

FUNDING STRATEGY STATEMENT

SHROPSHIRE COUNTY PENSION FUND

June 2021

This Funding Strategy Statement has been prepared by Shropshire Council (the Administering Authority) to set out the funding strategy for the Shropshire County Pension Fund (the "Fund"), in accordance with Regulation 58 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended) and guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ensuring that the Shropshire County Pension Fund (the “Fund”) has sufficient assets to meet its pension liabilities in the long term is the fiduciary responsibility of the Administering Authority (Shropshire Council). The Funding Strategy adopted by the Shropshire County Pension Fund will therefore be critical in achieving this.

The purpose of this Funding Strategy Statement (“FSS”) is to set out a clear and transparent funding strategy that will identify how each Fund employer’s pension liabilities are to be met going forward.

The details contained in this Funding Strategy Statement will have a financial and operational impact on all participating employers in the Shropshire County Pension Fund.

It is imperative therefore that each existing or potential employer is aware of the details contained in this statement.

Given this, and in accordance with governing legislation, all interested parties connected with the Shropshire County Pension Fund have been consulted and given opportunity to comment prior to this Funding Strategy Statement being finalised and adopted. This statement takes into consideration all comments and feedback received.



THE FUND’S OBJECTIVE

The Administering Authority’s long-term objective is for the Fund to achieve a 100% solvency level over a reasonable time period and then maintain sufficient assets in order for it to pay all benefits arising as they fall due. This objective will be considered on an employer specific level where appropriate.

The general principle adopted by the Fund is that the assumptions used, taken as a whole, will be chosen sufficiently prudently for pensions already in payment to continue to be paid, and to reflect the commitments that will arise from members’ accrued pension rights.

The funding strategy set out in this document has been developed alongside the Fund’s investment strategy on an integrated basis taking into account the overall financial and demographic risks inherent in the Fund. The funding strategy includes appropriate margins to allow for the possibility of events turning out worse than expected. Individual employer results will also have regard to their covenant strength and the investment strategy applied to the asset shares of those employers.



SOLVENCY AND LONG TERM COST EFFICIENCY

Each employer’s contributions are set at such a level to achieve full solvency in a reasonable timeframe. Solvency is defined as a level where the Fund’s liabilities i.e. benefit payments can be reasonably met as they arise.

Employer contributions are also set in order to achieve long term cost efficiency. Long term cost-efficiency implies that contributions must not be set at a level that is likely to give rise to additional costs in the future. For example, deferring costs to the future would be likely to result in those costs

being greater overall than if they were provided for at the appropriate time. Equally, the FSS must have regard to the desirability of maintaining as nearly constant a primary rate of contribution as possible.

When formulating the funding strategy, the Administering Authority has taken into account these key objectives and also considered the implications of the requirements under Section 13(4)(c) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. As part of these requirements the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) must, following an actuarial valuation, report on whether the rate of employer contributions to the Fund is set at an appropriate level to ensure the "solvency" of the pension fund and "long term cost efficiency" of the Local Government Pension Scheme (the "LGPS") so far as relating to the Fund.

RECOVERY PLAN AND CONTRIBUTIONS



As the solvency level of the Fund is 94% at the valuation date i.e. the assets of the Fund are less than the liabilities, a recovery plan needs to be implemented such that additional contributions are paid into the Fund to meet the shortfall. (In a similar manner, where an individual employer is in surplus it may in certain circumstances be appropriate to reduce the overall contributions payable to reflect this, by way of a "surplus offset".)

Deficit contributions paid to the Fund by each employer will be expressed as £s amounts (flat or increasing year on year) and it is the Fund's objective that any funding deficit is eliminated as quickly as the participating employers can reasonably afford given other competing cost pressures (surplus offset contributions, in cases where there is a funding surplus, will normally be expressed as a percentage of pensionable payroll). This may result in some flexibility in recovery periods by employer which would be at the sole discretion of the Administering Authority. The recovery periods will be set by the Fund, although employers will be free to select any shorter deficit recovery period if they wish. Employers may, in certain circumstances at the discretion of the Administering Authority, also elect to make prepayments of contributions which could result in a cash saving over the valuation certificate period.

The target recovery period for the Fund as a whole is 13 years at this valuation which is 3 years shorter than the target recovery period from the previous valuation. Subject to affordability and other considerations individual employer recovery periods would also be expected to reduce by 3 years at this valuation.

Where there is an increase in contributions required at this valuation the employer may, at the Administering Authority's discretion, be permitted to step-up their total contributions over a period of 3 years.



MC CLOUD

The Government has confirmed that a remedy is required for the LGPS in relation to the McCloud judgment. Therefore, the Fund has considered its policy in relation to costs that could emerge from the McCloud judgment in line with the guidance from the Scheme Advisory Board in conjunction with the Actuary. Whilst the remedy is not known and may not be known for some time, for the purpose of this valuation, when considering the appropriate contribution provision, we have assumed that the judgment would have the effect of removing the current age criteria applied to the underpin implemented in 2014 for the LGPS. This underpin therefore would apply to all active members as at 1 April 2012. The relevant estimated costs have been quantified and notified to employers on this basis but also highlighting that the final costs may be different. Employers will be

able to choose to include these estimated costs over 2020/23 in their certified contributions. Alternatively, they will need to make allowance within their budgets and note that additional contributions could be payable if the remedy is known before the next valuation.



ACTUARIAL ASSUMPTIONS

The actuarial assumptions used for assessing the funding position of the Fund and the individual employers, the “Primary” contribution rate, and any contribution variations due to underlying surpluses or deficits (i.e. the “Secondary” rate) are set out in an Appendix to this FSS.

The discount rate in excess of CPI inflation (the “real discount rate”) has been derived based on the expected return on the Fund’s assets allowing for the long term strategy set out in its Investment Strategy Statement (ISS). When assessing the appropriate prudent discount rate, consideration has been given to the level of expected asset returns in excess of CPI inflation (i.e. the rate at which the benefits in the LGPS generally increase each year). It is proposed at this valuation the real return over CPI inflation for determining the past service liabilities is 1.85% per annum and for determining the future service (“Primary”) contribution rates is 2.25% per annum.

Where warranted by an employer’s circumstances, the Administering Authority retains the discretion to apply a discount rate based on a lower risk investment strategy for that employer to protect the Fund as a whole. Such cases will be determined by the Section 151 Officer and reported to the Committee.

The demographic assumptions are based on the Fund Actuary’s bespoke analysis for the Fund, also taking into account the experience of the wider LGPS where relevant.



EMPLOYER ASSET SHARES

The Fund is a multi-employer pension Fund that is not formally unitised and so individual employer asset shares are calculated at each actuarial valuation. This means it is necessary to make some approximations in the timing of cashflows and allocation of investment returns when deriving each employer’s asset share.

At each review, cashflows into and out of the Fund relating to each employer, any movement of members between employers within the Fund, along with investment return earned on the asset share, are allowed for when calculating asset shares at each valuation.

Other adjustments are also made on account of the funding positions of orphan bodies which fall to be met by all other active employers in the Fund.



FUND POLICIES

In addition to the information/approaches required by overarching guidance and Regulation, this statement also summarises the Fund’s practice and policies in a number of key areas. The Fund’s Employer Events Framework Policy Document lays out the relevant policies in greater detail, including how the Fund will exercise its discretion as required, and the relevant sections of that policy document will be deemed to be part of this FSS:

1. Covenant assessment and monitoring

An employer's financial covenant underpins its legal obligation and crucially the ability to meet its financial responsibilities to the Fund now and in the future. The strength of covenant to the Fund effectively underwrites the risks to which the Fund is exposed. These risks include underfunding, longevity, investment and market forces.

