August and September and further slide over the New Year both detracted from performance, although both were followed by periods of recovery. Performance across other asset classes was also mixed, with market sentiment dominated by worries over global growth and central bank policy.

The Committee continued to monitor the investment portfolios and the performance of the Fund Managers it employs on a quarterly basis, as well as reviewing the rolling annual, 3yr and 5yr performance. By the end of the financial year the Pension Fund had seen a slight fall in value of around 1.07% to £1,126m decreasing from £1,138m at the end of March 2015.

Cllr. Clare Harrison  
Chair of Pensions Committee

## Governance of the Pension Scheme

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and is governed by Statute.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is the Administering Authority for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund. The Pensions Committee has delegated responsibility for the management of the Fund and oversees the general framework within which the Fund is managed and sets investment policy on behalf of the Council and other employers in the Fund. Therefore, the Pensions Committee considers all investment aspects of the Pension Fund. The Corporate director of Resources has delegated authority for the day to day running of the Fund.

### MANAGEMENT AND ADVISERS TO THE PENSION FUND as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

The Pensions Committee during 2016/17 was made up of seven Councillor Members, an Employer Representative and a Scheme Member representative.

#### Pensions Committee:

Councillors:

Councillor Andrew Cregan (Chair)  
Councillor Clare Harrisson (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury  
Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah  
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE  
Councillor Candida Ronald  
Councillor Andrew Wood

Trade Union Representative (non-voting): Kehinde Akintunde (GMB)

Admitted Bodies Representative (non-voting): Tony Childs (Tower Hamlets Homes)

#### Contact details for the Pensions Committee:-

Pensions Committee  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Town Hall,  
Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London, E14 2BG

## Staff, Advisers & Investment Managers

The management and administration of the pension Fund is delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources, having responsibility for the day to day management of the Fund.

### London Borough of Tower Hamlets Responsible Officers:

**Bola Tobun** – Investment & Treasury Manager

**Neville Murton** – Divisional Director Finance, Procurement & Audit

**Zena Cooke** – Corporate Director, Resources

#### Advisers:

**Consulting Actuary - Hymans Robertson LLP**  
Barry McKay - Actuarial Consultant/Adviser

**Investment Consultant - Hymans Robertson LLP**  
Matt Woodman – Senior Investment Consultant

**Independent Investment Adviser**  
Raymond Haines

**Custodial Services - State Street Bank**

**Performance Measurement Services - State Street**

**Legal Advisers - Legal Services**  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Town hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

**Auditor - KPMG LLP (UK)**

#### Investment Managers:

**GMO UK Limited**  
1 London Bridge, London, SE1 9BG

**Goldman Sachs Asset Management (GSAM)**  
River Court, 120 Fleet Street, London, EC4A 2BE

**Insight Investment**  
160 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4LA

**Legal & General Investment Management Limited**  
One Coleman Street, London, EC2R 5AA

**London LGPS CIV Ltd**  
70 Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester, M1 5ES.

**Ruffer LLP**  
80 Victoria Street, London SW1E 5JL

**Schroder Investment Management Limited**  
31 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7QA.

## Governance and Oversight Review

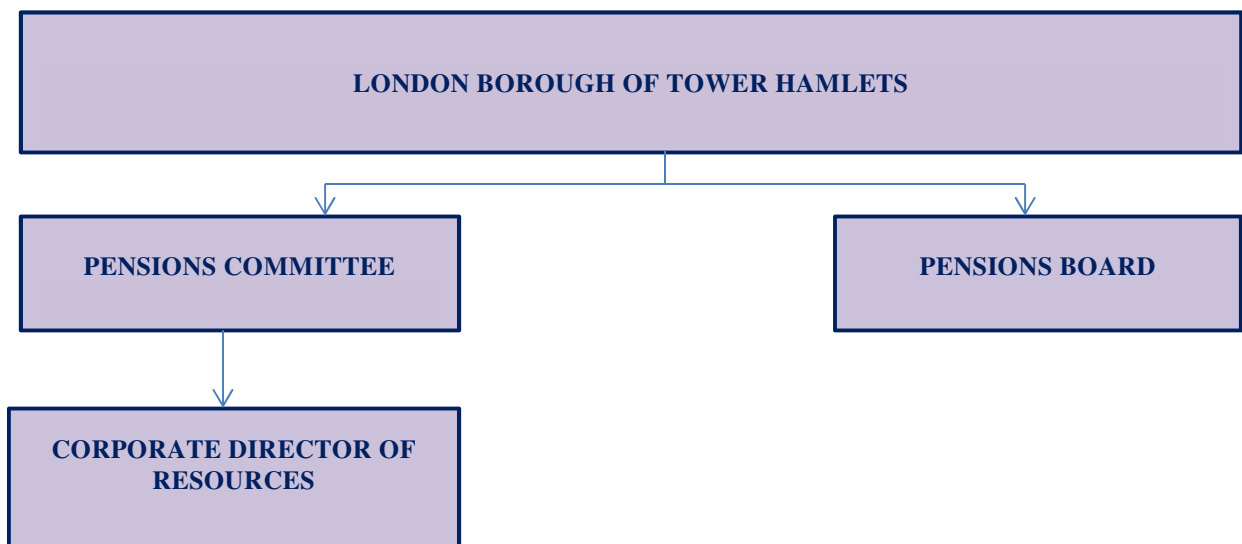
The Pension Fund Regulations require a new additional governance arrangement (Pensions Board) to be in place from 1 April 2015.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets is the Administering Authority of the pension Fund, the delegated responsibility for the management of the pension fund is with the Pensions Committee and the new regulatory requirement is for a Pensions Board to assist the Authority in monitoring compliance with regulations by overseeing the Pensions Committee work in how the Fund is administered.

Full Council approved the establishment of the Pensions Board at its meeting in September 2015 with delegation authority for the composition of it and terms of reference to the Pensions Committee. Pensions Committee agreed the composition of the board comprising three Employer Representatives, three Employee Representatives and an Independent Chairman.

Please see below chart illustrating the new governance arrangement.

### From Financial Year 2015/16



At the onset of Committee meetings, Committee members are required to make declarations of interest both in relation to membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme and relationship to any employer bodies within the Pension Fund. Further declarations are required as and when agenda items arise where a member may have a conflict of interest. The Governance Officer maintains a record of the Conflicts of Interest which covers Pensions Committee and Pensions Board Members as well as officers closely connected with the Fund.

A legal officer is present at the Committee meetings to provide guidance on legal matters and is also required to comment on other items where there could be conflicts of interest.

**Pensions Committee Attendance 2016/17**

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Voting Rights</b>	<b>30-Jun</b>	<b>22-Sep</b>	<b>07-Dec</b>	<b>16-Mar</b>
<b><u>Member</u></b>					
Cllr Andrew Cregan	√	Present	Present	Present	Present
Cllr Clare Harrisson	√	Absent	Present	Present	Present
Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury	√	Absent	Present	Absent	Present
Cllr Harun Miah	√				
Cllr M'med Maium Miah	√	Present	Absent	Absent	Present
Cllr Abdul Mukit MBE	√	Present	Present	Absent	Absent
Cllr Candida Ronald	√	Present	Present	Present	Present
Cllr Andrew Wood	√	Present	Present	Present	Present
<b><u>Substitute</u></b>					
Cllr Rajib Ahmed	√	Absent	Absent	Absent	Present
<b><u>Non-voting Member</u></b>					
Tony Childs	x	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
Kehinde Akintunde	x	Present	Absent	Absent	Present
<b><u>Public</u></b>					
Raymond Haines (Adviser)	x	Absent	Present	Present	Present
<b><u>Officers</u></b>					
Bola Tobun	x	Present	Present	Present	Present
Kevin Miles	x	Present	Present	Present	Present
George Bruce/Anant Dodia	x	Present	Absent	Absent	Present
Neville Murton	x	Present	Absent	Absent	Present
Ngozi Adedeji	x	Absent	Present	Present	Present
Zoe Folley	x				Present
Nishaat Ismail	x	Present	Present	Present	Absent

**Training** was provided to the Committee with a time slot at the Committee meetings. The topics covered in the training programme for the Committee in 2015/16 were provided in line with the Knowledge and Skills Framework to help ensure that the Committee are able to achieve high levels of the specialist knowledge required of them. The attendance at the training session is the same as set out in the table above for Pensions Committee attendance

**Topics covered during the financial year were:**

- Overview of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- LGPS 2014 – Benefit Structure
- New LGPS Governance Structure
- The Pensions Regulator (tPR)
- Roles and Responsibilities of Service Providers, Pensions Board & Committee
- Statutory Documents
- An overview of Investment Strategy and Asset Allocation



## Knowledge and Skills Policy Statement

### CIPFA Code of Practice on Public Sector Pensions – Finance Knowledge and Skills

The adoption of the CIPFA “Pensions Finance, knowledge and skills framework, Technical Guidance for Elected Representatives and Non-executives in the Public Sector” (2010) provides the basis for a training and development programme for the Pensions Committee based on the latest national guidance.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund adopts the key recommendations of the Code of Practice on Public Sector Pensions Finance Knowledge and Skills.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets recognises that effective financial administration, scheme governance and decision-making can only be achieved where those involved have the requisite knowledge and skills.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets will ensure that it has formal and comprehensive objectives, policies and practices, strategies and reporting arrangements for the effective acquisition and retention of the relevant public sector pension scheme finance knowledge and skills for those in the organisation responsible for financial administration, scheme governance and decision-making.

These policies and practices will be guided by reference to a comprehensive framework of knowledge and skills requirements such as that set down in the CIPFA Pensions Finance Knowledge and Skills Frameworks.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets will report on an annual basis how these policies have been put into practice throughout the financial year.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets has delegated responsibility for the implementation of the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice to the Corporate Director of Resources, who will act in accordance with the organisation’s policy statement, and where they are a CIPFA member with CIPFA Standards of Professional Practice.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets recognises the importance of ensuring that it has the necessary resources to discharge its pension administration responsibilities and that all staff and members charged with the financial administration, governance and decision-making with regard to the pension scheme are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to discharge the duties and responsibilities allocated to them.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets therefore seeks to utilise individuals who are both capable and experienced and it will provide and/or arrange training for staff and members of the pensions decision making and governance bodies, to enable them to acquire and maintain an appropriate level of expertise, knowledge and skills.

## **PENSIONS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FRAMEWORK FOR PENSIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **Core technical areas and areas of knowledge**

#### **Legislative and governance framework**

- General pensions framework
- Scheme-specific legislation for LGPS
- Pensions regulators and advisors
- Constitutional framework for pension fund committees within administering authorities
- Pension scheme governance

#### **Accounting and auditing standards**

- Accounts and Audit regulations
- Role of internal and external audit

#### **Procurement of financial services and relationship management**

- Procurement requirements of UK and EU legislation
- Supplier risk management

#### **Investment performance and risk management**

- Monitoring of investment performance
- Performance of advisors
- Performance of the Pensions Committee
- Performance of support services

#### **Financial markets and investment products**

- Investment strategy
- Financial markets
- Regulatory requirements regarding investment products

#### **Actuarial methods, standards and practices**

- Valuations, funding strategy and inter-valuation monitoring
- Ill-health and early retirement
- Admitted bodies
- Outsourcing and bulk transfers

## Risk Management

Risk management forms a key part of Pension Fund Governance and is part of the ongoing decision making process for the Committee. The benefits of successful risk management are clear for the Fund; improved financial performance, better delivery of services, and improved Fund governance and compliance.

There are four general approaches to treating risk: avoid, reduce, transfer or accept.

- Avoidance of risk – not undertaking the activity that is likely to trigger the risk
- Reducing the risk – controlling the likelihood of the risk occurring, or controlling the impact of the consequences if the risk does occur.
- Transferring the risk – handing the risk on elsewhere, either totally or in part – e.g. through insurance.
- Accepting the risk – acknowledging that the ability to take effective action against some risks may be limited or that the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefits gained.

The types of risk that the Fund is exposed to fall into the following broad categories:

- Financial – These relate to investment related risks including market, currency, credit and interest rate risks – these are outlined in detail in the Statement of Accounts.
- Strategic – Failure to meet strategic objectives such as performance targets, Funding Strategy Statement objectives, etc.
- Regulatory – Regulatory changes impacting on the Fund, or failure to comply with legislation or meet statutory deadlines.
- Reputational – Poor service damaging the reputation of the Fund.
- Operational – Data maintenance, service delivery targets.
- Contractual – 3rd party providers, failure to deliver, effective management of contracts.
- Communication – Failure to keep all stakeholders notified of things that affect them, be they employers, scheme members or contractors.

The Funding Strategy Statement (appendix 3) explains the fund's key risks and how they are identified, mitigated, managed and reviewed.

The Fund's investment managers and custodian are audited separately and at different times. The Council receives audited assurance reports AAF01/06, SSAE16 and ISAE3402 from their independent auditors. Any exceptions highlighted by their auditors are evaluated by officers.

The council is the primary employer in the Fund and the risks of late payment of contributions are with admitted and scheduled bodies who are treated by the Pension Regulations as part of the Council for pension purposes. All contributions received from external payroll providers are reconciled monthly.

## Investment and Performance Review

The second half of 2015 proved to be a difficult one for investors, and 2016 started in a similar fashion, with equity market volatility returning to levels not seen so consistently since the peak of the euro zone crisis in 2011. Global growth expectations have continued to be downgraded, repeating a pattern established over the last five years. Although much of the stress is being experienced in commodity related sectors, fears have grown of this spreading into the banking sector in the form of bad debts, which in turn raised concerns of a repeat of the financial crisis of 2008. Although we believe that to be too pessimistic a view, it betrays an underlying nervousness that permeates the investment community, leaving markets vulnerable to further negative developments.

Equity and Corporate Bond markets responded badly to three separate factors in the first six weeks of 2016. Initially there were concerns about China, concerns that have been magnified since the country initiated a devaluation of its currency in August 2015. A weaker renminbi is viewed as negative on two fronts: either it is a deliberate devaluation engineered by the Chinese government to boost an economy that is much weaker than they are owning up to in public data, or it is an expression of a lack of confidence by its citizens who would prefer to protect their capital by taking it out of the country. Neither option supports the already dull global growth outlook.

Once China stabilised, the oil price took centre stage, plumbing new depths for this cycle. A more negative interpretation of the lower oil price was a lack of global demand, playing to existing concerns about low growth, but our view remains that the current oil cycle is more about resurgent supply, which will eventually rebalance. However this will in all probability not happen until several oil companies, especially in the US shale sector, have gone bankrupt, and this is where concern about banks emerges. This concern was exacerbated by the negative interest rate policies of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Bank of Japan (BoJ), policies which potentially make it much harder for banks to make a decent return on their equity.

**Baillie Gifford Diversified Growth Fund** - In the year to 31 March 2016 the Fund delivered a return (net of fees) of -1.5%. The return on the Fund (net of fees) over the past five years has been 4.3% on an annualised basis. Delivered volatility over the same period was 4.5% per annum.

Over the 12 months, active currency, infrastructure and insurance linked securities all contributed positively to performance. Within active currency a long position in the Japanese yen was a key driver of positive returns. The Fund's overall negative return was driven by weak performance of economically-sensitive asset classes, including listed equities, emerging market bonds and high yield credit.

**Ruffer portfolio** - Over the last year, the portfolio was down 4.2%. It is clearly disappointing that over the last twelve months the manager has not succeeded in their primary objective of preserving capital, an outcome largely rooted in the portfolio's fall in Q3 2015. With this in mind it was encouraging to see a much more robust performance from the portfolio in the first quarter of 2016 under not dissimilar circumstances.

**GMO** - The benchmark return for the 12 month period to 31 March 2016 was -1.2% and the assets invested with GMO lagged this with a return of -6.0% (net of fees). There was a significant amount of volatility during the period. The second quarter of 2015 was relatively calm for equity markets, but the strong pound sterling translated this to disappointing returns for GBP investors, then equity markets fell heavily in quarter three with much of the focus being on weak economic signs from China. There was a strong

bounce back in the fourth quarter, with a much anticipated interest rate increase in the US proving to be a non-event from a market perspective, whilst the first quarter of 2016 proved to be the most volatile of all, with MSCI ACWI falling almost double digits in the first six weeks before recovering to finish positive in GBP terms at quarter end.

**Baillie Gifford Global Alpha** - In the 12 months to 31st March 2016, your portfolio returned -0.1%, marginally outperforming the benchmark by around 0.5%. Among the largest contributors to performance were Amazon (ecommerce), Ryanair (air travel) and Alphabet (internet search).

Amazon's core ecommerce offering continues to grow strongly while its cloud computing platform, Amazon Web Services (AWS), now accounts for around 40% of earnings and has supported significant share price appreciation over the period. Looking further ahead, we believe Amazon's focus on the long-term and ongoing investment bodes well for future earnings growth. Expansion to new airports and growing passenger numbers were behind Ryanair's strong share price performance. Management maintained an admirable grip on the firm's ex-fuel unit cost and improved its website, which should be positive for Ryanair in the long run as it looks to generate revenues via tailored ancillary offers and upselling. Within Alphabet, Google achieved revenue growth of over 20%+ year-on-year, driven mainly by strength in mobile search. Google now has several platforms with over 1 billion users each – the fastest growing of which is YouTube, which is benefitting from a growing trend towards watching content online and generated \$9bn of revenue in FY'15.

Stocks which detracted from performance included Ultra Petroleum (oil and gas), Prudential (insurance) and Carmax (used car retail).

**Schroder (Property)** – The twelve months to March 2016 represented another strong year for UK commercial real estate, with the market delivering unleveraged total returns of 11%. Most of this performance was driven by rental growth, as a buoyant economy and low levels of development pushed rental levels up in most sectors. Performance was front end loaded, with investors more cautious at the end of 2015 and in the first few months of 2016. Accordingly, the IPD all property initial yield stabilised at 5.0% last October and secondary units in many unlisted funds switched from trading at premiums to discounts.

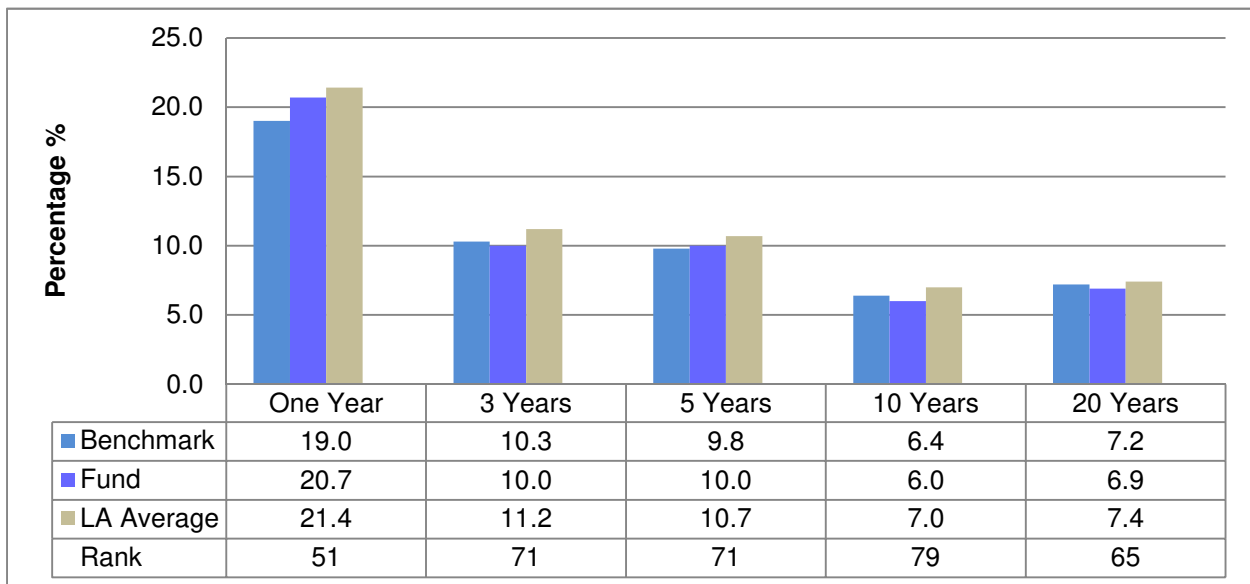
Central London offices delivered the strongest returns in the year to end March 2016 (16%), although after a long period of rental growth and falling yields, this is the part of the market that looks most vulnerable to a correction in pricing. Regional office markets (13%) and industrials (14%) also delivered strong return returns, the latter recording unprecedented levels of rental growth in some markets. The retail sector remains the laggard (8%), with very little rental growth outside of central London. Secondary high streets and shopping centres in particular, are still suffering from the growth in e-tailing and an oversupply of retail space from the previous cycle. Alternative property sectors, including student accommodation and healthcare, delivered returns of 10%, derived largely from a higher than average income return. These sectors are expected to be more defensive in the next stage in the cycle, with demand often driven by structural changes such as demographics and less linked to the economic cycle.

## Investment Performance of the Fund

The Fund's Investment Strategy Statement (ISS) replaced the Statement of Investment Principles from 1st April 2016. This ISS is designed to be a living document and is an important governance tool for the Fund. This document sets out the investment strategy of the Fund, provides transparency in relation to how the Fund investments are managed, acts as a risk register, and has been designed to be informative but reader focused. This document will be reviewed following the completion of the Fund investment strategy review and updated approved revised version will be published shortly after the Committee meeting of September 2017.

The fund performance improved over the latest year, with the fund recording an absolute return of 20.7%, 1.7% ahead its benchmark and 0.7% below the local authority (LA) average return as shown below. The three year return also marginally lagged behind the Fund benchmark return of 10.3% pa and also LA average return of 11.2% pa with the fund returning 10% per annum. The return for 5 year, 10 year and 20 year continued to lag the LA average by 0.7%, 1% and 1.5% respectively.

### Fund Performance (One, Three, Five Ten and 20 Years)



### Fund Management Activity

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund has been actively managed on a specialist basis by: Global Equities being managed by London Collective Investment Vehicle (CIV) and GMO, Goldman Sachs Asset Management (GSAM) pooled fund and Insights Investment pooled fund replaced Investec Asset Management (Corporate Bonds), Schroders Property Capital Partners (Property), the DGF mandates are being managed by LCIV and the passive management of UK Equities and UK Gilt & Index Linked are being managed by Legal & General Investment Management (LGIM).

In February 2016, the Baillie Gifford DGF mandate, June 2016 Baillie Gifford Global Equity and Ruffer Absolute Return portfolios were transferred to the London CIV platform with the same benchmark target. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016, the Fund redeemed out of Investec mandate of corporate pooled bonds and in April 2016 invested in Goldman Sachs Asset



Management (GSAM), Strategic Absolute Return Bond II Pooled Investment Fund and in July 2017 invested in BNY Mellon Absolute Return Bond Fund with Insights Investment.

The volatility in the equity markets and strong returns from the fund's global equity managers and absolute return funds was a major contributor to the outperformance.

The underperformance from GMO, Ruffer and Baillie Gifford Diversified Growth was unfavourable.

The main driver of GMO underperformance over the period stems from being underweight the U.S. and overweight Emerging Markets, although individual stock selection was also a detractor over the period, with Amazon's outperformance being outweighed by underperformance from Valeant Pharmaceuticals. The manager advised that they retain conviction in their U.S. vs Emerging view but have reduced the concentration of single stock positions, so would not expect single names to dominate performance attribution in future periods.

The fund continues to participate in the Collective Investment Vehicle (CIV) and at the time of writing this report, Baillie Gifford (Global Equity) mandate and Ruffer LLP mandate have been transferred to LCIV platform.

The fund received a positive cash flow from dealings with members of £4.37m and the 2016/17 cash flow forecast predicts that it will continue to be positive.

## Asset Allocation

The asset allocation within the portfolio is in line with or within the agreed tolerance of the benchmark asset allocation as at 31 March 2017 as set out below. The Committee has agreed to take corrective action and rebalance asset allocation where bond to equity allocation moves by +/-5%.

### Analysis of Asset Allocation

Asset Class	Benchmark	Fund Position	Variance
UK Equities	23.0%	19.3%	-3.7%
Global Equities	37.0%	44.0%	7.0%
UK Index Linked	6.0%	5.4%	-0.6%
Pooled Bonds	12.0%	10.8%	-1.2%
Property	12.0%	10.2%	-1.8%
Alternatives	10.0%	9.0%	-1.0%
Cash	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%

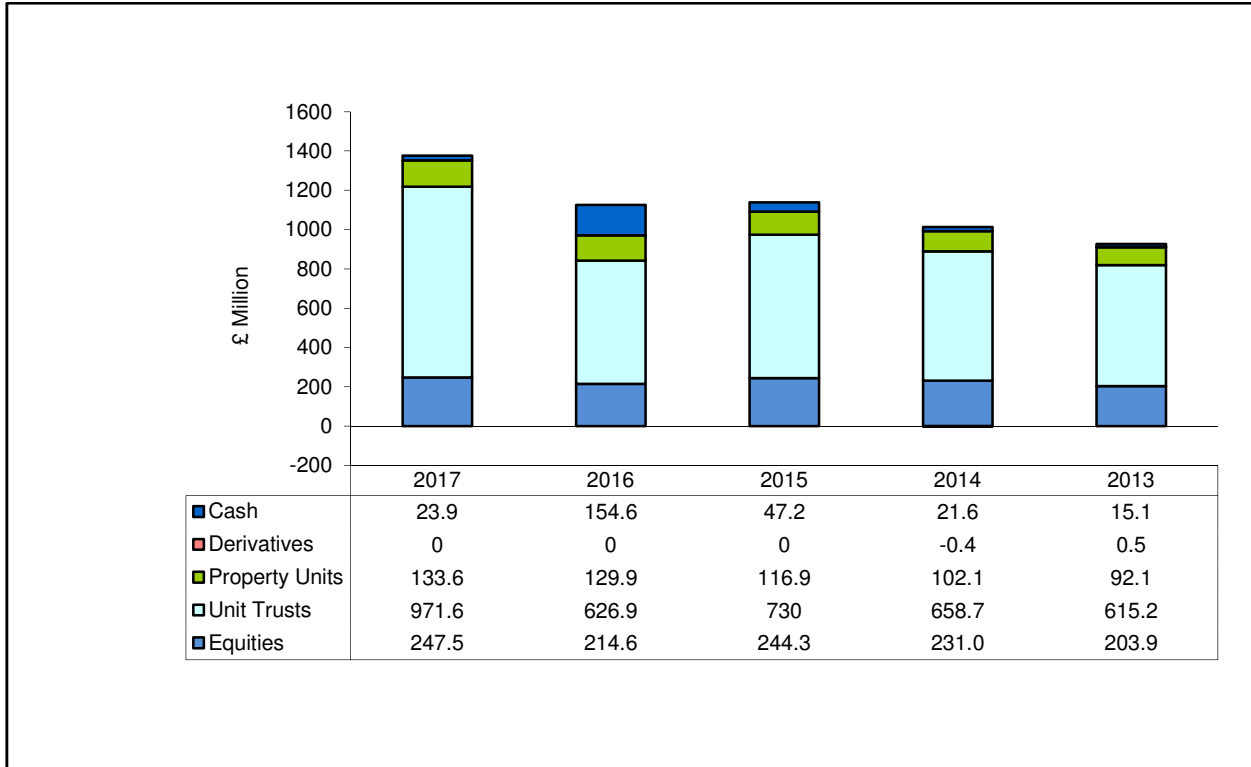
The Fund remains close to its strategic allocation, the global equity mandate was trimmed by redeeming £50m from the Fund portfolio with GMO waiting to be invested in alternatives, pooled bonds and property.

All investment activity is regulated by the Fund's Investment Strategy Statement which together with the Myners Compliance Statement are set out in Appendix 2.

### Financial Accounts

During the financial year 2016/17 the value of the Fund improves significantly by £253m from £1,126m to £1379m, an increase of 22.5%. This is mainly attributable to the outperformance of the Fund global equity managers.

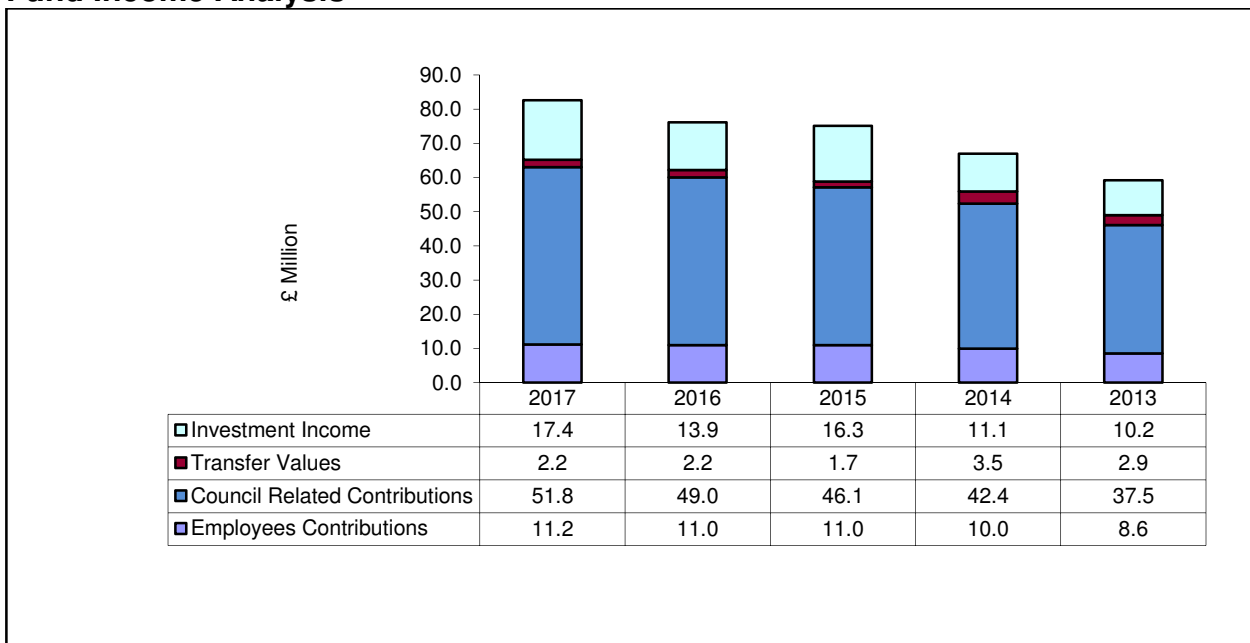
### ANALYSIS OF ASSET CLASS



### Fund Income

There was an overall improvement of £6.5m in the amount of income received by the Fund in 2016/17 compared to 2015/16.

### Fund Income Analysis





Investment income decreased over the year by £2.4m, mainly due to a reduction in dividend income. Transfer Values received (amounts paid over when a fund member transfers their benefits from one fund to another) increased by £500k. It is not possible to predict the value of transfer value payments as they are dependent on individual’s length of service and salary and as such may vary significantly. Employee contributions remain the same. Employer contributions went up by £2.9m (6.3%) mainly due to an increase in the employer’s deficit funding payment of £2m.

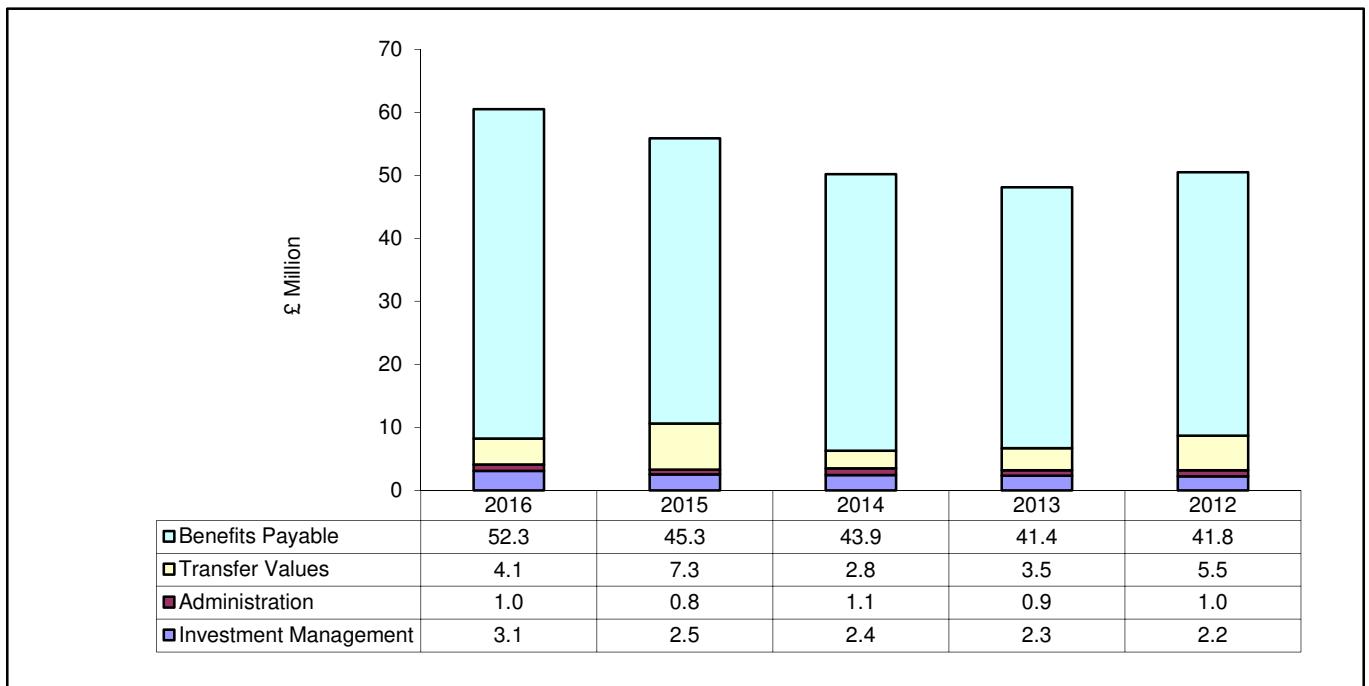
### Fund Income Variance Analysis

Type of Income	2016 £m	2015 £m	Variance %
Employees Contributions	11.0	11.0	0.0%
Council Related Contributions	49.0	46.1	6.3%
Transfer Values	2.2	1.7	29.4%
Investment Income	13.9	16.3	-14.7%
<b>Total Fund Income</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

### Fund Expenditure

In 2015/16 the overall Fund expenditure increased by £4.6m (8.4%). The major contributor to the increase was the rise in Benefits payable by £7m (15.5%). (160.7%). There was also a significant in investment management costs of £0.6m (24%) while transfers out fell by £3.2m (43.8%) and a modest rise in administration costs by £0.2m (25%), this increase is mainly due to capital regulatory contribution to LCIV.

### Fund Expenditure Analysis



The reduction in transfers out was a reflection of the value of transfer out payments being made, it could be combination of different things the number of staff leaving had reduced significantly and or lower salary paid leavers. The investment management fees which are

performance based have risen in line with the increase in the market value of the funds held during the year.

