

Investment Strategy Statement

**London Borough of Sutton
Pension Fund**

November 2022

(Approved by the Pension Committee - 13 December 2022)



Investment Strategy Statement

Introduction and background

This is the Investment Strategy Statement (“ISS”) of the London Borough of Sutton Pension Fund (“the Fund”), which is administered by Sutton 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 (“the Regulations”).

The ISS has been prepared by the Fund’s Pension Committee (“the Committee”) having taken advice from the Fund’s investment adviser, Mercer. The Committee acts on the delegated authority of the Administering Authority.

The ISS, which was previously approved by the Committee on 21 September 2021, 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 as it considers appropriate.

The Committee seeks to invest in accordance with the ISS any Fund money that is not needed immediately to make payments from the Fund. The ISS should be read in conjunction with the Fund’s Funding Strategy.

The suitability of particular investments and types of investments

The primary objective of the Fund is to provide pension and lump sum benefits for members on their retirement and/or benefits on death, before or after retirement, for their dependents, on a defined benefits basis. This funding position will be reviewed at each triennial actuarial valuation, or more frequently as required.

In order to meet this primary objective the Committee aims to:

- Maximise the returns from investments, whilst keeping risk within acceptable levels
- Contribute towards achieving and maintaining a future funding level of 100%
- Enable employer contribution rates to be kept as stable as possible

The Committee has translated its objectives into a suitable strategic asset allocation benchmark for the Fund. 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.

It is intended that the Fund’s investment strategy will be reviewed at least every three years following actuarial valuations of the Fund.

In addition, the Committee monitors its investment strategy on an ongoing basis, focusing on factors including, but not limited to:

- Suitability given the Fund’s level of funding and liability profile
- The level of expected risk
- Outlook for asset returns

The Committee also monitors the Fund’s actual allocation on a regular basis to ensure it does

not notably deviate from the target allocation. Actual against target allocation for each of the main asset classes is recorded within the quarterly performance monitoring report.

Fund Investment Beliefs and Responsible Investment and Climate policy

The Investment beliefs of the Committee are set out in Appendix 1. The Committee has also developed an extensive set of beliefs and policies on responsible investment and climate risk which are set out in Appendix 2.

Investment in a Variety of investments

Asset classes

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, debt instruments, 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.

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.

The Fund's target investment strategy is set out below, as well as strategic ranges for each asset class, as the Fund works towards the new target allocation over time. 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.

Table 1: Fund allocation

	Strategic Target	Strategic Ranges
Global Equity	50.0	45.0-55.0
Private Equity	0.0	0
Total Growth	50.0	45.0-55.0
Property	10.0	8.0-12.0
Infrastructure	10.0	8.0-12.0
Multi-asset credit	9.0	7.0-11.0
Private Debt	5.0	3.5-6.5
Impact	10.0	8.0-12.0
Total Income	44.0	34.5-53.5
Corporate Bonds	0.0	0
Index Linked Gilts	6.0	4.5-7.5
Total Protection	6.0	4.5-7.5

Cash	0.0	0.0-2.0
Total Fund	100.0	0

As part of the 31 March 2022 actuarial valuation the Fund Actuary has assumed a discount rate and therefore required rate of return on the Fund assets of 4.3% p.a. This includes an allowance for prudence. The Committee believes that the current investment strategy will generate returns in excess of the required return while taking an appropriate degree of risk and tests the ability of the strategy to meet the Fund's objectives as part of the strategy review process.

Managers

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.

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. 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. The manager of the passive funds in which the Fund holds a mix of investments within each pooled fund that reflects that of their respective benchmark indices.

The approach to risk, including the ways in which risks are to be measured and managed

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 an active risk management 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. One of the Committee's overarching beliefs is to only take as much investment risk as is necessary.

The principal risks affecting the Fund are set out below, we also discuss the Fund's approach to managing these risks and the contingency plans that are in place:

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 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. The Committee carried out a strategic review following the completion of the 2022 actuarial valuation and reviewed the probability of achieving the Fund's objectives and the level of risk being taken within the strategy. 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.

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.

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.

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 including climate risks reduce the Fund’s ability to generate long-term returns.
- Manager underperformance - The failure by the fund managers to achieve the rate of investment return assumed in setting their mandates.

The Committee measure and manage asset risks as follows:

The Fund’s strategic asset allocation benchmark invests in a diversified range of asset classes. The Committee has put in place rebalancing arrangements to ensure the Fund’s “actual allocation” does not deviate substantially from its target. 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.