The strength of employer covenant can be subject to substantial variation over relatively short periods of time and, as such, regular monitoring and assessment is vital to the overall risk management and governance of the Fund. The employers' covenants will be assessed and monitored objectively in a proportionate manner, and an employer's ability to meet their obligations in the short and long term will be considered when determining its funding strategy.

After the valuation, the Fund will continue to monitor employers' covenants in conjunction with their funding positions over the inter-valuation period. This will enable the Fund to anticipate and pre-empt any material issues arising and thus adopt a proactive approach in partnership with the employer.

2. Admitting employers to the Fund

Various types of employers are permitted to join the LGPS under certain circumstances, and the conditions upon which their entry to the Fund is based and the approach taken is determined by the Fund's admission policy. Examples of new employers include:

- Mandatory Scheme Employers - for example new academies (see later section)
- Designated bodies - those that are permitted to join if they pass a resolution for example Town and Parish Councils.
- Admission bodies - usually arising as a result of an outsourcing or a transfer to an entity that provides some form of public service and their funding primarily derives from local or central government.

The key objective for the Fund is to only admit employers where the risk to the Fund is mitigated as far as possible. The different employers pose different risks to the Fund.

Certain employers may be required to provide a guarantee or alternative security before entry will be allowed, in accordance with the Regulations and Fund policies.

3. Inter-valuation contribution reviews

The Regulations allow contributions to be reviewed and potentially revised between valuations at the Administering Authority's discretion, under the following scenarios:

- There has been a significant change in the employer's membership which will have a material impact on their liabilities
- There has been a significant change in the employer's covenant
- The Administering Authority is of the opinion that a change in circumstances means the employer is likely to exit the Fund

Where the Fund becomes aware that any of the above circumstances apply, they may review and amend the employer's contributions between actuarial valuations, in line with the process detailed in the Employer Events Policy. An employer may also be able to trigger a review where they feel any of the above apply.

4. Termination policy for employers exiting the Fund

When an employer ceases to participate within the Fund, it becomes an exiting employer under the Regulations. The Fund is then required to obtain an actuarial valuation of that employer's liabilities in respect of the benefits of the exiting employer's current and former employees, along with a termination contribution certificate.

The process applying on termination will depend on whether the exiting employer has a guarantor within the Fund, and if they do whether the employer or guarantor is ultimately responsible for the final position:

Termination with no guarantor

Where there is no guarantor who could subsume the liabilities of the exiting employer, the Fund's policy is to use more prudent assumptions to assess the termination position, to protect the remaining Fund employers.

Any deficit will be recovered from the exiting employer via the payment of a termination deficit. In the case of a surplus, the Fund will pay the exit credit to the exiting employer.

Termination with a guarantor

Where there is a guarantor who will subsume the liabilities, the termination position is assessed using an "ongoing" valuation basis, so consistent with the funding target assumptions.

Where there is no "risk sharing" (meaning the exiting employer is responsible for their final position in the Fund), any deficit will be recovered from the exiting employer if possible (and the guarantor otherwise) via the payment of a termination deficit. In the case of a surplus, the Fund will pay the exit credit to the exiting employer once the risk sharing position has been determined.

Otherwise, any deficit or surplus would be subsumed by the guarantor and taken into account at the following valuation.

Where the exiting employer and guarantor disagree on whether there is any "risk sharing", the Fund will assume that an exit credit is payable to the exiting employer. The guarantor will then have 1 month to dispute this, at which point the payment will be put on hold, and the two parties will be expected resolve the dispute between themselves. The Fund will not become involved in any dispute between the two parties until all other avenues have been explored. Further detail is set out in Section 5 of this FSS and in the Employer Events Framework.

Managing the exit payment / credit, and alternatives to termination

Under certain circumstances options other than immediate termination and settlement of any surplus/deficit are possible at the discretion of the Administering Authority, including:

- Issuing a suspension notice
- Spreading any termination payment
- Entering into a Deferred Debt Agreement

The Fund's Employer Events Framework Policy Document contains further details on the termination process and options available. The Administering Authority also reserves the right to modify the termination approach on a case by case basis if circumstances warrant it based on the advice of the Actuary.

5. Insurance arrangements

The Fund may consider whether ill health retirement costs can be insured either through a third party insurer or by setting up an internal captive insurance arrangement which pools these risks for eligible employers. If such an arrangement is implemented the relevant employer contribution rates will be adjusted accordingly.

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1

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended) (“the 2013 Regulations”) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 (“the 2014 Transitional Regulations”) (collectively; “the Regulations”) provide the statutory framework from which the Administering Authority is required to prepare a Funding Strategy Statement (FSS). The key requirements for preparing the FSS can be summarised as follows:

- After consultation with all relevant interested parties involved with the Shropshire County Pension Fund (the “Fund”), the Administering Authority will prepare and publish their funding strategy;
- In preparing the FSS, the Administering Authority must have regard to:
 - the guidance issued by CIPFA for this purpose; and
 - the Investment Strategy Statement (ISS) for the Fund published under Regulation 12 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016 (as amended);
- The FSS must be revised and published whenever there is a material change in either the policy set out in the FSS or the ISS.

BENEFITS

The benefits provided by the Fund are specified in the governing legislation contained in the Regulations referred to above. Benefits payable under the Fund are guaranteed by statute and thereby the pensions promise is secure for members. The FSS addresses the issue of managing the need to fund those benefits over the long term, whilst at the same time facilitating scrutiny and accountability through improved transparency and disclosure.

The Fund is a defined benefit arrangement with principally final salary related benefits from contributing members up to 1 April 2014 and Career Average Revalued Earnings (“CARE”) benefits earned thereafter. There is also a “50:50 Scheme Option”, where members can elect to accrue 50% of the full Fund benefits in relation to the member only and pay 50% of the normal member contribution.

EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS

The required levels of employee contributions are specified in the Regulations. Employer contributions are determined in accordance with the Regulations (which require that an actuarial valuation is completed every three years by the actuary, including a rates and adjustments certificate specifying the “primary” and “secondary” rate of the employer’s contribution).

PRIMARY RATE

The “Primary rate” for an employer is the contribution rate required to meet the cost of the future accrual of benefits, ignoring any past service surplus or deficit, but allowing for any employer-specific circumstances, such as its membership profile, the funding strategy adopted for that employer, the actuarial method used and/or the employer’s covenant.

The Primary rate for the whole fund is the weighted average (by payroll) of the individual employers' Primary rates.

SECONDARY RATE

The "Secondary rate" is an adjustment to the Primary rate to arrive at the total rate of contribution each employer is required to pay. The Secondary rate may be expressed as a percentage adjustment to the Primary rate, and/or a cash adjustment in each of the three years beginning 1 April in the year following the actuarial valuation.

Secondary rates for the whole fund in each of the three years shall also be disclosed. These will be the calculated weighted average based on the whole fund payroll in respect of percentage rates and the total amount in respect of cash adjustments.

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PURPOSE OF FSS IN POLICY TERMS

Funding is the making of advance provision to meet the cost of accruing benefit promises. Decisions taken regarding the approach to funding will therefore determine the rate or pace at which this advance provision is made. Although the Regulations specify the fundamental principles on which funding contributions should be assessed, implementation of the funding strategy is the responsibility of the Administering Authority, acting on the professional advice provided by the actuary.