### Fund Expenditure Variance Analysis

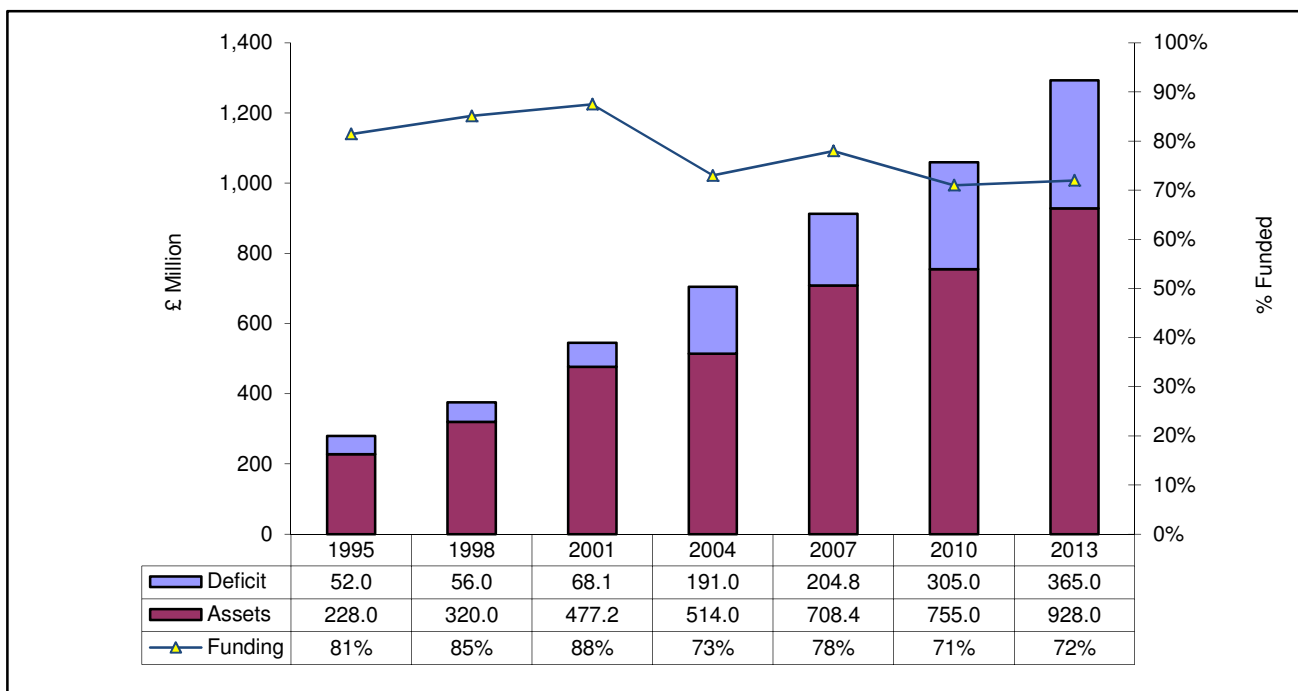
Type of Expenditure	2016	2015	Variance £m	Variance %
Investment Management	3.1	2.5	0.6	24.0%
Administration	1.0	0.8	0.2	25.0%
Transfer Values	4.1	7.3	-3.2	-43.8%
Benefits Payable	52.3	45.3	7.0	15.5%
<b>Total Fund Expenditure</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>8.2%</b>

### Funding Level

The Council is required to value the Pension Fund every three years.

The fund was valued by the consultant actuary Hymans Robertson LLP as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. The Actuary calculated that the Pension Fund is 71.8% funded and has a deficit of £365m.

### Movement in Funding Level



The funding position increased by 0.8% between the previous revaluation in 2010 and the 2013 valuation. This is principally attributable to an increase in the market value of assets with a reduction in ill-health retirements and slower rate of increase in salaries having a positive effect too. The deficit increase of £60m was brought about by an increase in the value of the Fund’s liabilities owing to the decrease in the real gilt yield.

On the recommendation of the Actuary, the Council adopted a strategy to recover the deficit over a 20-year period. This will involve the Council paying a lump sum of £18.5m in 2014/15 rising to £20.5m and £22m in 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively, into the pension fund specifically to recover the deficit.

Although the increase in deficit has necessitated an increase in the overall monetary amounts payable by the Council, the contribution rate element of this has been held at 15.8% of employee pay.

It should be emphasised that the deficit does not affect employees' pension entitlement. The Council is under a statutory obligation to provide sufficient funds to pay pensions and has adopted a strategy recommended by the Actuary to achieve full funding in twenty years. Councils can take a long-term perspective because of their financial stability and statutory backing. It should be recognised that the position is not unique to the Tower Hamlets Fund. All Pension Funds in both the public and private sectors have been subject to declining investment returns and increasing life expectancy, which has resulted in rising deficits in many cases. The 2013 valuation exercise has shown the fund to be gradually maturing as the proportion of employee members has fallen whilst the deferred and pensioner numbers have risen.

## The Scheme Details

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and is governed by Statute. The main regulations governing the operation of the scheme during the year were the Superannuation Act 1972 and the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 introduced the new 2014 LGPS which amongst other things changed the benefits structure from a final salary to career average revalued earning (CARE) scheme. In addition the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2009 covers the investment aspects of the funds.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is the Administering Authority for the Pension Fund and pensions and entitlement to benefits are fully protected in law. Membership of the Scheme is open to all employees of the Council including school employees with the exception of teachers (who have their own pension scheme). Other employers are admitted to the Pension Fund and depending on their status; their employees may also be able to participate in the LGPS. Employee contributions are determined by central government and are between 5.5% and 12.5% of pensionable pay. Employer rates are set by the Fund actuary every 3 years following a valuation of the assets and liabilities of the Fund, with the next valuation due to take place as at 31 March 2016.

The conditions of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations made it clear that the benefits that are payable to Scheme members and as such the benefits are guaranteed for those members and therefore members are not reliant on investment performance for their pension benefits. The contributions payable by Scheme members are also defined in the Regulations. Employing Authorities are required to pay contributions into the Scheme in order to meet the cost of funding employee benefits and as such, are required to meet any shortfall in funding the pension liabilities of Scheme members.

The Pension Scheme as applying during the financial year 2014/15 was a defined benefit career average revalued earnings scheme which aligns LGPS retirement age with an individual's state pension age. The key benefits of the scheme are outlined below:

- Pension benefits based on a 1/49th accrual basis for each year of pensionable service with benefits calculated on the career average pay revalued annually in line with inflation.
- Pre-2014 benefits guaranteed with a final salary link for any benefits earned prior to 1 April 2014.
- Option to pay 50% of the contribution rate to accrue 50% of the benefits.
- Option to convert some pension to lump sum on retirement on a 1:12 ratio.
- Life assurance cover 3x member final pay applicable from the day of joining scheme.
- Pensions for dependents: - spouses, civil partners and eligible co-habiting partners and eligible children.
- An entitlement to have pension paid early on medical grounds.
- Pensions increase annually in line with the cost of living.

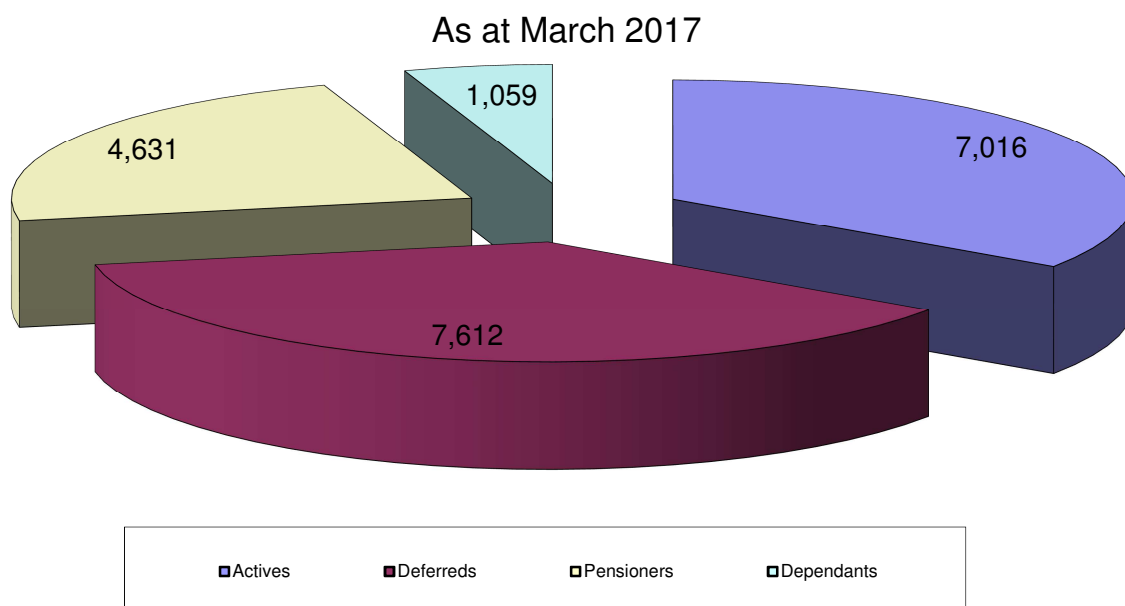
It should be noted that the foregoing is not an exhaustive list and that certain conditions have to be met for an individual to be entitled to the benefits outlined.

The foregoing benefit structure came into effect on 1 April 2014 and saw the start of significant changes to the public sector pension schemes, with most other schemes introducing their changes a year later on 1 April 2015. The previous LGPS introduced in 2008 was a defined benefit final salary scheme and was in operation until 31 March 2014, although it should be recognised that a large number of scheme members will have benefits accrued under both schemes and indeed some under the pre-2008 scheme. The key benefits under the 2008 scheme are outlined below:

- A guaranteed pension based on final pay and length of time in the scheme and an accrual rate of 1/60th per annum.
- Tax free lump sum on benefit accumulated prior to 1 April 2008 and option to convert some of the pension into tax free lump sum on post 1 April 2008 service.
- Life assurance cover 3x member final pay applicable from the day of joining scheme.
- Pensions for spouses/civil and co-habiting partners and children.
- An entitlement to have pension paid early on medical grounds.
- Pensions increase annually in line with the CPI.

### Scheme Membership

The Fund currently has a membership of 20,318 comprising the following categories as set out in the below chart. Membership to the scheme is automatic for full and part-time employee unless they opt out.



The total pension fund membership has increased by 2.6% between 2015/16 and 2016/17. The number of actives members (those currently contributing to the fund) has reduced by 6 members (0.1%). The deferred membership category (members who have contributed in the past but who have not yet become entitled to their benefits) has increased by 467 (6.5%) and pensioner members by 32 (0.7%). The dependants' category saw an increase of 15 (1.4%).

The table below sets out the movement in membership number between the different categories in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

### Movement in Fund Membership

Membership Type	31-Mar-17	31-Mar-16	Variance No.	Variance %
Actives	7,016	7,022	-6	-0.1%
Deferreds	7,612	7,145	467	6.5%
Pensioners	4,631	4,599	32	0.7%
Dependants	1,059	1,044	15	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,318</b>	<b>19,810</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>2.6%</b>

The membership of the fund over the last five years is as set out below.

Membership Type	31-Mar-17	31-Mar-16	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-14	31-Mar-13
Actives	7,016	7,022	6,860	6,792	5,298
Deferreds	7,612	7,145	6,786	6,664	6,292
Pensioners	4,631	4,599	4,352	4,246	4,148
Dependants	1,059	1,044	1,011	975	979
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,318</b>	<b>19,810</b>	<b>19,009</b>	<b>18,677</b>	<b>16,717</b>

### Fund Employers

London Borough of Tower Hamlets is the administering authority for the fund. The scheme is open to all council employees and scheduled bodies. Admitted bodies require the agreement of the administering authority to participate in the fund. The admitted bodies and scheduled participating in the fund are set out below.

#### Admitted Bodies

- Agilisys
- Capita
- Circle Anglia Ltd
- East End Homes
- Ecovert FM Ltd
- Gateway Housing Association
- Greenwich Leisure Ltd
- Look Ahead Housing and Care\*
- One Housing Group
- Redbridge Community Housing Ltd
- Swan Housing Association
- Tower Hamlets Community Housing

\*Look Ahead Housing and Care ceased to be an admitted body of the fund in September 2014

### Scheduled Bodies

- Bethnal Green Academy
- Canary Wharf College
- Culloden Primary School
- London Enterprise Academy
- Old Ford Primary School
- Sir William Burrough School
- Solebay Academy
- St Pauls Way Community School
- Tower Hamlets Homes Ltd

### Contributions to the Fund

Employees pay contributions based on the level of pay they receive with rates being set between 5.5% to 12.5% of pensionable pay. The employers contribution rate used during the financial year ranged from 15.9% to 41.4% of pensionable pay.

The following table shows the contributing employers and the contributions received from each during the year.

Contributing Employers	Active Members	Contributions from Members £	Contributions from Employers £
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	6,155	9,730,977	22,356,297
Agilisys	41	111,437	265,384
Bethnal Green Academy	20	45,343	132,334
Canary Wharf College	6	7,599	19,823
Capita	7	9,418	28,056
Circle Anglia Ltd	3	4,600	83,794
Culloden Academy	18	17,765	92,728
East End Homes	35	106,536	445,698
Ecovert FM Ltd	13	3,690	14,053
Gateway Housing Association	1	1,769	32,967
Greenwich Leisure Limited	7	18,496	46,629
London Enterprise Academy	1	2,110	4,924
Old Ford Academy	34	20,109	111,626
One Housing Group	9	14,832	93,802
Redbridge Community Housing Ltd	2	3,718	10,125
Sir William Burrough School	5	12,291	44,908
Solebay Academy	1	861	4,797
St.Pauls Way Community School	17	61,490	156,584
Swan Housing Association	1	1,922	17,749
Tower Hamlets Community Housing	16	56,207	241,218
Tower Hamlets Homes Limited	342	799,836	2,651,086
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,734</b>	<b>11,031,007</b>	<b>26,854,581</b>

\* The Council contributed an additional £22m in respect of deficit funding

The full accounts are as set out in Appendix 1.

The Council is required to publish a number of statements relating to the operation of the fund. The statements and the associated reports are as set out in the following appendices.

Appendix 2 Statement of Investment Principles

Appendix 3 Funding Strategy Statement

Appendix 4 Communications Strategy Statement

Appendix 5 Governance Compliance Statement

For further information on the Local Government Pension Scheme and your entitlement, please contact Anant Dodia at [anant.dodia@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:anant.dodia@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or by telephoning 020 7364 4248.



## Statement from the Actuary

An actuarial valuation of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund was carried out by Hymans Robertson LLP as at 31 March 2013 to determine the contribution rates that should be paid into the Fund by the employing authorities as from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017 in order to maintain the solvency of the Fund.

On the basis of the assumptions adopted, the valuation revealed that the value of the Fund's assets represented 71.8% of the Funding Target and the estimated deficit on the Fund at the valuation date was £365m. The Actuary has determined that the deficit can be recovered over a period of 20 years and the agreed monetary contribution to recover the deficit for the term of the revaluation is £18.5m (2014/15) rising to £20.5m (2015/16) and £22m (2016/17).

The Common Rate of Contribution payable by each employing authority under Regulation 77 for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017 is 35.5% of pensionable pay.

Individual Adjustments are required under Regulation 77 for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017 resulting in a Minimum Total Contribution Rates expressed as a percentage of pensionable pay are as set out below:

Employer Name as per 31 March 2013	Year ending 31 March 2015	Minimum Contribution for the year ending				
		Additional Monetary Deficit Payment £	Year ending 31 March 2016	Additional Monetary Deficit Payment £	Year ending 31 March 2017	Additional Monetary Deficit Payment £
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	15.8%	18.5m	15.8%	20.5m	15.8%	22m
Tower Hamlets Community Housing Limited	34.7%		36.1%		37.6%	
Redbridge Community Housing Limited	17.7%		17.7%		17.7%	
East End Homes Limited	31.1%		32.3%		33.6%	
Greenwich Leisure Limited	17.7%		17.7%		17.7%	
Swan Housing Association Limited	26.2%	10k	26.2%	10k	26.2%	11k
Gateway Housing Association (Bethnal Green & Victoria Park)	25.6%	26k	25.6%	27k	25.6%	28k
One Housing Group (Toynbee Island Homes)	41.4%		41.4%		41.4%	
Circle Anglia Limited	27.7%		27.7%		27.7%	
Tower Hamlets Homes	23.1%		23.1%		23.1%	
Look Ahead Housing & Care Limited	19.9%		19.9%		19.9%	
Ecovert FM Limited	22.5%		22.5%		22.5%	
Bethnal Green Academy	20.6%	141k	20.6%	146k	20.6%	152k
Sir William Burrough School	25.3%		23.6%		21.8%	
St Pauls Way Community School	16.7%		17.8%		18.9%	
Capita	19.6%		19.6%		19.6%	
Canary Wharf College	15.9%		15.9%		15.9%	
Agilisys	16.8%		16.8%		16.8%	

In addition to the certified contribution rates, payments to cover the additional liabilities arising from early retirements (other than ill-health) will be made to the Fund by the employers.

The results of the triennial valuation depend on the actuarial assumptions made about the future of the Fund. The effect on the valuation of the Fund of changes to the main assumptions are set out in the table below.

### Sensitivity of valuation results to changes in assumptions

Assumption	Change	Impact	
		Deficit (£m)	Future service rate (% of pay)
Discount rate	Increases by 0.5%	Falls by £112m	Falls by 3%
Salary increases	Increases by 0.5%	Rises by £31m	Rises by 2%
Price inflation/pension increases	Increases by 0.5%	Rises by £92m	Rises by 2%
Life expectancy	Increases by 1 year	Rises by £39m	Rises by 1%

This is not an exhaustive list of assumptions but those that are likely to have the biggest impact. The effect of changes are shown in isolation and it is possible that the Fund could experience changes to more than one assumption simultaneously.

The next triennial valuation of the Fund is due as at 31 March 2016. The contribution rates payable by the individual employers will be revised with effect from 1 April 2017.

## Statement of Responsibilities

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets as Administering Authority of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its Officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this council, that officer is the Corporate Director, Resources;
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets;
- Approve the Statement of Accounts

### Responsibilities of the Corporate Director, Resources

The Corporate Director, Resources is responsible for the preparation of the Pension Fund Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in CIPFA's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom ("the Code of Practice").

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Corporate Director, Resources has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent; and
- Complied with the Code of Practice, except where otherwise stated.

The Corporate Director, Resources has;

- Kept proper accounting records which were up to date; and
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### Responsible Financial Officer's Certificate:

I certify that the Accounts set out on pages 31 to 47 have been prepared in accordance with proper practices and that they give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the Pension Fund during the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and the amount and disposition of the Fund's assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2016.



**Zena Cooke**  
**Corporate Director, Resources**

## **Independent auditor's report to the members of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets on the pension fund financial statements published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts**

We have audited the financial statements of pension fund financial statements published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016 on pages 31 to 47. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16.

This report relates to the pension fund financial statements published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts and is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Authority, as a body, those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of the Authority, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of the Corporate Director of Resources and auditor**

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Corporate Director of Resources' Responsibilities, the Corporate Director of Resources is responsible for the preparation of the pension fund financial statements published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, and for being satisfied that the financial statements give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit, and express an opinion on, the pension fund financial statements published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

### **Scope of the audit of the financial statements**

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the pension fund financial statements, published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts, sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the pension fund financial statements, published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts, are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Pension Fund's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Corporate Director of Resources; and the overall presentation of the pension fund financial statements published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts.

In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts to identify material inconsistencies with the audited pension fund financial statements, published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts, and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

**Opinion on financial statements**

In our opinion the pension fund financial statements published with the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts:

- give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the Pension Fund during the year ended 31 March 2016 and the amount and disposition of the Fund's assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2016 other than liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits after the end of the scheme year; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

The Code of Audit Practice requires us to report to you if:

- the information given in the Pension Fund Annual Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is not consistent with the financial statements; or
- any matters have been reported in the public interest under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of, the audit; or
- any recommendations have been made under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- any other special powers of the auditor have been exercised under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

**We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.**

**Andrew Sayers**

**For and on behalf of KPMG LLP, Statutory Auditor**

*Chartered Accountants*

15 Canada Square, London, E14 5GL

29 November 2016



The London Borough of Tower  
Hamlets Pension Fund  
Appendix 1  
Draft Statement of Accounts 2016/17

<b>PENSION FUND ACCOUNTS</b>			
<b>PENSION FUND ACCOUNT</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>2015/16 £'000</b>	<b>2016/17 £'000</b>
<b>DEALINGS WITH MEMBERS, EMPLOYERS AND OTHERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE SCHEME</b>			
<b>Contributions</b>			
From employers			
Normal	3	26,812	28,524
Augmentation	3	1,697	1,288
Deficit funding	3	20,500	22,000
From members	3	10,951	11,151
<b>Transfers in</b>			
Transfers in from other pension funds	4	2,166	2,196
<b>Benefits</b>			
Pensions	4	(39,103)	(39,485)
Lump sum benefits	4	(13,158)	(12,341)
<b>Payments to and on account of leavers</b>			
Refunds of contributions		(169)	(259)
State scheme premiums		(196)	(29)
Transfers out to other pension funds		(4,092)	(3,517)
<b>Administrative expenses</b>	13	(1,038)	(972)
<b>NET ADDITIONS FROM DEALINGS WITH MEMBERS</b>		<b>4,370</b>	<b>8,555</b>
<b>RETURN ON INVESTMENTS</b>			
		<b>2015/16 £'000</b>	<b>2016/17 £'000</b>
Investment income	11	14,349	17,776
Taxes on Income		(409)	(363)
Change in market value of investments			
Realised		1,321	415,494
Unrealised	10	(28,625)	(197,035)
Investment management expenses	13	(3,076)	(2,879)
<b>NET RETURN ON INVESTMENTS</b>		<b>(16,440)</b>	<b>232,993</b>
Net increase in the Fund during the year		(12,070)	241,548
Add: Opening net assets of the scheme		1,138,199	1,126,129
<b>CLOSING NET ASSETS OF THE SCHEME</b>		<b>1,126,129</b>	<b>1,367,677</b>
<b>NET ASSETS STATEMENT AS AT 31ST MARCH</b>			
		<b>2016 £'000</b>	<b>2017 £'000</b>
<b>Investments Assets</b>			
Equities		214,617	247,485
Pooled Investment Vehicles			
Unit Trusts		572,275	971,562
Property		129,933	133,609
Other		54,607	0
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		971,432	1,352,656
Cash deposits	6	5,647	4,096
Other investment balances	5	1,973	1,673
<b>Investments Liabilities</b>			
Other investment balances	5	(35)	(45)
<b>Current Assets</b>			
	5	149,054	19,847
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
	5	(1,942)	(10,550)
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>		<b>1,126,129</b>	<b>1,367,677</b>



## NOTES TO THE PENSION FUND ACCOUNTS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Council is the administering authority for the Pension Fund and has executive responsibility for it. The Council delegates its responsibility for administering the Fund to the Pensions Committee which is responsible for considering all pension matters and discharging the obligations and duties of the Council under the Superannuation Act 1972 and other statutes relating to investment issues. The Committee meets quarterly to determine investment policy objectives, appoint investment managers, monitor investment performance and make representations to the Government on any proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Committee is required to obtain proper advice on the investment strategy of the Fund for which it has established an Investment Panel which includes professional investment advisors. The Panel meets quarterly to determine the general investment strategy, monitor the performance of the Fund and individual managers and consider technical reports on investment issues. The Fund employs six specialist investment managers with mandates corresponding to the principal asset classes.

The day to day administration of the Fund and the operation of the management arrangements and administration of the investment portfolio is delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources.

The Fund is operated as a funded, defined benefits scheme which provides for the payment of benefits to former employees of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and those of bodies admitted to the Fund. These individuals are referred to as "members". The benefits include not only retirement pensions, but also widows' pensions, death grants and lump sum payments in certain circumstances. The Fund is financed by contributions from members, employers and from interest and dividend receipts and gains on the Fund's investments.

The objective of the Pension Fund's financial statements is to provide information about the financial position, performance and financial adaptability of the Fund. They show the results of the stewardship of management - that is the accountability of management for the resources entrusted to it - and the disposition of its assets at the period end.

### 2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### (a) Accounts

The accounts summarise the transactions and net assets of the Pension Fund and comply in all material respects with Chapter 2 ("Recommended Accounting Practice") of the Statement of Recommended Practice (Financial Reports of Pensions Schemes) 2007 and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

The Fund is administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended), the Local Government Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 (as amended) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2015.

#### (b) Basis of preparation

Except where otherwise stated, the accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis, that is income and expenditure are recognised as earned or incurred, not as received or paid.

#### (c) The financial statements of the Fund do not take account of liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits after 31st March 2017. The actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits, valued on an IAS19 basis is disclosed in note 12 of the Accounts as permitted under IAS26.

#### Fund Account - Revenue Recognition

##### Contribution Income

Normal contributions, both from the members and from the employer, are accounted for on an accruals basis at the percentage rate recommended by the actuary in the payroll period to which it relates. Any amount due in the year but unpaid will be classified as a current asset.

Employer deficit contributions are accounted for in accordance with the agreement under which they are paid.

#### (d) Investments

Investments are shown in the Net Assets Statement at market value on the following bases.

- (i) Listed securities are shown by reference to bid price at the close of business on 31st March 2017.
- (ii) Pooled investment vehicles are valued at bid price, middle market price or single price at close of trading on 31st March 2017.
- (iii) Property unit trusts are shown by reference to bid price at close of business on 31st March 2017.
- (iv) The Fund does not hold any direct property holdings and therefore does not employ a separate property valuer.
- (v) Investments designated in foreign currencies are valued in sterling at the exchange rates ruling on 31st March 2017. Where the Council has entered into a transaction denominated in a foreign currency, the transaction is converted into sterling at the exchange rate applicable on the date the transaction was effective.
- (vi) Cash is represented by deposits held with financial institutions repayable on demand without penalty.

#### (e) Investment Income

- (i) Interest income is recognised in the Fund account as it accrues.
- (ii) Dividend income is recognised in the Fund account on an accruals basis. Any amount not received by the end of the reporting period is disclosed in the net asset statement as a current financial asset.
- (iii) Distributions from pooled funds are re-invested and as such are recognised in the change in market value.
- (iv) Changes in the net market value of investments held at any time during the year are recognised as income and comprise all realised and unrealised gains/losses.



## NOTES TO THE PENSION FUND ACCOUNTS

### 2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES Cont...

#### Fund account - expense items

##### (f) Management Expenses

The Code of Practice does not require any breakdown of pension fund administrative expenses. However in the interests of greater transparency, the Council discloses its pension fund management expenses in accordance with the CIPFA guidance on accounting for LGPS management costs.

##### Administrative Expenses

Staff costs of the pensions administration team are charged direct to the fund. Associated management, accommodation and other overheads are apportioned to this activity and charged as expenses to the fund.

##### Oversight & Governance Costs

Staff costs relating to oversight and governance are charged direct to the fund. Associated management, accommodation and other overheads are apportioned to this activity and charged as expenses to the fund.

##### Investment Management Expenses

Fund managers' fees are paid in accordance with the terms of each individual management agreement. The fees are based mainly on a percentage of the value of funds under their management and increase or reduce as the value of the investments change.

##### (g) Benefits Payable

Pensions and lump sums payable include all amounts known to be due as at the end of the financial year. Any amounts due but unpaid are disclosed in the net assets statement as current liabilities.

#### Net assets statement

##### Financial Assets

- (h) Financial assets are included in the net assets statement on a fair value basis as at the reporting date. A financial asset is recognised in the net assets statement on the date the fund becomes party to the contractual acquisition of the asset. From this date any gains or losses arising from changes in the fair value of the assets are recognised by the fund.

The values of investments as shown in the net assets statement have been determined as follows:

##### (i) Market-quoted investments

Market quoted investments – the value of an investment for which there is a readily available market price is determined by the bid price ruling on the final day of the accounting period.

##### (ii) Fixed interest securities

Fixed Interest Securities – are recorded at net market value based on their bid price.

### 2.a CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the authority about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from assumptions and estimates.

There is just one item in the authority's net asset statement as at 31st March 2017 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year.

**Pensions Liability** - Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund investments. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.

The assumptions interact in complex ways. During 2016/17, the Council's actuaries advised that the net pensions liability had increased by £107.4 million to £612.4 million as a result of falling bond yields.

### 3. CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions represent the total amounts receivable from the employing authority in respect of its own contributions and those of its pensionable employees. Employees pay contributions based on the level of pay they receive, with contribution rates set between 5.5% and 12.5% dependent on pensionable pay. The employer's contributions are made at a rate determined by the Fund's actuary necessary to maintain the Fund in a state of solvency, having regard to existing and future liabilities. The Primary Contribution Rates used during the financial year ending the 31 March 2017 range from 15.8% to 41.4% of pensionable pay. The Council paid an agreed additional monetary contribution of £22.0m to recover the deficit. Contributions shown in the revenue statement may be categorised as follows:-

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
<b>Members normal contributions</b>		
Council	9,673	9,835
Admitted bodies	184	157
Scheduled body	1,094	1,159
<b>Total members</b>	<b>10,951</b>	<b>11,151</b>
<b>Employers</b>		
<b>Normal contributions</b>		
Council	22,105	22,655
Admitted bodies	887	1,992
Scheduled bodies	3,820	3,877
<b>Deficit funding contributions</b>		
Council	20,500	22,000
<b>Other contributions</b>		
Council	1,697	1,288
<b>Total employers</b>	<b>49,009</b>	<b>51,812</b>
<b>Total contributions</b>	<b>59,960</b>	<b>62,963</b>

Employer deficit funding contributions are accounted for on the due dates on which they are payable under the schedule of contributions set by the scheme actuary or on receipt if earlier than the due date.

Note: The Council is required to operate an Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) scheme for employees. In 2016/17 employees made contributions of £12,699.25 (£10,870.28 in 2015/16) into the AVC Scheme operated by Aviva (Norwich Union) and £5,542.88 to Equitable Life (£6,434.33 in 2015/16). The contributions are not included in the Pension Fund Accounts in accordance with regulation 4(1)(b) of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2009 but are deducted from salaries and remitted directly to the provider.

### 4. BENEFITS, REFUNDS OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND TRANSFER VALUES

Benefits payable and refunds of contributions have been brought into the accounts on the basis of all valid claims approved during the year. Benefits are index linked to keep pace with inflation based on the consumer price index.

Transfers out/in are those sums paid to, or received from, other pension schemes and relate to the period of previous pensionable employment.

Transfer values are brought into the accounts on a cash basis. Benefits payable are analysed below.

	2015/16				2016/17			
	Council	Admitted Bodies	Scheduled Bodies	Total	Council	Admitted Bodies	Scheduled Bodies	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Pensions	(37,467)	(585)	(1,051)	(39,103)	(37,650)	(679)	(1,156)	(39,485)
Lump sum retirement benefits	(10,828)	(441)	(425)	(11,694)	(9,688)	(300)	(839)	(10,827)
Lump sum death benefits	(1,080)	(175)	(208)	(1,463)	(1,514)	0	0	(1,514)
<b>Total Pensions and Benefits</b>	<b>(49,375)</b>	<b>(1,201)</b>	<b>(1,684)</b>	<b>(52,260)</b>	<b>(48,852)</b>	<b>(979)</b>	<b>(1,995)</b>	<b>(51,826)</b>
Transfer Values Received (Individual)	2,166	0	0	2,166	2,195	0	0	2,195
Transfer Values Paid (Individual)	(4,092)	0	0	(4,092)	(3,517)	0	0	(3,517)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(51,301)</b>	<b>(1,201)</b>	<b>(1,684)</b>	<b>(54,186)</b>	<b>(50,174)</b>	<b>(979)</b>	<b>(1,995)</b>	<b>(53,148)</b>



**5. DEBTORS AND CREDITORS**

Unless otherwise stated, all transactions are accounted for on an accruals basis. The following amounts were debtors or creditors of the Pension Fund as at 31st March.

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
<b>Debtors</b>		
<b>Other Investment Balances</b>		
Investment sales	805	0
Dividends receivable	649	961
Tax recoverable	519	712
	<u>1,973</u>	<u>1,673</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Contributions due from admitted bodies	237	241
London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund	457	1,176
	<u>694</u>	<u>1,417</u>
<b>Total Debtors</b>	<b>2,667</b>	<b>3,090</b>
<b>Creditors</b>		
<b>Other Investment Balances</b>		
Investment purchases	35	45
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Unpaid benefits	1,271	1,564
Administrative expenses	671	747
London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund	0	3,940
HMRC Creditor Income Tax Deducted	0	4,199
	<u>1,942</u>	<u>10,550</u>
<b>Total Creditors</b>	<b>1,977</b>	<b>10,595</b>
<b>Net Debtors</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>(7,505)</b>

**6. CASH**

The deposits held by fund managers can be further analysed as follows:

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Aberdeen: Private Equity Portfolio	10	0
GMO	3,702	1,075
Schroders: Multi Asset Portfolio	0	0
Schroders: Property Portfolio	1,934	3,021
London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund	148,359	18,428
<b>TOTAL CASH</b>	<b>154,005</b>	<b>22,524</b>

**7. TAXATION****UK Income Tax**

Investment income is subject to UK tax which the Fund cannot recover under current tax legislation, except for tax deducted at source from Property unit trusts.

**Value Added Tax**

As Tower Hamlets Council is the Administering Authority for the Fund, VAT Input tax is recoverable on all Fund activities.

**Overseas Tax**

Taxation agreements exist between the UK and certain other European countries whereby a proportion of the tax deducted locally from investment earnings may be reclaimed. The proportion reclaimable and the timescale involved varies from country to country.

**8. STATEMENT OF INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES**

The Council, as the Administering Authority of the Pension Fund, is required to prepare, maintain and publish a Statement of Investment Principles (SIP) in accordance with the Local Authority Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) (Amendment) Regulations 1999. The SIP which is published as part of the Local Government Pensions Scheme Annual Report was approved by the Council's Pensions Committee on 7th December 2015.

## 9. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FUND

The following table sets out the membership of the Fund at 31st March:

	2016	2017
<b>London Borough of Tower Hamlets</b>		
Active Members	6,365	6,497
Pensioners	4,352	4,356
Deferred Pensioners	6,770	7,076
Dependants	1,018	1,030
	<b>18,505</b>	<b>18,959</b>
<b>Admitted &amp; Scheduled Bodies</b>		
Active Members	657	651
Pensioners	247	275
Deferred Pensioners	375	406
Dependants	26	29
	<b>1,305</b>	<b>1,361</b>

The following bodies have been admitted into the Fund:

### Admitted Bodies

Agilysis  
 City Gateway  
 East End Homes  
 Gateway Housing Association (formerly Bethnal Green and Victoria Park Housing Association)  
 Greenwich Leisure Limited  
 One Housing Group (formerly Island Homes)  
 Swan Housing Association  
 Tower Hamlets Community Housing  
 Vibrance (formerly Redbridge Community Housing Limited)

### Scheduled Bodies

Bethnal Green Academy  
 Canary Wharf College  
 Culloden Primary School  
 London Enterprise Academy  
 Old Ford Primary School  
 Sir William Burrough School  
 Solebay Academy  
 St. Pauls Way Community School  
 Tower Hamlets Homes Limited  
 Wapping High School

## 10. INVESTMENTS

The Fund employs nine specialist investment managers with mandates corresponding to the principal asset classes.