The Fund invests in a range of overseas markets which provides a diversified approach to currency markets; the Committee also assesses the Fund’s currency risk during their risk analysis. Currently the Fund will invest in liquid assets on an unhedged basis, but will aim to invest in illiquid assets on a hedged basis where possible.

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, using a range of approaches for equity investment and having a proportion of the Fund’s assets managed on a passive basis. The Committee assesses 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.

Details of the Fund’s approach to managing ESG risks is set out later in this document.

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.

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.

The approach to pooling investments, including the use of collective investment vehicles and shared services

The Fund is a participating scheme in the London Collective Investment Vehicle (CIV) Pool. The structure and basis on which the London CIV Pool operates is regularly reported to the Government.

Assets to be invested in the Pool

The Fund's intention is to invest its assets through the London CIV Pool, as and when suitable Pool investment solutions become available. The key criteria for assessment of Pool solutions will be as follows:

- 1 That the Pool enables access to an appropriate solution that meets the objectives and benchmark criteria set by the Fund
- 2 That there is a clear financial benefit to the Fund in investing in the solution offered by the Pool, should a change of provider be necessary.

At the time of preparing this statement the Fund has already invested the following assets via the London CIV Pool:

Asset class	Sub Fund (Manager)	% of Fund assets	Benchmark and performance objective
Global equities	Newton	12.0	Benchmark: MSCI All Countries World Index Performance objective: At least 1.5% above benchmark over rolling 3 year period (net of fees)
Sustainable global equities	RBC	14.1	Benchmark: MSCI All Countries World Index Performance objective: At least 1.5% above benchmark over rolling 3 year period (net of fees)
Multi-asset credit	CQS PIMCO	3.3	Benchmark: SONIA Performance objective: +4.0% p.a. (net of fees)
Diversified Growth Funds	Baillie Gifford	5.7	Benchmark: 3 month LIBOR + 3% Performance objective: 3% above benchmark over rolling 3 year period (gross of fees)
Diversified Growth Funds	Pyrford	5.8	Benchmark: 3 month LIBOR + 3% Performance Objective: 3% above benchmark over rolling 3 year period

			(gross of fees)
Private Debt	Pemberton, Churchill	2.8	Zero benchmark Performance objective: +6.0% to +8.0% p.a. (net of fees)
Renewable Infrastructure	Foresight, BlackRock, Quinbrook, Stonepeak	2.0	Zero benchmark Performance objective: IRR (net of fees) of 7 - 10 %, with a target yield 3 - 5% per annum

The fund holds **15.2% or £121.1m** of its assets 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. The Fund agrees for the London CIV to monitor the passive funds as part of the broader pool.

At the time of preparing this statement the Fund holds the following mandates outside of the London CIV. Opportunities for investing in these asset classes through the CIV will be reviewed as and when opportunities arise.

Asset class	Manager	% of Fund assets	Benchmark and performance objectives	Reason for not investing via the London CIV Pool
Global Equities	Harding Loevner	18.3	Benchmark: MSCI All Countries World NDR Index Performance objective: 3% above benchmark over rolling 3 year period (gross of fees)	No equivalent manager deemed available
Infrastructure	Partners Group	5.0	Zero benchmark +7.0% to +12.0% p.a. (net of fees) depending on fund	Already committed to investing with existing manager
Multi-asset credit	M&G (Alpha Opps Fund)	6.8	Benchmark: 3 Month LIBOR + 3% Performance objective: 3 Month LIBOR + 3 to 5 %	No equivalent LCIV manager available at present - to be kept under review
Property	Blackrock	3.3	Benchmark: IPD UK All Pooled Property Funds Index Performance objective: To outperform the benchmark	No property managers on London CIV

Property	LaSalle	1.7	Benchmark: IPD UK All Pooled Property Funds Index Performance objective: To outperform the benchmark	No property managers on London CIV
Property	Invesco	2.2	Performance objective: Unleveraged return of 8-9%	No property managers on London CIV

Structure and governance of the London CIV Pool

The current structure and governance framework of the London CIV is set out below:

Stakeholders and the 2019 Governance Progress Review

An effective governance framework is key to London CIV's operation, long term success and sustainability and to our legal and regulatory requirements. The Board has invested time and effort in collaboration with shareholders, in a review of the governance framework put in place in 2018. The key message from the 2019/20 governance progress review was that whilst in general, formal arrangements were working satisfactorily, the business model needed to be characterised by visibly higher levels of Client Fund engagement. London CIV is therefore implementing enhancements to the governance framework, in particular in respect of arrangements for Client Fund engagement in fund decision-making and Client Fund oversight. As part of our ongoing work on Board and Committee effectiveness, we will work to make the Shareholder Committee as effective as possible and improve the opportunities for engagement with those not on the Committee and the flow of information between the Committee and other shareholders.