The Administering Authority's long term objective is for the Fund to achieve a 100% solvency level over a reasonable time period and then maintain sufficient assets in order for it to pay all benefits arising as they fall due.

The purpose of this Funding Strategy Statement is therefore:

- to establish a clear and transparent fund-specific strategy which will identify how employers' pension liabilities are best met going forward by taking a prudent longer-term view of funding those liabilities;
- to establish contributions at a level to "secure the solvency" of the pension fund and the "long term cost efficiency";
- to have regard to the desirability of maintaining as nearly constant a primary rate of contribution as possible.

The intention is for this strategy to be both cohesive and comprehensive for the Fund as a whole, recognising that there will be conflicting objectives which need to be balanced and reconciled. Whilst the position of individual employers must be reflected in the statement, it must remain a single strategy for the Administering Authority to implement and maintain.

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AIMS AND PURPOSE OF THE FUND

THE AIMS OF THE FUND ARE TO:

- manage employers' liabilities effectively and ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet all liabilities as they fall due
- enable employer contribution rates to be kept at a reasonable and affordable cost to the taxpayers, scheduled, resolution and admitted bodies, while achieving and maintaining fund solvency and long term cost efficiency, which should be assessed in light of the profile of the Fund now and in the future due to sector changes
- maximise the returns from investments within reasonable risk parameters taking into account the above aims.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO:

- receive monies in respect of contributions, transfer values and investment income, and
- pay out monies in respect of Fund benefits, transfer values, costs, charges and expenses as defined in the 2013 Regulations, the 2014 Transitional Regulations and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE KEY PARTIES

The efficient and effective management of the Fund can only be achieved if all parties exercise their statutory duties and responsibilities conscientiously and diligently. The key parties for the purposes of the FSS are the Administering Authority (and, in particular the Pensions Committee the individual employers and the Fund Actuary and details of their roles are set out below. Other parties required to play their part in the fund management process are bankers, custodians, investment managers, auditors and legal, investment and governance advisors, along with the Local Pensions Board created under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

KEY PARTIES TO THE FSS

The **Administering Authority** should:

- operate the pension fund
- collect employer and employee contributions, investment income and other amounts due to the pension fund as stipulated in the Regulations
- pay from the pension fund the relevant entitlements as stipulated in the Regulations
- invest surplus monies in accordance the Regulations
- ensure that cash is available to meet liabilities as and when they fall due
- take measures as set out in the Regulations 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 an ISS, both after proper consultation with interested parties, and
- monitor all aspects of the Fund's performance and funding, amending the FSS/ISS as necessary
- effectively manage any potential conflicts of interest arising from its dual role as both fund administrator and a Fund employer, and
- establish, support and monitor a Local Pension Board (LPB) as required by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the Regulations and the Pensions Regulator's relevant Code of Practice.

The **Individual Employer** should:

- deduct contributions from employees' pay correctly after determining the appropriate employee contribution rate (in accordance with the Regulations), unless they are a Deferred Employer.
- pay all contributions, including their own as determined by the actuary, promptly by the due date
- develop a policy on certain discretions and exercise those discretions as permitted within the regulatory framework
- make additional contributions in accordance with agreed arrangements in respect of, for example, augmentation of Fund benefits, early retirement strain, and
- have regard to the Pensions Regulator's focus on data quality and comply with any requirement set by the Administering Authority in this context, and
- notify the Administering Authority promptly of any changes to membership which may affect future funding.

The **Fund Actuary** should:

- prepare valuations including the setting of employers' contribution rates at a level to ensure fund solvency after agreeing assumptions with the Administering Authority and having regard to their FSS and the Regulations
- prepare advice and calculations in connection with bulk transfers and individual benefit-related matters such as pension strain costs, ill health retirement costs etc
- provide advice and valuations on the termination of admission agreements
- provide advice to the Administering Authority on bonds and other forms of security against the financial effect on the Fund of employer default
- assist the Administering Authority in assessing whether employer contributions need to be revised between valuations as required by the Regulations
- advise on funding strategy, the preparation of the FSS and the inter-relationship between the FSS and the ISS, and
- ensure the Administering Authority is aware of any professional guidance or other professional requirements which may be of relevance to the Fund Actuary's role in advising the Fund.

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SOLVENCY FUNDING TARGET

Securing the “solvency” and “long term cost efficiency” is a regulatory requirement. To meet these requirements the Administering Authority’s long term funding objective is for the Fund to achieve and then maintain sufficient assets to cover 100% of projected accrued liabilities (the “funding target”) assessed on an ongoing past service basis including allowance for projected final pay where appropriate. In the long term, an employer’s total contribution rate would ultimately revert to its Primary rate of contribution.

SOLVENCY AND LONG TERM EFFICIENCY

Each employer’s contributions are set at such a level to achieve full solvency in a reasonable timeframe. Solvency is defined as a level where the Fund’s liabilities i.e. benefit payments can be reasonably met as they arise.

Employer contributions are also set in order to achieve long term cost efficiency. Long term cost-efficiency implies that contributions must not be set at a level that is likely to give rise to additional costs in the future. For example, deferring costs to the future would be likely to result in those costs being greater overall than if they were provided for at the appropriate time.

When formulating the funding strategy the Administering Authority has taken into account these key objectives and also considered the implications of the requirements under Section 13(4)(c) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. As part of these requirements the Government Actuary’s Department (GAD) must, following an actuarial valuation, report on whether the rate of employer contributions to the Fund is set at an appropriate level to ensure the “solvency” of the pension fund and “long term cost efficiency” of the LGPS so far as relating to the Fund.

DETERMINATION OF THE SOLVENCY FUNDING TARGET AND RECOVERY PLAN

The principal method and assumptions to be used in the calculation of the funding target are set out in **Appendix A**. The Employer Recovery Plans are set out in **Appendix B**.

Underlying these assumptions are the following two tenets:

- that the Fund is expected to continue for the foreseeable future; and
- favourable investment performance can play a valuable role in achieving adequate funding over the longer term.

This allows the Fund to take a longer term view when assessing the contribution requirements for certain employers.

In considering this the Administering Authority, based on the advice of the Actuary, will consider if this results in a reasonable likelihood that the funding plan will be successful potentially taking into account any changes in funding after the valuation date up to the finalisation of the valuation by 31 March 2020 at the latest.

As part of each valuation separate employer contribution rates are assessed by the Fund Actuary for each participating employer or group of employers. These rates are assessed taking into account

the experience and circumstances of each employer, following a principle of no cross-subsidy between the distinct employers and employer groups in the Fund.

The Administering Authority, following consultation with the participating employers, has adopted the following objectives for setting the individual employer contribution rates arising from the 2019 actuarial valuation:

- The Fund does not believe it appropriate for offsets to total contributions in respect of any surplus to be allowed where the employer has a deficit on their termination assumptions, unless there is compelling reason to do so.
- Where warranted by an employer's circumstances, the Administering Authority retains the discretion to apply a discount rate based on a lower risk investment strategy for that employer to protect the Fund as a whole. Such cases will be determined by the Section 151 Officer and reported to the Committee.
- The target deficit recovery/surplus offset period for the Fund as a whole will reduce by three years, to 13 years at the 2019 valuation, so as to maintain same "end point". For individual employers who are open to new members, subject to consideration of affordability, as a general rule the deficit recovery/surplus offset period will reduce by 3 years for employers at this valuation when compared to the preceding valuation. This is to target full solvency over a similar (or shorter) time horizon. Employers will have the freedom to adopt a deficit recovery plan on the basis of a shorter period if they so wish. Subject to affordability considerations and other factors, a bespoke period may be applied in respect of particular employers where the Administering Authority considers this to be warranted (see Recovery Plan in **Appendix B**).
- Individual employer contributions will be expressed and certified as two separate elements:
 - the **Primary rate**: a percentage of pensionable payroll in respect of the cost of the future accrual of benefits
 - the **Secondary rate**: a schedule of lump sum monetary amounts over 2020/23 in respect of an employer's surplus or deficit (the Secondary rate may be expressed as a percentage of pensionable payroll in cases where there is a funding surplus)

For any employer, the total contributions they are actually required to pay in any one year is the sum of the Primary and Secondary rates (subject to an overall minimum of zero). Both elements are subject to further review from April 2023 based on the results of the 2022 actuarial valuation.