### Manager

GMO UK Ltd.  
 Goldman Sachs Asset Management  
 Insight Investment Management (Global) Ltd  
 Legal & General Investment Management  
 London LGPS CIV  
 Schroders Asset Management Property Fund

### Mandate

Global Equity  
 Absolute Return Fund  
 Absolute Return Fund  
 UK Equity / Index Linked Gilts  
 Pooled  
 Property

The value of the Fund, by manager, as at 31st March was as follows:

	2016		2017	
	£ million	%	£ million	%
Baillie Gifford Life Ltd - Equities	209.9	21.4	0.0	-
GMO UK Ltd.	248.4	25.4	326.9	24.1
Goldman Sachs Asset Management Property Fund	0.0	-	77.9	5.7
Insight Investment Management (Global) Ltd	0.0	-	71.7	5.3
Legal & General Investment Management - Equities	217.3	22.2	265.9	19.6
Legal & General Investment Management	60.6	6.2	74.0	5.4
Ruffer LLP	54.6	5.6	0.0	-
Schroders Asset Management Property Fund	131.9	13.5	136.7	10.1
London CIV	56.3	5.8	405.2	29.8



**10. INVESTMENTS (continued)**

The movement in the opening and closing value of investments during the year, together with related direct transaction costs, were as follows:

	Market Value as at 1 Apr 2016 £'000	Purchases £'000	Sales £'000	Change in Market Value £'000	Market Value as at 31 Mar 2017 £'000
Equities	214,616	222,584	(290,805)	(60,399)	86,228
Pooled Investments	626,883	804,730	(168,871)	(132,122)	1,132,820
Pooled Property Investments	129,933	19,897	(11,875)	(4,545)	133,610
	971,432	1,047,211	(468,951)	(197,036)	1,352,858
<b>Other investment Balances</b>					
Cash Deposits	5,647	0	0	0	4,098
Amounts receivable for sales of investments					
Investment income due	1,973	0	0	0	1,673
Amounts payable for purchases of investments	(35)	0	0	0	(45)
<b>Net Investment Assets</b>	<b>7,585</b>				<b>5,724</b>

	Market Value as at 1 Apr 2015 £'000	Purchases £'000	Sales £'000	Change in Market Value £'000	Market Value as at 31 Mar 2016 £'000
Bonds	99,631	0	(98,701)	(930)	0
Equities	270,637	244,815	(256,368)	(16,288)	242,798
Pooled Investments	604,114	67,622	(50,020)	(23,014)	598,702
Pooled Property Investments	118,945	10,359	(8,978)	11,607	129,933
	1,081,327	322,796	(414,067)	(28,625)	971,431
<b>Other investment Balances</b>					
Cash Deposits	5,414	0	0	0	5,647
Investment income due	978	0	0	0	1,973
Amounts payable for purchases of investments	(223)	0	0	0	(35)
<b>Net Investment Assets</b>	<b>6,169</b>				<b>7,585</b>

**10. INVESTMENTS (continued)**

A further analysis of investments assets is as follows.

	Market Value as at 1 Apr 2016 £'000	Market Value as at 31 Mar 2017 £'000
<b>Equities</b>		
UK		
Quoted	16,023	21,584
Overseas		
Quoted	199,593	225,922
	214,616	247,496
<b>Pooled Funds - Additional Analysis</b>		
UK		
Fixed Income Unit Trust	80,630	73,978
Unit Trusts	538,072	820,774
Overseas		
Unit Trusts	28,181	78,809
	626,883	971,561
<b>Pooled Property Investments</b>	129,934	133,609
	129,934	133,609
<b>Cash Deposits</b>	5,647	4,098
<b>Investment Income Due</b>	1,973	1,673
	7,620	5,769
<b>Total Investment Assets</b>	<b>979,053</b>	<b>1,358,425</b>
<b>Investment Liabilities</b>		
Amounts Payable for Purchases	(35)	(45)
<b>Total Investment Liabilities</b>	<b>(35)</b>	<b>(45)</b>
<b>Net Investment Assets</b>	<b>979,018</b>	<b>1,358,380</b>

The market value per investment manager is as follows:

	Market Value 31 Mar 2016		Market Value 31 Mar 2017	
	£'000	%	£'000	%
Baillie Gifford	209,888	21.6%	0	0.0%
GMO UK Ltd	242,796	25.0%	324,295	24.0%
Insight Investment Management (Global) Ltd	0	0.0%	71,743	5.3%
Legal & General	277,864	28.6%	339,885	25.1%
London LGPS CIV	58,344	5.8%	405,215	30.0%
Goldman Sachs Asset Management		0.0%	77,929	5.8%
Ruffer	54,806	5.6%	0	0.0%
Schroders Asset Management Property Fund	129,934	13.4%	133,609	9.9%
	971,432	100.0%	1,352,656	100.0%

**11. INVESTMENT INCOME**

Investment income is broken down as follows.

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Dividends from overseas equities	8,660	11,917
Dividends from UK equities	0	89
Net rents from properties	4,733	5,002
Interest on cash deposits	387	130
Foreign tax	160	275
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,940</b>	<b>17,413</b>

**TAXES ON INVESTMENT INCOME**

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Withholding tax - equities	360	286
Withholding tax - pooled	49	77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>363</b>

**12 ACTUARIAL POSITION**

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations require a triennial revaluation of the Fund to assess the adequacy of the Fund's investments and contributions in relation to its overall and future obligations. The contribution rate required for benefits accruing in the future is assessed by considering the benefits that accrue over the course of the three years to the next valuation. The employer's contribution rate is determined by the Actuary as part of the revaluation exercise.

The 2016 statutory triennial revaluation of the Pension Fund completed by the Actuary (Hymans Robertson) in the year estimated the deficit on the Fund to be £235 million and the funding level to be 82.8%. This compares to a deficit at the previous revaluation in 2013 of £365 million and a corresponding funding level of 71.8%.

The Actuary has determined that the deficit can be recovered over a period of 20 years and the agreed contributions to recover the deficit for the term of the revaluation is as set out below :-

	£m
2017/18	15.00
2018/19	15.00
2019/20	15.00

The FSS requires that the Fund operates the same target funding level of all on-going employers of 100% of its accrued liabilities valued on the on-going basis, to be achieved over a 20 year period (a period equivalent to the expected future working lifetime of the remaining scheme members). The valuation of the Fund as at 31st March 2016 determined that this would require a contribution (additional to the future contribution rate) of 9.1% of members' pensionable pay equivalent to £15.0 million per annum.

The Council, as Administering Authority, prepares a Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) in respect of the Fund in collaboration with the Fund's Actuary and after consultation with the employers and investment advisors. The Actuary is required to have regard to this statement when carrying out the valuation. The FSS includes the Fund's funding policy, the objectives of which are:

- to ensure the long-term solvency of the Fund
- to ensure that sufficient funds are available to meet all benefits as they fall due for payment
- not to restrain unnecessarily the investment strategy of the Fund so that the Council can seek to maximise investment returns (and hence minimise the cost of the benefits) for an appropriate level of risk.

The basis of valuing the Fund's assets (see note 2) is compatible with the basis of placing a value on members' benefits as both are related to market conditions at the valuation date.



**12. ACTUARIAL POSITION (continued)**

In accordance with the funding policy, the Actuary determines the employer contribution requirement for future service for the Fund as a whole, and for employers who continue to admit new members. The cost of future service benefits is assessed, taking into account expected future salary increases, in order to place a current value on future benefit cashflows. The Actuary "discounts" the future cashflows to the valuation date at a suitable rate. The Actuary adopts a "gilt-based" valuation which uses the yield on suitably dated Government bonds as the discount rate. This is then uplifted to the "funding basis discount rate" taking into account the Fund's current and expected future investment strategy to reflect the percentage by which the Fund is anticipated to "outperform" the yield on Government bonds. The contribution rate required to meet the expected cost of future service benefits is derived as this value less expected member contributions expressed as a percentage of the value of members' pensionable pay. This is known as the "Projected Unit method". The future contribution rate for 2016/17 was 19.9%.

In addition, the Actuary compares the value of the Fund's assets with the estimated cost of members' past service. The ratio of the asset value to the estimated cost of members' past service benefits is known as the "funding level". If the funding level is more than 100% there is a "surplus"; if it is less than 100% there is a "shortfall". The next valuation will be as at 31st March 2016 and the recommendations implemented from 1st April 2017.

Although the funding shortfall is significant, it should be noted that current legislation provides that the level of members' basic pension entitlement and contributions are not affected by the financial position of the Fund. It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that pension entitlements are fully funded and that the impact on Council Tax is minimised. It should also be recognised that the Council is a long-term investor both because a high proportion of pension benefits do not become payable until far in the future and the Council has a relatively secure long-term income stream.

The latest full triennial actuarial valuation of the Fund's liabilities in accordance with IAS26 took place at 31st March 2016. The main actuarial assumptions used in revaluation and applied during the intervaluation period were as follows:

Financial Assumptions	Nominal
Price inflation (CPI)	2.1%
Pay increases	2.0%
Funding basis discount rate	4.2%

Longevity (In years)	Male	Female
Average future life expectancy for a pensioner aged 65 at the valuation date	22.1	24.1
Average future life expectancy at age 65 for a non-pensioner aged 45 at the valuation date	23.9	25.8

**Actuarial Value of Promised Retirement Benefits**

IAS 26 requires the present value of the Fund's promised retirement benefits to be disclosed and for this purpose the actuarial assumptions and methodology should be based on IAS19.

The actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits calculated in line with IAS19 assumptions is estimated to be £1,983 million (£1,559 million in 2015/16). This includes both vested and non-vested benefits.

**Assumptions**

To assess the value of the employer's liabilities the actuary rolls forward the values from the liabilities calculated from the funding valuation as at 31 March 2016 using financial assumptions that comply with IAS 19.

**Demographic assumptions**

The demographic assumptions used are consistent with those used for the funding valuation as at March 2016.

Average future life expectancies at age 65 years	Males	Females
Current pensioners	22.1	24.1
Future pensioners	23.9	25.8

**Financial assumptions**

	31st March 2016	31st March 2017
Year ended	2016	2017
Pension increase rate	2.2%	2.4%
Salary increase rate	3.7%	2.2%
Discount rate	3.5%	2.5%

**13. MANAGEMENT EXPENSES**

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Administration costs	677	799
Investment management expenses	3,076	2,879
Oversight & governance	86	183
	<b>3,839</b>	<b>3,861</b>

**14. INVESTMENT EXPENSES**

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Management fees	2,901	2,722
Custody fees	29	35
Transaction Costs	146	122
	<b>3,076</b>	<b>2,879</b>

The investment management expenses above includes transaction costs of £160,000 (£74,000 in 2015/16). Costs are also incurred through the bid/offer spread on investment sales and purchases and these are reflected in the costs of purchases and proceeds from sales of investments.

**14b. EXTERNAL AUDIT FEE**

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Audit Fee	21	21
	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>

**15. RISK MANAGEMENT****Nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments****Risk and Risk Management**

The fund's primary long-term risk is that the fund's assets will fall short of its liabilities. The aim of investment risk management is to minimise the risk of a reduction in the value of the fund and to maximise the opportunity for gains across the whole portfolio. The fund achieves this through asset diversification to reduce exposure to market risk and credit risk to an acceptable level.

**Credit risk**

Credit risk is the risk that a counter party to a financial instrument may fail to pay amounts due to the Pension fund. The market value of investments generally reflect an assessment of credit in their pricing and consequently the risk of loss is implicitly provided for in the carrying value of the fund's financial assets and liabilities. The fund carries out a review of its investment managers annual internal control reports to ensure that managers are diligent in their selection and use of counterparties and brokers. Deposits are made with banks and financial institutions that are rated independently and meet the Council's credit criteria.

The Council only invests money with institutions with a minimum Fitch credit rating of A+ or higher.

**Liquidity risk**

This is the risk that the Fund might not have the cash flow required in order to meet its financial obligations when they become due. Over the years contributions have tended to be greater than benefits and this has ensured that sufficient cash has been available to meet payments.

The Fund currently operates two bank accounts. One is held by the Fund's custodian (State Street Bank) and holds cash relating to the investment activities and the other is the LBTH Pension Fund bank account and this is used to hold cash relating to member activities.

Should the Fund have insufficient money available to meet its commitments it may, under Regulation 5.2 borrow cash for up to 90 days. If there was a longer term shortfall then the Fund's assets could be sold to provide additional cash. A significant proportion of the Fund is made up of readily realisable assets.

**Market risk**

This is the risk that fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises; interest rate risk, currency risk and other price risk. The Fund mitigates these risks as follows:

**Interest rate risk**

Cash deposits held in the Pension Fund bank account are invested in accordance with the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

The Fund holds a percentage of its portfolio in fixed interest securities to mitigate this risk should interest rates fall.

The Fund's direct exposure to interest rate movements as at 31st March 2016 and 31st March 2017 is set out below.

Interest Rate Risk	As At 31st March 2016	As At 31st March 2017
Asset Type	£'000	£'000
Cash and cash equivalents	5,647	4,096
Cash balances	149,053	19,846
Fixed interest securities	60,630	73,978
<b>Total</b>	<b>215,330</b>	<b>97,920</b>

Interest Rate Risk - Sensitivity Analysis	Carrying Amount As At 31st March 2017	Change in year in net assets available	
Asset Type		+100 BPS £'000	-100 BPS £'000
Cash and cash equivalents	4,096	41	(41)
Cash balances	19,846	198	(198)
Fixed interest securities	73,978	(740)	740
<b>Total change in net assets available</b>	<b>97,920</b>	<b>(500)</b>	<b>500</b>

Interest Rate Risk - Sensitivity Analysis	Carrying Amount As At 31st March 2016	Change in year in net assets available to pay benefits	
Asset Type		+100 BPS £'000	-100 BPS £'000
Cash and cash equivalents	5,647	56	(56)
Cash balances	149,053	1,491	(1,491)
Fixed interest securities	60,630	(606)	606
<b>Total change in net assets available</b>	<b>215,330</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>(941)</b>

**Interest rate risk - sensitivity analysis**

Interest rates can vary and can affect both income to the fund and the value of net assets available to pay benefits. A 100 basis point (BPS) movement in interest rates is consistent with the level of sensitivity applied as part of the fund's risk management strategy. The table below shows the effect of a +/- 100 BPS change in interest rates.



**15. RISK MANAGEMENT (continued)****Currency risk**

The Fund invests in financial instruments denominated in currencies other than Sterling and as a result is exposed to exchange rate risk. This is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in foreign exchange rates. To alleviate this risk the Fund allows investment managers to use derivative contracts, in accordance with the contract conditions:

Following analysis of historical data in consultation with the fund's investment advisors, the Council considers the likely volatility associated with foreign exchange rate movements to be 8.8%. This analysis assumes all other variables, in particular interest rates, remain constant.

The following table summarises the Fund's currency exposure as at 31 March 2017 and as at the previous year end.

Currency Exposure - Asset Type	As At 31st March 2016 £'000	As At 31st March 2017 £'000
Asset Type		
Overseas quoted securities	230,423	306,252
Overseas unit trusts	3,574	0
Cash	0	0
<b>Total overseas assets</b>	<b>233,997</b>	<b>306,252</b>

Currency Exposure - Sensitivity Analysis	Carrying Amount As At 31st March 2017 £'000	Change in year in net assets available to pay benefits	
		+8.8%	-8.8%
Asset Type	£'000	£'000	£'000
Overseas quoted securities	306,252	333,202	279,302
Overseas unit trusts	0	0	0
Cash	0	0	0
<b>Total change in net assets available</b>	<b>306,252</b>	<b>333,202</b>	<b>279,302</b>

Currency Exposure - Sensitivity Analysis	Carrying Amount As At 31st March 2016 £'000	Change in year in net assets available to pay benefits	
		+6.8%	-6.8%
Asset Type	£'000	£'000	£'000
Overseas quoted securities	230,423	246,092	214,754
Overseas unit trusts	3,574	3,817	3,331
Cash	0	0	0
<b>Total change in net assets available</b>	<b>233,997</b>	<b>249,909</b>	<b>218,085</b>

**Other Price risk**

To mitigate the risk of a loss owing to a fall in market prices the Fund maintains a diverse portfolio of investments. Diversification ensures that the Fund has a balance of investments that offer different levels of risk and return.

The Fund employs a number of investment managers, with differing but complementary styles, to mitigate the risk of underperformance of any single manager and to ensure that any fall in market prices should not affect the Fund as a whole.

Manager performance and asset allocation policy is regularly reviewed by the Pensions Investment Panel. The Fund also uses certain derivative instruments as part of efficient portfolio management.

**Other price risk - sensitivity analysis**

Potential price changes are determined based on the observed historical volatility of asset class returns. 'Riskier' assets such as equities will display greater potential volatility than bonds. The potential volatilities are consistent with a one standard deviation movement in the change in value of the assets over the latest three years.

Following analysis of historical data and expected investment return movement during the financial year, in consultation with the Fund's investment advisors, the Council has determined that the following movements in market price risk are reasonably possible for the 2016/17 reporting period. This analysis assumes that all other variables, in particular foreign currency exchange rates and interest rates remain the same.

Price Risk - sensitivity analysis	Potential Market Movements (+/-)
Asset Type	
UK equities	7.9%
Global equity	11.0%
Total fixed interest	4.9%
Alternatives	6.0%
Cash	0.0%
Pooled Property Investments	2.1%

**15. RISK MANAGEMENT (continued)**

Had the market price of the Fund's investments increased/decreased in line with the above, the change in net assets available to pay benefits in the market price would have been as follows:

Asset Type	Value as at 31 March 2017	Percentage change	Value on increase	Value on decrease
	£'000	%	£'000	£'000
<b>Cash and cash equivalents</b>	22,524	0.0%	22,524	22,524
<b>Investment portfolio assets</b>				
UK equities	265,886	7.9%	286,997	244,775
Global equity	324,294	11.0%	360,064	288,524
Total fixed interest	73,978	4.9%	77,588	70,368
Alternatives	554,887	6.0%	588,402	521,372
Pooled Property Investments	133,611	2.1%	136,457	130,765
Net derivative assets	0	0.0%	0	0
Investment income due	1,673	0.0%	1,673	1,673
Amounts receivable for sales	0	0.0%	0	0
Amounts payable for purchases	(45)	0.0%	(45)	(45)
<b>Total assets available to pay benefits</b>	<b>1,376,808</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1,473,660</b>	<b>1,279,958</b>

Had the market price of the Fund's investments increased/decreased in line with the above, the change in net assets available to pay benefits in the market price would have been as follows:

Asset Type	Value as at 31 March 2016	Percentage change	Value on increase	Value on decrease
	£'000	%	£'000	£'000
<b>Cash and cash equivalents</b>	154,005	0.0%	154,005	154,005
<b>Investment portfolio assets</b>				
UK equities	217,234	10.6%	240,261	194,207
Global equity	452,685	11.3%	503,838	401,532
Total fixed interest	60,630	3.8%	62,934	58,326
Alternatives	110,950	4.6%	116,054	105,846
Pooled Property Investments	129,934	2.2%	132,793	127,075
Net derivative assets	0	0.0%	0	0
Investment income due	1,973	0.0%	1,973	1,973
Amounts receivable for sales	0	0.0%	0	0
Amounts payable for purchases	(35)	0.0%	(35)	(35)
<b>Total assets available to pay benefits</b>	<b>1,127,376</b>		<b>1,211,622</b>	<b>1,042,930</b>

**Refinancing risk**

The Council does not have any financial instruments that have a refinancing risk as part of its treasury management and investment strategies.



**16. VALUATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS CARRIED AT FAIR VALUE****Fair Value Hierarchy**

IFRS7 requires the Fund to classify fair value instruments using a three-level hierarchy. The three levels are summarised as follows:

Level 1 - inputs that reflect quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets. Products classified as level 1 comprise quoted equities, quoted fixed securities, quoted index-linked securities and unit trusts

Level 2 - inputs other than quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets

Level 3 - inputs that are not based on observable data. Such instruments would include unquoted equity investments and hedge fund of funds.

The following sets out the Fund's assets and liabilities according to the fair value hierarchy as at 31st March 2017.

	Level 1 £'000	Level 2 £'000	Level 3 £'000	Total £'000
Equities	247,485	0	0	247,485
Pooled Funds				
Unit Trusts	971,562	0	0	971,562
Property Unit Trust	133,609	0	0	133,609
Other	0	0	0	0
Derivative Contracts				
Forward Foreign Exchange Contracts	0	0	0	0
Cash and bank Deposits	23,701	0	0	23,701
Current Assets	1,914	0	0	1,914
Current Liabilities	(10,595)	0	0	(10,595)
	<b>1,367,676</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,367,676</b>

During the year ended 31st March 2017 there were no transfers between the levels of the fair value hierarchy.

The equivalents at 31st March 2016 were as follows:

	Level 1 £'000	Level 2 £'000	Level 3 £'000	Total £'000
Equities	214,617	0	0	214,617
Pooled Funds				
Unit Trusts	572,275	0	0	572,275
Property Unit Trust	129,933	0	0	129,933
Other	54,607	0	0	54,607
Derivative Contracts				
Forward Foreign Exchange Contracts	0	0	0	0
Cash and bank Deposits	154,464	0	0	154,464
Current Assets	2,210	0	0	2,210
Current Liabilities	(1,977)	0	0	(1,977)
	<b>1,126,129</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,126,129</b>

**16. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS DISCLOSURES****Net gains and losses on financial instruments**

	Long-term	
	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
<b>Financial Assets</b>		
Loans and receivables	398	148
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(27,304)	218,459
<b>Total Financial Assets</b>	<b>(26,906)</b>	<b>218,607</b>
<b>Financial Liabilities</b>		
Payables		
Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss	0	0
<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>17. CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Contributions due - employees		
Contributions due - employers	236	241
Sundry debtors	458	1,177
Cash balances	148,359	18,428
	<b>149,053</b>	<b>19,846</b>
<b>Analysis of debtors</b>		
	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Other entities and individuals	149,053	19,846
	<b>149,053</b>	<b>19,846</b>
<b>18. CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Sundry creditors	671	4,687
HMRC creditor		4,199
Benefits payable	1,271	1,664
	<b>1,942</b>	<b>10,550</b>
<b>Analysis of creditors</b>		
	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
Other entities and individuals	1,942	10,550
	<b>1,942</b>	<b>10,550</b>

## 19. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund is administered by The London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

In accordance with IAS24 'Related Party Disclosure', material transactions with related parties not disclosed elsewhere in the financial statements are detailed below.

The Council incurred costs of £669k (£669k 2015/16) relating to administration of the Fund and has been reimbursed by the Fund for these expenses. The Council contributed £22.0m (£20.5m 2015/16) to the Fund in respect of back funding. All monies owing to and from the Fund were paid in the year.

During the year no Committee Members or Council Chief Officers with direct responsibility for pension fund issues, have undertaken any declarable transactions with the Pension Fund, other than administrative services undertaken by the Council on behalf of the Pension Fund.

The pension fund cash held by London Borough of Tower Hamlets is invested on the money markets by the treasury management operations of the Council. During the year to 31st March 2017, the Fund held an average investment of £26.1m (£48.1m 31st March 2016), earning interest of £148k (£398k in 2015/16).

The Council has a subsidiary company, Tower Hamlets Homes, who are within the Fund. During the year the Fund received contribution payments totalling £3.3m (£3.4m 2015/16) from this company.

Fund administration expenses payable to the administrating authority are as set out in the table below.

	2015/16	2016/17
	£'000	£'000
<b>Fund Administration Expenses</b>		
Payroll/ HR Support	494	494
Corporate Finance	175	175
	<b>669</b>	<b>669</b>

### Key Management Personnel

Employees holding key positions in the financial management of the fund as at 31st March 2015 include:

Chief Accountant

The financial value of their relationship with the fund is as set out below

	2015/16	2016/17
	£'000	£'000
Short term benefits	19	30
Long term/post retirement benefits	4	13

### Governance

Each member of the pension fund committee is required to declare their interests at each meeting of the Committee. These are recorded as part of the public record of each meeting. For 2014/15 there were no Members of the Pension Fund Committee who had involvement with other organisations.

**Compensation of key management** - It was not practical to include costs relating to key management personnel within the Pension Fund Accounts, principally as they are charged to the Council's Accounts and have not been charged to the Pension Fund. All costs are disclosed within note 33 of the Council's main accounts.

## 20. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The Council has also provided an assurance that it will meet the pension liabilities of Tower Hamlets Homes in the event the ALMO is unable to fund the liabilities arising from its pension obligations. The liability as at 31st March 2017 was £0.734m (£2.542m 2015/16).

## 21. CONTINGENT ASSETS

Admitted body employers in the Fund hold insurance bonds to guard against the possibility of not being able to meet their pension obligations. These bonds are drawn in favour of the pension fund and payment will only be triggered in event of employer default.

## 22. IMPAIRMENT LOSSES

During 2016/17 impairment losses were nil (impairment losses in 2015/16 were also nil).



The London Borough of Tower  
Hamlets Pension Fund  
Appendix 2  
Investment Strategy Statement



## 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 This is the Investment Strategy Statement (“ISS”) of the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund (“the Fund”), which is administered by Tower Hamlets Council, (“the Administering Authority”). The ISS is made in accordance with Regulation 7 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016.
- 1.2 The Administering Authority has delegated all its functions as administering authority to the Pensions Committee (“the Committee”). The ISS, which was approved by the Committee on 16th March 2017, is subject to periodic review at least every three years and without delay after any significant change in investment policy. The Committee has consulted on the contents of the Fund’s investment strategy with such persons it considers appropriate – for example, pensions board, independent adviser, local authority employers such as admitted bodies and scheduled bodies.
- 1.3 The Committee will invest in accordance with the ISS, any Fund money that is not needed immediately to make payments from the Fund.
- 1.4 The Pensions Committee is charged with the responsibility for the governance and stewardship of the Fund. The Fund has adopted a prudent, risk aware investment strategy, which is kept continually under review. Asset allocation decisions are taken in the best long term interest of Fund employers and member beneficiaries.
- 1.5 The ISS should be read in conjunction with the Fund’s Funding Strategy Statement, which sets out how solvency risks will be managed with regard to the underlying pension liabilities.

## 2.0 Long-term view of investments

- 2.1 The Fund’s primary investment objective is to ensure that over the long term the Fund will have sufficient assets to meet all pension liabilities as they fall due. This funding position will be reviewed at each triennial actuarial valuation, or more frequently as required.
- 2.2 The Committee aims to fund the Fund in such a manner that, in normal market conditions, all accrued benefits are fully covered by the value of the Fund’s assets and that an appropriate level of contributions is agreed by the employer to meet the cost of future benefits accruing. For employee members, benefits will be based on service completed but will take account of future salary and/or inflation increases.
- 2.3 The strength of the respective employers’ covenant and the present cash flow positive nature of the Fund allow a long-term deficit recovery period and enable the Fund to take a long-term view of investment strategy.
- 2.4 The most important aspect of risk is not the volatility of returns, but the risk of absolute loss, and of not meeting the objective of facilitating low, stable contribution rates for employers. Illiquidity and volatility are risks which offer potential sources of additional compensation to the long term investor. Although, it is more important to avoid being a forced seller in short term market setbacks.
- 2.5 Participation in economic growth is a major source of long term equity return. Over the long term, equities are expected to outperform other liquid assets, particularly government bonds and cash. Well governed companies that manage their business in a responsible manner will likely produce higher returns over the long term.

- 2.6 The Committee has translated its objectives into a suitable strategic asset allocation benchmark for the Fund. (See section 5.6) This benchmark is consistent with the Committee's views on the appropriate balance between generating a satisfactory long-term return on investments whilst taking account of market volatility and risk and the nature of the Fund's liabilities.
- 2.7 The fund carried out an Asset Outperformance Assumption modelling exercise in conjunction with the 2016 actuarial valuation. The Committee set a target range of 66%-75% chance of achieving their long term funding target – returning to a fully funded position within the next 20 years. (The probability required for each employer to reach its funding target within its time horizon. In general, higher probabilities of success are achieved by paying higher contributions and relying less on volatile investment returns. The probability required for each employer is largely based on each employer's assessed covenant. For instance, a lower probability of success (e.g. 66%) may be required for a secure body as they may be considered to be able to pay higher contributions (or current rates for longer) should they not reach their funding target over their time horizon.
- 2.8 This approach helps to ensure that the investment strategy takes due account of the maturity profile of the Fund (in terms of the relative proportions of liabilities in respect of pensioners, deferred and active members), together with the level of disclosed surplus or deficit (relative to the funding bases used).
- 2.9 In line with the above overall objective the Fund will invest money in a wide variety of investments, having assessed the suitability of particular investments; the investment objectives, the impact of different economic scenarios on achieving required total Fund returns, and the resulting diversity across the whole Fund. Prior to any such decisions being made the Fund will take appropriate external independent advice.
- 2.10 The Committee also monitors the Fund's actual allocation on a regular basis to ensure it does not notably deviate from the target allocation. The Fund will invest in accordance with its investment strategy, any Fund money that is not needed immediately to make payments from the Fund. Any deviations within guidelines from the agreed strategy will be reported to the Pensions Committee, the Pensions Board and the Section 151 Officer so that appropriate corrective actions can be undertaken.

### 3. The investment objectives of the Fund

- a) The long-term objective is for the Fund to achieve a funding level of 100% over a maximum fund recovery period of 20 years from April 2016. This target will be reviewed following each triennial actuarial valuation and consultation with Fund employers.
- b) The outcome of the last valuation carried out as at 31st March 2016:
- The funding level has improved from 71.8% to 82.7%.
  - In monetary terms the deficit has reduced by £130m from £365m (at March 2013) to £235m (March 2016). This was based on the Fund having assets of £1,126m and liabilities of £1,361m.
- c) The actuarial valuation, at 31 March 2016, was prepared on the basis of an expected real return on assets of 2% over the long term, a nominal return of 4.2% assuming inflation (CPI) to be 2.2%.



- d) In order to monitor the investment objective, the Pensions Committee requires the provision of detailed performance measurement of the Fund's investments. This is provided by the Fund's custodian, State Street, on a quarterly basis. In addition, the Pensions Committee conducts a formal annual performance review of each of its investment managers.
- e) The Fund will target an outperformance of this over 10 years, within a diversified portfolio to stabilise returns and reduce volatility throughout the period.
- f) The actuarial funding target is reviewed after periodic actuarial valuations and consultation with Fund employers and may undergo a partial or full review at other times should circumstances warrant it.

#### 4. Strategy Review and Strategic Benchmark

- 4.1 A full Strategic Investment Review will be undertaken by the Fund every three to six years by specialist professional advisors. The investment strategy (including the core investment objectives and asset allocations) will be capable of sufficiently flexible to meet longer term prevailing market conditions and address any short term cash flow requirements. Interim reviews may be undertaken to ensure that the Strategy remains appropriate.
- 4.2 The Fund will operate a fund-specific benchmark for the investment portfolio, with long-term allocations to the various investment asset classes, which reflect the circumstances of the Fund.
- 4.3 As is appropriate all asset classes and products will be kept under continual review. In addition to considering the benefits of individual products and asset classes for introduction into the strategy, consideration will be given to how the inclusion affects the overall risk/return characteristics of the total portfolio. Before any investment decisions are made by the Pensions Committee, professional advice will be sought. If there are any instances where advice received is not to be acted upon reporting to both the Committee and the Pensions Board will ensue.

##### *Asset classes*

- 4.4 The Fund may invest in quoted and unquoted securities of UK and overseas markets including equities and fixed interest and index linked bonds, cash, property, infrastructure and commodities either directly or through pooled funds. The Fund may also make use of contracts for differences and other derivatives either directly or in pooled funds investing in these products for the purpose of efficient portfolio management or to hedge specific risks.
- 4.5 The Committee reviews the nature of Fund investments on a regular basis, with particular reference to suitability and diversification. The Committee seeks and considers written advice from a suitably qualified person in undertaking such a review. If, at any time, investment in a security or product not previously known to the Committee is proposed, appropriate advice is sought and considered to ensure its suitability and diversification.
- 4.6 The Fund's target investment strategy is set out below. The table also includes the maximum percentage of total Fund value that it will invest in these asset classes. In line with the Regulations, the authority's investment strategy does not permit more

than 5% of the total value of all investments of fund money to be invested in entities which are connected with that authority within the meaning of section 212 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007”.

- 4.7 The Committee also monitors the Fund’s actual allocation on a regular basis to ensure it does not notably deviate from the target allocation, s151 officer and her officers have the delegated authority to rebalance the Fund to its strategic assets allocation.

Asset class	Targeted Strategic Asset Allocation %	Investments Range (%)
<i>UK equities</i>	20%	(15% - 25%)
<i>Global equities</i>	40%	(35% - 45%)
<b>Total equities</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>(50% - 70%)</b>
Property	12%	(10% - 15%)
Diversified Growth Funds	10%	(8% - 15%)
Gilts	3%	(2% - 7%)
Corporate bonds	15%	(10% - 20%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 5. *Restrictions on investment*

- 5.1 The Regulations do not permit more than 5% of the Fund’s value to be invested in entities which are connected with that authority within the meaning of section 212 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007(e). The investment policy of the Fund does not permit any employer-related investment, other than is necessary to meet the regulatory requirements with regards to pooling.
- 5.2 The Pensions Committee believes that the Fund’s portfolio is adequately diversified, and has taken professional advice to this effect from their investment consultant and independent advisor.
- 5.3 The strategic asset allocation includes ranges for each asset class within which the asset allocation can vary. In the event that any asset class range is breached, the Pensions Committee will be informed and the Fund’s officers will endeavour to bring the asset allocation back within the range within an appropriate period of time.
- 5.4 The Pensions Committee reviews the suitability of the asset allocation of the Fund on a yearly basis, following advice from the officers, investment consultant and independent advisor.
- 5.5 It is intended that the Fund’s investment strategy will be reviewed at least every three years, following the latest actuarial valuation of the Fund. The investment strategy takes due account of the maturity profile of the Fund and the current funding position.
- 5.6 The Pensions Committee has set the following benchmark against which performance of the Fund will be measured:

Asset class	Benchmark
-------------	-----------

<b>Equities</b>	
UK Equities	FTSE All Share
Global Equities	MSCI All Countries World Index
<b>Bonds and Cash</b>	
UK Gilts Over 5 Years	FTSE UK Gilts Index-Linked Over 5 Years Index
Absolute Return Bonds	3 Months LIBOR plus 3-4%
Cash	LIBID 7 Day
<b>Alternatives</b>	
Property Unit Trusts	UK IPD Monthly Index Property
Diversified Growth Fund	3 Months LIBOR plus 3%

## 6.0 Managers

- 6.1 The Committee has appointed a number of investment managers all of whom are authorised under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 to undertake investment business.
- 6.2 The Committee, after seeking appropriate investment advice, has agreed specific benchmarks with each manager so that, in aggregate, they are consistent with the overall asset allocation for the Fund.
- 6.3 The Fund's investment managers will hold a mix of investments which reflects their views relative to their respective benchmarks. Within each major market and asset class, the managers will maintain diversified portfolios through direct investment or pooled vehicles.
- 6.4 The manager of the passive funds in which the Fund invests holds a mix of investments within each pooled fund that reflects that of their respective benchmark indices as set out in section 5.6.
- 6.5 The Fund's current structure and performance targets are set out in the table below.

<b>Current Managers and Mandates</b>				
<b>Manager</b>	<b>Mandate</b>	<b>Benchmark Allocation</b>	<b>Investment Ranges</b>	<b>Performance Target</b>
Baillie Gifford (LCIV)	Global Equities (Active & Growth)	18%	15%-20%	Outperform benchmark by 2-3% over a rolling 3 year period
	Diversified Growth	5%	4%-7.5%	3 Months LIBOR +3% per annum

Manager	Mandate	Benchmark Allocation	Investment Ranges	Performance Target
GMO	Global Equities (Active & Value)	23%	20%-25%	Outperform benchmark by 1.5% over a rolling 3 year period
Insight	Pooled Bonds (Absolute Return)	6%	4%-8%	3 Months LIBOR +2% per annum
Goldman Sachs	Pooled Bonds (Absolute Return)	6%	4%-8%	3 Months LIBOR +2% per annum
Legal & General	UK Equities (Passive)	20%	15%-25%	FTSE All share
	UK Index Linked (Passive)	5%	2%-7%	FTSE A Gov Index Linked >5yrs
Ruffer (LCIV)	Diversified Growth	5%	4%-7.5%	3 Months LIBOR +3% per annum
Schroders	Property	12%	10%-15%	Outperform benchmark by 0.75% over a rolling 3 year period

## 7.0 *The Approach to Risk*

- 7.1 The Committee is aware that the Fund has a need to take risk (e.g. investing in growth assets) to help it achieve its funding objectives. It has a programme in place that aims to help it identify the risks being taken and put in place processes to manage, measure, monitor and (where possible) mitigate the risks being taken.
- 7.2 The principal risks affecting the Fund and the Fund's approach to managing these risks and the contingency plans that are in place are set below:

### *Funding risks*

- Financial mismatch – The risk that Fund assets fail to grow in line with the developing cost of meeting the liabilities.
  - Changing demographics – The risk that longevity improves and other demographic factors change, increasing the cost of Fund benefits.
  - Systemic risk - The possibility of an interlinked and simultaneous failure of several asset classes and/or investment managers, possibly compounded by financial 'contagion', resulting in an increase in the cost of meeting the Fund's liabilities. (The impacts is reducing the value of investments/assets and requiring increased employer's contributions).
- 7.3 The Committee measures and manages financial mismatch in two ways. As indicated above, the Committee has set a strategic asset allocation benchmark for the Fund. This benchmark was set taking into account asset liability modelling which focused on probability of success and level of downside risk.