Changes include the creation of a Responsible Investment Reference Group and a Cost Transparency Working Group (CTWG) together with enhanced arrangements for the involvement of Client Funds in the development of LCV funds including mandate seed investor groups. There is now a monthly "Meet the Manager" event to improve fund manager oversight involvement and a regular London CIV update.

We are amending the Shareholder Committee Terms of Reference (ToR) so that the Trade Union Observer, who provides insight on the stakeholder interests of beneficiaries, is a voting member.

We will also put in place a Disputes and Deadlock procedure.

We aim to ensure these, and other informal events, provide all shareholders with the opportunity to inform the development of our statement of strategic priorities, expectations and objectives which are reviewed by the Shareholder Committee and formally approved by all shareholders at the January General Meeting.

London CIV committee structure

FORMAL GOVERNANCE



Source: London CIV

How social, environmental or corporate governance considerations are taken into account in the selection, non-selection, retention and realisation of investments

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 Pension Committee undertakes training on a regular basis and this will include training and information sessions on matters of social responsibility, environmental risk and corporate governance.

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.

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.

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.

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.

The exercise of rights (including voting rights) attaching to investments

Voting rights

The Fund recognises the importance of its role as stewards of capital and the need to ensure the highest standards of governance and corporate responsibility in the underlying companies in which it invests. The Fund recognises that ultimately this protects the financial interests of the Fund and its beneficiaries. The Fund has a commitment to actively exercise the ownership rights attached to its investments, reflecting the Fund's conviction that responsible asset owners should maintain oversight of the companies in which they invest, 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. Further detail on the Fund's Voting policy is set out in Appendix 2.

Stewardship

The Committee has formally agreed to adhere to the Stewardship Code as published by the Financial Reporting Council. The Committee expects both the London CIV Pool and any directly appointed fund managers to also comply with the Stewardship Code and this is monitored on an annual basis.

In addition to the Fund's compliance with the Stewardship Code, the Fund believes in collective engagement and is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), through which it collectively exercises a voice across a range of corporate governance issues. Further detail on the Fund's Engagement and Stewardship policy is included in Appendix 2.

Prepared by:-

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For and on behalf of the London Borough of Sutton Pension Fund Committee

Appendix 1: Investment Beliefs

Statement of Investment Beliefs

This document sets out the investment beliefs of the Pensions Committee (the “Committee”) of the London Borough of Sutton as administering authority to the London Borough of Sutton Pension Fund (the “Fund”).

Belief: Clear and well defined objectives are essential to achieve future success

The Committee is aware that there is a need to generate a sufficient level of return from the Fund’s assets, while at the same time having a clear understanding of the potential risks and ensuring there is sufficient liquidity available to pay members’ benefits as they fall due. The Committee have considered their own priorities and believe that setting clear objectives for the Fund is key in providing focus for the way the investment strategy is implemented.

Belief: Strategic asset allocation is a key determinant of risk and return, and thus is typically more important than manager or stock selection

The Committee understands that having the appropriate strategy in place is a key driver of the Fund’s future success. As a result, priority is given to more strategic investment matters.

Belief: Funding and investment strategy are linked

The Committee understands that a number of funding related aspects feed into investment strategy decisions, including maturity, sponsor covenant and level of required return. Given this, actuarial and investment matters, most notably setting investment strategy, are looked at in tandem by the Committee.

Belief: The Committee will take an appropriate level of investment risk

As a long term LGPS Fund the Committee acknowledges the need to take investment risk to ensure the affordability and sustainability of the Fund. However, the level of risk will be set which is aligned to the long term objectives, with a view to taking appropriate and not unnecessary levels of risk and managing funding level volatility.

Belief: Long term investing provides opportunities for enhancing returns

The Committee believes that investors with long term time horizons are typically less constrained by liquidity requirements and able to better withstand periods of price volatility. As a long term investor, the Fund may choose to gain additional compensation by investing in assets that are illiquid (e.g. property, infrastructure and private equity) or may be subject to higher levels of volatility (a premium return is required for any such investments). Having this long-term focus also helps the Fund tolerate periods of active manager underperformance when the manager’s investment style is out of favour with the market.

Belief: Equities are expected to generate superior long term returns

The Committee believes that, over the longer term, equities are expected to outperform other liquid assets, in particular government bonds. The Committee is therefore comfortable that the Fund maintains a significant allocation to equities in order to support the affordability of contributions.