- Where increases in employer contributions are required from 1 April 2020, following completion of the 2019 actuarial valuation, if the Administering Authority agrees then the increase from the rates of contribution payable in the year 2020/21 may be implemented in steps, over a maximum period of 3 years.

EMPLOYERS EXITING THE FUND

On the cessation of an employer's participation in the Fund, in accordance with the Regulations, the Fund Actuary will be asked to make a termination assessment. In such circumstances the approach will depend on whether the employer has a guarantor in the in Fund:

Termination with no guarantor

Where there is no guarantor who could subsume the liabilities of the exiting employer, the Fund's policy on assessing the termination position is as follows:

EMPLOYERS WITH NO GUARANTOR IN THE FUND WHO JOINED PRIOR TO 1 JULY 2012	EMPLOYERS WITH NO GUARANTOR IN THE FUND WHO JOINED AFTER 1 JULY 2012
Using a corporate bond basis, with the discount rate based on the long dated Sterling AA Corporate Bond yield of appropriate duration, and allowing for a more prudent assessment of future mortality trends.	Using a "least risk" funding basis based on government bonds of appropriate duration, and allowing for a more prudent assessment of future mortality trends.

In the case of a deficit, the Fund would normally require the exiting employer to pay the termination deficit to the Fund as an immediate lump sum cash payment (unless agreed otherwise by the Administering Authority at their sole discretion) following completion of the termination process.

In the case of a surplus, the Fund pays the exit credit to the exiting employer following completion of the termination process (within 6 months of cessation or such longer period as may be agreed in the individual case). This is subject to the exiting employer providing sufficient notice to the Fund of their intent to exit; any delays in notification will impact on the payment date.

Termination with a guarantor

Where there is a guarantor who will subsume the liabilities in full, the termination position is assessed using an "ongoing" valuation basis so consistent with the funding target assumptions. Where a guarantee takes any other form, the assessment will use the "no guarantor" approach outlined above.

a) No "risk sharing"

A "risk sharing" arrangement in this instance is a situation where the guarantor, rather than the exiting employer, is responsible for the termination payment.

Where there is no risk sharing, in the event of a deficit, the Fund will seek to recover this from the exiting employer in the first instance. However, if this is not possible, then to maintain a consistent approach between treatment of surplus and deficit, the Fund will then seek to recover the deficit from the guarantor via an additional cash payment, unless otherwise agreed with the Administering Authority. In the case of a surplus, the Fund will pay the exit credit to the exiting employer once the risk sharing position has been determined.

b) "Risk sharing" applies

Any assets, liabilities and deficit or surplus would be subsumed by the guarantor and taken into account at the following valuation.

Where the employer has a guarantor, the Administering Authority will need to determine whether a) and b) applies. In that case they will:

- contact both the exiting employer and the guarantor to confirm whether there is a "risk-sharing" arrangement in place, and to ask for any evidence of this

- where both sides agree, the termination assessment will be progressed in line with the standard approach
- otherwise, the Fund's normal policy will be to proceed assuming the exiting employer is responsible for any termination payment, and so is entitled to any exit credit

Once the termination assessment is complete, the two parties will be notified of the outcome. At that point either party will have 1 month to dispute the outcome. If this happens then payment of any exit credit will be put on hold, and the two parties will be expected to resolve the dispute between themselves, without input from the Fund. The Fund will not become involved in any dispute between the two parties until all other avenues have been explored. The following arrangements will apply in respect of disputes raised with the Fund:

- In the case of a surplus, in line with the amending Regulations ([The Local Government Pension Scheme \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020](#)) the parties will need to make formal representations to the Administering Authority if they believe an Exit Credit should be paid outside the policy set out above, or if they dispute the determination of the Administering Authority. The Fund will notify the parties of the information required to make the determination on request.
- If the Fund determines an Exit Credit is payable then they will pay this directly to the exiting employer within 6 months of completion of the final cessation assessment by the Actuary.
- In the case of a deficit, in order to maintain a consistent approach, the Fund will seek to recover this from the exiting employer in the first instance and if this fails, the matter will be referred to the guarantor. If neither the Fund nor the guarantor succeeds in recovering the deficit, then the deficit will be recovered from the guarantor either as a further contribution collection or at the next valuation depending on the circumstances.

If requested, the Administering Authority will provide details of the information considered as part of the determination. A determination notice will be provided alongside the termination assessment from the Actuary. The notice will cover the following information and process steps:

1. Details of the employers involved in the process (e.g. the exiting employer and guarantor).
2. Details of the admission agreement, commercial contracts and any amendments to the terms that have been made available to the Administering Authority and considered as part of the decision making process. The underlying principle will be that if an employer is responsible for a deficit, they will be eligible for any surplus. This is subject to the information provided and any risk sharing arrangements in place.
3. The final certification of the exit credit by the Actuary.
4. The Administering Authority's determination based on the information provided.
5. Details of the appeals process in the event that a party disagrees with the determination and wishes to make representations to the Administering Authority.

In some instances, the outgoing employer may only be responsible for part of the residual deficit or surplus as per the separate risk sharing agreement. The default is that any surplus would be retained by the Fund in favour of the outsourcing employer/guarantor unless the commercial contract or other arrangements dictate otherwise and the Fund is aware of this or representation is made by the relevant parties in line with the Regulations (as noted above). For the avoidance of

doubt, where the outgoing employer is not responsible for any termination costs under a risk sharing agreement then no exit credit will be paid as per the Regulations, provided that the guarantor makes the Fund aware of the provisions of the risk sharing agreement in any representation made.

The Fund may seek to recover any costs associated with the dispute resolution process as part of the final termination settlement.

In the event of parties unreasonably seeking to crystallise the exit credit on termination, the Fund will consider its overall policy and seek to recover termination deficits as opposed to allowing them to be subsumed with no impact on contribution requirements until the next assessment of the contribution requirements for the guarantor. Equally where a guarantor decides not to underwrite the residual liabilities the basis of assessment on termination will assume the liabilities are orphaned and thus the minimum risk basis will apply.

Managing the exit payment / credit, and alternatives to termination

The default policy is that any termination payment due is paid in full following the final assessment. However, the regulations give power to the Administering Authority to use its discretion to allow alternative approaches and these will be considered where this is in the best interest of the Fund. These are:

SUSPENSION	SPREADING	DEFERRED DEBT AGREEMENT
Issue a "suspension notice" if the employer is likely to have active members in the near future	Allow the termination payment to be spread over an agreed period	To allow the employer to remain in the Fund under a "Deferred Debt Agreement" (DDA)

The Fund's Employer Events Framework Policy Document includes more detail on the termination process, and in particular the options available around managing termination and termination payments, and the relevant sections of that policy document will be deemed to be part of this FSS.