- 7.4 The Committee assesses risk relative to the strategic benchmark by monitoring the Fund's asset allocation and investment returns relative to the benchmark. The Committee also assesses risk relative to liabilities by monitoring the delivery of benchmark returns relative to liabilities.
- 7.5 The Committee also seeks to understand the assumptions used in any analysis and modelling so they can be compared to their own views and the level of risks associated with these assumptions to be assessed.
- 7.6 The Committee seeks to mitigate systemic risk through a diversified portfolio but it is not possible to make specific provision for all possible eventualities that may arise under this heading.

#### 7.7 *Asset risks*

- Concentration - The risk that a significant allocation to any single asset category and its underperformance relative to expectation would result in difficulties in achieving funding objectives.
- Illiquidity - The risk that the Fund cannot meet its immediate liabilities because it has insufficient liquid assets.
- Currency risk – The risk that the currency of the Fund's assets underperforms relative to Sterling (i.e. the currency of the liabilities).
- Environmental, social and governance ("ESG") – The risk that ESG related factors reduce the Fund's ability to generate the long-term returns.
- Manager underperformance - The failure by the fund managers to achieve the rate of investment return assumed in setting their mandates.

#### 7.8 The Committee measure and manage asset risks as follows:

- a) The Fund's strategic asset allocation benchmark invests in a diversified range of asset classes. The Committee has delegated rebalancing arrangements to s151 officer and her officers to ensure the Fund's "actual allocation" does not deviate from its maximum limits. The Fund invests in a range of investment mandates each of which has a defined objective, performance benchmark and manager process which, taken in aggregate, help reduce the Fund's asset concentration risk. By investing across a range of assets, including liquid quoted equities and bonds, as well as property; the Committee has recognised the need for access to liquidity in the short term.
- b) The Fund invests in a range of overseas markets which provides a diversified approach to currency markets; the Committee also assess the Fund's currency risk during their risk analysis. Detail of the Fund's approach to managing ESG risks is set out later in this document.
- c) The Committee has considered the risk of underperformance by any single investment manager and have attempted to reduce this risk by appointing more than one manager and having a proportion of the Scheme's assets managed on a passive basis. The Committee assess the Fund's managers' performance on a regular basis, and will take steps, including potentially replacing one or more of their managers, if underperformance persists.

### 7.9 *Other provider risk*

- Transition risk - The risk of incurring unexpected costs in relation to the transition of assets among managers. When carrying out significant transitions, the Committee seeks suitable professional advice.
- Custody risk - The risk of losing economic rights to Fund assets, when held in custody or when being traded.
- Credit default - The possibility of default of a counterparty in meeting its obligations.

7.10 The Committee monitors and manages risks in these areas through a process of regular scrutiny of its providers, and audit of the operations it conducts for the Fund, or has delegated such monitoring and management of risk to the appointed investment managers as appropriate (e.g. custody risk in relation to pooled funds). The Committee has the power to replace a provider should serious concerns exist.

7.11 A more comprehensive breakdown of the risks to which the Fund is exposed and the approach to managing these risks is set out in the Fund's risk register and policy documents.

## 8. **Pooling of investments**

8.1 The Fund is a participating scheme in the London Collective Investment Vehicle (LCIV) Pool. The proposed structure and basis on which the LCIV Pool will operate was set out in the July 2016 submission to Government.

8.2 The London CIV has been operational for some time and is in the process of opening a range of sub-funds covering liquid asset classes, with less liquid asset classes to follow.

8.3 The Fund has already transitioned assets into the London CIV with a value of assets under management (AUM) of £382.5m or 30% of the LBTH pension fund assets as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 and will look to transition further liquid assets as and when there are suitable investment strategies available on the platform that meet the needs of the Fund.

8.4 The Fund holds 25% or £327.4m of AUM as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 in life funds and intends to retain these outside of the London CIV in accordance with government guidance on the retention of life funds outside pools for the time being.

8.5 The Fund is monitoring developments and the opening of investment strategy funds on the London CIV platform with a view to transitioning liquid assets across to the London CIV as soon as there are suitable sub-funds to meet the Fund's investment strategy/ asset allocation requirements.

8.6 Any assets not currently invested in the Pool will be reviewed at least annually to determine whether the rationale remains appropriate, and whether it continues to demonstrate value for money.

### ***Structure and governance of the LCIV Pool***

8.7 The July 2016 submission to Government of the LCIV Pool provided a statement addressing the structure and governance of the Pool, the mechanisms by which the

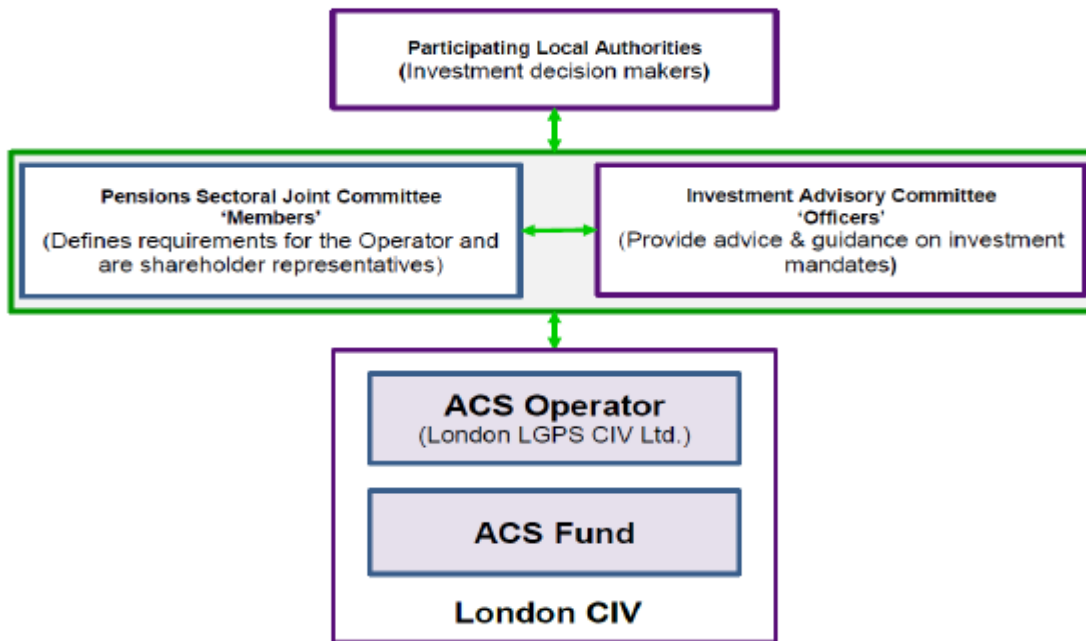


Fund can hold the Pool to account and the services that will be shared or jointly procured.

- 8.8 The below diagrams sets out the governance structure for the London CIV. The governance structure of the CIV has been designed to ensure that there are both formal and informal routes to engage with all the Authorities as both shareholders and investors. This is achieved through a combination of the London Councils' Sectoral Joint Committee, comprising nominated Member representatives from the London Local Authorities (in most cases the Pensions Committee Chair), and the Investment Advisory Committee ("IAC") formed from nominated borough officers, which includes both London Local Authority Treasurers and Pension Officers from a number of Authorities.
- 8.9 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.
- 8.10 The Pensions Sectoral Joint Committee ("PSJC") has been established under the governing arrangements of London Councils. The PSJC effectively fulfils two roles, one is as a mechanism for convening elected Member representation from each borough (generally the borough's Pension Committee Chair), and the other is as the route to convening the Authorities as shareholders in London CIV. This Committee will provide scrutiny and oversight of the CIV for the Authorities, with each Borough represented on the Committee with voting rights.
- 8.11 Borough Pension Committees – In most instances the Chair of the Pensions Committee at a Borough level will be the delegated representative on the PSJC and will be able to provide an overview back to the individual Committee on the work of the London CIV and its effectiveness from attending the PSJC. In addition the London CIV will provide regular updates to Authorities through its written reports and will also attend Committee meetings as and when required and in this way will help to ensure that the individual Pensions Committee are able to provide scrutiny of the London CIV.
- 8.12 The Investment Advisory Committee (IAC) was formed in September 2015 with the remit to:
- To support the Joint Committee in the investment decision making process
  - To liaise with the Fund Operator of the CIV in defining Shareholders' investment needs.
- 8.13 Membership of the IAC was renewed in July 2016 with London Treasurers being asked to nominate themselves and or their officers, 24 nominations were received. Whilst this was greater than allowed for under the Terms of Reference, after consideration, it was agreed that the full complement of nominations should be included in the Committee.
- 8.14 This was to ensure at a time of rapid development for the London CIV, as many Pension Funds could be engaged fully in the process and that this would also enable

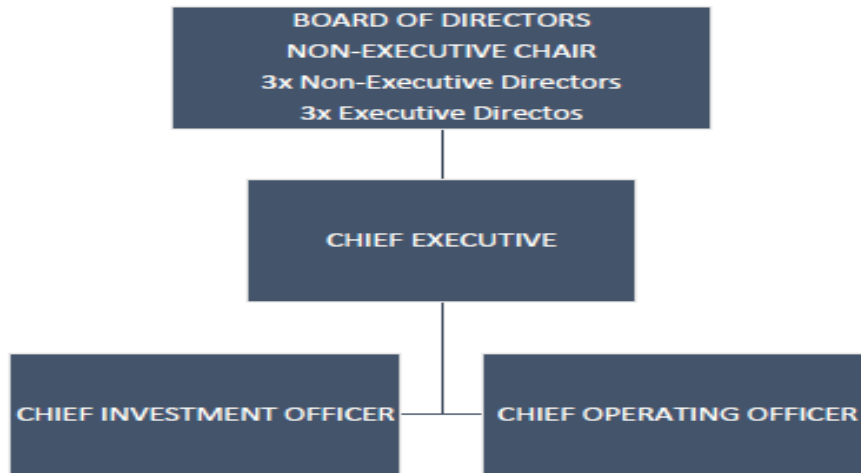
a wide range of pension managers to work closely alongside officers of the CIV. The new Committee comprised 9 London Treasurers and 15 Pension Managers.

### LONDON CIV GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



- 8.14 At the company level for London CIV, it is the Board of Directors that is responsible for decision making within the company, which will include the decisions to appoint and remove investment managers. The Board of the CIV has ultimate responsibility for all aspects of management of the Company. The board will at all times retain and exercise overall control. As a result the board composition seeks to achieve a balance of skills, competencies and expertise to govern on behalf of the shareholders.
- 8.15 The board will challenge the business, has a strong focus on oversight of both the organisation and third parties, and understands its duties as a regulated Company. The board have a mix of relevant investment, operational and financial experience having held senior roles at regulated entities combined with a strong understanding of local government and the requirements of its shareholders. The governance practices will be commensurate with the business and nature of the investment funds it manages.
- 8.16 The board is comprised of seven members both executive and non-executive with a range of skills. The non-executive directors are independent third parties with experience gained from either local government or careers in financial services and each have in-depth understanding of their respective fields. The executive team are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the business and setting the strategic direction of the Company. The non-executive directors will provide independent judgment and challenge to the board based on their respective experience.



LONDON CIV BOARD - COMPANY STRUCTURE**Performance measurement**

8.17 Fund performance is measured at a number of different levels. The objective of the Fund is to outperform the actuarial discount rate. The policy portfolio is selected by the Committee, with advice from the Fund Investment Advisers and Officers, and investment managers including LCIV, is expected to generate returns above the discount rate.

8.18 The performance of the pooling arrangements is monitored via regular reporting and through periodic meetings. Performance for LCIV is measured against the policy portfolio. LCIV seeks to outperform the policy portfolio on a risk adjusted basis, via active sub-funds creation/selection and or selecting the best managers for each of the sub-funds and by implementing investments in a low cost manner. Performance for the investment sub-funds is measured against widely used and transparent benchmarks.

8.19 Where performance falls short of expectations the Committee, Officers and the Investment Advisers for the Fund will identify the cause of this underperformance and will respond appropriately either to alter its policy portfolio (where asset allocation is the underlying cause) or to require changes to the management of the sub fund vehicles (where management skill within LCIV is the underlying cause).

**9. Social, environmental or corporate governance**

9.1 It is recognised that ESG factors can influence long term investment performance and the ability to achieve long term sustainable returns. The Committee consider the Fund's approach to responsible investment in two key areas:

- *Sustainable investment / ESG factors* – considering the financial impact of environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors on its investments.
- *Stewardship and governance* – acting as responsible and active investors/owners, through considered voting of shares, and engaging with investee company management as part of the investment process.

**Sustainable investment / ESG**

9.2 The Fund is committed to being a long term steward of the assets in which it invests and expects this approach to protect and enhance the value of the Fund in the long

term. In making investment decisions, the Fund seeks and receives proper advice from internal and external advisers with the requisite knowledge and skills. In addition the Pensions Committee undertakes training on a regular basis and this will include training on and information sessions on matters of social, environmental and corporate governance.

- 9.3 The Fund requires its investment managers to integrate all material financial factors, including corporate governance, environmental, social, and ethical considerations, into the decision-making process for all fund investments. It expects its managers to follow good practice and use their influence as major institutional investors and long-term stewards of capital to promote good practice in the investee companies and markets to which the Fund is exposed.
- 9.4 The Fund expects its external investment managers (and specifically the London Collective Investment Vehicle through which the Fund will increasingly invest) to undertake appropriate monitoring of current investments with regard to their policies and practices on all issues which could present a material financial risk to the long-term performance of the fund such as corporate governance and environmental factors. The Fund expects its fund managers to integrate material ESG factors within its investment analysis and decision making.
- 9.5 Effective monitoring and identification of these issues can enable engagement with boards and management of investee companies to seek resolution of potential problems at an early stage. Where collaboration is likely to be the most effective mechanism for encouraging issues to be addressed, the Fund expects its investment managers to participate in joint action with other institutional investors as permitted by relevant legal and regulatory codes. The Fund monitors this activity on an ongoing basis with the aim of maximising its impact and effectiveness.
- 9.6 The Fund will invest on the basis of financial risk and return having considered a full range of factors contributing to the financial risk including social, environment and governance factors to the extent these directly or indirectly impact on financial risk and return.
- 9.7 The Fund in preparing and reviewing its Investment Strategy Statement will consult with interested stakeholders including, but not limited to Fund employers, investment managers, Local Pension Board, advisers to the Fund and other parties that it deems appropriate to consult with.

### ***Voting rights***

- 9.8 The Fund recognises the importance of its role as stewards of capital and the need to ensure the highest standards of governance and promoting corporate responsibility in the underlying companies in which its investments reside. The Fund recognises that ultimately this protects the financial interests of the Fund and its ultimate beneficiaries.
- 9.9 The Fund has a commitment to actively exercising the ownership rights attached to its investments reflecting the Fund's conviction that responsible asset owners should maintain oversight of the companies in which it ultimately invests recognising that the companies' activities impact upon not only their customers and clients, but more widely upon their employees and other stakeholders and also wider society.
- 9.10 The Committee has delegated the exercise of voting rights to the investment manager(s) on the basis that voting power will be exercised by them with the

objective of preserving and enhancing long term shareholder value. The managers are strongly encouraged to vote in line with voting alerts issued by the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) as far as practically possible to do so and will hold managers to account where they have not voted in accordance with the LAPFF directions in respect of all resolutions at annual and extraordinary general meetings of companies under Regulation 7(2)(f). The Committee has elected to monitor the voting decisions made by all its investment managers on a regular basis.

- 9.11 The Fund's investments through the London CIV are covered by the voting policy of the CIV which has been agreed by the Pensions Sectoral Joint Committee. Voting is delegated to the external managers and monitored on a quarterly basis. The CIV will arrange for managers to vote in accordance with voting alerts issued by the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) as far as practically possible to do so and will hold managers to account where they have not voted in accordance with the LAPFF directions.
- 9.12 The Fund will incorporate a report of voting activity as part of its Pension Fund Annual report which is published on the Council / Pension Fund website.

### **Stewardship**

- 9.13 The Fund complies with the UK Stewardship Code ('the Code') and is preparing a formal statement of commitment with the Code for assessment. The current draft is set out in Appendix A.
- 9.14 The Fund expects its external investment managers to be signatories of the Stewardship Code and reach Tier One level of compliance or to be seeking to achieve a Tier One status within a reasonable timeframe. Where this is not feasible the Fund expects a detailed explanation as to why it will not be able to achieve this level.
- 9.15 In addition, the Fund expects its investment managers to work collaboratively with others if this will lead to greater influence and deliver improved outcomes for shareholders and more broadly.
- 9.16 The Committee recognises that taking a collaborative approach with other investors can help to achieve wider and more effective outcomes.
- The Fund:
- (a) is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) and in this way joins with other LGPS Funds to magnify its voice and maximise the influence of investors as asset owners;
  - (b) is a member of the Pension and Lifetime Savings Association (PLSA) and in this way joins with other investors to magnify its voice and maximise the influence of investors as asset owners;
  - (c) gives support to shareholder resolutions where these reflect concerns which are shared and represent the Fund interest; and
  - (d) joins wider lobbying activities where appropriate opportunities arise.

**Myners principles for investment decision making**

9.17 The old regulation requiring administering authorities to state the extent to which they comply with Myners principles for investment decision making no longer applies. However, they should still have regard to the guidance. This section has been kept in this document as Appendix B for Tower Hamlets Funds, with some small amendments to keep the responses current.

**Full compliance**

The Fund's annual report includes all of the Fund's policies including the governance policy statement, governance policy compliance statement, communications policy statement, responsible investment and stewardship policy, funding strategy statement and statement of investment principles. The annual report can be found on the council's website.

Quarterly reports to the Pensions Committee and Pensions Board on the management of the Fund's investments are publicly available on the council's website. <http://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=392>

Prepared by: - Bola Tobun (Investment & Treasury Manager)  
(For and on behalf of LBTH Pensions Committee)

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Draft Statement of Commitment with the UK Stewardship code

Appendix B – Myners Investment Principles – Compliance Statement

**Appendix A - Draft Statement of Commitment with the UK Stewardship Code****Principle 1: *Institutional investors should publicly disclose their policy on how they will discharge their stewardship responsibilities.***

The Fund takes its responsibilities as a shareholder seriously and has made a commitment to the informed exercise of its ownership rights as detailed in the Fund's Investment Strategy Statement.

The Fund invests via pooled funds and therefore expects its underlying investment managers to exercise voting and engagement rights on its behalf. The Fund encourages its underlying investment managers to comply with the UK Stewardship Code.

The Fund is subject to the ESG and voting policies of its underlying investment managers. The Pensions Committee ('the Committee') considers these policies when appointing a new manager and when monitoring investment managers, the Fund's Officers consider whether each manager's actions and engagement activities have been appropriate and in keeping with the Fund's policy.

In considering its stewardship activities, the Fund monitors the activities of its investment managers with regard to the following:

- The exercise of voting rights
- The integration and management of Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) issues
- Engagement activities and progress

The Fund is a long-term investor and is committed to being an active owner. It wishes to promote a policy of dialogue on responsible investment issues, through its investment managers, with company management.

The Committee has identified the following ESG issues as a focus for engagement:

- Environmental issues: including conserving energy, promoting alternative energy sources, recycling, avoiding pollution and using environmentally friendly and sustainable resources
- Human rights: including child labour issues in foreign subsidiaries of UK companies or operations in countries with oppressive regimes
- Employment standards: including equal opportunities, health and safety, trade union recognition and employee participation

The Fund recognises that taking a collaborative approach with other investors can help to achieve wider and more effective outcomes and is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), which aims to promote best practice on corporate governance and RI issues through co-operative action with other local authority funds.

The Fund regularly reviews its approach to responsible investment and the exercise of its stewardship activities.

**Principle 2: *Institutional investors should have a robust policy on managing conflicts of interest in relation to stewardship and this policy should be publicly disclosed.***

The Fund expects its investment managers to have effective policies addressing potential conflicts of interest related to stewardship.

In respect of potential conflicts of interest within the Fund, the Committee members are required to make declarations of interest prior to panel meetings.

All declarations are captured in the minutes of the meeting, which are publicly available, potential conflicts, based on declarations, are managed accordingly by the Chair of the Committee.

**Principle 3: *Institutional investors should monitor their investee companies.***

While the day-to-day responsibility for managing the Fund's equity holdings is delegated to the Fund's appointed investment managers, the Fund recognises that it cannot delegate its stewardship obligations. The Fund's Committee and Officers monitor the Fund's investment managers on a regular and ongoing basis, including with respect to stewardship activities.

As such the Fund expects its investment managers to monitor investee companies, intervene where necessary, and report back regularly on activity undertaken. This may be via written reports, phone calls, or meetings with the Officers and the Committee.

In addition, the Committee receives an annual report from the Fund's investment consultant on the ESG credentials, including active ownership, of its investment managers.

**Principle 4: *Institutional investors should establish clear guidelines on when and how they will escalate their activities as a method of protecting and enhancing shareholder value.***

Responsibility for day-to-day interaction with companies is delegated to the Fund's investment managers, including the escalation of engagement when necessary.

The Fund's Officers and Committee monitor the escalation activities undertaken by the Fund's investment managers through the regular reporting provided by the Fund's managers.

On occasion, the Fund may itself choose to escalate activity; this will typically be through its membership of LAPFF or via one of the underlying investment managers.

Escalation activities undertaken by LAPFF may include writing a letter to the board or additional meetings with company management.

**Principle 5: *Institutional investors should be willing to act collectively with other investors where appropriate.***

The Fund seeks to work collaboratively with other institutional shareholders in order to maximise the influence that it can have on individual companies.

The Fund undertakes collective engagement activities through its membership of LAPFF as well as through initiatives proposed by the Fund's investment managers or advisors.



In addition, the fund has formally agreed to join the London Collective Investment Vehicle (CIV) and regularly collaborates with other members of the CIV with respect to ESG and stewardship issues.

**Principle 6: *Institutional investors should have a clear policy on voting and disclosure of voting activity.***

The Fund invests via pooled funds and is therefore subject to the underlying investment managers' policies. The Fund expects its investment managers to exercise all votes associated with the Fund's equity holdings where practicable. The Fund encourages its investment managers to publicly disclose their voting records.

Generally, the Fund expects its investment managers to support resolutions that are consistent with the UK Corporate Governance Code and represent best practice. In overseas markets, the Committee expects the managers to take account of local best practice principles.

Where resolutions or issues fall short of the expected standards, the Committee expects managers will either abstain or vote against, depending on the individual circumstances of the company and the issues presented. The Committee expects the investment managers to report on their voting activities on a regular basis and the Fund's Officers consider whether each manager's actions and engagement activities have been appropriate and in keeping with the Fund's policy.

The policy is reviewed at least annually in order to take account of regulatory developments and timely or controversial issues may be discussed at Committee meetings.

**Principle 7: *Institutional investors should report periodically on their stewardship and voting activities.***

The Fund expects its underlying investment managers to report regularly to both the Officers and the Committee with respect to voting and engagement activities, including examples of company engagement, progress on engagement over time and collaborative activities. The Fund encourages its investment managers to publicly report on their stewardship activities.

The Fund will report on its stewardship activity to the Committee on an annual basis. In addition, quarterly reports of voting actions are posted as part of the funds reporting to Committee and are available on the Council's website: <http://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=392>

The Committee will provide an annual report on how the Fund satisfies its UK Stewardship Code obligations requirements, which will be made available publicly.

This statement has been approved by the Committee on 16 March 2017.

**Compliance and monitoring**

The investment managers are required to adhere to the principles set out in this Investment Strategy Statement. The Pensions Committee will require an annual written statement from the investment managers that they have adhered to the principles set out in this statement.



If you have any questions on this statement or the Fund's approach to stewardship, please contact Bola Tobun, Investments and Treasury Manager by e-mail at the following address [Bola.Tobun@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Bola.Tobun@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## Appendix B - Myners Investment Principles – Compliance Statement

### 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, and manage conflicts of interest.

#### **Full compliance**

The Pensions Committee and Pensions Board are supported in their decision making/assisting roles by the Corporate Director, Resources and the Investment and Treasury Manager.

Members of the both Committee and Board participate in regular training delivered through a formal programme. Training is provided at every quarterly meeting.

### Principle 2: Clear Objectives

An overall investment objective should be set out for the fund that takes account of the scheme's liabilities, the potential impact on local taxpayers, the strength of the covenant for non-local authority employers, and the attitude to risk of both the administering authority and scheme employers, and these should be clearly communicated to advisors and investment managers.

#### **Full compliance**

The Fund's overall objectives are defined in the Funding Strategy Statement and are directly linked to the triennial actuarial valuation. The investment objectives are clearly stated in the Statement of Investment Principles/Investment Strategy Statement.

The content of the Funding Strategy Statement reflects discussions held with individual scheme employers during the actuarial valuation process. Employers understand that contribution rates are set, having given consideration to the key tenets of affordability, sustainability and stability but also with the understanding that any decisions made must be prudent. To this end, the strength of the employer covenant is considered when setting contribution rates.

### Principle 3: Risk and liabilities

In setting and reviewing their investment strategy, administering authorities should take account of the form and structure of liabilities. These include the implications for the local taxpayers, the strength of the covenant for participating employers, the risk of their default and longevity risk.

#### **Full compliance**

The Fund's actuary reviews the funding position of each employer every three years and this valuation includes an assessment of the gap between the employer's share of the Fund assets and the liabilities specific to each employer. The strength of the employer covenant is considered when setting contribution rates.

The Fund's investment strategy is reviewed following each triennial valuation to ensure that the investment strategy will achieve the expected returns assumed during the valuation process.

As a member of Club Vita, a bespoke set of assumptions are specifically tailored to fit the membership profile of the Tower Hamlets Fund. The assumptions selected are intended to make an appropriate allowance for future improvements in longevity, based on the actual experience of the Fund.

#### 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 also periodically make a formal assessment of their own effectiveness as a decision-making body and report on this to scheme members.

#### **Full compliance**

Each manager's performance is measured quarterly against benchmark targets, which are specified in the contract between the Fund and the manager. The Fund's global custodian produces performance data for each manager and for the Fund as a whole. The target outperformance for the Fund as a whole is specified within the Statement of Investment Principles/Investment Strategy Statement. The Fund performance is also assessed with reference to the local authority peer group.

Performance data is reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis. Fund managers present to the officers or the Committee on at least an annual basis and officers hold four additional meetings with managers per quarter to discuss the portfolio composition, strategy and performance.

Consideration has been given to quantitative measures to assess the performance of the Committee, although options other than measuring meeting attendance and the success of the Committee's implemented strategies are limited.

#### Principle 5: Responsible ownership

Administering authorities should:

- Adopt, or ensure their investment managers adopt, the Stewardship Code.
- 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**

All new investment mandates will be expected to include a statement of a manager's adoption of the Stewardship Code.

The Council wishes to have an active influence on issues of environmental or ethical concern with companies in which the Pension Fund is a shareholder. It will seek to codify its approach with Fund Managers and will use the services of specialist agencies as necessary to identify issues of concern.

The Council requires the Fund Managers to take into account the implications of substantial “extra financial” considerations, e.g., environmental, social or reputational issues that could bring a particular investment decision into the public arena.

The Fund wishes to be an active shareholder and exercise its voting rights to promote and support good corporate governance principles. In addition, the Fund is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), thus demonstrating a commitment to sustainable investment and the promotion of high standards of corporate governance and responsibility.

All of the Fund’s managers are signed up to the Stewardship Code, which provides a framework for investors to consider environmental, social and corporate governance issues when making investment decisions.

#### 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 communication to scheme members in the form they consider most appropriate



The London Borough of Tower  
Hamlets Pension Fund  
Appendix 3  
Funding Strategy Statement



## FUNDING STRATEGY STATEMENT

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 What is this document?

This is the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund (“the Fund”), which is administered by London Borough of Tower Hamlets, (“the Administering Authority”).

It has been prepared by the Administering Authority in collaboration with the Fund’s actuary, Hymans Robertson LLP, and after consultation with the Fund’s employers and investment adviser. It is effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

#### 1.2 What is the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund?

The Fund is part of the national Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The LGPS was set up by the UK Government to provide retirement and death benefits for local government employees, and those employed in similar or related bodies, across the whole of the UK. The Administering Authority runs the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Fund, in effect the LGPS for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets area, to make sure it:

- receives the proper amount of contributions from employees and employers, and any transfer payments;
- invests the contributions appropriately, with the aim that the Fund’s assets grow over time with investment income and capital growth;
- uses the assets to pay Fund benefits to the members (as and when they retire, for the rest of their lives), and to their dependants (as and when members die), as defined in the LGPS Regulations. Assets are also used to pay transfer values and administration costs.

The roles and responsibilities of the key parties involved in the management of the Fund are summarised in **Appendix B**.

#### 1.3 Why does the Fund need a Funding Strategy Statement?

Employees’ benefits are guaranteed by the LGPS Regulations, and do not change with market values or employer contributions. Investment returns will help pay for some of the benefits, but probably not all, and certainly with no guarantee. Employees’ contributions are fixed in those Regulations also, at a level which covers only part of the cost of the benefits.

Therefore, employers need to pay the balance of the cost of delivering the benefits to members and their dependants.

The FSS focuses on how employer liabilities are measured, the pace at which these liabilities are funded, and how employers or pools of employers pay for their own liabilities. This statement sets out how the Administering Authority has balanced the conflicting aims of:

- affordability of employer contributions,
- transparency of processes,

- stability of employers' contributions, and
- prudence in the funding basis.

There are also regulatory requirements for an FSS, as given in **Appendix A**.

The FSS is a summary of the Fund's approach to funding its liabilities, and this includes reference to the Fund's other policies; it is not an exhaustive statement of policy on all issues. The FSS forms part of a framework of which includes:

- the LGPS Regulations;
- the Rates and Adjustments Certificate (confirming employer contribution rates for the next three years) which can be found in an appendix to the formal valuation report;
- the Fund's policies on admissions and cessations;
- actuarial factors for valuing individual transfers, early retirement costs and the costs of buying added service; and
- the Fund's Statement of Investment Principles (see Section 4).

#### **1.4 How does the Fund and this FSS affect me?**

This depends who you are:

- a member of the Fund, i.e. a current or former employee, or a dependant: the Fund needs to be sure it is collecting and holding enough money so that your benefits are always paid in full;
- an employer in the Fund (or which is considering joining the Fund): you will want to know how your contributions are calculated from time to time, that these are fair by comparison to other employers in the Fund, and in what circumstances you might need to pay more. Note that the FSS applies to all employers participating in the Fund;
- an Elected Member whose council participates in the Fund: you will want to be sure that the council balances the need to hold prudent reserves for members' retirement and death benefits, with the other competing demands for council money;
- a Council Tax payer: your council seeks to strike the balance above, and also to minimise cross-subsidies between different generations of taxpayers.

#### **1.5 What does the FSS aim to do?**

The FSS sets out the objectives of the Fund's funding strategy, such as:

- to ensure the long-term solvency of the Fund, using a prudent long term view. This will ensure that sufficient funds are available to meet all members'/dependants' benefits as they fall due for payment;
- to ensure that employer contribution rates are reasonably stable where appropriate;
- to minimise the long-term cash contributions which employers need to pay to the Fund, by recognising the link between assets and liabilities and adopting an investment strategy which balances risk and return (NB this will also minimise the costs to be borne by Council Tax payers);

- to reflect the different characteristics of different employers in determining contribution rates. This involves the Fund having a clear and transparent funding strategy to demonstrate how each employer can best meet its own liabilities over future years; and
- to use reasonable measures to reduce the risk to other employers and ultimately to the Council Tax payer from an employer defaulting on its pension obligations.

### **1.6 How do I find my way around this document?**

In Section 2 there is a brief introduction to some of the main principles behind funding, i.e. deciding how much an employer should contribute to the Fund from time to time.

In Section 3 we outline how the Fund calculates the contributions payable by different employers in different situations.

In Section 4 we show how the funding strategy is linked with the Fund's investment strategy.

In the Appendices we cover various issues in more detail if you are interested:

- A. the regulatory background, including how and when the FSS is reviewed,
- B. who is responsible for what,
- C. what issues the Fund needs to monitor, and how it manages its risks,
- D. some more details about the actuarial calculations required,
- E. the assumptions which the Fund actuary currently makes about the future,
- F. a glossary explaining the technical terms occasionally used here.

If you have any other queries please contact Anant Dodia in the first instance at e-mail address [anant.dodia@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:anant.dodia@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or on telephone number 020 7364 4248.

## 2 Basic Funding issues

(More detailed and extensive descriptions are given in [Appendix D](#)).

### 2.1 How does the actuary calculate a contribution rate?

Employer contributions are normally made up of two elements:

- a) the estimated cost of future benefits being built up from year to year, referred to as the “*future service rate*”; plus
- b) an adjustment for the difference between the assets built up to date and the value of past service benefits, referred to as the “*past service adjustment*”. If there is a deficit the past service adjustment will be an increase in the employer’s total contribution; if there is a surplus there may be a reduction in the employer’s total contribution. Any past service adjustment will aim to return the employer to full funding over an appropriate period (the “deficit recovery period”).

### 2.2 How is a deficit (or surplus) calculated?

An employer’s “funding level” is defined as the ratio of:

- the market value of the employer’s share of assets, to
- the value placed by the actuary on the benefits built up to date for the employer’s employees and ex-employees (the “liabilities”). The Fund actuary agrees with the Administering Authority the assumptions to be used in calculating this value.

If this is less than 100% then it means the employer has a shortfall, which is the employer’s deficit; if it is more than 100% then the employer is said to be in surplus. The amount of deficit or shortfall is the difference between the asset value and the liabilities value.

A larger deficit will give rise to higher employer contributions. If a deficit is spread over a longer period then the annual employer cost is lower than if it is spread over a shorter period.

### 2.3 How are contribution rates calculated for different employers?

The Fund’s actuary is required by the Regulations to report the *Common Contribution Rate*, for all employers collectively at each triennial valuation, combining items (a) and (b) above. This is based on actuarial assumptions about the likelihood, size and timing of benefit payments to be made from the Fund in the future, as outlined in [Appendix E](#).

The Fund’s actuary is also required to adjust the *Common Contribution Rate* for circumstances specific to each individual employer. The sorts of specific circumstances which are considered are discussed in [Section 3](#). It is this adjusted contribution rate which the employer is actually required to pay, and the rates for all employers are shown in the Fund’s Rates and Adjustments Certificate.

In effect, the *Common Contribution Rate* is a notional quantity, as it is unlikely that any employer will pay that exact rate. Separate future service rates are calculated for each employer together with individual past service adjustments according to employer-specific circumstances.

Details of the outcome of the Actuarial Valuation as at 31 March 2013 can be found in the formal valuation report which will be issued by 31 March 2014, including an analysis at Fund Level of the *Common Contribution Rate*. Further details of individual employer contribution rates can also be found in the formal report.

## 2.4 What else might affect the employer's contribution?

Employer covenants, and likely term of membership, are also considered when setting contributions: more details are given in [Section 3](#).