Belief: Diversification can provide more stable investment returns and help manage volatility The Committee believes that diversification across asset classes can help reduce the volatility of the Fund’s overall asset value and improve its risk-return characteristics. The Committee believes that investing across a range of asset classes (including, but not restricted to, equities, bonds, absolute return funds, infrastructure and property) will provide the Fund with diversification benefits.

Belief: Fees and costs matter

The Committee recognises that fees and costs reduce the Fund’s investment returns. The Committee considers the fees and costs of its investment arrangements to ensure the Fund is

getting value for money and to minimise, as far as possible, any cost leakages from its investment process. The Committee will consider paying higher fees in areas where there is real value and manager skill which can help the Fund achieve better or more consistent net of fees returns.

Belief: Funding level movements will be reflected in both the levels of cash contributions and investment risk

Should the funding level of the Fund improve or fall away from current levels the Committee will consider both the approach to funding and investment risk and will not solely look to minimise/maximise contributions or investment risk but find a balanced approach to investment and funding requirements that is aligned to the long term objectives of the Fund.

Beliefs: Market inefficiencies will provide opportunities to add value over time

The Committee believes that at times relative market movements or dislocations will provide opportunities to generate additional returns for the Fund. However, the Committee does not believe that they are best placed to capitalise on these opportunities. The Committee will therefore set mandates with the flexibility for managers to add value through allocation decisions where deemed appropriate. Alongside this the Committee will assess the position of the Fund against the long term strategic benchmark and any requirements to rebalance back toward the long term target.

Belief: Active management can add value but is not guaranteed

The Committee recognises that certain asset classes can only be accessed via active management. The Committee also recognises that active managers may be able to generate higher returns for the Fund (net of fees), or similar returns but at lower volatility, than equivalent passive exposure. The Committee will therefore use active management selectively and when doing so will aim to minimise excessive turnover in its active managers. By carefully selecting and monitoring active managers and recognising that periods of underperformance will arise, the Committee seeks to minimise the additional risk from active management, and continue to monitor active managers to ensure their mandates remain appropriate for the Fund.

Belief: Responsible Investment is important to the Committee and can have a material impact on the long term performance of its investments

The Committee recognises that Responsible Investment issues incorporating all forms of ESG issues can impact the Fund's returns and reputation. Given this, the Committee aims to be aware of, and monitor, financially material ESG-related risks and issues through the Fund's investment managers. The Committee commits to an ongoing review of its Responsible Investment policy to ensure it reflects latest industry developments and regulations and currently focuses on active engagement through working with managers and bodies such as the LAPFF.

Belief: There is a potential premium to be earned from illiquidity which the Fund can benefit from

The Committee believes that there are some more illiquid asset classes which the Fund can invest in where the Fund will benefit from the illiquid nature of the investments through attractive risk adjusted returns. The Committee will consider what is deemed an appropriate allocation to illiquid assets in the context of the changing net cashflow position of the Fund and will continue to monitor this over time.

Appendix 2: Responsible Investment Policy

Statement of Responsible Investment

The Committee acts as a responsible and active investor/owner through considered voting of share and ensuring that the Fund's managers engage with investee company management as part of the investment process.

The Committee considers the Fund's approach to responsible investment in two key areas:

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

The following principles set out the Fund's approach:

- The Committee recognises that their duty is to act in the best financial interests of the Fund's beneficiaries. The Committee believes that environmental, social and corporate governance ("ESG") issues can have a material financial impact on the long-term performance of its investments and consideration of such factors is a part of their fiduciary duty.
- The Fund's investment managers including the London CIV are expected to take account of ESG factors as part of their investment analysis and decision-making process. Further, ESG issues will be an explicit factor in considering the appointment of any new investment manager, mandate and benchmark.
- The Fund's investment managers are expected to incorporate reporting on ESG factors into their regular reporting. This includes information on voting and engagement, in addition to details on how the investment managers are assessing and managing ESG factors in relation to their respective mandates. The Committee encourages their investment managers to develop their reporting and monitoring of ESG factors over time.
- The Committee also encourages engagement by their investment managers with investee companies on ESG factors to positively influence company behaviour and enhance the value of the holdings.
- The Committee believes that they will have greater influence on the future direction of companies if they remain invested. Overall engagement activities are viewed by the Committee as a key element of the broader approach to responsible investing. Remaining invested provides the Fund with a voice on how companies are generating their revenues and how they will change in the future. The Committee view divestment as being the last resort.
- The Committee intends to make use of collaboration with other funds to pursue their engagement policy. To help with this, the Fund is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum ("LAPFF"), one of the UK's leading collaborative shareholder engagement groups.
- The Committee is also seeking greater transparency of the ESG relative risks associated with their underlying investments.