FUNDING FOR NON-ILL HEALTH EARLY RETIREMENT COSTS

Employers are required to meet all costs of early retirement strain by immediate capital payments into the Fund.

6

LINK TO INVESTMENT POLICY AND THE INVESTMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT (ISS)

The results of the 2019 valuation show the liabilities to be 94% covered by the current assets, with the funding deficit of 6% being covered by future deficit contributions.

In assessing the value of the Fund's liabilities in the valuation, allowance has been made for growth asset out-performance as described below, taking into account the investment strategy adopted by the Fund, as set out in the ISS.

It is not possible to construct a portfolio of investments which produces a stream of income exactly matching the expected liability outgo. However, it is possible to construct a portfolio which represents the "minimum risk" investment position which would deliver a very high certainty of real returns above assumed CPI inflation. Such a portfolio would consist of a mixture of long-term index-linked, fixed interest gilts and possible swaps.

Investment of the Fund's assets in line with this portfolio would minimise fluctuations in the Fund's funding position between successive actuarial valuations.

If, at the valuation date, the Fund had been invested in this portfolio, then in carrying out this valuation it would not be appropriate to make any allowance for growth assets out-performance. This would result in real return of less than CPI at the valuation date. On this basis of assessment, the assessed value of the Fund's liabilities at the valuation would have been significantly higher, resulting in a funding level of 54%.

Departure from a minimum risk investment strategy, in particular to include growth assets such as equities, gives a better prospect that the assets will, over time, deliver returns in excess of CPI inflation and reduce the contribution requirements. The target solvency position of having sufficient assets to meet the Fund's pension obligations might in practice therefore be achieved by a range of combinations of funding plan, investment strategy and investment performance.

The current strategy is:

ASSET CLASS	ALLOCATION	CONTROL RANGES
Total Equities	47.0	42.0-52.0
Unconstrained global equities**	11.0	8.0-14.0
UK equities	8.0	5.5-10.5
Passive equities (100% hedged to GBP)*	28.0	22.0-34.0
Total alternatives	25.5	20.5-30.5
European (inc UK) property	5.0	n/a
Private equity	5.0	n/a
Infrastructure	3.0	n/a
Fund of hedge funds	7.5	n/a
Insurance-linked securities	1.5	n/a
Property debt	3.5	n/a
Total bonds	27.5	22.5-32.5
Liability driven investment (LDI)	3.5	2.0-5.0
Unconstrained bonds	24.0	20.0-28.0

**The Fund has implemented an equity derivatives program with Legal and General Investment Management in order to manage the SCPF's exposure to equity markets over the short to medium term. The strategy protects c£655m of equities with £140m of protection expiring in June 2021, another £215m in September 2021, and £300m in December 2021. The protection targeted is such that when expected dividend income is allowed for, total losses over the terms of the protection will be no greater than 3%, unless the extent of price losses are sufficiently large to result in total losses exceeding 23%, in which case the protection structure reduces the total return losses by 20%. The protection was funded by selling potential upside returns on the equity protected with the amount retained varying by region.*

***The Fund transferred its unconstrained active global equities to LGPS Central in March 2019.*

The investment strategy set out above and individual return expectations on those asset classes equate to an overall best estimate average expected return of 2.5% per annum in excess of CPI inflation as at 31 March 2019 i.e. a 50/50 change of achieving this real return. For the purposes of setting a funding strategy however, the Administering Authority believes that it is appropriate to take a margin for prudence on these return expectations (see further comment in Appendix A).

The Administering Authority is currently in the process of reviewing the investment strategy and this is expected to be completed later this year. The revised strategy will be reflected in the updated Investment Strategy Statement in due course and the next revision of the Funding Strategy Statement which is expected to be undertaken as part of the 2022 valuation of the Fund.

7

IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS AND COUNTER-MEASURES

The funding of defined benefits is by its nature uncertain. Funding of the Fund is based on both financial and demographic assumptions. These assumptions are specified in the actuarial valuation report. When actual experience is not in line with the assumptions adopted a surplus or shortfall will emerge at the next actuarial assessment and will require a subsequent contribution adjustment to bring the funding back into line with the target.

The Administering Authority has been advised by the Fund Actuary that the greatest risk to the funding level is the investment risk inherent in the predominantly equity based strategy, so that actual asset out-performance between successive valuations could diverge significantly from that assumed in the long term.

FINANCIAL

The financial risks are as follows:-

- Investment markets fail to perform in line with expectations
- Market outlook moves at variance with assumptions
- Investment Fund Managers fail to achieve performance targets over the longer term
- Asset re-allocations in volatile markets may lock in past losses
- Pay and price inflation significantly more or less than anticipated
- Future underperformance arising as a result of participating in the larger asset pooling vehicle.

Any increase in employer contribution rates (as a result of these risks), may in turn impact on the service delivery of that employer and their financial position.

In practice the extent to which these risks can be reduced is limited. However, the Fund's asset allocation is kept under constant review and the performance of the investment managers is regularly monitored.

DEMOGRAPHIC

The demographic risks are as follows:-

- Longevity horizon continues to expand
- Deteriorating pattern of early retirements (including those granted on the grounds of ill health)
- Unanticipated acceleration of the maturing of the Fund resulting in materially negative cashflows and shortening of liability durations
- The level of take-up of the 50:50 option at a higher or lower level than built into the actuarial assumptions.

Increasing longevity is something which government policies, both national and local, are designed to promote. It does, however, result in a greater liability for pension funds.

Apart from the regulatory procedures in place to ensure that ill-health retirements are properly controlled, **employing bodies should be doing everything in their power to minimise the**

number of ill-health retirements. Early retirements for reasons of redundancy and efficiency do not affect the solvency of the Fund because they are the subject of a direct charge.

With regards to increasing maturity (e.g. due to further cuts in workforce and/or restrictions on new employees accessing the Fund), the Administering Authority regularly monitors the position in terms of cashflow requirements and considers the impact on the investment strategy.

INSURANCE OF CERTAIN BENEFITS

The contributions for any employer may be varied as agreed by the Actuary and Administering Authority to reflect any changes in contribution requirements as a result of any benefit costs being insured with a third party or internally within the Fund.

REGULATORY

The key regulatory risks are as follows:-

- Changes to Regulations, e.g. changes to the benefits package, retirement age, potential new entrants to Fund,
- Changes to national pension requirements and/or HMRC Rules

Membership of the LGPS is open to all local government staff and should be encouraged as a valuable part of the contract of employment. However, increasing membership does result in higher employer monetary costs.

GOVERNANCE

The Fund has done as much as it believes it reasonably can to enable employing bodies and Fund members (via their representatives on the Local Pension Board) to make their views known to the Fund and to participate in the decision-making process.

Governance risks are as follows:-

- The quality of membership data deteriorates materially due to breakdown in processes for updating the information resulting in liabilities being under or overstated
- Administering Authority unaware of structural changes in employer's membership (e.g. large fall in employee numbers, large number of retirements) with the result that contribution rates are set at too low a level
- Administering Authority not advised of an employer closing to new entrants, something which would normally require an increase in contribution rates
- An employer ceasing to exist with insufficient funding or adequacy of a bond. Where there is a guarantor body in place, any outstanding funding deficit that is not recovered from the outgoing employer / bond will need to be paid by the guarantor (or the assets and liabilities for the outgoing employer will need to be subsumed by the guarantor). For cases where there is no guarantor or bond in place, any outstanding funding deficit that is not recovered from the outgoing employer will need to be subsumed by the Fund as a whole and spread across all employers.
- Changes in the Committee membership.