For some employers it may be agreed to pool contributions, see [3.4](#).

Any costs of non-ill-health early retirements must be paid by the employer, see [3.6](#).

If an employer is approaching the end of its participation in the Fund then its contributions may be amended appropriately, so that the assets meet (as closely as possible) the value of its liabilities in the Fund when its participation ends.

Employers' contributions are expressed as minima, with employers able to pay contributions at a higher rate. Account of the higher rate will be taken by the Fund Actuary at subsequent valuations.

## 2.5 What different types of employer participate in the Fund?

Historically the LGPS was intended for local authority employees only. However over the years, with the diversification and changes to delivery of local services, many more types and numbers of employers now participate. There are currently more employers in the Fund than ever before, a significant part of this being due to new academies.

In essence, participation in the LGPS is open to public sector employers providing some form of service to the local community. Whilst the majority of members will be local authority employees (and ex-employees), the majority of participating employers are those providing services in place of (or alongside) local authority services: academy schools, contractors, housing associations, charities, etc.

The LGPS Regulations define various types of employer as follows:

**Scheduled bodies** - councils, and other specified employers such as academies and further education establishments. These must provide access to the LGPS in respect of their employees who are not eligible to join another public sector scheme (such as the Teachers Scheme). These employers are so-called because they are specified in a schedule to the LGPS Regulations.

It is now possible for Local Education Authority schools to convert to academy status, and for other forms of school (such as Free Schools) to be established under the academies legislation. All such academies, as employers of non-teaching staff, become separate new employers in the Fund. As academies are defined in the LGPS Regulations as "Scheduled Bodies", the Administering Authority has no discretion over whether to admit them to the Fund, and the academy has no discretion whether to continue to allow its non-teaching staff to join the Fund. There has also been guidance issued by the DCLG regarding the terms of academies' membership in LGPS Funds.



**Designating employers** - employers such as town and parish councils are able to participate in the LGPS via resolution (and the Fund cannot refuse them entry where the resolution is passed). These employers can designate which of their employees are eligible to join the scheme.

Other employers are able to participate in the Fund via an admission agreement, and are referred to as 'admission bodies'. These employers are generally those with a "community of interest" with another scheme employer – **community admission bodies** ("CAB") or those providing a service on behalf of a scheme employer – **transferee admission bodies** ("TAB"). CABs will include housing associations and charities, TABs will generally be contractors. The Fund is able to set its criteria for participation by these employers and can refuse entry if the requirements as set out in the Fund's admissions policy are not met.

## 2.6 How does the Fund recognise that contribution levels can affect council and employer service provision, and council tax?

The Administering Authority and the Fund actuary are acutely aware that, all other things being equal, a higher contribution required to be paid to the Fund will mean less cash available for the employer to spend on the provision of services. For instance:

- Higher pension Fund contributions may result in reduced council spending, which in turn could affect the resources available for council services, and/or greater pressure on council tax levels;
- Contributions which Academies pay to the Fund will therefore not be available to pay for providing education;
- Other employers will provide various services to the local community, perhaps through housing associations, charitable work, or contracting council services. If they are required to pay more in pension contributions to the LGPS then this may affect their ability to provide the local services.

Whilst all this is true, it should also be borne in mind that:

- The Fund provides invaluable financial security to local families, whether to those who formerly worked in the service of the local community who have now retired, or to their families after their death;
- The Fund must have the assets available to meet these retirement and death benefits, which in turn means that the various employers must each pay their own way. Lower contributions today will mean higher contributions tomorrow: deferring payments does not alter the employer's ultimate obligation to the Fund in respect of its current and former employees;
- Each employer will generally only pay for its own employees and ex-employees (and their dependants), not for those of other employers in the Fund;
- The Fund strives to maintain reasonably stable employer contribution rates where appropriate and possible;
- The Fund wishes to avoid the situation where an employer falls so far behind in managing its funding shortfall that its deficit becomes unmanageable in practice: such a situation may lead to employer insolvency and the resulting deficit falling on the other Fund employers. In that situation, those employers' services would in turn suffer as a result;
- Council contributions to the Fund should be at a suitable level, to protect the interests of different generations of council tax payers. For instance, underpayment of contributions for some years will need to be balanced by overpayment in other years; the council will wish to minimise the extent to which council tax payers in one period are in effect benefitting at the expense of those paying in a different period.

Overall, therefore, there is clearly a balance to be struck between the Fund's need for maintaining prudent funding levels, and the employers' need to allocate their resources appropriately. The Fund achieves this through various techniques which affect contribution increases to various degrees (see [3.1](#)). In deciding which of these techniques to apply to any given employer, the Fund will consider a risk assessment

of that employer using a knowledge base which is regularly monitored and kept up-to-date. This database will include such information as the type of employer, its membership profile and funding position, any guarantors or security provision, material changes anticipated, etc. This helps the Fund establish a picture of the financial standing of the employer, i.e. its ability to meet its long term Fund commitments.

For instance, where an employer is considered relatively low risk then the Fund will permit greater smoothing (such as stabilisation or a longer deficit recovery period relative to other employers) which will temporarily produce lower contribution levels than would otherwise have applied. This is permitted in the expectation that the employer will still be able to meet its obligations for many years to come.

On the other hand, an employer whose risk assessment indicates a less strong covenant will generally be required to pay higher contributions (for instance, with a more prudent funding basis or a shorter deficit recovery period relative to other employers). This is because of the higher probability that at some point it will fail or be unable to meet its pension contributions, with its deficit in the Fund then falling to other Fund employers.

The Fund actively seeks employer input, including to its funding arrangements, through various means: see **Appendix A**.

### 3. Calculating contributions for individual Employers

#### 3.1 General comments

A key challenge for the Administering Authority is to balance the need for stable, affordable employer contributions with the requirement to take a prudent, longer-term view of funding and ensure the solvency of the Fund. With this in mind, there are a number of methods which the Administering Authority may permit, in order to improve the stability of employer contributions. These include, where circumstances permit:-

- capping of employer contribution rate changes within a pre-determined range (“stabilisation”)
- the use of extended deficit recovery periods
- the phasing in of contribution rises or reductions
- the pooling of contributions amongst employers with similar characteristics
- the use of some form of security or guarantee to justify a lower contribution rate than would otherwise be the case.

These and associated issues are covered in this Section.

The Administering Authority recognises that there may occasionally be particular circumstances affecting individual employers that are not easily managed within the rules and policies set out in the Funding Strategy Statement. Therefore the Administering Authority may, at its sole discretion, direct the actuary to adopt alternative funding approaches on a case by case basis for specific employers.

#### 3.2 The effect of paying contributions below the theoretical level

Employers which are permitted to use one or more of the above methods will often be paying, for a time, contributions less than the theoretical contribution rate. Such employers should appreciate that:

- their true long term liability (i.e. the actual eventual cost of benefits payable to their employees and ex-employees) is not affected by the choice of method,
- lower contributions in the short term will be assumed to incur a greater loss of investment returns on the deficit. Thus, deferring a certain amount of contribution will lead to higher contributions in the long-term, and
- it will take longer to reach full funding, all other things being equal.

Overleaf ([3.3](#)) is a summary of how the main funding policies differ for different types of employer, followed by more detailed notes where necessary.

[Section 3.4](#) onwards deals with various other funding issues which apply to all employers.

## 3.3 The different approaches used for different employers

Type of employer	Scheduled Bodies			Community Admission Bodies and Designating Employers		Transferee Admission Bodies (all)
	Local Authorities	Police, Fire, Colleges etc	Academies	Open to new entrants	Closed to new entrants	
<b>Basis used</b>	Ongoing, assumes long-term Fund participation (see <u>Appendix E</u> )			Ongoing, but may move to "gilts basis" - see <u>Note (a)</u>		Ongoing, assumes fixed contract term in the Fund (see <u>Appendix E</u> )
<b>Future service rate</b>	Projected Unit Credit approach (see <u>Appendix D – D.2</u> )			Attained Age approach (see <u>Appendix D – D.2</u> )		Projected Unit Credit approach (see <u>Appendix D – D.2</u> )
<b>Stabilised rate?</b>	Yes - see <u>Note (b)</u>	No employers of this type	No	No	No	No
<b>Maximum deficit recovery period – Note (c)</b>	20 years	NA	14 years	20 years	Future working lifetime of remaining active members	Outstanding contract term



<b>Deficit recovery payments – Note (d)</b>	Monetary amount	NA	% of payroll	% of payroll	Monetary amount	% of payroll
<b>Treatment of surplus</b>	Covered by stabilisation arrangement	NA	Spread over recovery period	Preferred approach: contributions kept at future service rate. However, reductions may be permitted by the Admin. Authority		Preferred approach: contributions kept at future service rate. However, reductions may be permitted by the Admin. Authority
<b>Phasing of contribution changes</b>	Covered by stabilisation arrangement	NA	Maximum of 3 years	3 years - <u>Note (e)</u>	3 years - <u>Note (e)</u>	Maximum of 3 years
<b>Review of rates – Note (f)</b>	Administering Authority reserves the right to review contribution rates and amounts, and the level of security provided, at regular intervals between valuations					Particularly reviewed in last 3 years of contract
<b>New employer</b>	n/a	n/a	<u>Note (g)</u>	<u>Note (h)</u>		<u>Notes (h) &amp; (i)</u>
<b>Cessation of participation: cessation debt payable</b>	Cessation is assumed not to be generally possible, as Scheduled Bodies are legally obliged to participate in the LGPS. In the rare event of cessation occurring (machinery of Government changes for example), the cessation debt principles applied would be as per <u>Note (j)</u> .			Can be ceased subject to terms of admission agreement. Cessation debt will be calculated on a basis appropriate to the circumstances of cessation – see <u>Note (i)</u> .		Participation is assumed to expire at the end of the contract. Cessation debt (if any) calculated

			on ongoing basis. Awarding Authority will be liable for future deficits and contributions arising.
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*Note (a)* (Basis for CABs and Designating Employers closed to new entrants)

In the circumstances where:

- the employer is a Designating Employer, or an Admission Body but not a Transferee Admission Body, and
- the employer has no guarantor, and
- the admission agreement is likely to terminate, or the employer is likely to lose its last active member, within a timeframe considered appropriate by the Administering Authority to prompt a change in funding,

the Administering Authority may vary the discount rate used to set employer contribution rate. In particular contributions may be set for an employer to achieve full funding on a more prudent basis (e.g. using a discount rate set equal to gilt yields) by the time the agreement terminates or the last active member leaves, in order to protect other employers in the Fund. This policy will increase regular contributions and reduce, but not entirely eliminate, the possibility of a final deficit payment being required from the employer when a cessation valuation is carried out.

The Administering Authority also reserves the right to adopt the above approach in respect of those Designating Employers and Admission Bodies with no guarantor, where the strength of covenant is considered to be weak but there is no immediate expectation that the admission agreement will cease or the Designating Employer alters its designation.

*Note (b)* (Stabilisation)

Stabilisation is a mechanism where employer contribution rate variations from year to year are kept within a pre-determined range, thus allowing those employers' rates to be relatively stable. In the interests of stability and affordability of employer contributions, the Administering Authority, on the advice of the Fund Actuary, believes that stabilising contributions can still be viewed as a prudent longer-term approach. However, employers whose contribution rates have been "stabilised" (and may therefore be paying less than their theoretical contribution rate) should be aware of the risks of this approach and should consider making additional payments to the Fund if possible.

This stabilisation mechanism allows short term investment market volatility to be managed so as not to cause volatility in employer contribution rates, on the basis that a long term view can be taken on net cash inflow, investment returns and strength of employer covenant.

The current stabilisation mechanism applies to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council.

On the basis of extensive modelling carried out for the 2013 valuation exercise (see [Section 4](#)), the stabilised details are as follows:

<b>Employer</b>	<b>London Borough of Tower Hamlets</b>
<b>Max contribution increase</b>	+£2m
<b>Max contribution decrease</b>	-£2m

The stabilisation criteria and limits will be reviewed at the 31 March 2016 valuation, to take effect from 1 April 2017. This will take into account the employer's membership profiles, the issues surrounding employer security, and other relevant factors.

*Note (c) (Deficit Recovery Periods)*

The deficit recovery period starts at the commencement of the revised contribution rate (1 April 2014 for the 2013 valuation). The Administering Authority would normally expect the same approach to be used at successive triennial valuations, but would reserve the right to propose alternative spreading periods, for example where there were no new entrants.

Where stabilisation applies, the resulting employer contribution rate would be amended to comply with the stabilisation mechanism.

For employers with no (or very few) active members at this valuation, the deficit should be recovered by a fixed monetary amount over a period to be agreed with the body or its successor.

*Note (d) (Deficit Recovery Payments)*

For employers where stabilisation is not being applied, the deficit recovery payments for each employer covering the three year period until the next valuation will often be set as a percentage of salaries. However, the Administering Authority reserves the right to amend these rates between valuations and/or to require these payments in monetary terms instead, for instance where:

- (i) the employer is relatively mature, i.e. has a large deficit recovery contribution rate because of a small or decreasing payroll; or
- (ii) the employer has closed the Fund to new entrants.

*Note (e) (Phasing in of contribution changes)*

All phasing is subject to the Administering Authority being satisfied as to the strength of the employer's covenant.

*Note (f) (Regular Reviews)*

Such reviews may be triggered by significant events including but not limited to: significant reductions in payroll, altered employer circumstances, Government

restructuring affecting the employer's business, or failure to pay contributions or arrange appropriate security as required by the Administering Authority.

The result of a review may be to require increased contributions (by strengthening the assumptions adopted and/or moving to monetary levels of deficit recovery contributions), and/or an increased level of security or guarantee.

*Note (g) (New Academy employers)*

At the time of writing, the Fund's policies on academies' funding issues are as follows:

- a) The new academy will be regarded as a separate employer in its own right and will not be pooled with other employers in the Fund. The only exception is where the academy is part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) in which case the academy's figures will be calculated as below but can be combined with those of the other academies in the MAT;
- b) The new academy's past service liabilities on conversion will be calculated based on its active Fund members on the day before conversion. For the avoidance of doubt, these liabilities will include all past service of those members, but will exclude the liabilities relating to any ex-employees of the school who have deferred or pensioner status;
- c) The new academy will be allocated an initial asset share from the ceding council's assets in the Fund. This asset share will be calculated using the estimated funding position of the ceding council at the date of academy conversion. The share will be based on the active members' funding level, having first allocated assets in the council's share to fully fund deferred and pensioner members. The asset allocation will be based on market conditions and the academy's active Fund membership on the day prior to conversion;
- d) The new academy's initial contribution rate will be calculated using market conditions, the council funding position and, membership data, all as at the day prior to conversion;

The Fund's policies on academies are subject to change in the light of any amendments to DCLG guidance. Any changes will be notified to academies, and will be reflected in a subsequent version of this FSS. In particular, policy (d) above will be reconsidered at each valuation.

*Note (h) (New Admission Bodies)*

With effect from 1 October 2012, the LGPS 2012 Miscellaneous Regulations introduced mandatory new requirements for all Admission Bodies brought into the Fund from that date. Under these Regulations, all new Admission Bodies will be required to provide some form of security, such as a guarantee from the letting employer, an indemnity or a bond. The security is required to cover some or all of the following:

- the strain cost of any redundancy early retirements resulting from the premature termination of the contract;
- allowance for the risk of asset underperformance;



- allowance for the risk of a fall in gilt yields;
- allowance for the possible non-payment of employer and member contributions to the Fund;
- the current deficit.

For all new Transferee Admission Bodies, the security must be to the satisfaction of the Administering Authority as well as the letting employer, and will be reassessed on an annual basis.

The Administering Authority will only consider requests from Community Admission Bodies (or other similar bodies, such as section 75 NHS partnerships) to join the Fund if they are sponsored by a Scheduled Body with tax raising powers, guaranteeing their liabilities and also providing a form of security as above.

The above approaches reduce the risk to other employers in the Fund, of potentially having to pick up any shortfall in respect of Admission Bodies ceasing with an unpaid deficit.

*Note (i) (New Transferee Admission Bodies)*

A new TAB usually joins the Fund as a result of the letting/outsourcing of some services from an existing employer (normally a Scheduled Body such as a council or academy) to another organisation (a “contractor”). This involves the TUPE transfer of some staff from the letting employer to the contractor. Consequently, for the duration of the contract, the contractor is a new participating employer in the Fund so that the transferring employees maintain their eligibility for LGPS membership. At the end of the contract the employees revert to the letting employer or to a replacement contractor.

Ordinarily, the TAB would be set up in the Fund as a new employer with responsibility for all the accrued benefits of the transferring employees; in this case, the contractor would usually be assigned an initial asset allocation equal to the past service liability value of the employees’ Fund benefits. The quid pro quo is that the contractor is then expected to ensure that its share of the Fund is also fully funded at the end of the contract: see Note (i).

Employers which “outsource” have flexibility in the way that they can deal with the pension risk potentially taken on by the contractor. In particular there are three different routes that such employers may wish to adopt. Clearly as the risk ultimately resides with the employer letting the contract, it is for them to agree the appropriate route with the contractor:

**i) Pooling**

Under this option the contractor is pooled with the letting employer. In this case, the contractor pays the same rate as the letting employer, which is may be under the stabilisation approach.

**ii) Letting employer retains pre-contract risks**

iii) Under this option the letting employer would retain responsibility for assets and liabilities in respect of service accrued prior to the contract commencement date. The contractor would be responsible for the future liabilities that accrue in respect of transferred staff. The contractor's contribution rate could vary from one valuation to the next. It would be liable for any deficit at the end of the contract term in respect of assets and liabilities attributable to service accrued during the contract term.

**iii) Fixed contribution rate agreed**

Under this option the contractor pays a fixed contribution rate and doesn't pay any cessation deficit.

The Administering Authority is willing to administer any of the above options as long as the approach is documented in the Admission Agreement as well as the transfer agreement. The Admission Agreement should ensure that some element of risk transfers to the contractor where it relates to their decisions and it is unfair to burden the letting employer with that risk. For example the contractor should typically be responsible for pension costs that arise from;

- a. above average pay increases, including the effect in respect of service prior to contract commencement even if the letting employer takes on responsibility for the latter under (ii) above;
- b. redundancy and early retirement decisions.

*Note (j) (Admission Bodies Ceasing)*

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Admission Agreement, the Administering Authority may consider any of the following as triggers for the cessation of an admission agreement with any type of body:

- Last active member ceasing participation in the Fund;
- The insolvency, winding up or liquidation of the Admission Body;
- Any breach by the Admission Body of any of its obligations under the Agreement that they have failed to remedy to the satisfaction of the Fund;
- A failure by the Admission Body to pay any sums due to the Fund within the period required by the Fund; or
- The failure by the Admission Body to renew or adjust the level of the bond or indemnity, or to confirm an appropriate alternative guarantor, as required by the Fund.

On cessation, the Administering Authority will instruct the Fund actuary to carry out a cessation valuation to determine whether there is any deficit or surplus. Where there is a deficit, payment of this amount in full would normally be sought from the Admission Body; where there is a surplus it should be noted that current legislation does not permit a refund payment to the Admission Body.

For non-Transferee Admission Bodies whose participation is voluntarily ended either by themselves or the Fund, or where a cessation event has been triggered, the

Administering Authority must look to protect the interests of other ongoing employers. The actuary will therefore adopt an approach which, to the extent reasonably practicable, protects the other employers from the likelihood of any material loss emerging in future:

- a) Where there is a guarantor for future deficits and contributions, the cessation valuation will normally be calculated using the ongoing basis as described in Appendix E;
- b) Alternatively, it may be possible to simply transfer the former Admission Body's liabilities and assets to the guarantor, without needing to crystallise any deficit. This approach may be adopted where the employer cannot pay the contributions due, and this is within the terms of the guarantee;
- c) Where a guarantor does not exist then, in order to protect other employers in the Fund, the cessation liabilities and final deficit will normally be calculated using a "gilts cessation basis", which is more prudent than the ongoing basis. This has no allowance for potential future investment outperformance above gilt yields, and has added allowance for future improvements in life expectancy. This could give rise to significant cessation debts being required.

Under (a) and (c), any shortfall would usually be levied on the departing Admission Body as a single lump sum payment. If this is not possible then the Fund would look to any bond, indemnity or guarantee in place for the employer.

In the event that the Fund is not able to recover the required payment in full, then the unpaid amounts fall to be shared amongst all of the other employers in the Fund. This may require an immediate revision to the Rates and Adjustments Certificate affecting other employers in the Fund, or instead be reflected in the contribution rates set at the next formal valuation following the cessation date.

As an alternative, where the ceasing Admission Body is continuing in business, the Fund at its absolute discretion reserves the right to enter into an agreement with the ceasing Admission Body. Under this agreement the Fund would accept an appropriate alternative security to be held against any deficit, and would carry out the cessation valuation on an ongoing basis: deficit recovery payments would be derived from this cessation debt. This approach would be monitored as part of each triennial valuation: the Fund reserves the right to revert to a "gilts cessation basis" and seek immediate payment of any funding shortfall identified. The Administering Authority may need to seek legal advice in such cases, as the Body would have no contributing members.

### **3.3 Pooled contributions**

From time to time the Administering Authority may set up pools for employers with similar characteristics. This will always be in line with its broader funding strategy.

With the advice of the Actuary the Administering Authority allows smaller employers of similar types to pool their contributions as a way of sharing experience and smoothing out the effects of costly but relatively rare events such as ill-health retirements or deaths in service.

Community Admission Bodies that are deemed by the Administering Authority to have closed to new entrants are not usually permitted to participate in a pool. Transferee Admission Bodies are usually also ineligible for pooling.

Smaller admitted bodies may be pooled with the letting employer, provided all parties (particularly the letting employer) agree.

Employers who are permitted to enter (or remain in) a pool at the 2013 valuation will not normally be advised of their individual contribution rate unless agreed by the Administering Authority.

Schools generally are also pooled with their funding Council. However there may be exceptions for specialist or independent schools.

Those employers which have been pooled are identified in the Rates and Adjustments Certificate.

### **3.4 Additional flexibility in return for added security**

The Administering Authority may permit greater flexibility to the employer's contributions if the employer provides added security to the satisfaction of the Administering Authority.

Such flexibility includes a reduced rate of contribution, an extended deficit recovery period, or permission to join a pool with another body (e.g. the Local Authority).

Such security may include, but is not limited to, a suitable bond, a legally-binding guarantee from an appropriate third party, or security over an employer asset of sufficient value.

The degree of flexibility given may take into account factors such as:

- the extent of the employer's deficit;
- the amount and quality of the security offered;
- the employer's financial security and business plan;
- whether the admission agreement is likely to be open or closed to new entrants.

### **3.5 Non ill health early retirement costs**

It is assumed that members' benefits are payable from the earliest age that the employee could retire without incurring a reduction to their benefit (and without requiring their employer's consent to retire). (**NB** the relevant age may be different for different periods of service, following the benefit changes from April 2008 and April 2014). Employers are required to pay additional contributions ('strain') wherever an employee retires before attaining this age. The actuary's funding basis makes no allowance for premature retirement except on grounds of ill-health.

### **3.6 Ill health early retirement costs**

Admitted Bodies will usually have an 'ill health allowance'; Scheduled Bodies may have this also, depending on their agreement terms with the Administering Authority. The Fund monitors each employer's ill health experience on an ongoing basis. If the

cumulative cost of ill health retirement in any financial year exceeds the allowance at the previous valuation, the employer will be charged additional contributions on the same basis as apply for non ill-health cases.

### **3.7 Ill health insurance**

If an employer provides satisfactory evidence to the Administering Authority of a current insurance policy covering ill health early retirement strains, then:

- the employer's contribution to the Fund each year is reduced by the amount of that year's insurance premium, so that the total contribution is unchanged, and
- there is no need for monitoring of allowances.

The employer must keep the Administering Authority notified of any changes in the insurance policy's coverage or premium terms, or if the policy is ceased.

### **3.8 Employers with no remaining active members**

In general an employer ceasing in the Fund, due to the departure of the last active member, will pay a cessation debt on an appropriate basis (see 3.3, Note (j)) and consequently have no further obligation to the Fund. Thereafter it is expected that one of two situations will eventually arise:

- a) The employer's asset share runs out before all its ex-employees' benefits have been paid. In this situation the other Fund employers will be required to contribute to pay all remaining benefits: this will be done by the Fund actuary apportioning the remaining liabilities on a pro-rata basis at successive formal valuations;
- b) The last ex-employee or dependant dies before the employer's asset share has been fully utilised. In this situation the remaining assets would be apportioned pro-rata by the Fund's actuary to the other Fund employers.
- c) In exceptional circumstances the Fund may permit an employer with no remaining active members to continue contributing to the Fund. This may require the provision of a suitable security or guarantee, as well as a written ongoing commitment to fund the remainder of the employer's obligations over an appropriate period. The Fund would reserve the right to invoke the cessation requirements in the future, however. The Administering Authority may need to seek legal advice in such cases, as the employer would have no contributing members.



## 4. Funding strategy and links to investment strategy

### 4.1 What is the Fund's investment strategy?

The Fund has built up assets over the years, and continues to receive contribution and other income. All of this must be invested in a suitable manner, which is the investment strategy.

Investment strategy is set by the administering authority, after consultation with the employers and after taking investment advice. The precise mix, manager make up and target returns are set out in the Statement of Investment Principles (SIP), which is available to members and employers.

The investment strategy is set for the long-term, but is reviewed from time to time. Normally a full review is carried out after each actuarial valuation, and is kept under review annually between actuarial valuations to ensure that it remains appropriate to the Fund's liability profile.

The same investment strategy is currently followed for all employers.

### 4.2 What is the link between funding strategy and investment strategy?

The Fund must be able to meet all benefit payments as and when they fall due. These payments will be met by contributions (resulting from the funding strategy) or asset returns and income (resulting from the investment strategy). To the extent that investment returns or income fall short, then higher cash contributions are required from employers, and vice versa

Therefore, the funding and investment strategies are inextricably linked.

### 4.3 How does the funding strategy reflect the Fund's investment strategy?

In the opinion of the Fund actuary, the current funding policy is consistent with the current investment strategy of the Fund. The asset outperformance assumption contained in the discount rate (see [E3](#)) is within a range that would be considered acceptable for funding purposes; it is also considered to be consistent with the requirement to take a "prudent longer-term view" of the funding of liabilities as required by the UK Government (see [A1](#)).

However, in the short term – such as the three yearly assessments at formal valuations – there is the scope for considerable volatility and there is a material chance that in the short-term and even medium term, asset returns will fall short of this target. The stability measures described in [Section 3](#) will damp down, but not remove, the effect on employers' contributions.

The Fund does not hold a contingency reserve to protect it against the volatility of equity investments.

### 4.4 How does this differ for a large stable employer?

The Actuary has developed four key measures which capture the essence of the Fund's strategies, both funding and investment:

- Prudence - the Fund should have a reasonable expectation of being fully funded in the long term;

- Affordability – how much can employers afford;
- Stewardship – the assumptions used should be sustainable in the long term, without having to resort to overly optimistic assumptions about the future to maintain an apparently healthy funding position;
- Stability – employers should not see significant moves in their contribution rates from one year to the next, and this will help to provide a more stable budgeting environment.

The key problem is that the key objectives often conflict. For example, minimising the long term cost of the scheme (i.e. keeping employer rates affordable) is best achieved by investing in higher returning assets e.g. equities. However, equities are also very volatile (i.e. go up and down fairly frequently in fairly large moves), which conflicts with the objective to have stable contribution rates.

Therefore a balance needs to be maintained between risk and reward, which has been considered by the use of Asset Liability Modelling: this is a set of calculation techniques applied by the Fund's actuary, to model the range of potential future solvency levels and contribution rates.

The Actuary was able to model the impact of these four key areas, for the purpose of setting a stabilisation approach (see [3.3 Note \(b\)](#)). The modelling demonstrated that retaining the present investment strategy, coupled with constraining employer contribution rate changes as described in [3.3 Note \(b\)](#), struck an appropriate balance between the above objectives. In particular the stabilisation approach currently adopted meets the need for stability of contributions without jeopardising the Administering Authority's aims of prudent stewardship of the Fund.

Whilst the current stabilisation mechanism is to remain in place until 2017, it should be noted that this will need to be reviewed following the 2016 valuation.

#### **4.5 Does the Fund monitor its overall funding position?**

The Administering Authority monitors the relative funding position, i.e. changes in the relationship between asset values and the liabilities value, on an ad-hoc basis.

## Appendix A – Regulatory framework

### A1 Why does the Fund need an FSS?

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has stated that the purpose of the FSS is:

- *“to establish a **clear and transparent fund-specific strategy** which will identify how employers’ pension liabilities are best met going forward;*
- *to support the regulatory framework to maintain **as nearly constant employer contribution rates as possible**; and*
- *to take a **prudent longer-term view** of funding those liabilities.”*

These objectives are desirable individually, but may be mutually conflicting.

The requirement to maintain and publish a FSS is contained in LGPS Regulations which are updated from time to time. In publishing the FSS the Administering Authority has to have regard to any guidance published by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) (most recently in 2012) and to its Statement of Investment Principles.

This is the framework within which the Fund’s actuary carries out triennial valuations to set employers’ contributions and provides recommendations to the Administering Authority when other funding decisions are required, such as when employers join or leave the Fund. The FSS applies to all employers participating in the Fund.

### A2 Does the Administering Authority consult anyone on the FSS?

Yes. This is required by LGPS Regulations. It is covered in more detail by the most recent CIPFA guidance, which states that the FSS must first be subject to “consultation with such persons as the authority considers appropriate”, and should include “a meaningful dialogue at officer and elected member level with council tax raising authorities and with corresponding representatives of other participating employers”.

In practice, for the Fund, the consultation process for this FSS was as follows:

- a) A draft version of the FSS was issued to all participating employers on 27 January 2014 for comment;
- b) Comments were requested within 22 days; and
- c) Following the end of the consultation period the FSS was updated where required and the report will be published on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

### A3 How is the FSS published?

The FSS is made available through the following routes:

- Published on the website, at <http://modern.gov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=392>;

- A copy sent by [post/e-mail] to each participating employer in the Fund;
- A copy sent to [employee/pensioner] representatives;
- A summary issued to all Fund members;
- A full copy included in the annual report and accounts of the Fund;
- Copies sent to investment managers and independent advisers;
- Copies made available on request.

**A4 How often is the FSS reviewed?**

The FSS is reviewed in detail at least every three years as part of the triennial valuation. This version is expected to remain unaltered until it is consulted upon as part of the formal process for the next valuation in 2016.

It is possible that (usually slight) amendments may be needed within the three year period. These would be needed to reflect any regulatory changes, or alterations to the way the Fund operates (e.g. to accommodate a new class of employer). Any such amendments would be consulted upon as appropriate:

- trivial amendments would be simply notified at the next round of employer communications,
- amendments affecting only one class of employer would be consulted with those employers,
- other more significant amendments would be subject to full consultation.

In any event, changes to the FSS would need agreement by the [Pensions Committee] and would be included in the relevant Committee Meeting minutes.

**A5 How does the FSS fit into other Fund documents?**

The FSS is a summary of the Fund's approach to funding liabilities. It is not an exhaustive statement of policy on all issues, for example there are a number of separate statements published by the Fund including the Statement of Investment Principles, Governance Strategy and Communications Strategy. In addition, the Fund publishes an Annual Report and Accounts with up to date information on the Fund.

These documents can be found on the web at  
<http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=392>

## Appendix B – Responsibilities of key parties

The efficient and effective operation of the Fund needs various parties to each play their part.

### B1 The Administering Authority should:-

- operate the Fund as per the LGPS Regulations;
- effectively manage any potential conflicts of interest arising from its dual role as Administering Authority and a Fund employer;
- collect employer and employee contributions, and investment income and other amounts due to the Fund;
- ensure that cash is available to meet benefit payments as and when they fall due;
- pay from the Fund the relevant benefits and entitlements that are due;
- invest surplus monies (i.e. contributions and other income which are not immediately needed to pay benefits) in accordance with the Fund's Statement of Investment Principles (SIP) and LGPS Regulations;
- communicate appropriately with employers so that they fully understand their obligations to the Fund;
- take appropriate measures to safeguard the Fund against the consequences of employer default;
- manage the valuation process in consultation with the Fund's actuary;
- prepare and maintain a FSS and a SIP, after consultation;
- advise the Actuary of any new or ceasing employers;
- notify the Fund's actuary of material changes which could affect funding (this is covered in a separate agreement with the actuary); and
- monitor all aspects of the fund's performance and funding and amend the FSS/SIP as necessary and appropriate.

### B2 The Individual Employer should:-

- deduct contributions from employees' pay correctly;
- pay all contributions, including their own as determined by the actuary, promptly by the due date;
- have a policy and exercise discretions within the regulatory framework;
- make additional contributions in accordance with agreed arrangements in respect of, for example, augmentation of scheme benefits, early retirement strain; and
- notify the Administering Authority promptly of all changes to its circumstances, prospects or membership, which could affect future funding.

### B3 The Fund Actuary should:-

- prepare valuations, including the setting of employers' contribution rates. This will involve agreeing assumptions with the Administering Authority, having regard to the FSS and LGPS Regulations, and targeting each employer's solvency appropriately;



- provide advice relating to new employers in the Fund, including the level and type of bonds or other forms of security (and the monitoring of these);
- prepare advice and calculations in connection with bulk transfers and individual benefit-related matters;
- assist the Administering Authority in considering possible changes to employer contributions between formal valuations, where circumstances suggest this may be necessary;
- advise on the termination of Admission Bodies' participation in the Fund; and
- fully reflect actuarial professional guidance and requirements in the advice given to the Administering Authority.

**B4 Other parties:-**

- investment advisers (either internal or external) should ensure the Fund's SIP remains appropriate, and consistent with this FSS;
- investment managers, custodians and bankers should all play their part in the effective investment (and dis-investment) of Fund assets, in line with the SIP;
- auditors should comply with their auditing standards, ensure Fund compliance with all requirements, monitor and advise on fraud detection, and sign off annual reports and financial statements as required;
- governance advisers may be appointed to advise the Administering Authority on efficient processes and working methods in managing the Fund;
- legal advisers (either internal or external) should ensure the Fund's operation and management remains fully compliant with all regulations and broader local government requirements, including the Administering Authority's own procedures.

## Appendix C – Key risks and controls

### C1 Types of risk

The Administering Authority has an active risk management programme in place. The measures that it has in place to control key risks are summarised below under the following headings:

- financial;
- demographic;
- regulatory; and
- governance.