- The Committee may consider portfolio 'tilts' in line with ESG or responsible investment objectives. However, these will only be applied where the Committee believes the tilt will protect or enhance financial value.
- The Committee wishes to take a proactive approach to Responsible Investment and Climate Change risk factors, which will be reflected in the implementation of the Fund's investment strategy.
- The Committee believes that companies that consider sustainability issues and engage proactively with the transition to a low carbon economy will be more successful in the longer run.

The Committee also has a number of ESG related beliefs which are integrated into the Fund's overall belief statement.

Stewardship - Voting & Engagement

The Fund recognises the importance of responsible and active ownership and has a duty to exercise its stewardship and active ownership responsibilities (such as use of proxy voting rights and encouraging its appointed investment managers to actively engage with investee companies) effectively by using its influence as a long-term investor to encourage positive behaviour.

- The Fund supports the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum ("LAPFF") stance regarding engagement with investee companies, rather than divestment from certain sectors. The Panel considers that pursuing an engagement-led approach is consistent with its fiduciary duty to members, and allows the Fund, through the actions of its appointed investment managers, to be an active participant in encouraging the companies in which it invests to transform and adapt to meet the needs of a changing world, including supporting the transition to a low carbon economy.

- In the first instance, the Fund expects its appointed fund managers (including London CIV) will use engagement tools to improve standards and long-term sustainability characteristics of investee companies. Where this proves unsuccessful, the Fund would support a decision to divest. The Fund will communicate its beliefs to its appointed fund managers and expects that they will provide evidence of their engagement activity, including case studies, on an annual basis.

- Besides exclusions made purely on the basis of investment characteristics (i.e., investment in sectors which, in the view of the appointed investment managers, do not have a sustainable future or attractive potential), the Fund do not support maintaining an 'exclusions list' of sectors or stocks, and will avoid selecting investment managers which make exclusionary decisions based on ethical or moral principles.

- The Fund will monitor the stewardship activity of its appointed fund managers (including London CIV) and expects that they will highlight examples of thematic voting (for example, on matters such as climate change, human rights, and strong standards of corporate governance) and outcomes.

- In the event that voting rights are not used, the Fund will ask that their appointed fund managers explain why this is the case.

- The Fund will request details from their appointed fund managers (including London CIV) regarding how voting decisions are made (e.g. whether based on recommendations of proxy voting agencies), and seek explanation of voting activity which conflicts with the Committee's agreed priorities (e.g. where votes are cast against introduction of TCFD, formal carbon target reductions, best practice in corporate governance standards; etc).

The Fund believes that collaboration via the London CIV gives rise to stewardship and engagement opportunities, as does the Fund's continued membership of LAPFF as well as broader collaboration with other investors.

- The Fund will engage with the London CIV regarding prioritisation of engagement themes, and use collective weight of institutional capital to impress upon their appointed investment managers the importance of these.
- The Fund will continue to participate in LAPFF to actively shape their agenda and priorities on stewardship matters.
- The Fund may consider joining other investment industry collaboration initiatives in future to work with other investors to achieve greater traction on sustainability issues.

Climate change actions

Considering the implications of, and seeking to mitigate, climate change related risks as well as take advantage of opportunities is consistent with the Fund's fiduciary duty and is fundamental to the ability to continue to generate long-term sustainable returns within the Fund's investment portfolio. Accordingly, the Fund recognises that climate change is one of the material ESG factors that pose a potential financial risk over the Fund's investment timescale.

- The Fund will communicate its view of the importance of climate change as a key risk to the Fund's appointed investment managers (including London CIV). The Panel will also communicate its view that there is the potential for investment opportunities to arise as a result of the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- The Fund expects its appointed investment managers (including London CIV) to provide evidence of their consideration of climate change as a factor which affects portfolio construction on an ongoing basis.
- The Panel expects that its appointed investment managers (including London CIV) will actively support the transition to a low-carbon economy by supporting low-carbon energy investment, resolutions regarding carbon target reduction, and corporate disclosures in line with the Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures ("TCFD") framework.
- The Fund will communicate to its appointed fund managers its belief that corporate disclosures under the TCFD framework assist in understanding carbon exposure across the production and supply chain, and expects that they will support motions to introduce TCFD reporting.

The Fund recognises that exposure to fossil fuel investments is one component of overall exposure to climate change risks and acknowledges the importance of considering climate change risk holistically.

- The Fund will undertake climate risk analysis across the Fund's portfolio to establish the Fund's exposure over time to climate risk.
- The Fund will seek to adopt and report on the recommendations of TCFD within a 12 month period of the approval of this policy statement.
- The Fund will set an ambition to achieve net zero by 2050.