For these risks to be minimised much depends on information being supplied to the Administering Authority by the employing bodies. Arrangements are strictly controlled and monitored, but in most cases the employer, rather than the Fund as a whole, bears the risk.

8

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Administering Authority has taken advice from the actuary in preparing this Statement, and has consulted with the employers participating in the Fund.

A full review of this Statement will occur no less frequently than every three years, to coincide with completion of a full actuarial valuation. Any review will take account of the current economic conditions and will also reflect any legislative changes.

The Administering Authority will monitor the progress of the funding strategy between full actuarial valuations. If considered appropriate, the funding strategy will be reviewed (other than as part of the triennial valuation process), for example, if there:

- has been a significant change in market conditions, and/or deviation in the progress of the funding strategy
- have been significant changes to the Fund membership, or LGPS benefits
- have been changes to the circumstances of any of the employing authorities to such an extent that they impact on or warrant a change in the funding strategy
- have been any significant special contributions paid into the Fund.

When monitoring the funding strategy, if the Administering Authority considers that any action is required, the relevant employing authorities will be contacted. In the case of admitted bodies, there is statutory provision for rates to be amended between valuations but it is unlikely that this power will be invoked other than in exceptional circumstances.

INTER-VALUATION CONTRIBUTION REVIEWS

The Regulations allow contributions to be reviewed and potentially revised between valuations at the Administering Authority's discretion, under the following scenarios:

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
There has been a significant change in the employer's membership which will have a material impact on their liabilities	There has been a significant change in the employer's covenant	The Administering Authority is of the opinion that a change in circumstances means the employer is likely to exit the Fund

Scenarios 1 and 2 apply to "ongoing" employers, who are generally expected to remain in the Fund, and are reviewed on that basis. Reviews can be triggered by the Fund, or requested by the employer.

Reviews will not take place where a) the funding position changes solely due to changes in market conditions (asset movements or assumption changes), b) the next actuarial valuation rates and adjustments certificate is less than 6 months away and membership changes would otherwise trigger a review (reviews in this period due to covenant changes may be considered), or c) where the Fund does not believe that a review is necessary or in the best interests of the Fund as a whole.

Scenario 3 employers who are “planning for exit” are expected to leave the Fund in the near future, and their review will take place on that basis, with a focus on achieving a fully funded position at termination.

COST MANAGEMENT AND THE MCCLOUD JUDGEMENT

The cost management process was set up by HMT, with an additional strand set up by the Scheme Advisory Board (for the LGPS). The aim of this was to control costs for employers and taxpayers via adjustments to benefits and/or employee contributions.

As part of this, it was agreed that employers should bear the costs/risks of external factors such as the discount rate, investment returns and inflation changes, whereas employees should bear the costs/risks of other factors such as wage growth, life expectancy changes, ill health retirement experience and commutation of pension.

The outcomes of the cost management process were expected to be implemented from 1 April 2019, based on data from the 2016 valuations for the LGPS. This was put on hold due to age discrimination cases brought in respect of the firefighters and judges schemes, relating to protections provided when the public sector schemes were changed (which was on 1 April 2014 for the LGPS and 1 April 2015 for other Schemes). The process has now commenced again, but no outcomes are available as of yet.

It is not known how these cases will affect the LGPS or the cost management process at this time. The Scheme Advisory Board issued guidance which sets out how the McCloud case should be allowed for within the 2019 valuation.

The potential impact of the judgement (based on the information available at the time) has been quantified and communicated to employers as part of the 2019 valuation. Employers will be able to choose to include these estimated costs over 2020/23 in their certified contributions. Alternatively, they will need to make allowance within their budgets and note that additional contributions could be payable if the remedy is known before the next valuation.

APPENDIX A - ACTUARIAL METHOD AND ASSUMPTIONS

METHOD

The actuarial method to be used in the calculation of the solvency funding target is the Projected Unit method, under which the salary increases assumed for each member are projected until that member is assumed to leave active service by death, retirement or withdrawal from service. This method implicitly allows for new entrants to the Fund on the basis that the overall age profile of the active membership will remain stable. As a result, for those employers which are closed to new entrants, an alternative method is adopted, which makes advance allowance for the anticipated future ageing and decline of the current closed membership group potentially over the period of the rates and adjustments certificate.

FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS – SOLVENCY FUNDING TARGET

Investment return (discount rate)

The discount rate has been derived based on the expected return on the Fund assets base on the long term strategy set out in the Investment Strategy Statement (ISS). It includes appropriate margins for prudence. When assessing the appropriate discount rate consideration has been given to the returns in excess of CPI inflation (as derived below). The discount rate at the valuation has been derived based on an assumed return of 1.85% per annum above CPI inflation i.e. a real return of 1.85% per annum, equating to a total discount rate of 4.25% per annum. This real return will be reviewed from time to time based on the investment strategy, market outlook and the Fund's overall risk metrics.

Where warranted by an employer's circumstances, the Administering Authority retains the discretion to apply a discount rate based on a lower risk investment strategy for that employer to protect the Fund as a whole.

Inflation (Consumer Prices Index)

The inflation assumption will be taken to be the investment market's expectation for RPI inflation as indicated by the difference between yields derived from market instruments, principally conventional and index-linked UK Government gilts as at the valuation date, reflecting the profile and duration of the Fund's accrued liabilities, but subject to the following two adjustments:

- an allowance for supply/demand distortions in the bond market is incorporated, and
- an adjustment due to retirement pensions being increased annually by the change in the Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index

The overall reduction to RPI inflation at the 2019 valuation date was 1.0% per annum. However, this was in advance of the Government's decision to move RPI in line with CPIH from 2030 – this decision will act to reduce the gap between RPI and CPI from that point on. Therefore, this assumption will be reviewed and updated periodically as needed by the Fund Actuary.

Salary increases

In relation to benefits earned prior to 1 April 2014, the assumption for real salary increases (salary increases in excess of price inflation) will be determined by an allowance of 1.25% p.a. over the inflation assumption as described above. This includes allowance for promotional increases.

Pension increases/Indexation of CARE benefits

Increases to pensions are assumed to be in line with the inflation (CPI) assumption described above. This is modified appropriately to reflect any benefits which are not fully indexed in line with the CPI (e.g. Guaranteed Minimum Pensions where the LGPS is not required to provide full indexation).

DEMOGRAPHIC ASSUMPTIONS**Mortality/Life Expectancy**

The mortality in retirement assumptions will be based on the most up-to-date information in relation to self-administered pension schemes published by the Continuous Mortality Investigation (CMI), making allowance for future improvements in longevity and the experience of the Fund. The mortality tables used are set out below, with a loading reflecting Fund specific experience. The derivation of the mortality assumption is set out in a separate paper as supplied by the Actuary. For all members, it is assumed that the accelerated trend in longevity seen in recent years will continue in the longer term and as such, the assumptions build in a minimum level of longevity 'improvement' year on year in the future in line with the CMI projections with a long-term improvement trend of 1.5% per annum.

The mortality before retirement has also been adjusted based on LGPS wide experience.

Commutation

It has been assumed that, on average, 50% of retiring members will take the maximum tax-free cash available at retirement and 50% will take the standard 3/80ths cash sum. The option which members have to commute part of their pension at retirement in return for a lump sum is a rate of £12 cash for each £1 p.a. of pension given up.