### C2 Financial risks

Risk	Summary of Control Mechanisms
Fund assets fail to deliver returns in line with the anticipated returns underpinning valuation of liabilities over the long-term.	<p>Only anticipate long-term return on a relatively prudent basis to reduce risk of under-performing.</p> <p>Assets invested on the basis of specialist advice, in a suitably diversified manner across asset classes, geographies, managers, etc.</p> <p>Analyse progress at three yearly valuations for all employers.</p> <p>Inter-valuation roll-forward of liabilities between valuations at whole Fund level.</p>
Inappropriate long-term investment strategy.	<p>Overall investment strategy options considered as an integral part of the funding strategy. Used asset liability modelling to measure 4 key outcomes.</p> <p>Chosen option considered to provide the best balance.</p>
Fall in risk-free returns on Government bonds, leading to rise in value placed on liabilities.	<p>Stabilisation modelling at whole Fund level allows for the probability of this within a longer term context.</p> <p>Inter-valuation monitoring, as above.</p> <p>Some investment in bonds helps to mitigate this risk.</p>
Active investment manager under-performance relative to benchmark.	Quarterly investment monitoring analyses market performance and active managers

Risk	Summary of Control Mechanisms
	relative to their index benchmark.
Pay and price inflation significantly more than anticipated.	<p>The focus of the actuarial valuation process is on real returns on assets, net of price and pay increases.</p> <p>Inter-valuation monitoring, as above, gives early warning.</p> <p>Some investment in bonds also helps to mitigate this risk.</p> <p>Employers pay for their own salary awards and should be mindful of the geared effect on pension liabilities of any bias in pensionable pay rises towards longer-serving employees.</p>
Effect of possible increase in employer's contribution rate on service delivery and admission/scheduled bodies	An explicit stabilisation mechanism has been agreed as part of the funding strategy. Other measures such as deficit spreading and phasing are also in place to limit sudden increases in contributions,
Orphaned employers give rise to added costs for the Fund	<p>The Fund seeks a cessation debt (or security/guarantor) to minimise the risk of this happening in the future.</p> <p>If it occurs, the Actuary calculates the added cost spread pro-rata among all employers – (see <a href="#">3.9</a>).</p>

### C3 Demographic risks

Risk	Summary of Control Mechanisms
Pensioners living longer, thus increasing cost to Fund.	<p>Set mortality assumptions with some allowance for future increases in life expectancy.</p> <p>The Fund Actuary has direct access to the experience of over 50 LGPS funds which allows early identification of changes in life expectancy that might in turn affect the assumptions underpinning the valuation.</p>
Maturing Fund – i.e. proportion of actively contributing employees declines relative to retired employees.	Continue to monitor at each valuation, consider seeking monetary amounts rather than % of pay and consider alternative

Risk	Summary of Control Mechanisms
	investment strategies.
Deteriorating patterns of early retirements	Employers are charged the extra cost of non-ill-health retirements following each individual decision.  Employer ill health retirement experience is monitored, and insurance is an option.
Reductions in payroll causing insufficient deficit recovery payments	In many cases this may not be sufficient cause for concern, and will in effect be caught at the next formal valuation. However, there are protections through employers paying monetary amounts.

#### C4 Regulatory risks

Risk	Summary of Control Mechanisms
Changes to national pension requirements and/or HMRC rules e.g. changes arising from public sector pensions reform.	The Administering Authority considers all consultation papers issued by the Government and comments where appropriate.  The results of the most recent reforms have been built into the 2013 valuation. Any changes to member contribution rates or benefit levels will be carefully communicated with members to minimise possible opt-outs or adverse actions.

#### C5 Governance risks

Risk	Summary of Control Mechanisms
Administering Authority unaware of structural changes in an employer's membership (e.g. large fall in employee members, large number of retirements) or not advised of an employer closing to new entrants.	The Administering Authority has a close relationship with employing bodies and communicates required standards e.g. for submission of data.  The Actuary may revise the rates and Adjustments certificate to increase an employer's contributions (under Regulation 38) between triennial valuations  Deficit contributions may be expressed as monetary amounts.

Risk	Summary of Control Mechanisms
<p>Actuarial or investment advice is not sought, or is not heeded, or proves to be insufficient in some way</p>	<p>The Administering Authority maintains close contact with its specialist advisers.</p> <p>Advice is delivered via formal meetings involving Elected Members, and recorded appropriately.</p> <p>Actuarial advice is subject to professional requirements such as peer review.</p>
<p>Administering Authority failing to commission the Fund Actuary to carry out a termination valuation for a departing Admission Body.</p>	<p>The Administering Authority requires employers with Best Value contractors to inform it of forthcoming changes.</p> <p>Community Admission Bodies' memberships are monitored and, if active membership decreases, steps will be taken.</p>
<p>An employer ceasing to exist with insufficient funding or adequacy of a bond.</p>	<p>The Administering Authority believes that it would normally be too late to address the position if it was left to the time of departure.</p> <p>The risk is mitigated by:</p> <p>Seeking a funding guarantee from another scheme employer, or external body, wherever possible (see <u>Notes (h) and (j) to 3.3</u>).</p> <p>Alerting the prospective employer to its obligations and encouraging it to take independent actuarial advice.</p> <p>Vetting prospective employers before admission.</p> <p>Where permitted under the regulations requiring a bond to protect the Fund from various risks.</p> <p>Requiring new Community Admission Bodies to have a guarantor.</p> <p>Reviewing bond or guarantor arrangements at regular intervals (see <u>Note (f) to 3.3</u>).</p> <p>Reviewing contributions well ahead of cessation if thought appropriate (see <u>Note (a) to 3.3</u>).</p>

## Appendix D – The calculation of Employer contributions

In [Section 2](#) there was a broad description of the way in which contribution rates are calculated. This Appendix considers these calculations in much more detail.

The calculations involve actuarial assumptions about future experience, and these are described in detail in [Appendix E](#).

### D1 What is the difference between calculations across the whole Fund and calculations for an individual employer?

Employer contributions are normally made up of two elements:

- a) the estimated cost of future benefits being accrued, referred to as the “future service rate”; plus
- b) an adjustment for the funding position of accrued benefits relative to the Fund’s solvency target, “*past service adjustment*”. If there is a surplus there may be a reduction in the employer’s contribution rate. If there is a deficit there will be an increase in the employer’s contribution rate, with the surplus or deficit spread over an appropriate period. The aim is to return the employer to full funding over that period. See [Section 3](#) for deficit recovery periods.

The Fund’s actuary is required by the regulations to report the *Common Contribution Rate*<sup>1</sup>, for all employers collectively at each triennial valuation. It combines items (a) and (b) and is expressed as a percentage of pay; it is in effect an average rate across all employers in the Fund.

The Fund’s actuary is also required to adjust the Common Contribution Rate for circumstances which are deemed “peculiar” to an individual employer<sup>2</sup>. It is the adjusted contribution rate which employers are actually required to pay. The sorts of “peculiar” factors which are considered are discussed below.

In effect, the *Common Contribution Rate* is a notional quantity. Separate future service rates are calculated for each employer together with individual past service adjustments according to employer-specific past service deficit spreading and increased employer contribution phasing periods.

### D2 How is the Future Service Rate calculated?

The future service element of the employer contribution rate is calculated with the aim that these contributions will meet benefit payments in respect of members’ **future** service in the Fund. This is based upon the cost (in excess of members’ contributions) of the benefits which employee members earn from their service each year.

The future service rate is calculated separately for all the employers, although employers within a pool will pay the contribution rate applicable to the pool as a whole. The calculation is on the “ongoing” valuation basis (see [Appendix E](#)), but where it is considered appropriate to do so the Administering Authority reserves the right to set a future service rate by reference to liabilities valued on a more prudent basis (see [Section 3](#)).

<sup>1</sup> See LGPS (Administration) Regulations 36(5).

<sup>2</sup> See LGPS (Administration) Regulations 36(7).



The approach used to calculate each employer's future service contribution rate depends on whether or not new entrants are being admitted. Employers should note that it is only Admission Bodies and Designating Employers that may have the power not to automatically admit all eligible new staff to the Fund, depending on the terms of their Admission Agreements and employment contracts.

**a) Employers which admit new entrants**

These rates will be derived using the "Projected Unit Method" of valuation with a one year period, i.e. only considering the cost of the next year's benefit accrual and contribution income. If future experience is in line with assumptions, and the employer's membership profile remains stable, this rate should be broadly stable over time. If the membership of employees matures (e.g. because of lower recruitment) the rate would rise over time.

**b) Employers which do not admit new entrants**

To give more long term stability to such employers' contributions, the "Attained Age" funding method is normally adopted. This measures benefit accrual and contribution income over the whole future anticipated working lifetimes of current active employee members.

Both approaches include expenses of administration to the extent that they are borne by the Fund, and include allowances for benefits payable on death in service and ill health retirement.

**D3 How is the Solvency / Funding Level calculated?**

The Fund's actuary is required to report on the "solvency" of the whole Fund in a valuation which should be carried out at least once every three years. As part of this valuation, the actuary will calculate the solvency position of each employer.

'Solvency' is defined to be the ratio of the market value of the employer's asset share to the value placed on accrued benefits on the Fund actuary's chosen assumptions. This quantity is known as a funding level.

For the value of the employer's asset share, see D5 below.

For the value of benefits, the Fund actuary agrees the assumptions to be used with the Administering Authority – see Appendix E. These assumptions are used to calculate the present value of all benefit payments expected in the future, relating to that employer's current and former employees, based on pensionable service to the valuation date only (i.e. ignoring further benefits to be built up in the future).

The Fund operates the same target funding level for all employers of 100% of its accrued liabilities valued on the ongoing basis, unless otherwise determined (see Section 3).

**D4 What affects a given employer's valuation results?**

The results of these calculations for a given individual employer will be affected by:

- past contributions relative to the cost of accruals of benefits;

- different liability profiles of employers (e.g. mix of members by age, gender, service vs. salary);
- the effect of any differences in the valuation basis on the value placed on the employer's liabilities;
- any different deficit/surplus spreading periods or phasing of contribution changes;
- the difference between actual and assumed rises in pensionable pay;
- the difference between actual and assumed increases to pensions in payment and deferred pensions;
- the difference between actual and assumed retirements on grounds of ill-health from active status;
- the difference between actual and assumed amounts of pension ceasing on death;
- the additional costs of any non ill-health retirements relative to any extra payments made;

over the period between each triennial valuation.

Actual investment returns achieved on the Fund between each valuation are applied proportionately across all employers, to the extent that employers in effect share the same investment strategy. Transfers of liabilities between employers within the Fund occur automatically within this process, with a sum broadly equivalent to the reserve required on the ongoing basis being exchanged between the two employers.

#### **D5 How is each employer's asset share calculated?**

The Administering Authority does not account for each employer's assets separately. Instead, the Fund's actuary is required to apportion the assets of the whole Fund between the employers, at each triennial valuation.

This apportionment uses the income and expenditure figures provided for certain cash flows for each employer. This process adjusts for transfers of liabilities between employers participating in the Fund, but does make a number of simplifying assumptions. The split is calculated using an actuarial technique known as "analysis of surplus".

The Fund actuary does not allow for certain relatively minor events, including but not limited to:

- the actual timing of employer contributions within any financial year;
- the effect of the premature payment of any deferred pensions on grounds of incapacity.

These effects are swept up within a miscellaneous item in the analysis of surplus, which is split between employers in proportion to their liabilities.

The methodology adopted means that there will inevitably be some difference between the asset shares calculated for individual employers and those that would have resulted had they participated in their own ring-fenced section of the Fund.

The asset apportionment is capable of verification but not to audit standard. The Administering Authority recognises the limitations in the process, but it considers that the Fund actuary's approach addresses the risks of employer cross-subsidisation to an acceptable degree.

## Appendix E – Actuarial assumptions

### E1 What are the actuarial assumptions?

These are expectations of future experience used to place a value on future benefit payments (“the liabilities”). Assumptions are made about the amount of benefit payable to members (the financial assumptions) and the likelihood or timing of payments (the demographic assumptions). For example, financial assumptions include investment returns, salary growth and pension increases; demographic assumptions include life expectancy, probabilities of ill-health early retirement, and proportions of member deaths giving rise to dependants’ benefits.

Changes in assumptions will affect the measured value of future service accrual and past service liabilities, and hence the measured value of the past service deficit. However, different assumptions will not of course affect the actual benefits payable by the Fund in future.

The combination of all assumptions is described as the “basis”. A more optimistic basis might involve higher assumed investment returns (discount rate), or lower assumed salary growth, pension increases or life expectancy; a more optimistic basis will give lower liability values and lower employer costs. A more prudent basis will give higher liability values and higher employer costs.

### E2 What basis is used by the Fund?

The Fund’s standard funding basis is described as the “ongoing basis”, which applies to most employers in most circumstances. This is described in more detail below. It anticipates employers remaining in the Fund in the long term.

However, in certain circumstances, typically where the employer is not expected to remain in the Fund long term, a more prudent basis applies: see [Note \(a\) to 3.3](#).

### E3 What assumptions are made in the ongoing basis?

#### a) Investment return / discount rate

The key financial assumption is the anticipated return on the Fund’s investments. This “discount rate” assumption makes allowance for an anticipated out-performance of Fund returns relative to long term yields on UK Government bonds (“gilts”). There is, however, no guarantee that Fund returns will out-perform gilts. The risk is greater when measured over short periods such as the three years between formal actuarial valuations, when the actual returns and assumed returns can deviate sharply.

Given the very long-term nature of the liabilities, a long term view of prospective asset returns is taken. The long term in this context would be 20 to 30 years or more.

For the purpose of the triennial funding valuation at 31 March 2013 and setting contribution rates effective from 1 April 2014, the Fund actuary has assumed that future investment returns earned by the Fund over the long term will be 1.6% per annum greater than gilt yields at the time of the valuation (this a change from the 2010 valuation where 1.4% was used). In the opinion of the Fund actuary, based on the current investment strategy of the Fund, this asset out-performance assumption is within a range that would be considered acceptable for the purposes of the funding valuation.

**b) Salary growth**

Pay for public sector employees is currently subject to restriction by the UK Government until 2016. Although this “pay freeze” does not officially apply to local government and associated employers, it has been suggested that they are likely to show similar restraint in respect of pay awards. Based on long term historical analysis of the membership in LGPS funds, the salary increase assumption at the 2013 valuation has been set to 0.5% above the retail prices index (RPI) per annum. This is a change from the previous valuation, which assumed a three year restriction at 1% per annum followed by longer term growth at RPI plus 1.5% per annum.

**c) Pension increases**

Since 2011 the consumer prices index (CPI), rather than RPI, has been the basis for increases to public sector pensions in deferment and in payment. This change was allowed for in the valuation calculations as at 31 March 2010. Note that the basis of such increases is set by the Government, and is not under the control of the Fund or any employers.

As at the previous valuation, we derive our assumption for RPI from market data as the difference between the yield on long-dated fixed interest and index-linked government bonds. This is then reduced to arrive at the CPI assumption, to allow for the “formula effect” of the difference between RPI and CPI. At this valuation, we propose a reduction of 0.8% per annum. This is a larger reduction than at 2010, which will serve to reduce the value placed on the Fund’s liabilities (all other things being equal).

**d) Life expectancy**

The demographic assumptions are intended to be best estimates of future experience in the Fund based on past experience of LGPS funds which participate in Club Vita, the longevity analytics service used by the Fund, and endorsed by the actuary.

The longevity assumptions that have been adopted at this valuation are a bespoke set of “VitaCurves”, produced by the Club Vita’s detailed analysis, which are specifically tailored to fit the membership profile of the Fund. These curves are based on the data provided by the Fund for the purposes of this valuation.

It is acknowledged that future life expectancy and, in particular, the allowance for future improvements in life expectancy, is uncertain. There is a consensus amongst actuaries, demographers and medical experts that life expectancy is likely to improve in the future. Allowance has been made in the ongoing valuation basis for future improvements in line with “medium cohort” and a 1.25% per annum minimum underpin to future reductions in mortality rates. This is a higher allowance for future improvements than was made in 2010.

The combined effect of the above changes from the 2010 valuation approach, is to add around 0.5 years of life expectancy on average. The approach taken is considered reasonable in light of the long term nature of the Fund and the assumed level of security underpinning members’ benefits.

**e) General**

The same financial assumptions are adopted for all employers, in deriving the past service deficit and the future service rate: as described in [\(3.3\)](#), these calculated figures

are translated in different ways into employer contributions, depending on the employer's circumstances.

The demographic assumptions, in particular the life expectancy assumption, in effect vary by type of member and so reflect the different membership profiles of employers.



## Appendix F – Glossary

<b>Actuarial assumptions/basis</b>	The combined set of assumptions made by the actuary, regarding the future, to calculate the value of <b>liabilities</b> . The main assumptions will relate to the <b>discount rate</b> , salary growth, pension increases and longevity. More prudent assumptions will give a higher liability value, whereas more optimistic assumptions will give a lower value.
<b>Administering Authority</b>	The council with statutory responsibility for running the Fund, in effect the Fund's "trustees".
<b>Admission Bodies</b>	Employers which voluntarily participate in the Fund, so that their employees and ex-employees are <b>members</b> . There will be an Admission Agreement setting out the employer's obligations. For more details (see <a href="#">2.5</a> ).
<b>Common contribution rate</b>	The Fund-wide <b>future service rate</b> plus <b>past service adjustment</b> . It should be noted that this will differ from the actual contributions payable by individual <b>employers</b> .
<b>Covenant</b>	The assessed financial strength of the employer. A strong covenant indicates a greater ability (and willingness) to pay for pension obligations in the long run. A weaker covenant means that it appears that the employer may have difficulties meeting its pension obligations in full over the longer term.
<b>Deficit</b>	The shortfall between the assets value and the <b>liabilities</b> value. This relates to assets and liabilities built up to date, and ignores the future build-up of pension (which in effect is assumed to be met by future contributions).
<b>Deficit repair/recovery period</b>	The target length of time over which the current <b>deficit</b> is intended to be paid off. A shorter period will give rise to a higher annual <b>past service adjustment</b> (deficit repair contribution), and vice versa.
<b>Designating Employer</b>	Employers such as town and parish councils that are able to participate in the LGPS via resolution. These employers can designate which of their employees are eligible to join the Fund.
<b>Discount rate</b>	The annual rate at which future assumed cashflows (in and out of the Fund) are discounted to the present day. This is necessary to provide a <b>liabilities</b> value which is consistent with the present day value of the assets, to calculate the <b>deficit</b> . A lower discount rate gives a higher liabilities value, and vice versa. It is similarly used in the calculation of the <b>future service rate</b> and the <b>common contribution rate</b> .
<b>Employer</b>	An individual participating body in the Fund, which employs (or used to employ) <b>members</b> of the Fund. Normally the assets and <b>liabilities</b> values for each employer are individually tracked, together with its

**future service rate** at each **valuation**.

<b>Funding level</b>	The ratio of assets value to <b>liabilities</b> value: for further details (see <u>2.2</u> ).
<b>Future service rate</b>	The actuarially calculated cost of each year's build-up of pension by the current active <b>members</b> , excluding members' contributions but including Fund administrative expenses. This is calculated using a chosen set of <b>actuarial assumptions</b> .
<b>Gilt</b>	A UK Government bond, ie a promise by the Government to pay interest and capital as per the terms of that particular gilt, in return for an initial payment of capital by the purchaser. Gilts can be "fixed interest", where the interest payments are level throughout the gilt's term, or "index-linked" where the interest payments vary each year in line with a specified index (usually RPI). Gilts can be bought as assets by the Fund, but their main use in funding is as an objective measure of solvency.
<b>Guarantee / guarantor</b>	A formal promise by a third party (the guarantor) that it will meet any pension obligations not met by a specified employer. The presence of a guarantor will mean, for instance, that the Fund can consider the employer's <b>covenant</b> to be as strong as its guarantor's.
<b>Letting employer</b>	An employer which outsources or transfers a part of its services and workforce to another employer (usually a contractor). The contractor will pay towards the LGPS benefits accrued by the transferring members, but ultimately the obligation to pay for these benefits will revert to the letting employer. A letting employer will usually be a local authority, but can sometimes be another type of employer such as an Academy.
<b>Liabilities</b>	The actuarially calculated present value of all pension entitlements of all <b>members</b> of the Fund, built up to date. This is compared with the present market value of Fund assets to derive the <b>deficit</b> . It is calculated on a chosen set of <b>actuarial assumptions</b> .
<b>LGPS</b>	The Local Government Pension Scheme, a public sector pension arrangement put in place via Government Regulations, for workers in local government. These Regulations also dictate eligibility (particularly for Scheduled Bodies), members' contribution rates, benefit calculations and certain governance requirements. The LGPS is divided into 101 Funds which map the UK. Each LGPS Fund is autonomous to the extent not dictated by Regulations, e.g. regarding investment strategy, employer contributions and choice of advisers.
<b>Maturity</b>	A general term to describe a Fund (or an employer's position within a Fund) where the members are closer to retirement (or more of them already retired) and the investment time horizon is shorter. This has implications for investment strategy and, consequently, funding

strategy.

<b>Members</b>	The individuals who have built up (and may still be building up) entitlement in the Fund. They are divided into actives (current employee members), deferreds (ex-employees who have not yet retired) and pensioners (ex-employees who have now retired, and dependants of deceased ex-employees).
<b>Past service adjustment</b>	The part of the employer's annual contribution which relates to past service <b>deficit</b> repair.
<b>Pooling</b>	Employers may be grouped together for the purpose of calculating contribution rates, so that their combined membership and asset shares are used to calculate a single contribution rate applicable to all employers in the pool. A pool may still require each individual employer to ultimately pay for its own share of <b>deficit</b> , or (if formally agreed) it may allow <b>deficits</b> to be passed from one employer to another. For further details of the Fund's current pooling policy (see <a href="#">3.4</a> ).
<b>Profile</b>	The profile of an employer's membership or liability reflects various measurements of that employer's <b>members</b> , ie current and former employees. This includes: the proportions which are active, deferred or pensioner; the average ages of each category; the varying salary or pension levels; the lengths of service of active members vs their salary levels, etc. A membership (or liability) profile might be measured for its <b>maturity</b> also.
<b>Rates and Adjustments Certificate</b>	A formal document required by the LGPS Regulations, which must be updated at least every three years at the conclusion of the formal <b>valuation</b> . This is completed by the actuary and confirms the contributions to be paid by each employer (or pool of employers) in the Fund for the three year period until the next valuation is completed.
<b>Scheduled Bodies</b>	Types of employer explicitly defined in the LGPS Regulations, whose employers must be offered membership of their local LGPS Fund. These include Councils, colleges, universities, academies, police and fire authorities etc, other than employees who have entitlement to a different public sector pension scheme (e.g. teachers, police and fire officers, university lecturers).
<b>Solvency</b>	In a funding context, this usually refers to a 100% <b>funding level</b> , ie where the assets value equals the <b>liabilities</b> value.
<b>Stabilisation</b>	Any method used to smooth out changes in employer contributions from one year to the next. This is very broadly required by the LGPS Regulations, but in practice is particularly employed for large stable employers in the Fund. Different methods may involve: probability-based modelling of future market movements; longer deficit recovery

periods; higher discount rates; or some combination of these.

**Theoretical contribution rate**

The employer's contribution rate, including both **future service rate** and **past service adjustment**, which would be calculated on the standard **actuarial basis**, before any allowance for **stabilisation** or other agreed adjustment.

**Valuation**

An actuarial investigation to calculate the liabilities, future service contribution rate and common contribution rate for a Fund, and usually individual employers too. This is normally carried out in full every three years (last done as at 31 March 2013), but can be approximately updated at other times. The assets value is based on market values at the valuation date, and the liabilities value and contribution rates are based on long term bond market yields at that date also.



The London Borough of Tower  
Hamlets Pension Fund  
Appendix 4  
Communications Strategy Statement

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## Introduction

This is the Communications Strategy Statement of London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund.

The Fund liaises with over 12 employers and approximately 15,000 scheme members in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme. The delivery of the benefits involves communication with a number of other interested parties. This statement provides an overview of how we communicate and how we intend to measure whether our communications are successful.

Any enquiries in relation to this Communication Strategy Statement should be sent to:

London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Town Hall  
Human Resources  
Payroll & Pensions Services  
Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London E14 2BG

Telephone: 020 7364 4251

Facsimile: 020 7364 4593

Email: [pensions@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:pensions@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## Regulatory Framework

This Policy Statement is required by the provisions of Regulation 106B of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations 1997. The provision requires us to:

“...prepare, maintain and publish a written statement setting out their policy concerning communications with:

- (a) members.
- (b) representatives of members.
- (c) prospective members.
- (d) employing authorities.”

In addition it specifies that the Statement must include information relating to:

- “(a) the provision of information and publicity about the Scheme to members, representatives of members and employing authorities;
- (b) the format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity; and
- (c) the promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employing authorities.”

As a provider of an occupational pension scheme, we are already obliged to satisfy the requirements of the Occupational Pension Schemes (Disclosure of information) Regulations and other legislation, for example the Pensions Act 2004. Previously the disclosure requirements have been prescriptive, concentrating on timescales rather than quality. From 6 April 2006 more generalised disclosure requirements are to be introduced, supported by a Code of Practice. The type of information that pension schemes are required to disclose will remain very much the same as before, although the prescriptive timescales are being replaced with a more generic requirement to provide information within a “*reasonable period*”.

The draft Code of Practice<sup>3</sup> issued by the Pensions Regulator in September 2005 sets out suggested timescales in which the information should be provided. While the Code itself is not a statement of the law, and no penalties can be levied for failure to comply with it, the Courts or a tribunal must take account of it when determining if any legal requirements have not been met. A summary of our expected timescales for meeting the various disclosure of information requirements are set out in the Performance Management section of this document, alongside those proposed by the Pension Regulator in the draft Code of Practice.

### **Responsibilities and Resources**

Within the Pension Section, the responsibility for communication material is performed by our Pensions Manager with the assistance of two Principal Pensions Officers.

Although, the team write all communications within the section, all design work is carried out by the Council's Creative & Technical team. The Pensions team are also responsible for arranging all forums, workshops and meetings covered within this Statement.

All printing is carried out by an external supplier, which is usually decided upon by the Council's Creative & Technical team.

### **Communication with key audience groups**

Our audience

We communicate with a number of stakeholders. For the purposes of this Communication Policy Statement, we are considering our communications with the following audience groups:

- active members;
- deferred members;
- pensioner members;
- prospective members;
- employing authorities (scheme employers and admitted bodies);
- senior managers;
- union representatives;
- elected members/the Pension Panel;
- Pensions Section staff;

In addition there are a number of other stakeholders with whom we communicate on a regular basis, such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Department for Communities and Local Government, solicitors, the Pensions Advisory Service, and other pension providers. We also consider as part of this policy how we communicate with these interested parties.

### **How we communicate**

General communication

We will continue to use paper based communication as our main means of communicating, for example, by sending letters to our scheme members. However, we will compliment this by

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<sup>3</sup> Code of Practice – Reasonable periods for the purposes of the Occupational Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2006 issued September 2005

use of electronic means such as our intranet. We will accept communications electronically, for example by e-mail and, where we do so, we will respond electronically where possible.

Our pension section staffs are responsible for specific tasks. Any phone calls or visitors are then passed to the relevant person within the section. Direct line phone numbers are advertised to allow easier access to the correct person.

### **Branding**

As the Pension Fund is administered by London Borough of Tower Hamlets, all literature and communications will conform to the branding of the Council.

### **Accessibility**

We recognise that individuals may have specific needs in relation to the format of our information or the language in which it is provided. Demand for alternative formats/languages is not high enough to allow us to prepare alternative format/language material automatically. However, on all communication from the Pension Fund office we will include a statement offering the communication in large print, Braille, on cassette or in another language on request.

### **Policy on Communication with Active, Deferred and Pensioner Members**

Our objectives with regard to communication with members are:

- for the LGPS to be used as a tool in the attraction and retention of employees.
- for better education on the benefits of the LGPS.
- to provide more opportunities for face to face communication.
- as a result of improved communication, for queries and complaints to be reduced.
- for our employers to be employers of choice.
- to increase take up of the LGPS employees.
- to reassure stakeholders.

Our objectives will be met by providing the following communications, which are over and above individual communications with members (for example, the notifications of scheme benefits or responses to individual queries). The communications are explained in more detail beneath the table:

Scheme booklet	Paper based and on intranet	At joining and major scheme changes	Post to home address/via employers	Active
Newsletters	Paper based and on intranet	Annually and after any scheme changes	Via employers for Actives. Post to home address for deferred & pensioners	Separately for active, deferred and pensioners
Pension Fund Report and Accounts	Paper based and on intranet	Annually	On request	All
Pension Fund Accounts – Summary	Paper based	Annually	Via employers for actives. Post to home address for deferred and pensioners	All
Estimated Benefit Statements	Paper based/via intranet	Annually	Post to home address/via employers for active members. To home address for deferred members.	Active and Deferred.
Factsheets	Paper based and on intranet	On request	On request	Active, deferred & pensioners
Intranet	Electronic	Continually available	Advertised on all communications	All
Road shows/ Workshops	Face to face	Annually	Advertised in newsletters, via posters and pensioners payslips	All
Face to face education sessions	Face to face	On request	On request	All
Joiner packs	Paper based	On joining	Post to home addresses	Active members
Pay advice slip/P60	Paper based	Conditional	Post to home address	Pensioners

## Explanation of communications

**Scheme booklet** - A booklet providing a relatively detailed overview of the LGPS, including who can join, how much it costs, the retirement and death benefits and how to increase the value of benefits.

**Newsletters** - An annual/biannual newsletter which provides updates in relation to changes to the LGPS as well as other related news, such as national changes to pensions, forthcoming road shows, a summary of the accounts for the year, contact details, etc.

**Pension Fund Report and Accounts** – Details of the value of the Pension Fund during the financial year, income and expenditure as well as other related details, for example, the current employing authorities and scheme membership numbers. This is a somewhat detailed and lengthy document and, therefore, it will not be routinely distributed except on request. A summary document, as detailed below, will be distributed.

**Pension Fund Report and Accounts Summary** – provides a handy summary of the position of the Pension Fund during the financial year, income and expenditure as well as other related details.

**Estimated Benefit Statements** – For active members these include the current value of benefits as well as the projected benefits as at their earliest retirement date and at age 65. The associated death benefits are also shown as well as details of any individuals the member has nominated to receive the lump sum death grant. State benefits are also included. In relation to deferred members, the benefit statement includes the current value of the deferred benefits and the earliest payment date of the benefits as well as the associated death benefits.

**Factsheets** – These are leaflets that provide some detail in relation to specific topics, such as topping up pension rights, transfer values in and out of the scheme, death benefits and, for pensioners, annual pension's increases.

**Intranet** – The intranet will provide scheme specific information, forms that can be printed or downloaded, access to documents (such as newsletters and report and accounts), frequently asked questions and answers, links to related sites and contact information.

**Road shows/Workshops** – Every year a number of staff will visit the schools/offices around the Borough, providing the opportunity to have a face to face conversation about your pension rights

**Face to face education sessions** – These are education sessions that are available on request for small groups of members. For example, where an employer is going through a restructuring, it may be beneficial for the employees to understand the impact any pay reduction may have on their pension rights.

**Joiner packs** – These complement the joiner booklet and enclose information on AVCs and the paperwork needed to join the scheme.

**Pay advice slip/P60** – The Pay advice slips are sent when the address, pension or tax code changes. The P60 information is communicated using this medium on an annual basis.

## Policy on promotion of the scheme to Prospective Members and their Employing Authorities

Our objectives with regard to communication with prospective members are:

- to improve take up of the LGPS.
- for the LGPS to be used as a tool in the attraction of employees.
- for our employers to be employers of choice.
- for public relations purposes.

As we, in the Pension Team Section, do not have direct access to prospective members, we will work in partnership with the employing authorities in the Fund to meet these objectives. We will do this by providing the following communications:

Overview of the LGPS leaflet	Paper based	On commencing employment	Via employers	New employees
Educational sessions	As part of induction workshops	On commencing employment	Face to face	New employees
Promotional newsletters/flyers	Paper based	Annually	Via employers	Existing employees
Posters	Paper based	Ongoing	Via employers	New and existing employees

### Explanation of communications

Overview of the LGPS leaflet - A short leaflet that summarises the costs of joining the LGPS and the benefits of doing so.

Educational sessions – A talk providing an overview of the benefits of joining the LGPS.

Promotional newsletters/flyers – These will be designed to help those who are not in the LGPS to understand the benefits of participating in the Scheme and provide guidance on how to join the Scheme.

Posters – These will be designed to help those who are not in the LGPS understand the benefits of participating in the scheme and provide guidance on how to join the Scheme.

### Policy on communication with Employing Authorities

Our objectives with regard to communication with employers are:

- to improve relationships.
- to assist them in understanding costs/funding issues.
- to work together to maintain accurate data.
- to ensure smooth transfers of staff.
- to ensure they understand the benefits of being an LGPS employer.



- to assist them in making the most of the discretionary areas within the LGPS.

**Our objectives will be met by providing the following communications:**

Employers' Guide	Paper based and intranet	At joining and updated as necessary	Post or via email	Main contact for all employers
Newsletters	Electronic (e-mail) and intranet	Annually or more frequent if necessary	E-mail	All contacts for all employers
Employers' focus groups	Face to face	At least quarterly/half yearly	Invitations by e-mail	Either main contacts or specific groups (e.g. HR or payroll) depending on topics
Pension Fund Report and Accounts	Paper based and employer website	Annually	Post	Main contact for all employers
Meeting with adviser	Face to face	On request	Invite sent by post or email	Senior management involved in funding and HR issues.

**Explanation of communications**

Employers' Guide – is a detailed guide that provides guidance on the employer responsibilities, including the forms and other necessary communications with the Pensions Section and Scheme members.

Newsletters – A technical briefing newsletter that will include recent changes to the scheme, the way the Pensions Section is run and other relevant information so as to keep employers fully up to date.

Employers' focus groups – Generally workgroup style sessions set up to debate current issues within the LGPS.

Pensions Fund Report and Accounts – Details of the value of the Pension Fund during the financial year, income and expenditure as well as other related details, for example, the current employing authorities and scheme membership numbers.

Adviser meeting – Gives employers the opportunity to discuss their involvement in the Scheme with advisers.

### Policy on communication with senior managers

Our objectives with regard to communication with senior managers are:

- to ensure they are fully aware of developments within the LGPS
- to ensure that they understand costs/funding issues
- to promote the benefits of the Scheme as a recruitment/retention tool.

Our objectives will be met by providing the following communications:

Method of communication	Media	Frequency of Issue	Method of Distribution	Audience Group
Briefing papers	Paper based and electronic	As and when required	Email or hard copy	All
Committee papers	Paper based and electronic	In advance of Committee	Email or hard copy	All

### Explanation of communications

Briefing papers – a briefing that highlights key issues or developments relating to the LGPS and the Fund, which can be used by senior managers when attending meetings

Committee paper – a formal document setting out relevant issues in respect of the LGPS, in many cases seeking specific decisions or directions from elected members

### Policy on communication with union representatives

Our objectives with regard to communication with union representatives are:

- to foster close working relationships in communicating the benefits of the Scheme to their members
- to ensure they are aware of the Pension Fund's policy in relation to any decisions that need to be taken concerning the Scheme
- to engage in discussions over the future of the Scheme
- to provide opportunities to Education Union representatives on the provisions of the Scheme

Our objectives will be met by providing the following communications:

Method of communication	Media	Frequency of Issue	Method of Distribution	Audience Group
Briefing papers	Paper based and electronic	As and when required	Email or hard copy	All
Face to face education sessions	Face to face	On request	On request	All
Pension Committee	Meeting	Quarterly	Via invitation when appropriate	All

**Explanation of communications**

Briefing papers – a briefing that highlights key issues and developments relating to the LGPS and the Fund.

Face to face education sessions – these are education sessions that are available on request for union representatives and activists, for example to improve their understanding of the basic principles of the Scheme, or to explain possible changes to policies.

Pensions Committee – a formal meeting of elected members, attended by senior managers, at which local decisions in relation to the Scheme (policies, etc) are taken.

**Policy on communication with elected members/Pensions Committee**

Our objectives with regard to communication with elected members/Pensions Committee are:

- to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the Scheme
- to seek their approval to the development or amendment of discretionary policies, where required
- to seek their approval to formal responses to government consultation in relation to the Scheme.

Our objectives will be met by providing the following communications:

Method of Communication	Media	Frequency of Issue	Method of Distribution	Audience Group
Training sessions	Face to face	When there is a new Pensions Committee and as and when required	Face to face or via the Employers Organisation for local government	All members of the Pensions Committee as well as other elected members
Briefing papers	Paper based and electronic	As and when required	Email or hard copy	All members of the Pensions Committee
Pension Committee	Meeting	Quarterly	Members elected onto Pension Committee	All members of the Pensions Committee

**Explanation of communications**

Training sessions – to provide a broad overview of the main provisions of the LGPS to elected members and their responsibilities within it.

Briefing papers - a briefing that highlights key issues and developments to the LGPS and the Fund.