Other Demographics

Following an analysis of Fund experience carried out by the Actuary, the incidence of ill health retirements, withdrawal rates and the proportions married/civil partnership assumption have been modified from the last valuation. In addition, no allowance will be made for the future take-up of the 50:50 option (an allowance of 10% of current and future members (by payroll) for certain employers was made at the last valuation). Where any member has actually opted for the 50:50 scheme, this will be allowed for in the assessment of the rate for the next 3 years. Other assumptions are as per the last valuation.

Expenses

Expenses are met out the Fund, in accordance with the Regulations. This is allowed for by adding 0.6% of pensionable pay to the contributions as required from participating employers. This addition is reassessed at each valuation. Investment expenses have been allowed for implicitly in determining the discount rates.

Discretionary Benefits

The costs of any discretion exercised by an employer in order to enhance benefits for a member through the Fund will be subject to additional contributions from the employer as required by the Regulations as and when the event occurs. As a result, no allowance for such discretionary benefits has been made in the valuation

METHOD AND ASSUMPTIONS USED IN CALCULATING THE COST OF FUTURE ACCRUAL (OR PRIMARY RATE)

The future service liabilities are calculated using the same assumptions as the funding target except that a different financial assumption for the discount rate is used. A critical aspect here is that the Regulations state the desirability of keeping the "Primary Rate" (which is the future service rate) as stable as possible so this needs to be taken into account when setting the assumptions.

As future service contributions are paid in respect of benefits built up in the future, the FSR should take account of the market conditions applying at future dates, not just the date of the valuation, thus it is justifiable to use a slightly higher expected return from the investment strategy. In addition the future liabilities for which these contributions will be paid have a longer average duration than the past service liabilities as they relate to active members only.

The financial assumptions in relation to future service (i.e. the normal cost) are not specifically linked to investment conditions as at the valuation date itself, and are based on an overall assumed real discount rate of 2.25% per annum above the long term average assumption for consumer price inflation of 2.4% per annum, giving a total discount rate of 4.65% per annum.

EMPLOYER ASSET SHARES

The Fund is a multi-employer pension Fund that is not formally unitised and so individual employer asset shares are calculated at each actuarial valuation. This means it is necessary to make some approximations in the timing of cashflows and allocation of investment returns when deriving the employer asset share.

In attributing the overall investment performance obtained on the assets of the Fund to each employer a pro-rata principle is adopted. This approach is effectively one of applying a notional individual employer investment strategy identical to that adopted for the Fund as a whole unless agreed otherwise between the employer and the Fund at the sole discretion of the Administering Authority.

At each review, cashflows into and out of the Fund relating to each employer, any movement of members between employers within the Fund, along with investment return earned on the asset share, are allowed for when calculating asset shares at each valuation.

Other adjustments are also made on account of the funding positions of orphan bodies which fall to be met by all other active employers in the Fund.

SUMMARY OF KEY WHOLE FUND ASSUMPTIONS USED FOR CALCULATING FUNDING TARGET AND COST OF FUTURE ACCRUAL (THE "PRIMARY RATE") FOR THE 2019 ACTUARIAL VALUATION

Long-term yields	
Market implied RPI inflation	3.4% p.a.
Solvency Funding Target financial assumptions	
Investment return/Discount Rate	4.25% p.a.
CPI price inflation	2.4% p.a.
Long Term Salary increases	3.65% p.a.
Pension increases/indexation of CARE benefits	2.4% p.a.
Future service accrual financial assumptions	
Investment return/Discount Rate	4.65% p.a.
CPI price inflation	2.4% p.a.
Long Term Salary increases	3.9% p.a.
Pension increases/indexation of CARE benefits	2.4% p.a.

Life expectancy assumptions

The post retirement mortality tables adopted for this valuation, along with sample life expectancies, are set out below:

	Base Table	Improvements	Adjustment (M / F)
Current pensioners:			
Normal health	S3PA	CMI_2018 [1.5%]	93% / 88%
Ill-health	S3PA	CMI_2018 [1.5%]	115% / 126%
Dependants	S3PMA / S3DFA	CMI_2018 [1.5%]	124% / 87%
Future dependants	S3PMA / S3DFA	CMI_2018 [1.5%]	119% / 106%
Current active / deferred:			
Active normal health	S3PA	CMI_2018 [1.5%]	98% / 90%
Active ill-health	S3PA	CMI_2018 [1.5%]	116% / 139%
Deferred	S3PA	CMI_2018 [1.5%]	117% / 104%
Future dependants	S3PMA / S3DFA	CMI_2018 [1.5%]	126% / 113%

Other demographic assumptions are set out in the Actuary's formal report.

APPENDIX B – EMPLOYER RECOVERY PLANS

As the assets of the Fund are less than the liabilities at the effective date, a recovery plan needs to be adopted such that additional contributions are paid into the Fund to meet the shortfall.

Deficit contributions paid to the Fund by each employer will be expressed as £s amounts and it is the Fund's objective that any funding deficit is eliminated as quickly as the participating employers can reasonably afford based on the Administering Authority's view of the employer's covenant and risk to the Fund. However, some employers have funding surpluses and in these cases any "surplus offset" will normally be determined as a percentage of pensionable pay.

Recovery periods will be set by the Fund on a consistent basis across employer categories where possible and communicated as part of the discussions with employers. This will determine the minimum contribution requirement and employers will be free to select any shorter deficit recovery period and higher contributions if they wish, including the option of prepaying the deficit contributions in one lump sum (either on annual basis or a one-off payment). This will be reflected in the monetary amount requested via a reduction in overall £ deficit contributions payable.

The determination of the target recovery periods is summarised in the table below. Individual employer circumstances may dictate that a different recovery period is applied in specific cases:

Category	Target Recovery Period	Derivation
Fund Employers	13 years	Determined by reducing the recovery period from the preceding valuation by 3 years.
Open Admitted Bodies	13 years	Determined by reducing the recovery period from the preceding valuation by 3 years.
Closed Employers	Based on the future working lifetime of the membership	Determined by the future working life of the membership.
Employers with a limited participation in the Fund	Determined on a case by case basis	Length of expected period of participation in the Fund

In determining the actual recovery period to apply for any particular employer or employer grouping, the Administering Authority may take into account some or all of the following factors:

- The size of the funding shortfall;
- The business plans of the employer;
- The assessment of the financial covenant of the Employer, and security of future income streams;
- Any contingent security available to the Fund or offered by the Employer such as guarantor or bond arrangements, charge over assets, etc.

The objective is to recover any deficit over a reasonable timeframe, and this will be periodically reviewed. Subject to affordability considerations a key principle will be to maintain the contributions at the expected monetary levels from the preceding valuation (allowing for any indexation in deficit payments over the recovery period).

Other factors affecting the Employer Recovery Plans

As part of the process of agreeing funding plans with individual employers, the Administering Authority will consider the use of contingent assets and other tools such as bonds or guarantees that could assist employing bodies in managing the cost of their liabilities or could provide the Fund with greater security against outstanding liabilities. All other things equal this could result in a longer recovery period being acceptable to the Administering Authority, although employers will still be expected to at least cover expected interest costs on the deficit.

For an employer without a guarantor in the Fund, any surplus offset will normally only be allowed to the extent that the employer has a surplus on its termination basis.

It is acknowledged by the Administering Authority that, whilst posing a relatively low risk to the Fund as a whole, a number of smaller employers may be faced with significant contribution increases that could seriously affect their ability to function in the future. The Administering Authority therefore would be willing to use its discretion to accept an evidenced based affordable level of contributions for the organisation for the three years 2020/23. Any application of this option is at the ultimate discretion of the Fund officers and Section 151 officer in order to effectively manage risk across the Fund. It will only be considered after the provision of the appropriate evidence as part of the covenant assessment and also the appropriate professional advice.