Pension Committee - a formal meeting of elected members, attended by senior managers, at which local decisions in relation to the Scheme (policies, etc.) are taken.

**Policy on communication with pension section staff**

Our objectives with regard to communication with Pension Section's staff are:

- ensure they are aware of changes and proposed changes to the scheme
- to provide on the job training to new staff
- to develop improvements to services, and changes to processes as required
- to agree and monitor service standards

Our objectives will be met by providing the following communications:

Method of Communication	Media	Frequency of Issue	Method of Distribution	Audience Group
Face to face training sessions	Face to face	As required	By arrangement	All
Staff meetings	Face to face	As required, but no less frequently than monthly	By arrangement	All
Attendance at seminars	Externally provided	As and when advertised	By email, paper based	All
Software User Group meetings	Face to face	Quarterly	By email, paper based.	Principal Administrators
Regional Officer Group meetings	Face to face	Quarterly	By email, paper based.	Pension Manager/ Principal Administrators

**Explanation of communications**

Face to face training sessions – which enable new staff to understand the basics of the Scheme, or provide more in depth training to existing staff, either as part of their career development or to explain changes to the provisions of the Scheme

Staff meetings – to discuss any matters concerning the local administration of the Scheme, including for example improvements to services or timescales

Attendance at seminars – to provide more tailored training on specific issues

Software User Group meeting – to discuss any issues concerning the computer software used to administer the scheme, including future upgrades and improvements

Regional Officer Group meetings - discussion group of principal officers from other administering authorities.

**Policy on communication with tax payers**

Our objectives with regard to communication with tax payers are:

- to provide access to key information in relation to the management of the scheme
- to outline the management of the scheme

Our objectives will be met by providing the following communications:

Method of Communication	Media	Frequency of Issue	Method of Distribution	Audience Group
Pension Fund Report and Accounts	Paper based and on website	Annually	Post	All, on request
Pension Fund Committee Papers	Paper based and on website	As and when available	Post	All, on request

**Explanation of communications**

Pension Fund Report and Accounts – details of the value of the Pension Fund during the financial year, income and expenditure as well as other related details, for example, the current employing authorities and scheme membership numbers.

Pension Fund Committee Papers - a formal document setting out relevant issues in respect of the LGPS, in many cases seeking specific decisions or directions from elected members.

**Policy on communication with other stakeholders/interested parties**

Our objectives with regard to communication with other stakeholder/interested parties are:

- to meet our obligations under various legislative requirements
- to ensure the proper administration of the scheme
- to deal with the resolution of pension disputes
- to administer the Fund's Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) scheme

Our objectives will be met by providing the following communications:

Method of Communication	Media	Frequency of Issue	Method of Distribution	Audience Group
Pension Fund valuation reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rates and Adjustments (R&amp;A) certificates</li> <li>• Revised R&amp;A certificates</li> <li>• Cessation valuations</li> </ul>	Electronic	Every three years	Via email	Government Departments)/ Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs HMRC)/all Scheme employers
Details of new employers entered into the Fund	Hard copy	As new employers are entered into the Fund	Post	Government Departments /HMRC
Formal resolution of pension disputes	Hard copy or electronic	As and when a dispute requires resolution	Via email or post	Scheme member or their representatives, the Pensions Advisory Service/the Pensions Ombudsman
Completion of questionnaires	Electronic or hard copy	As and when required	Via email or post	Government Departments /HMRC/the Pensions Regulator



### Explanation of communications

Pension Fund Valuation Reports – a report issued every three years setting out the estimated assets and liabilities of the Fund as a whole, as well as setting out individual employer contribution rates for a three year period commencing one year from the valuation date

Details of new employers – a legal requirement to notify both organisations of the name and type of employer entered into the Fund (i.e. following the admission of third party service providers into the scheme)

Resolution of pension disputes – a formal notification of pension dispute resolution, together with any additional correspondence relating to the dispute

Completion of questionnaires – various questionnaires that may be received, requesting specific information in relation to the structure of the LGPS or the make up of the Fund

### Performance Measurement

So as to measure the success of our communications with active, deferred and pensioner members, we will use the following methods:

### Timeliness

We will measure against the following target delivery timescales:

Scheme booklet	New joiners to the LGPS	Within two months of joining	Within two weeks of joining the LGPS
Estimated Benefit Statements as at 31 March	Active members	On request	31 July each year
Telephone calls	All	Not applicable	95% of phone calls to be answered within 30 seconds
Issue of retirement benefits	Active and deferred members retiring	Within two months of retirement	95% of retirement benefits to be issued within 10 working days of retirement
Issue of deferred benefits	Leavers	Within two months of withdrawal	Within one month of notification
Transfers in	Joiners/active members	Within two months of request	Within one month of request
Issue of forms i.e. expression of wish	Active/deferred members	N/A	Within five working days
Changes to Scheme rules	Active/deferred and pensioner	Within two months of the change	Within one month of change coming

	members, as required	coming into effect	into effect
Annual Pension Fund Report and Accounts	All	Within two months of request	Within ten working days

### Quality

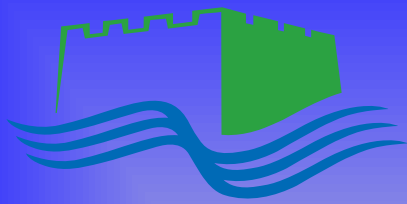
Active and deferred members	Paper based survey with annual benefit statements	All services	
All member types	Annual paper based survey on completion of specific tasks	Service received during that task	One task to be chosen each quarter from: retirements new starts and transfers in transfers out deferred leavers
All member types	Focus group meeting on half yearly basis	All services and identify improvement areas/new services	Representative group of all member types. To include union representatives.
Employers	Focus Groups	Their issues	Regular feedback sessions.

### Results

Details of the performance figures are reported to the Head of Pay, Pension, & e-HR on a quarterly basis. Feedback is received from the Service Head and from various focus /discussion groups.

### Review Process

We will review our Communication Policy to ensure it meets audience needs and regulatory requirements at least annually. A current version of the Policy Statement will always be available on our intranet and paper copies will be available on request.



**TOWER HAMLETS**

The London Borough of Tower  
Hamlets Pension Fund  
Appendix 5  
Governance Compliance Statement

## Governance and Compliance Statement

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council is the Administering Authority of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund and administers the Local Government Pension Scheme on behalf of participating employers.

Regulation 55 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 requires Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Administering Authorities to publish Governance Compliance Statements setting out information relating to how the Administering Authority delegates its functions under those regulations and whether it complies with guidance given by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. It also requires the Authority to keep the statement under review and to make revisions as appropriate and where such revisions are made to publish a revised statement.

### 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:

- around 15,000 current and former members of the Fund, and their dependants
- over 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, our 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

### Structure

The Constitution of the Council sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and that those who made the decisions are accountable to local people.

The Constitution sets out the framework under which the Pension Fund is to be administered as described below.

The Council delegates its responsibility for administering the Fund to the Pensions Committee. The terms of this delegation are as set out in the Council Constitution and provide that the Committee is responsible for consideration of all pension matters and discharging the obligations and duties of the Council under the Superannuation Act 1972 and various statutory matters relating to investment issues.

The governance structure is supported by:

- The Pensions Committee

- Officers of the Council; and
- Professional Advisors

### **Terms of Reference for the Pensions Committee**

The Constitution allows for the appointment of a Pensions Committee which has responsibility for the discharge of all non-executive functions assigned to it.

The following are the terms of reference for the Pensions Committee:

To act as Trustees of the Council's Pension Fund, consider pension matters and meet the obligations and duties of the Council under the Superannuation Act 1972, the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, and other pension legislation.

- 1) To make arrangements for the appointment of and to appoint suitably qualified pension fund administrators, actuaries, advisers, investment managers and custodian's and periodically to review those arrangements.
- 2) To formulate and publish a Statement of Investment Principles.
- 3) To set the overall strategic objectives for the Pension Fund, having taken appropriate expert advice, and to develop a medium term plan to deliver the objectives.
- 4) To determine the strategic asset allocation policy, the mandates to be given to the investment managers and the performance measures to be set for them.
- 5) To make arrangements for the triennial actuarial valuation, to monitor liabilities and to undertake any asset/liability and other relevant studies as required.
- 6) To monitor the performance and effectiveness of the investment managers and their compliance with the Statement of Investment Principles.
- 7) To set an annual budget for the operation of the Pension Fund and to monitor income and expenditure against budget.
- 8) To receive and approve an Annual Report on the activities of the Fund prior to publication.
- 9) To make arrangements to keep members of the Pension Fund informed of performance and developments relating to the Pension Fund on an annual basis.
- 10) To keep the terms of reference under review.
- 11) To determine all matters relating to admission body issues.
- 12) To focus on strategic and investment related matters at two Pensions Committee meetings.
- 13) To review the Pension Fund's policy and strategy documents on a regular basis and review performance against the Fund's objectives within the business plan
- 14) To maintain an overview of pensions training for Members.

In addition the Pensions Committee will also co-opt a non-voting employer representative and a non-voting scheme member representative.

## **Membership of the Pensions Committee**

The Council decides the composition and makes appointments to the Pensions Committee. Currently the membership of the Pensions Committee is a minimum of 7 elected Members from Tower Hamlets Council on a politically proportionate basis and the Pensions Committee will elect a Chair and Vice Chair. All Tower Hamlets Council elected Members have voting rights on the Committee and three voting members of the Committee are required to be able to deem the meeting quorate.

In addition there are two co-opted non-voting members representing employer and Scheme member interests. Although the co-opted representatives do not have voting rights they are treated as equal members of the Committee, they have access to all Committee Advisers, officers, meetings and training as if they were Council Members and have the opportunity to contribute to the decision making process.

Voting rights are restricted to elected Members as they are deemed to be fulfilling the role of Trustees as the Pension Fund with all the legal responsibilities that this entails, it was not felt appropriate to apply the same legal definition to the lay members of the Committee and hence their role as non-voting members.

Members of the Pensions Committee, including co-opted members, are required to declare any interests that they have in relation to the Pension Fund or items on the agenda at the commencement of the meeting.

The Fund is aware that good governance means an organisation is open in its dealings and readily provides information to interested parties; meetings are open to members of the public who are welcome to attend. However, there may be occasions when members of the public are excluded from meetings when it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed.

## **Meetings**

The Pensions Committee shall meet at least four times a year in the ordinary course of business and additional meetings may be arranged as required to facilitate its work. Work for the year will be agreed with the Committee to include dedicated training sessions for Committee members.

Agendas for meetings will be agreed with the Chair and will be circulated with supporting papers to all members of the Committee, Officers of the Council as appropriate and the Fund's Investment Advisor.

The Council will give at least five clear working days' notice of any meeting by posting details of the meeting at the Tower Hamlets Town Hall and on the Council's website. The Council will make copies of the agenda and reports open to the public available for inspection at least five clear working days before the meeting. If an item is added to the agenda later, the revised agenda will be open to inspection from the time the item was added to the agenda. The reason for lateness will be specified in the report.

There may on occasions be items which may be exempt from the agenda, reports and minutes of the meetings when it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed. Items which are most likely to be excluded are issues where to disclose information would contravene an individual's privacy or where there are financial interests which may be compromised as a result of disclosure for example discussions surrounding contracts.



The Council will make available copies of the minutes of the meeting and records of decisions taken for six years after a meeting. Minutes of meetings and records of decisions are available for inspection on the Council's website:

<http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=392>.

### **Other Delegations of Powers**

The Pensions Committee act as quasi trustees and oversee the management of the Pension Fund. As quasi trustees the Committee has a clear fiduciary duty in the performance of their functions, they have to ensure that the Fund is managed in accordance with the regulations and to do so prudently and impartially and to ensure the best possible outcomes for the Pension Fund, its participating employers, local taxpayers and Scheme members. Whilst trustees can delegate some of their powers, they cannot delegate their responsibilities as trustees. **Appendix B outlines** the areas that the Pensions Committee has currently delegated though these may be added to from time to time.

Under the Council's Constitution delegated powers have been given to the Corporate Director of Resources in relation to all other pension fund matters, in addition to his role as Chief Financial Officer (often called S151 Officer). As Chief Financial Officer he is responsible for the preparation of the Pension Fund Annual Report & Accounts and ensuring the proper financial administration of the Fund. As appropriate the Corporate Director of Resources will delegate aspects of the role to other officers of the Council including the Investment & Treasury Manager and to professional advisors within the scope of the LGPS Regulations.

### **Pension Board**

With effect from 1 April 2015, each Administering Authority is required to establish a local Pension Board to assist them with:

- securing compliance with the LGPS Regulations and any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and requirements imposed in relation to the LGPS by the Pensions Regulator
- ensuring the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Pension Fund

Such Pension Boards are not local authority committees; as such the Constitution of Tower Hamlets Council does not apply to the Pension Board unless it is expressly referred to in the Board's terms of reference. The Tower Hamlets Pension Board established by Tower Hamlets Council and the full terms of reference of the Board can be found within the Council's Constitution. The key points are summarised below.

### **Role of the Pension Board**

The Council has charged the Pension Board with providing oversight of the matters outlined above. The Pension Board, however, is not a decision making body in relation to the management of the Pension Fund and the Pension Fund's management powers and responsibilities which have been delegated by the Council to the Pensions Committee or otherwise remain solely the powers and responsibilities of them, including but not limited to the setting and delivery of the Fund's strategies, the allocation of the Fund's assets and the appointment of contractors, advisors and fund managers.

### **Membership of the Pension Board**

The Pension Board consists of 7 members as follows:

- Three Employer Representatives
- Three Scheme Member Representatives
- One Independent Member (non-voting) to act as chair of the Pension Board

Pension Board members, (excluding any Independent Member), have individual voting rights but it is expected the Pension Board will as far as possible reach a consensus.

A meeting of the Pension Board is only quorate when two of the six Employer and Scheme Member Representatives are present, and where the Board has an Independent Member they must also be present.

Members of the Pension Board are required to declare any interests that they have in relation to the Pension Fund or items on the agenda at the commencement of the meeting.

### **Meetings**

The Pension Board meets at least twice a year in the ordinary course of business and additional meetings may be arranged as required to facilitate its work. The Pension Board will be treated in the same way as a Committee of Tower Hamlets Council and, as such, members of the public may attend and papers will be made public in the same way as described above for the Pension Committee.

### **Policy Documents**

In addition to the foregoing, there are a number of other documents which are relevant to the Governance and management of the Pension Fund. Brief details of these are listed below and the full copies of all documents can either be found on the Pension Fund Website <http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=392> or by writing to the address given at the end of this document.

### **Funding Strategy Statement**

The Funding Strategy Statement forms part of the framework for the funding and management of the Pension Fund. It sets out how the Fund will approach its liabilities and contains a schedule of the minimum contribution rates that are required of individual employers within the Fund. The Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) is drawn up by the Administering Authority in collaboration with the Fund's actuary and after consultation with the Fund's employers. The FSS forms part of a broader framework which covers the Pension Fund and applies to all employers participating in the Fund. The FSS represents a summary of the Fund's approach to funding the liabilities of the Pension Fund.

### **Statement of Investment Principles**

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 require pension fund administering authorities to prepare,

maintain and publish a statement of the principles governing their decisions on the investment of the pension fund.

The areas covered in the statement of investment principles are as follows:

- Types of investments to be held.
- Balance between different types of investments.
- Risk.
- Expected return on investments.
- Realisation of investments.
- The extent to which social, ethical and environmental considerations are taken into account.
- The extent to which the Council complies with the 6 Myners principles of investment practice (2008).

### **Governance Compliance Statement**

This sets out the Pension Fund's compliance with the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance on Governance in the LGPS. This is attached as Appendix A and shows where the Fund is compliant or not compliant with best practice and the reasons why it may not be compliant.

### **Training Policy**

Tower Hamlets Council has a Training Policy which has been put in place to assist the Fund in achieving its governance objectives and all Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers are expected to continually demonstrate their own personal commitment to training and to ensuring that the governance objectives are met.

To assist in achieving these objectives, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund aims 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.

Members of the Pensions Committee, Pension Board and officers involved in the management of the Fund will receive training to ensure that they meet the aims of the Training Policy with training schedules drawn up and reviewed on at least an annual basis.

### **Annual Report and Accounts**

As part of the financial standing orders it is the duty of the Chief Financial Officer to ensure that record keeping and accounts are maintained by the Pension Fund. The Pension Fund accounts are produced in accordance with the accounting recommendations of the Financial Reports of Pension Schemes - Statement of Recommended Practice. The financial statements summarise the transactions of the Scheme and deal with the net assets of the Scheme. The statement of accounts is reviewed by both the Pensions Committee and the Audit Committee and incorporated in the Statement of Accounts for the Council. Full copies of the Report and Accounts are distributed to employers in the Fund and other interested parties and a copy placed on the website

<http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=392>

**Communication Policy**

This document sets out the communications policy of the administering authority and sets out the strategy for ensuring that all interested parties are kept informed of developments in the Pension Fund. This helps to ensure transparency and an effective communication process for all interested parties. A copy of the policy can be found on the Pensions website <http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=392>

**Discretions Policies**

Under the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations, the Administering Authority has a level of discretion in relation to a number of areas. The Administering Authority reviews these policies as appropriate and will notify interested parties of any significant changes. Employing Authorities are also required to set out their discretions policies in respect of areas under the Regulations where they have a discretionary power. Copies of both the Administering Authority and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' Employing Authority Discretions can be found on the website: <http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=392>

**Pension Administration Strategy and Employer Guide**

In order to assist with the management and efficient running of the Pension Fund, the Pension Administration Strategy and Employer Guide encompassing administrative procedures and responsibilities for the Pension Fund for both the Administering Authority and Employing Authorities has been distributed to employers within the Fund following consultation and can be found on the website

<http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=392>.

This represents part of the process for ensuring the ongoing efficient management of the Fund and maintenance of accurate data and forms part of the overall governance procedures for the Fund.

**Approval, Review and Consultation**

This Governance Policy and Statement was approved at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pensions Committee meeting on 23 July 2015 following consultation with all the participating employers in the Fund and other interested parties. It will be formally reviewed and updated at least every year or sooner if the governance arrangements or other matters included within it merit reconsideration.

**Contact Information**

Further information on the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund can be found as shown below:

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund  
Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London  
E14 2BG

Email: [pensions@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:pensions@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Website: <http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=392>

PRINCIPLE	REQUIREMENT	COMPLIANCE	COMMENT
<b>STRUCTURE</b>	The management of the administration of benefits and strategic management of fund assets clearly rests with the main committee established by the appointing council	Compliant	The Council's Constitution states that the Pensions Committee is responsible for the management of the Pension Fund
	That representatives of participating LGPS employers, admitted bodies and scheme members (including pensioner and deferred members) are members of either the main or secondary committee established to underpin the work of the main committee.	Compliant	Trade union representatives and representatives of admitted bodies sit on the Pension Committee.
	That where a secondary committee or panel has been established, the structure ensures effective communication across both levels.	Compliant	A report of the Pensions Committee is presented at the following Pensions Committee. All key recommendations of the Pensions Committee are ratified by the Pensions Committee.
	That where a secondary committee or panel has been established, at least one seat on the main committee is allocated for a member from the secondary committee or panel.	Compliant	All members of the Pensions Committee are also members of the Pensions Committee.
<b>REPRESENTATION</b>	<p>That all key stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to be represented within the main or secondary committee structure. These include :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employing authorities (including non-scheme employers, e.g. admitted bodies),</li> <li>• scheme members (including deferred and pensioner scheme members),</li> <li>• independent professional observers,</li> <li>• expert advisors (on an ad-hoc basis).</li> </ul>	Compliant	Trade unions and admitted bodies are represented on the Pensions Committee.

PRINCIPLE	REQUIREMENT	COMPLIANCE	COMMENT
	That where lay members sit on a main or secondary committee, they are treated equally in terms of access to papers and meetings, training and are given full opportunity to contribute to the decision making process, with or without voting rights.	Compliant	Papers for Committee and the Pensions Committee are made available to all members of both bodies at the same time and are published well in advance of the meetings in line with the council's committee agenda publication framework.
<b>SELECTION &amp; ROLE OF LAY MEMBERS</b>	That committee or panel members are made fully aware of the status, role and function they are required to perform on either a main or secondary committee.	Compliant	Members of the Pensions Committee/ Pensions Committee have access to the terms of reference of each body and are aware of their roles and responsibilities as members of these bodies/ Panel.
<b>VOTING</b>	The policy of individual administering authorities on voting rights is clear and transparent, including the justification for not extending voting rights to each body or group represented on main LGPS committees.	Compliant	The Pensions Committee/ Pensions Committee does not currently confer voting rights on non-Councillors in line with common practice across the local government sector.
<b>TRAINING/FACILITY TIME/EXPENSES</b>	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.	Compliant	Regular training is arranged for members of the Pensions Committee. In addition members are encouraged to attend external training courses. The cost of any such courses attended will be met by the Fund.
	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.	Compliant	The rule on training provision is applied equally across all members of the Pensions Committee.



PRINCIPLE	REQUIREMENT	COMPLIANCE	COMMENT
<b>MEETINGS (FREQUENCY/ QUORUM)</b>	That an administering authority's main committee or committees meet at least quarterly.	Compliant	Meetings of the Pensions Committee are arranged to take place quarterly.
	That an administering authority's secondary committee or panel meet at least twice a year and is synchronised with the dates when the main committee sits.	Compliant	Meetings of the Pensions Committee are arranged to take place quarterly.
	That administering authorities who do not include lay members in their formal governance arrangements, provide a forum outside of those arrangements by which the interests of key stakeholders can be represented.	Compliant	Union representatives on the Pensions Committee are lay members. Other stakeholders of the Fund are able to make representations at the Annual General Meeting of the Pension Fund.
<b>ACCESS</b>	That subject to any rules in the Council's Constitution, all members of main and secondary committees or panels have equal access to committee papers, documents and advice that falls to be considered at meetings of the main committee.	Compliant	Panel meeting papers are circulated at the same time to all members of the Pensions Committee/ Pensions Committee.
<b>SCOPE</b>	That administering authorities have taken steps to bring wider scheme issues within the scope of their governance arrangements.	Compliant	Pensions Committee considers a range of issues at its meetings and therefore has taken steps to bring wider scheme issues within the scope of the governance arrangements.
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	That administering authorities have published details of their governance arrangements in such a way that stakeholders with an interest in the way in which the scheme is governed, can express an interest in wanting to be part of those arrangements.	Compliant	This Governance Compliance Statement is a public document that is attached as an appendix to the annual pension fund report.





# **London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Appendix 6 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:

- around 19,000 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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:

Bola Tobun

Investment & Treasury Manager

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Mulberry Place

5 Clove Crescent

London

E14 2BG

E-mail [Bola.Tobun@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Bola.Tobun@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Telephone 020 7364 4733



# **LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

## **Administering Authority for Tower Hamlets Pension Fund**

### **Appendix 7**

#### **Procedure for Recording and Reporting Breaches of the Law**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the procedures to be followed by certain persons involved with the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund, the Local Government Pension Scheme managed and administered by Tower Hamlets Council, in relation to reporting breaches of the law to the Pensions Regulator.
- 1.2 Breaches can occur in relation to a wide variety of the tasks normally associated with the administrative function of a scheme such as keeping records, internal controls, calculating benefits and making investment or investment-related decisions.
- 1.3 This Procedure document applies, in the main, to:
  - all members of the Tower Hamlets Pensions Committee and Board;
  - all officers involved in the management of the Pension Fund ;
  - personnel of the shared service pensions administrator providing day to day administration services to the Fund, and any professional advisers including auditors, actuaries, legal advisers and fund managers; and
  - officers of employers participating in the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund who are responsible for pension matters.

## 2. Requirements

- 2.1 This section clarifies the full extent of the legal requirements and to whom they apply.
- 2.2 ***Pensions Act 2004***  
Section 70 of the Pensions Act 2004 (the Act) imposes a requirement on the following persons:
  - a trustee or manager of an occupational or personal pension scheme;
  - a member of the pension board of a public service pension scheme;
  - a person who is otherwise involved in the administration of such a scheme an occupational or personal pension scheme;
  - the employer in relation to an occupational pension scheme;
  - a professional adviser in relation to such a scheme; and
  - a person who is otherwise involved in advising the trustees or managers of an occupational or personal pension scheme in relation to the scheme, to report a matter to The Pensions Regulator as soon as is reasonably practicable where that person has reasonable cause to believe that:
    - (a) a legal duty relating to the administration of the scheme has not been or is not being complied with, and
    - (b) the failure to comply is likely to be of material significance to The Pensions Regulator.



The Act states that a person can be subject to a civil penalty if he or she fails to comply with this requirement without a reasonable excuse. The duty to report breaches under the Act overrides any other duties the individuals listed above may have. However the duty to report does not override 'legal privilege'. This means that, generally, communications between a professional legal adviser and their client, or a person representing their client, in connection with legal advice being given to the client, do not have to be disclosed.

### 2.3 ***The Pension Regulator's Code of Practice***

Practical guidance in relation to this legal requirement is included in The Pension Regulator's Code of Practice including in the following areas:

- implementing adequate procedures.
- judging whether a breach must be reported.
- submitting a report to The Pensions Regulator.
- whistleblowing protection and confidentiality.

### 2.4 ***Application to the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund***

This procedure has been developed to reflect the guidance contained in The Pension Regulator's Code of Practice in relation to the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund and this document sets out how the Board will strive to achieve best practice through use of a formal reporting breaches procedure.

## **3 The Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Reporting Breaches Procedure**

The following procedure details how individuals responsible for reporting and whistleblowing can identify, assess and report (or record if not reported) a breach of law relating to the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund. It aims to ensure individuals responsible are able to meet their legal obligations, avoid placing any reliance on others to report. The procedure will also assist in providing an early warning of possible malpractice and reduce risk.

### 3.1 ***Clarification of the law***

Individuals may need to refer to regulations and guidance when considering whether or not to report a possible breach. Some of the key provisions are shown below:

- Section 70(1) and 70(2) of the Pensions Act 2004:  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/35/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/35/contents)
- Employment Rights Act 1996:  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/18/contents)
- Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2013 (Disclosure Regulations):  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/2734/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/2734/contents/made)
- Public Service Pension Schemes Act 2013:  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/25/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/25/contents)
- Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (various):  
<http://www.lgpsregs.org/timelineregs/Default.html> (pre 2014 schemes)  
<http://www.lgpsregs.org/index.php/regs-legislation> (2014 scheme)

- The Pensions Regulator's Code of Practice:  
<http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/codes/code-governance-administration-publicservice-pension-schemes.aspx>  
In particular, individuals should refer to the section on 'Reporting breaches of the law', and for information about reporting late payments of employee or employer contributions, the section of the code on 'Maintaining contributions'.

Further guidance and assistance can be provided by the Council Monitoring Officer and the Corporate Director, Resources, provided that requesting this assistance will not result in alerting those responsible for any serious offence (where the breach is in relation to such an offence).

### 3.2 ***Clarification when a breach is suspected***

Individuals need to have reasonable cause to believe that a breach has occurred, not just a suspicion. Where a breach is suspected the individual should carry out further checks to confirm the breach has occurred. Where the individual does not know the facts or events, it will usually be appropriate to check with the Council Monitoring Officer and the Corporate Director, Resources, a member of the Pensions Committee or Pension Board or others who are able to explain what has happened. However there are some instances where it would not be appropriate to make further checks, for example, if the individual has become aware of theft, suspected fraud or another serious offence and they are also aware that by making further checks there is a risk of either alerting those involved or hampering the actions of the police or a regulatory authority. In these cases The Pensions Regulator should be contacted without delay.

### 3.3 ***Determining whether the breach is likely to be of material significance***

To decide whether a breach is likely to be of material significance an individual should consider the following, both separately and collectively:

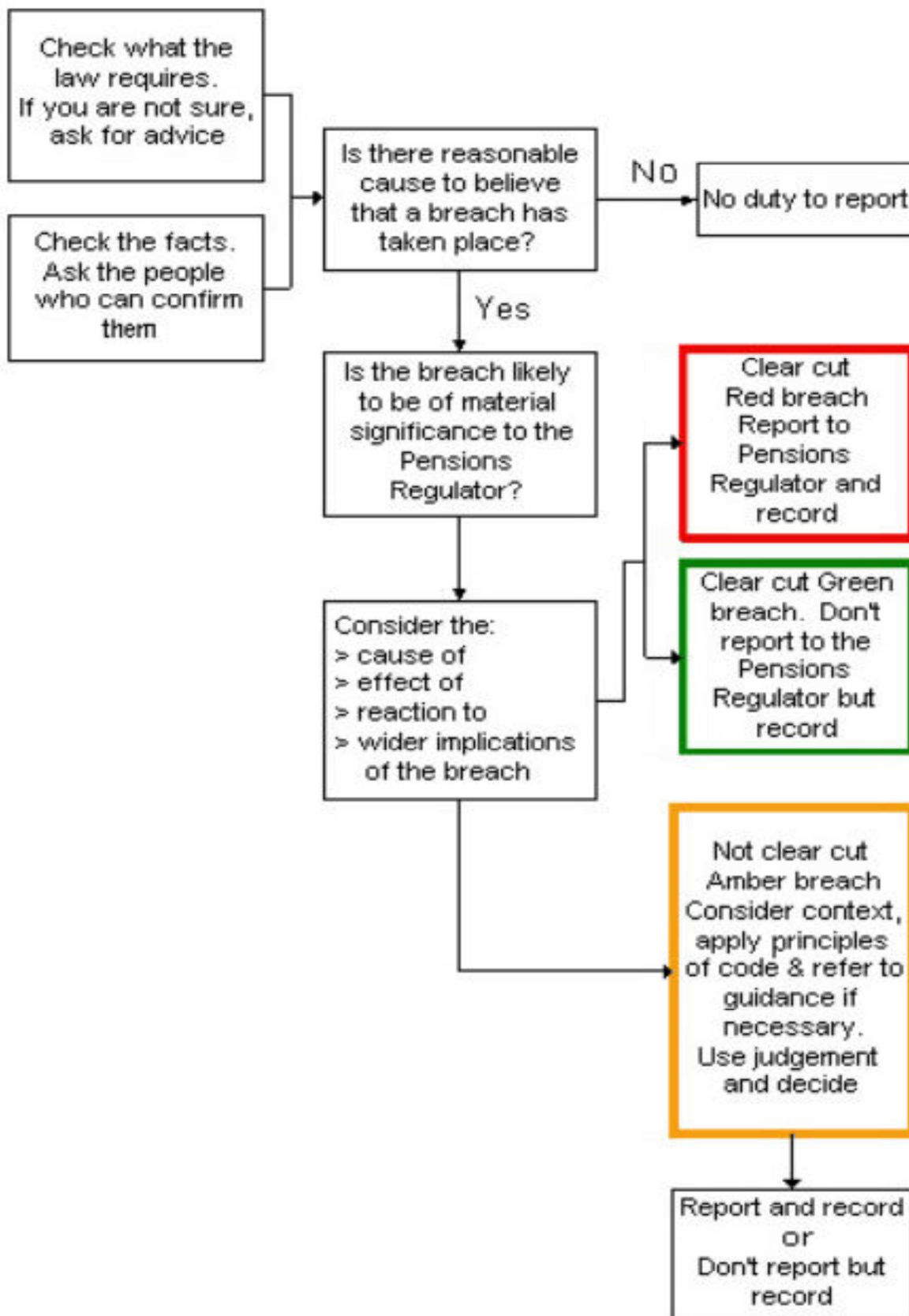
- cause of the breach (what made it happen);
- effect of the breach (the consequence(s) of the breach);
- reaction to the breach; and
- wider implications of the breach.

Further details on the above four considerations are provided in Appendix A to this procedure.

The individual should use the traffic light framework described in Appendix B to help assess the material significance of each breach and to formally support and document their decision.

- ### 3.4
- A decision tree is provided below to show the process for deciding whether or not a breach has taken place and whether it is materially significant and therefore requires to be reported.

# Decision-tree: deciding whether to report



3.5 ***Referral to a level of seniority for a decision to be made on whether to report***

Tower Hamlets Council has a designated Monitoring Officer to ensure the Council acts and operates within the law. They are considered to have appropriate experience to help investigate whether there is reasonable cause to believe a breach has occurred, to check the law and facts of the case, to maintain records of all breaches and to assist in any reporting to The Pensions Regulator, where appropriate. If breaches relate to late or incorrect payment of contributions or pension benefits, the matter should be highlighted to the Council Service Head of Finance & Procurement and the Corporate Director, Resources, at the earliest opportunity to ensure the matter is resolved as a matter of urgency. Individuals must bear in mind, however, that the involvement of the Monitoring Officer is to help clarify the potential reporter's thought process and to ensure this procedure is followed. The reporter remains responsible for the final decision as to whether a matter should be reported to The Pensions Regulator.

The matter should not be referred to any of these officers if doing so will alert any person responsible for a possible serious offence to the investigation (as highlighted in section 2). If that is the case, the individual should report the matter to The Pensions Regulator setting out the reasons for reporting, including any uncertainty – a telephone call to the Regulator before the submission may be appropriate, particularly in more serious breaches.

3.6 ***Dealing with complex cases***

The Council Service Head of Finance & Procurement and the Corporate Director, Resources, may be able to provide guidance on particularly complex cases. Information may also be available from national resources such as the Scheme Advisory Board or the LGPC Secretariat (part of the LG Group - <http://www.lgpsregs.org/>). If timescales allow, legal advice or other professional advice can be sought and the case can be discussed at the next Board meeting.

3.7. ***Timescales for reporting***

The Pensions Act and Pension Regulators Code require that if an individual decides to report a breach, the report must be made in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. Individuals should not rely on waiting for others to report and nor is it necessary for a reporter to gather all the evidence which The Pensions Regulator may require before taking action. A delay in reporting may exacerbate or increase the risk of the breach. The time taken to reach the judgements on “reasonable cause to believe” and on “material significance” should be consistent with the speed implied by ‘as soon as reasonably practicable’. In particular, the time taken should reflect the seriousness of the suspected breach.

3.8 ***Early identification of very serious breaches***

In cases of immediate risk to the scheme, for instance, where there is any indication of dishonesty, The Pensions Regulator does not expect reporters to seek an explanation or to assess the effectiveness of proposed remedies. They should only make such immediate checks as are necessary. The more

serious the potential breach and its consequences, the more urgently reporters should make these necessary checks. In cases of potential dishonesty the reporter should avoid, where possible, checks which might alert those implicated. In serious cases, reporters should use the quickest means possible to alert The Pensions Regulator to the breach.

3.9 ***Recording all breaches even if they are not reported***

The record of past breaches may be relevant in deciding whether to report a breach (for example it may reveal a systemic issue). Tower Hamlets Council will maintain a record of all breaches identified by individuals and reporters should therefore provide copies of reports to the Council Monitoring Officer and the Corporate Director, Resources. Records of unreported breaches should also be provided as soon as reasonably practicable and certainly no later than within 20 working days of the decision made not to report. These will be recorded alongside all reported breaches. The record of all breaches (reported or otherwise) will be included in the quarterly Monitoring Report at each Pension Committee, and this will also be shared with the Pension Board.

3.10 ***Reporting a breach***

Reports must be submitted in writing via The Pensions Regulator's online system at [www.tpr.gov.uk/exchange](http://www.tpr.gov.uk/exchange), or by post, email or fax, and should be marked urgent if appropriate. If necessary, a written report can be preceded by a telephone call. Reporters should ensure they receive an acknowledgement for any report they send to The Pensions Regulator. The Pensions Regulator will acknowledge receipt of all reports within five working days and may contact reporters to request further information. Reporters will not usually be informed of any actions taken by The Pensions Regulator due to restrictions on the disclosure of information.

As a minimum, individuals reporting should provide:

- full scheme name (Tower Hamlets Pension Fund);
- description of breach(es);
- any relevant dates;
- name, position and contact details;
- role in connection to the scheme; and
- employer name or name of scheme manager (the latter is Tower Hamlets Council).

If possible, reporters should also indicate:

- the reason why the breach is thought to be of material significance to The Pensions Regulator;
- scheme address (provided at the end of this procedures document);
- scheme manager contact details (provided at the end of this procedures document);
- pension scheme registry number (PSR – 00330180RT); and
- whether the breach has been reported before.

The reporter should provide further information or reports of further breaches if this may help The Pensions Regulator in the exercise of its functions. The Pensions Regulator may make contact to request further information.

### 3.11 **Confidentiality**

If requested, The Pensions Regulator will do its best to protect a reporter's identity and will not disclose information except where it is lawfully required to do so. If an individual's employer decides not to report and the individual employed by them disagrees with this and decides to report a breach themselves, they may have protection under the Employment Rights Act 1996 if they make an individual report in good faith.

### 3.12 **Reporting to Pensions Committee and Pensions Board**

A report will be presented to the Pensions Committee and the Pensions Board on a quarterly basis setting out:

- all breaches, including those reported to The Pensions Regulator and those unreported, with the associated dates;
- in relation to each breach, details of what action was taken and the result of any action (where not confidential);
- any future actions for the prevention of the breach in question being repeated; and
- highlighting new breaches which have arisen in the last year/since the previous meeting.

This information will also be provided upon request by any other individual or organisation (excluding sensitive/confidential cases or ongoing cases where discussion may influence the proceedings). An example of the information to be included in the quarterly reports is provided in Appendix C to this procedure.

### 3.13 **Review**

This Reporting Breaches Procedure was originally developed in June 2016. It will be kept under review and updated as considered appropriate by the Corporate Director, Resources. It may be changed as a result of legal or regulatory changes, evolving best practice and ongoing review of the effectiveness of the procedure.

## **Further Information**

If you require further information about reporting breaches or this procedure, please contact:

Bola Tobun - Investment & Treasury Manager  
Email: Bola.Tobun@towerhamlets.gov.uk  
Telephone: 020 7364 4733  
Tower Hamlets Pension Fund  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets, London E14 2BG



**Designated officer contact details:**

1) Service Head of Finance and Procurement – Neville Murton  
Email: [Neville.Murton@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Neville.Murton@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

2) Corporate Director, Resources – Zena Cooke  
Email: [Zena.Cooke@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Zena.Cooke@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

3) Monitoring Officer – Melanie Clay  
Email: [Melanie.Clay@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Melanie.Clay@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## Appendix A

### Determining whether a breach is likely to be of material significance

To decide whether a breach is likely to be of material significance individuals should consider the following elements, both separately and collectively:

- cause of the breach (what made it happen);
- effect of the breach (the consequence(s) of the breach);
- reaction to the breach; and
- wider implications of the breach.

### The cause of the breach

Examples of causes which are likely to be of concern to The Pensions Regulator are provided below:

- acting, or failing to act, in deliberate contravention of the law;
- dishonesty;
- incomplete or inaccurate advice;
- poor administration, i.e. failure to implement adequate administration procedures;
- poor governance; or
- slow or inappropriate decision-making practices.

When deciding whether a cause is likely to be of material significance individuals should also consider:

- whether the breach has been caused by an isolated incident such as a power outage, fire, flood or a genuine one-off mistake.
- whether there have been any other breaches (reported to The Pensions Regulator or not) which when taken together may become materially significant.

### The effect of the breach

Examples of the possible effects (with possible causes) of breaches which are considered likely to be of material significance to The Pensions Regulator in the context of the LGPS are given below:

- Committee/Board members not having enough knowledge and understanding, resulting in pension boards not fulfilling their roles, the scheme not being properly governed and administered and/or scheme managers breaching other legal requirements.
- Conflicts of interest of Committee or Board members, resulting in them being prejudiced in the way in which they carry out their role and/or the ineffective governance and administration of the scheme and/or scheme managers breaching legal requirements.
- Poor internal controls, leading to schemes not being run in accordance with their scheme regulations and other legal requirements, risks not being

properly identified and managed and/or the right money not being paid to or by the scheme at the right time.

- Inaccurate or incomplete information about benefits and scheme information provided to members, resulting in members not being able to effectively plan or make decisions about their retirement.
- Poor member records held, resulting in member benefits being calculated incorrectly and/or not being paid to the right person at the right time.
- Misappropriation of assets, resulting in scheme assets not being safeguarded.
- Other breaches which result in the scheme being poorly governed, managed or administered.

### **The reaction to the breach**

A breach is likely to be of concern and material significance to The Pensions Regulator where a breach has been identified and those involved:

- do not take prompt and effective action to remedy the breach and identify and tackle its cause in order to minimise risk of recurrence;
- are not pursuing corrective action to a proper conclusion; or
- fail to notify affected scheme members where it would have been appropriate to do so.

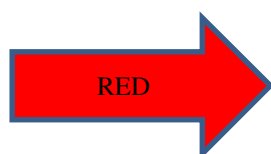
### **The wider implications of the breach**

Reporters should also consider the wider implications when deciding whether a breach must be reported. The breach is likely to be of material significance to The Pensions Regulator where the fact that a breach has occurred makes it more likely that further breaches will occur within the Fund or, if due to maladministration by a third party, further breaches will occur in other pension schemes.

## Appendix B

### Traffic light framework for deciding whether or not to report

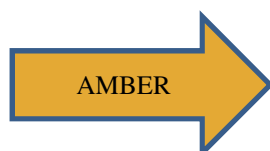
It is recommended that those responsible for reporting use the traffic light framework when deciding whether to report to The Pensions Regulator. This is illustrated below:



This where the cause, effect, reaction and wider implications of a breach, when considered together, are likely to be of material significance.

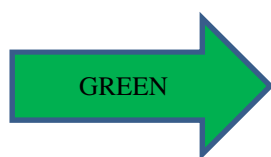
These must be reported to The Pensions Regulator.

Example: Several members' benefits have been calculated incorrectly. The errors have not been recognised and no action has been taken to identify and tackle the cause or to correct the errors.



This where the cause, effect, reaction and wider implications of a breach, when considered together, may be of material significance. They might consist of several failures of administration that, although not significant in themselves, have a cumulative significance because steps have not been taken to put things right. You will need to exercise your own judgement to determine whether the breach is likely to be of material significance and should be reported.

Example: Several members' benefits have been calculated incorrectly. The errors have been corrected, with no financial detriment to the members. However the breach was caused by a system error which may have wider implications for other public service schemes using the same system.



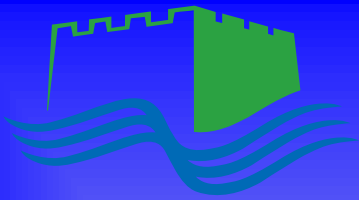
This where the cause, effect, reaction and wider implications of a breach, when considered together, are not likely to be of material significance. These should be recorded but do not need to be reported.

Example: A member's benefits have been calculated incorrectly. This was an isolated incident, which has been promptly identified and corrected, with no financial detriment to the member. Procedures have been put in place to mitigate against this happening again.

### All breaches should be recorded even if the decision is not to report.

When using the traffic light framework individuals should consider the content of the red, amber and green sections for each of the cause, effect, reaction and wider implications of the breach, before you consider the four together. Some useful examples of this is framework is provided by The Pensions Regulator at the following link:<http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/codes/code-related-report-reaches.aspx>





**TOWER HAMLETS**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**Administering Authority for  
Tower Hamlets Pension Fund**

**Appendix 8  
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY**

**June 2016**



## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

### Introduction

Conflicts of interest have always existed for those with LGPS administering authority responsibilities as well as for advisers to LGPS funds. This simply reflects the fact that many of those managing or advising LGPS funds will have a variety of other roles and responsibilities, for example as a member of the scheme, as an elected member of an employer participating in the LGPS or as an adviser to more than one LGPS administering authority. Further any of those persons may have an individual personal, business or other interest which might conflict, or be perceived to conflict, with their role managing or advising LGPS funds.

It is generally accepted that LGPS administering authorities have both fiduciary and public law duties to act in the best interest of both the scheme beneficiaries and participating employers. This, however, does not preclude those involved in the management of the fund from having other roles or responsibilities which may result in an actual or potential conflict of interest. Accordingly, it is good practice to document within a policy, such as this, how any such conflicts or potential conflicts are to be managed.

This is the Conflicts of Interest Policy of the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund, which is managed by London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The Policy details how actual and potential conflicts of interest are identified and managed by those involved in the management and governance of the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund whether directly or in an advisory capacity.

This Conflicts of Interest Policy is established to guide the Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members, officers and advisers. Along with other constitutional documents, including the various Codes of Conduct, it aims to ensure that those individuals do not act improperly or create a perception that they may have acted improperly. It is an aid to good governance, encouraging transparency and minimising the risk of any matter prejudicing decision making or management of the Fund otherwise.

**In relation to the governance of the Fund, the Administering Authority's objectives are to:**

- Act in the best interests of the Fund's members and employers
- Have robust governance arrangements in place, to facilitate informed decision making, supported by appropriate advice, policies and strategies
- Ensure the Pension Fund is managed and its services delivered by people who have the appropriate knowledge and expertise
- Act with integrity and be accountable to stakeholders for all decisions, ensuring they are robust and well based
- Understand and monitor risk
- Strive to ensure compliance with the appropriate legislation and statutory guidance, and to act in the spirit of other relevant guidelines and best practice guidance
- Clearly articulate its objectives and how it intends to achieve those objectives through business planning, and continually measure and monitor success

The identification and management of potential and actual conflicts of interest is integral to the Administering Authority achieving its governance objectives.

**To whom this Policy Applies**

This Conflicts of Interest Policy applies to all members of the Pensions Committee and the Pension Board, including scheme member and employer representatives, whether voting members or not. It applies to all managers in the management of London Borough of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund, the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), Corporate Directors, and the Service Heads (from here on in collectively referred to as the senior officers of the Fund).

The Pension Manager/Investment Manager will monitor potential conflicts for less senior officers involved in the daily management of the Pension Fund and highlight this Policy to them as he/she considers appropriate.

This Policy and the issue of conflicts of interest in general must be considered in light of each individual's role, whether this is a management, advisory or assisting role.

The Policy also applies to all advisers and suppliers to the Fund, whether advising the Pension Board, Pensions Committee or Fund officers.

In this Policy, reference to advisers includes all advisers, suppliers and other parties providing advice and services to the Administering Authority in relation to pension fund matters. This includes but is not limited to actuaries, investment consultants, independent advisers, benefits consultants, third party administrators, fund managers, lawyers, custodians and AVC providers. Where an advisory appointment is with a firm rather than an individual, reference to "advisers" is to the lead adviser(s) responsible for the delivery of advice and services to the Administering Authority rather than the firm as a whole.

In accepting any role covered by this Policy, those individuals agree that they must:

- acknowledge any potential conflict of interest they may have;
- be open with the Administering Authority on any conflicts of interest they may have;
- adopt practical solutions to managing those conflicts; and
- plan ahead and agree with the Administering Authority how they will manage any conflicts of interest which arise in future.

The procedures outlined later in this Policy provide a framework for each individual to meet these requirements.

## **Legislative and related context**

The overriding requirements in relation to the management of potential or actual conflicts of interest for those involved in LGPS funds are contained in various elements of legislation and guidance. These are considered further below.

### *The Public Service Pensions Act 2013*

Section 5 of this Act requires that the scheme manager (in the case of the LGPS, this is the administering authority) must be satisfied that a Pension Board member does not have a conflict of interest at the point of appointment and from time to time thereafter. It also requires Pension Board members (or nominated members) to provide reasonable information to the scheme manager for this purpose.

The Act defines a conflict of interest as “a financial or other interest which is likely to prejudice the person’s exercise of functions as a member of the board (but does not include a financial or other interest arising merely by virtue of membership of the scheme or any connected scheme).”

Further, the Act requires that scheme managers must have regard to any such guidance that the national scheme advisory board issue (see below).

### *The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013*

Regulation 108 of these Regulations applies the requirements of the Public Service Pensions Act (as outlined above) to the LGPS, placing a duty on each Administering Authority to satisfy itself that Pension Board members do not have conflicts of interest on appointment or whilst they are members of the board. It also requires those pension board members to provide reasonable information to the administering authority in this regard.

Regulation 109 states that each Administering Authority must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State in relation to Pension Boards. Further, regulation 110 provides that the national scheme advisory board has a function of providing advice to Administering Authorities and Pension Boards. At the point of writing this Policy, the shadow LGPS national scheme advisory board has issued guidance relating to the creation of Pension Boards including a section on conflicts of interest. It is expected that this guidance will be adopted by the scheme advisory board when it is created by statute and possibly also by the Secretary of State. This Conflicts of Interest Policy has been developed having regard to that guidance.

### *The Pensions Act 2004*

The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 also added a number of provisions to the Pensions Act 2004 related to the governance of public service pension schemes and, in particular, conflicts of interest.

Section 90A requires the Pensions Regulator to issue a code of practice relating to conflicts of interest for pension board members. The Pensions Regulator has issued such a code and this Conflicts of Interest Policy has been developed having regard to that code.

Further, under section 13, the Pensions Regulator can issue an improvement notice (i.e. a notice requiring steps to be taken to rectify a situation) where it is considered that the requirements relating to conflicts of interest for Pension Board members are not being adhered to.

### *Local Government Act 2000*

All members and co-opted members of the Tower Hamlets Pensions Committee are required by the Local Government Act 2000 to abide by Flintshire's Members' Code of Conduct. Part 3 of that Code contains provisions relating to personal interests, personal and prejudicial interests, their disclosure and limitations on members' participation where they have any such interest.

### *The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' Ten Guiding Principles*

The Local Government Act 2000 empowered the National Assembly to issue principles to which local authority elected members must have regard in undertaking their role as a member. These principles draw on the 7 Principles of Public Life which were set out in the Nolan Report "Standards of Conduct in Local Government in England, Scotland and Wales". Three more were added to these; a duty to uphold the law, proper stewardship of the Council's resources and equality and respect for others.

The current principles were set out in a statutory instrument and are detailed below. Many of the principles are integral to the successful implementation of this Policy.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT & CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

### **1. Code of conduct**

- 1.1 As members of a publicly funded body with a responsibility to discharge public business, members of the Tower Hamlets Pension Board should have the highest standards of conduct.
- 1.2 Pension Board members should have regard to the Seven Principles of Public life:
  - Selflessness
  - Integrity
  - Objectivity
  - Accountability
  - Openness
  - Honesty
  - Leadership
- 1.3 All Tower Hamlets Pension Board members must:
  - Act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.
  - Not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
  - Make all choices on merit and must be impartial and seen to be impartial, when carrying out your public duties.
  - Co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your role.
  - Not, without proper authority, reveal any confidential and sensitive information that is provided to you, such as personal information about someone, or commercially sensitive information which, if disclosed, might harm the commercial interests of the Council or another person or organisation.
  - Ensure when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the authority that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

- Promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example.
- Sign the Conflict of Interest Declaration and declare any further potential conflicts of interest that may arise once appointed as a member.
- Comply with the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Code in addition to all other existing Codes of Conduct or Protocols (e.g. The Member Code of Conduct).

## 2. **Conflict of interest**

- 2.1 The Public Service Pensions Act 2013, Section 5(4) requires that any member of a Pension Board must not have a “conflict of interest”, which is defined in Section 5(5) as a “financial or other interest which is likely to prejudice the person’s exercise of functions as a member of the board, but does not include a financial or other interest arising merely by virtue of membership of the scheme or any connected scheme.”
- 2.2 A conflict of interest exists where a decision on a matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting (to a greater extent than other persons who may be affected by the decision) the well-being or financial position of the Councillor, a relative or a friend or
- the employment or business carried out by those persons, or in which they might be investors (above a certain level)
  - any of the bodies with which the decision maker is associated, and which decision maker will have registered in the appropriate register of interests.

It does not need to be shown that a conflict of interest actually exists. It is sufficient if it appears to a fair and informed observer that there was a real possibility of conflict.

..

- 2.3 Examples of potential conflicts of interest, not only for the Board but also for all those involved in managing the Pension Fund, are listed at appendix 1.
- 2.4 All prospective Pension Board members are required to complete the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Conflict of interest declaration before they are appointed to the Pension Board, attached at appendix 2.
- 2.5 All appointments to the Pension Board should be kept under review by the Corporate Director, Resources.
- 2.5 It is the duty of any appointed Pension Board member to declare any potential conflict of interest. This declaration should be made to the Chair of the Pension Board in the first instance or to the Scheme Manager, and recorded in a register of interests.
- 2.7 The Pension Board shall identify and monitor any potential conflict of interests in a register of interests (attached at appendix 3). The register of interests should be circulated to the Tower Hamlets Pension Board and Scheme Manager for review and publication.
- 2.8 If the Pension Board suspects any conflict of interest it should report its concerns to the Scheme Manager.



- 2.9 When seeking to prevent a potential conflict of interest becoming detrimental to the conduct and decisions of the Pension Board, the Tower Hamlets Pension Board must consider obtaining legal advice when assessing its course of action and response. The Tower Hamlets Pension Board should consult the Monitoring Officer or the Service Head, Legal Services in the first instance.
- 2.10 Education on identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest will be included as part of the training requirement in the Knowledge and Understanding policy.
3. **Operational procedure for officers, Pensions Committee members and Pension Board members**
- 3.1 The following procedures must be followed by all individuals to whom this policy applies.

<b>What is required</b>	<b>How this will be done</b>
<i>Step 1 - Initial identification of interests which do or could give rise to a conflict</i>	<p>On appointment to their role or on the commencement of this Policy if later, all individuals will be provided with a copy of this Policy and be required to complete a Declaration of Interest the same or similar to that included in Appendix 2. This is in addition to the requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests and other registerable interests.</p> <p>The information contained in these declarations will be collated into the Pension Fund Register of conflicts of interest in a format the same or similar to that included in Appendix 3.</p>
<i>Step 2 - Ongoing notification and management of potential or actual conflicts of interest</i>	<p>At the commencement of any Pensions Committee, Pension Board or other formal meeting where pension fund matters are to be discussed, the Chairman will ask all those present who are covered by this Policy to declare any new potential conflicts. These will be recorded in the Fund's Register of conflicts of interest. In addition, the latest version of the Register will be made available by the Governance Officer to the Chairman of every meeting prior to that meeting.</p> <p>At Tower Hamlets Pensions Committee meetings there will also, at the start of the meeting, be an agenda item for Members to declare any interests under the Members' Code in relation to any items on that agenda.</p> <p>Any individual, who considers that they or another individual has a potential or actual conflict of interest, as defined by this Policy, which relates to an item of business at a meeting, must advise the Chairman and the Governance Officer prior to the meeting, where possible, or state this clearly at the meeting at the earliest possible opportunity. The Chairman, in consultation with the Officers, should then decide whether the conflicted or potentially conflicted individual needs to leave the meeting during the discussion on the relevant matter or to withdraw from voting on the matter.</p> <p>If such a conflict is identified outside of a meeting the notification must be made to the Governance Officer and where it relates to the business of any meeting, also to the Chairman of that meeting. The Officers, in consultation with the Chairman where relevant, will consider any necessary action to manage the potential or actual conflict.</p> <p>Where information relating to any potential or actual conflict has been provided, the Pensions Manager/Investment &amp; Treasury Manager may seek such professional advice as he or she thinks fit (such as legal advice from the Monitoring Officer) on to how to address any identified conflicts.</p> <p>Any such potential or actual conflicts of interest and the action taken must be recorded on the Fund's Register of conflicts of interest.</p>
<i>Step 3 - Periodic review of potential and actual conflicts</i>	<p>At least once every 12 months, the Officers will provide to all individuals to whom this Policy applies a copy of the Fund's Register of conflicts of interest. All individuals will complete a new Declaration of Interest (see Appendix 2) confirming that their information contained in the Register is correct or highlighting any changes that need to be made to the declaration. Following this exercise, the updated Register will then be circulated by the Officers to all individuals to whom it relates.</p>

#### 4. Operational procedure for advisers

- 4.1 All of the key advisers are expected to have their own policies on how conflicts of interest will be managed in their relationships with their clients, and these should have been shared with London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 4.2 Although this Policy applies to all advisers, the operational procedures outlined in steps 1 and 3 above relating to completing ongoing declarations are not expected to apply to advisers. Instead all advisers must:
- be provided with a copy of this Policy on appointment and whenever it is updated
  - adhere to the principles of this Policy
  - provide, on request, information to the Pensions Manager/Investment & Treasury Manager in relation to how they will manage and monitor actual or potential conflicts of interests relating to the provision of advice or services to London Borough of Tower Hamlets
  - notify the Pensions Manager/Investment & Treasury Manager immediately should a potential or actual conflict of interest arise.
- 4.3 All potential or actual conflicts notified by advisers will be recorded in the Fund's Register of conflicts of interest.
- 4.4 London Borough of Tower Hamlets will encourage a culture of openness and transparency and will encourage individuals to be vigilant, have a clear understanding of their role and the circumstances in which they may have a conflict of interest, and of how potential conflicts should be managed.
- 4.5 London Borough of Tower Hamlets will evaluate the nature of any dual interests or responsibilities that are highlighted and assess the impact on pension fund operations and good governance were an actual conflict of interest to materialise.
- 4.6 Ways in which conflicts of interest may be managed include:
- the individual concerned abstaining from discussion, decision-making or providing advice relating to the relevant issue
  - the individual being excluded from the meeting(s) and any related correspondence or material in connection with the relevant issue (for example, a report for a Pensions Committee meeting)
  - a working group or sub-committee being established, excluding the individual concerned, to consider the matter outside of the formal meeting (where the terms of reference permit this to happen)

4.7 Provided that the Administering Authority, (having taken any professional advice deemed to be required) is satisfied that the method of management is satisfactory, London Borough of Tower Hamlets shall endeavour to avoid the need for an individual to have to resign due to a conflict of interest. However, where the conflict is considered to be so fundamental that it cannot be effectively managed, or where a Pension Board member has an actual conflict of interest as defined in the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the individual will be required to resign from the Committee, Board or appointment.

4.8 *Minor Gifts*

For the purposes of this Policy, gifts such as t-shirts, pens, trade show bags and other promotional items (subject to a notional maximum value of £10 per item and an overall maximum value of £20 from an individual company per event) obtained at events such as conferences, training events, seminars, and trade shows, that are offered equally to all members of the public attending the event do not need to be declared. Pensions Committee members should, however, be aware that they may be subject to lower limits and a separate notification procedure in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Members' Code of Conduct.

**5. Monitoring and Reporting**

5.1 The Fund's Register of conflicts of interest may be viewed by any interested party at any point in time. It will be made available on request by the Governance Officer for the Fund. In addition, it will be published in the annual report and accounts

5.2 In order to identify whether the objectives of this Policy are being met the Administering Authority will:

- Review the Register of conflicts of interest on an annual basis and consider whether there have been any potential or actual conflicts of interest that were not declared at the earliest opportunity
- Provide its findings to the Administering Authority's Independent Adviser and ask him or her to include comment on the management of conflicts of interest in his or her annual report on the governance of the Fund each year.

**6. Key Risks**

6.1 The key risks to the delivery of this Policy are outlined below. All of these could result in an actual conflict of interest arising and not being properly managed. The Pensions Manager/Investment & Treasury Manager will monitor these and other key risks and consider how to respond to them.

- Insufficient training or poor understanding in relation to individuals' roles on pension fund matters
- Insufficient training or failure to communicate the requirements of this Policy
- Absence of the individual nominated to manage the operational aspects of this Policy and no one deputising, or failure of that individual to carry out the operational aspects in accordance with this Policy
- Failure by a chairperson to take appropriate action when a conflict is highlighted at a meeting.

## **7. Costs**

- 7.1 All costs related to the operation and implementation of this Policy will be met directly by Tower Hamlets Pension Fund. However, no payments will be made to any individuals in relation to any time spent or expenses incurred in the disclosure or management of any potential or actual conflicts of interest under this Policy.

## **8. Approval, Review and Consultation**

- 8.1 This Conflicts of Interest Policy is to be approved using delegated responsibilities on 30 June 2016. It will be formally reviewed and updated at least every three years or sooner if the conflict management arrangements or other matters included within it merit reconsideration, including if there are any changes to the LGPS or other relevant Regulations or Guidance which need to be taken into account.

## **Further Information**

If you require further information about anything in or related to this Conflicts of Interest Policy, please contact:

Bola Tobun,  
Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Manager,  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
E-mail - [Bola.Tobun@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Bola.Tobun@towerhamlets.gov.uk)  
Telephone – 020 7364 4733

## Examples of Potential Conflicts of Interest

- a) An elected member on the Pension Committee is asked to provide views on a funding strategy which could result in an increase in the employer contributions required from the employer he or she represents.
- b) A member of the Pension Committee is on the board of a Fund Manager that the Committee is considering appointing.
- c) An officer of the Fund or member of the Pension Committee accepts a dinner invitation from a Fund Manager who has submitted a bid as part of a tender process.
- d) An employer representative on the Pension Board is employed by a company to which the administering authority has outsourced its pension administration services and the Local Pension Board is reviewing the standards of service provided by that company.
- e) The person appointed to consider internal disputes is asked to review a case relating to a close friend or relative.
- f) An officer of the Fund is asked to provide guidance to the Local Pension Board on the background to an item considered at the Pension Committee. This could be a potential conflict as the officer could consciously or sub-consciously avoid providing full details, resulting in the Board not having full information and not being able to provide a complete view on the appropriateness or otherwise of that Pension Committee item.
- g) The administering authority is considering buying its own payroll system for paying pensioners, rather than using the payroll system used for all employees of the Council. The Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection, who has responsibility for the Council budget, is expected to approve the report to go to the Pension Committee, which, if agreed, would result in a material reduction in the recharges to the Council from the Fund.
- h) Officers of the Fund are asked to provide a report to the Pension Board or Pension Committee on whether the administration services should be outsourced which, if it were to happen, could result in a change of employer or job insecurity for the officers.
- i) An employer representative employed by the administering authority and appointed to the Pension Board to represent employers generally could be conflicted if he or she only acts in the interests of the administering authority, rather than those of all participating employers. Equally, a member representative, who is also a trade union representative, appointed to the pension board to represent the entire scheme membership could be conflicted if he or she only acts in the interests of their union and union membership, rather than all scheme members.
- j) A Fund adviser is party to the development of a strategy which could result in additional work for their firm, for example, delegated consulting of fund monies or providing assistance with monitoring the covenant of employers.
- k) An employer representative has access to information by virtue of his or her employment, which could influence or inform the considerations or decisions of the Pension Committee or Local Pension Board. He or she has to consider whether to share this information in light of their duty of confidentiality to their employer. Their knowledge of this information will put them in a position of conflict if it is likely to prejudice their ability to carry out their functions as a member of the Pension Board.

## Declaration of Interests relating to the management of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund administered by London Borough of Tower Hamlets

*Tick as appropriate*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [insert full name], am:

- an officer involved in the management
- Pensions Committee Member
- Pension Board Member

of Tower Hamlets Pension Fund and I set out below under the appropriate headings my interests, which I am required to declare under Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Conflicts of Interest Policy. I have put "none" where I have no such interests under any heading.

**Responsibilities or other interests that could result in a conflict of interest** (please list and continue overleaf if necessary):

*A) Relating to me*

*B) Relating to family members or close colleagues*

### Undertaking:

I declare that I understand my responsibilities under the Tower Hamlets Pension Fund Conflicts of Interest Policy. I undertake to notify the Pensions Manager/Investment & Treasury Manager of any changes in the information set out above.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name (CAPITAL LETTERS) \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix 3**

**Tower Hamlets Pension Fund - Register of Potential and Actual Conflicts of Interest**

All reported conflicts of interest will be recorded in the minutes and a register of conflicts will be maintained and reviewed annually by London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the Administering Authority.

<b>Date Identified</b>	<b>Name of Person</b>	<b>Role of Person</b>	<b>Details of conflict</b>	<b>Actual or potential conflict</b>	<b>How notified(1)</b>	<b>Action taken(2)</b>	<b>Follow up required</b>	<b>Date resolved</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> E.g. verbal declaration at meeting, written conflicts declaration, etc.

<sup>(2)</sup> E.g. withdrawing from a decision making process, left meeting



**TOWER HAMLETS**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**Administering Authority for  
Tower Hamlets Pension Fund**

**PENSIONS BOARD  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015/16**

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PENSIONS BOARD 2015-16

### Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the work undertaken by the Local Pensions Board during 2015-2016 and to meet the legislative requirement to produce an annual report.

### Constitution, Representation Meetings and Attendance

The Board was constituted under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and held its first meeting on the 28 July 2015 before the recommended Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) deadline of 31 July 2015.

The board consists of three representatives of the scheme employers, three representing of the scheme members and an Independent Chair.

### Membership

#### Tower Hamlets Pension Board Membership 2015 /16

Member Representatives	Designation	Employer Representatives	Designation
David Thompson	Pensioners Representative	Cllr. David Chesterton	Elected Member
John Gray	Admitted Bodies Representative	Minesh Jani	Administering Authority
Stephen Stratton	Active Members Representative	Andrew Crompton	Admitted Bodies

#### The Independent Chair for the board – John Jones (started March 2016)

The Corporate Director, Resources wishes to thank the Board members for their work over the last year.

The Board met on four occasions during the year ending 31 March 2016.

- 1) 28 July 2015
- 2) 01 October 2015
- 3) 20 November 2015
- 4) 07 March 2016

### Functions and Operation of the Board

The two primary functions of a Local Pension Board are to assist the Administering Authority to:

- Ensure effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS
- Ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulation

It therefore has a monitor/assist /review purpose, rather than being a decision making body. It could be seen as being a critical friend. As such, the general approach of the Board is to seek assurances with evidence from the Fund that it is meeting its objectives set out above.

The Board is not a Committee of the Council, but is established under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. The Board operates under Terms of Reference which were approved at inception.

The establishment and initial meetings of the Board coincided with the period of greatest pressure on officers in the recent history of the LGPS, with the Administering Authority having to respond to the DCLG by 19 February 2016 on the critical consultation documents on both the proposed pooling of LGPS investments, and also on revised Investment and Management of Funds Regulations. These developments placed a relatively higher level of workload on the Fund during the first year of the board's existence.

The Board recognises the need to prioritise and differentiates in its agenda between items for detailed discussion, and those for awareness or noting, and prioritises its time budget accordingly.

**Costs**

There is a financial budget for the Board of £12.5k. The cost incurred in the creation and implementation of the Board has been minimal, having been incorporated within existing officer workloads. No independent external reviews were commissioned over the course of the year. There was some spend incurred on external training which was contained within the total training budget of £6k.

The costs of running the Board are borne by the Pension Fund as part of its overall budget. The costs have in fact minimal as forming and running the board have been incorporated within existing workloads.

The Board has not commissioned any external consultants for work, however there has been some expenditure on training as follows:

- LGPS Induction Session (Roles & Responsibilities) – Internal
- Half day external training by AXA on Investments, LGPS and the role and purpose of the Board
- Half day triennial valuation – internal training and update provided by the Fund's Actuary.
- Full one day training on custody and performance monitoring by State street
- Full one day external training by Aon on LGPS, valuation and Investments

**Detailed Work of the Board:****Scheme documents**

Board members were provided with the range of scheme policies which were incorporated in the schemes Annual Report. The Board expects to take forward a detailed review of these policies going forward.

**Pensions Committee**

The Pensions board has also focused heavily on the attendance of meeting and training of the committee and this has been of great concern to them, therefore there has been monitoring of attendance at their quarterly meetings.

There is an alignment of the Committee and Board agenda's in order to demonstrate the board active oversight of what the Committee is to consider and what the Committee then determined is in operation. The board care so much and spent a lot of time discussing the their input and also trying to determine what contribution a Pension Board should make so that they complement and not duplicate the Committee.

Pensions Board key/action points from their meeting is a standing item on the committee's agenda.

**Risk management and register**

The board also recognised that there are benefits in reviewing the risk register that is exclusive to the Fund. This is a project in development as officers are preparing risk management policies and parameters for the fund.

**Pensions Regulator**

Whilst it is generally felt that the LGPS is comparatively well governed, nevertheless the Pensions Regulator is examining the Scheme on an ongoing basis and has, for example, highlighted delays by administering authorities in producing Annual Benefit Statements. A TPR compliance checklist has been developed and this will be review by the board semi-annually.

**Reporting and Recording Breaches**

The Board and its members, as with other players, all have a responsibility to report breaches of law to the Pensions Regulator. A procedure manual and a policy document on reporting and recording breaches have been developed with a quarterly update template.

**Scheme Advisory Board (SAB)**

The SAB is responsible for providing advice to the responsible authority i.e. the (secretary of state), at the authority's request, on the desirability of changes to the scheme.

The SAB has a two way role: giving advice both upwards to the DCLG and down to individual funds. There is expected to be a two way flow of information between the SAB and individual Funds and it is the aim of the Tower Hamlets Pension Board to be seen as an example of good practice.

The SAB examined the establishment of Local Pension Boards and Tower Hamlets Pension Fund complied with the requirements and timescales.

**Training**

Each Board member has to be conversant with the details of the Scheme, which translates as having a good working knowledge. The fund has offered a number of training opportunities for Board members where possible. External training was provided for Board members in collaboration with other funds on the role and purpose of the Board, Actuarial valuation. Assessment of training needs, and how they are met, will be a standing item on the board's agenda going forward. Both formal and informal (cascade) training will be considered.

All members are encouraged to complete self-study and information on the pension regulator's tool-kit has been provided to Board members.

**Work plan**

The agenda for the first three meetings emerged naturally as the Board scanned the statutory documents, reports to the Pensions Panel, and reports, reviews and compliance requirements of both the Scheme Advisory Board and the Pensions Regulator.

In considering the work of the Board going forward to ensure the continued good governance of the scheme, the following key areas have been highlighted and members will prioritise reviews based on information collected from quarterly compliance updates.

- Triennial Valuation March 2016
- Meeting legislative requirement on pooling
- Improving data quality
- Ensuring strength in employer covenants
- Admission and Termination of other employers to the scheme
- Accounts
- Administration
- Audit and Risk Management
- Governance
- Training

There will be a degree of flexibility to allow for any additional reviews by either the Scheme Advisory Board or the Pensions Regulator.

Attached to this report are:

Appendix 1 is the Pensions Board Members Attendance for 2015/16 and Appendix 2 is the Pensions Committee Members Attendance for 2015/16.

**Appendix 1****Pension Board Members Attendance 2015/16**

	28th July		1st Oct	14th Sept	20th Nov	10th Dec	7th March	18th March
	Meeting	Training	Meeting	Training	Meeting	Training	Meeting	Training
John Jones (Chair)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	N/A
David Thompson (Vice Chair)	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
Councillor Dave Chesterton	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Minesh Jani	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Andrew Compton	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Steven Stratton	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P	A	P
John Gray	P	P	N/A	N/A	A	A	A	P
P=Present								
A=Absent								
N/A - Attendance not required								

**Appendix 2****Pension Committee Members Attendance 2015/16**

	23rd July		17th September		25th November		9th March	
	Meeting	Training	Meeting	Training	Meeting	Training	Meeting	Training
Councillor Andrew Cregan (Chair)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Councillor Clare Harrison (Vice Chair)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	A
Councillor Harun Miah	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A
Councillor Candida Ronald	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	P
Co-Opted Members								
John Gray	A	A	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kehinde Akintunde	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P	P	P
Tony Childs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	A	A	A	A
P=Present								
A=Absent								
N/A - Attendance not required								
<b>Training</b>								
LGPS Governance								
Roles & Responsibilities								
Fixed Income								
Liability Driven Awareness								
Performance Monitoring								
TPR code of Practice								