For those bodies identified as having a weaker covenant, the Administering Authority will need to balance the level of risk plus the solvency requirements of the Fund with the sustainability of the organisation when agreeing funding plans. As a minimum, the annual deficit payment must meet the on-going interest costs to ensure, everything else being equal, that the deficit does not increase in monetary terms.

Notwithstanding the above, the Administering Authority, in consultation with the actuary, has also had to consider whether any exceptional arrangements should apply in particular cases.

APPENDIX C - GLOSSARY

Actuarial Valuation: an investigation by an actuary into the ability of the Fund to meet its liabilities. For the LGPS the Fund Actuary will assess the funding level of each participating employer and agree contribution rates with the administering authority to fund the cost of new benefits and make good any existing deficits as set out in the separate Funding Strategy Statement. The asset value is based on market values at the valuation date.

Administering Authority: the council with a statutory responsibility for running the Fund and that is responsible for all aspects of its management and operation.

Admission bodies: A specific type of employer under the Local Government Pension Scheme (the "LGPS") who do not automatically qualify for participation in the Fund but are allowed to join if they satisfy the relevant criteria set out in the Regulations.

Benchmark: a measure against which fund performance is to be judged.

Best Estimate Assumption: an assumption where the outcome has a 50/50 chance of being achieved.

Bonds: loans made to an issuer (often a government or a company) which undertakes to repay the loan at an agreed later date. The term refers generically to corporate bonds or government bonds (gilts).

Career Average Revalued Earnings Scheme (CARE): with effect from 1 April 2014, benefits accrued by members in the LGPS take the form of CARE benefits. Every year members will accrue a pension benefit equivalent to 1/49th of their pensionable pay in that year. Each annual pension accrued receives inflationary increases (in line with the annual change in the Consumer Prices Index) over the period to retirement.

CPI: acronym standing for "Consumer Prices Index". CPI is a measure of inflation with a basket of goods that is assessed on an annual basis. The reference goods and services differ from those of RPI. These goods are expected to provide lower, less volatile inflation increases. Pension increases in the LGPS are linked to the annual change in CPI.

Covenant: 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 or affordability constraints in the short term.

Deficit: the extent to which the value of the Fund's past service liabilities exceeds the value of the Fund's assets. 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).

Deferred Debt Agreement (DDA): A written agreement between the Administering Authority and an exiting Fund employer for that employer to defer their obligation to make an exit payment and continue to make contributions at the assessed Secondary rate until the termination of the DDA.

Deferred Employer: An employer that has entered into a DDA with the Fund.

Discount Rate: the rate of interest used to convert a cash amount e.g. future benefit payments occurring in the future to a present value.

Employer's Future Service Contribution Rate: the contribution rate payable by an employer, expressed as a % of pensionable pay, as being sufficient to meet the cost of new benefits being accrued by active members in the future. The cost will be net of employee contributions and will include an allowance for the expected level of administrative expenses.

Employing bodies: any organisation that participates in the LGPS, including admission bodies and Fund employers.

Equities: shares in a company which are bought and sold on a stock exchange.

Fund / Scheme Employers: employers that have the statutory right to participate in the LGPS. These organisations (set out in Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the 2013 Regulations) would not need to designate eligibility, unlike the Part 2 Fund Employers.

Funding or solvency Level: the ratio of the value of the Fund's assets and the value of the Fund's liabilities expressed as a percentage.

Funding Strategy Statement: this is a key governance document that outlines how the administering authority will manage employer's contributions and risks to the Fund.

Government Actuary's Department (GAD): the GAD is responsible for providing actuarial advice to public sector clients. GAD is a non-ministerial department of HM Treasury.

Guarantee / guarantor: 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 covenant to be as strong as its guarantor's.

Investment Strategy: the long-term distribution of assets among various asset classes that takes into account the Funds objectives and attitude to risk.

Letting employer: an employer that outsources part of its services/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.

Liabilities: the actuarially calculated present value of all benefit entitlements i.e. Fund cashflows of all members of the Fund, built up to date or in the future. The liabilities in relation to the benefit entitlements earned up to the valuation date are compared with the present market value of Fund assets to derive the deficit and funding/solvency level. Liabilities can be assessed on different set of actuarial assumptions depending on the purpose of the valuation.

LGPS: 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.

Maturity: 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.

Members: 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).

Minimum risk basis: an approach where the discount rate used to assess the liabilities is determined based on the market yields of Government bond investments based on the appropriate duration of the liabilities being assessed. This is usually adopted when an employer is exiting the Fund.

Orphan liabilities: liabilities in the Fund for which there is no sponsoring employer within the Fund. Ultimately orphan liabilities must be underwritten by all other employers in the Fund.

Percentiles: relative ranking (in hundredths) of a particular range. For example, in terms of expected returns a percentile ranking of 75 indicates that in 25% of cases, the return achieved would be greater than the figure, and in 75% cases the return would be lower.

Phasing/stepping of contributions: when there is an increase/decrease in an employer's long term contribution requirements, the increase in contributions can be gradually stepped or phased in over an agreed period. The phasing/stepping can be in equal steps or on a bespoke basis for each employer.

Pooling: employers may be grouped together for the purpose of calculating contribution rates, (i.e. 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 deficit, or (if formally agreed) it may allow deficits to be passed from one employer to another.

Prepayment: the payment by employers of contributions to the Fund earlier than that certified by the Actuary. The amount paid will be reduced in monetary terms compared to the certified amount to reflect the early payment.

Present Value: the value of projected benefit payments, discounted back to the valuation date.

Profile: the profile of an employer's membership or liability reflects various measurements of that employer's members, i.e. 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.

Prudent Assumption: an assumption where the outcome has a greater than 50/50 chance of being achieved i.e. the outcome is more likely to be overstated than understated. Legislation and Guidance requires the assumptions adopted for an actuarial valuation to be prudent.

Rates and Adjustments Certificate: a formal document required by the LGPS Regulations, which must be updated at least every three years at the conclusion of the formal valuation. 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.

Real Return or Real Discount Rate: a rate of return or discount rate net of (CPI) inflation.

Recovery period: the target length of time over which the current deficit or surplus is intended to be paid off. A shorter period will give rise to a higher annual contribution in the case of a deficit, and vice versa.

Recovery Plan: a strategy by which an employer will make up a funding deficit over a specified period of time (“the recovery period”), as set out in the Funding Strategy Statement.

Scheduled bodies: 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, 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).

Section 13 Valuation: in accordance with Section 13 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2014, the Government Actuary’s Department (GAD) have been commissioned to advise the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in connection with reviewing the 2016 LGPS actuarial valuations. All LGPS Funds therefore will be assessed on a standardised set of assumptions as part of this process.

Solvency Funding Target: an assessment of the present value of benefits to be paid in the future. The desired funding target is to achieve a solvency level of a 100% i.e. assets equal to the accrued liabilities at the valuation date assessed on the ongoing concern basis.

Valuation funding basis: the financial and demographic assumptions used to determine the employer’s contribution requirements. The relevant discount rate used for valuing the present value of liabilities is consistent with an expected rate of return of the Fund’s investments. This includes an expected out-performance over gilts in the long-term from other asset classes, held by the Fund.

50/50 Scheme: in the LGPS, active members are given the option of accruing a lower personal benefit in the 50/50 Scheme, in return for paying a lower level of contribution.