ITEM No …8……….

REPORT TO: **PENSION SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE & PENSION BOARD – 23 JUNE 2025**

REPORT ON: **FUNDING STRATEGY STATEMENT 2025**

REPORT BY: **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

REPORT NO: **167-2025**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report reviews the Funding Strategy Statement for Tayside Pension Fund.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Funding Strategy Statement is required to be reviewed annually, and the Sub-Committee is asked to approve, noting the introduction of alternative treatment of employer exit credits following the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 which came into force on 1st April 2025.

Members are also asked to note that following update to the actuary's stochastic model regarding assumptions for cessation valuations without guarantor, to allow for the recent increase in market volatility, Barnet Waddingham have confirmed that they have maintained the probability of a deficit arising in the future at 15%.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial costs although the funding strategy does have indirect impact on employers' contribution rates. This strategy is designed to minimise risk of financial impact.

4 INTRODUCTION

It is the responsibility of Dundee City Council, acting in its capacity as Administering Authority to the Tayside Pension Fund, to prepare, publish and maintain the Funding Strategy Statement having regard to guidance produced in February 2016 by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in a document entitled "Preparing and Maintaining a Funding Strategy Statement".

The initial Funding Strategy Statement (Article III of the Minute of Meeting of the Superannuation Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee of 1 March 2006, Report No 57-2006 refers) states that the pension regulations require the Fund Actuary to have regard to it as part of the process for the actuarial valuation of the Fund. The previous Funding Strategy Statement (Article XVI of the Minute of Meeting of the Pension Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee of 18 March 2024, report no 83-2024 refers) which took account of the triennial valuation of 31 March 2023.

5 NEW SCOTTISH AMENDMENT REGULATIONS

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 came into force on 1st April 2025. These regulations outline how a Scottish LGPS Funds must determine the amount of exit credit due to be paid to an exiting employer. However, they do not apply to any historical exit credits that have been paid before 2 April 2025.

Prior to this change, Scottish Funds were obliged to pay out any surplus identified in a cessation valuation in full as an exit credit and was no discretion over the amount payable. From 2 April 2025, funds will be required to exercise discretion over the amount of any exit credit payable to a ceasing employer. Further detail is provided in section 7 of the Funding Strategy Statement.

6 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

7 CONSULTATIONS

All participating bodies have been consulted in the drafting of the Funding Strategy Statement. The Chief Executive and Head of Democratic & Legal Services have also been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

PAUL THOMSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES **17 JUNE 2025**

APPENDIX 1

FUNDING STRATEGY STATEMENT

JUNE 2025

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1 OVERVIEW

1.1 This Funding Strategy Statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 56 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (the Regulations). The Statement describes the strategy of Dundee City Council acting in its capacity as Administering Authority (the Administering Authority) for the funding of Tayside Pension Fund (the Fund).

1.2 As required by Regulation 56(4), the Statement has been prepared having regard to guidance first published by CIPFA in March 2004, with revisions in September 2016 to reflect the introduction of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the new 2015 scheme and changes to investment regulations.

2 PURPOSES OF THE STATEMENT

2.1 The four main purposes of this Statement are:

- To establish a clear and transparent strategy, specific to the Fund, which will identify how employer's pension liabilities are best met going forward.
- To support the regulatory requirement in relation to the desirability of maintaining as constant employer contribution rates as possible.
- To ensure solvency and long-term cost efficiencies are met.
- To take a prudent longer-term view of funding the Fund's liabilities.

3 CONSULTATION

3.1 In accordance with Regulation 56(3), all employers participating within the Fund have been consulted on the contents of this Statement and their views have been considered in formulating the Statement. However, the Statement describes a single strategy for the Fund as a whole.

3.2 In addition, the Administering Authority has had regard to the Fund's Statement of Investment Principles published under Regulation 12 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2010 (the Investment Regulations), as required by Regulation 56(4)(b)

3.3 The Fund Actuary, Barnett Waddingham, has also been consulted on the contents of this Statement.

4 PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE FUND

Purpose of the Fund

4.1 The purpose of the Fund is:

- To pay out monies in respect of Local Government Pension Scheme (the Scheme) benefits, transfer values, costs, charges, and expenses.
- To receive monies in respect of contributions, transfer values and investment income and other charges, costs, and expenses.

The Aims of the Fund in Relation to the Funding Strategy

4.2 The aims of the Fund in relation to the Funding Strategy are set out below.

The first aim is to enable employer contribution rates to be kept as constant as possible and at reasonable cost to the Scheme Employers and to the taxpayers.

4.3 The Administering Authority recognises that the requirement to keep employer contribution rates as constant as possible can run counter to the following requirements:

- the regulatory requirement to secure solvency, and that contribution rates be set at such a level to ensure that liabilities can be met as they arise

- that contribution rates are not set at a level that gives rise to additional costs (e.g. deferring costs to the future) to ensure long term cost efficiency

- the requirement that the costs should be reasonable, and
- maximising income from investments within reasonable cost parameters (see the fourth aim).

4.4 Producing low volatility in employer contribution rates requires material investment in assets that 'match' the employer's liabilities. In this context 'match' means assets that behave in a similar manner to the liabilities as economic conditions alter. For the liabilities represented by benefits payable by the Scheme, such assets would tend to comprise index linked gilt edged investments.

4.5 Other classes of assets, such as shares and property, are perceived to offer higher long-term rates of return, on average, and consistent with the requirement to maximise the returns from investments, the Administering Authority invests a substantial proportion of the Fund in such assets. However, these assets are riskier in nature and that risk can manifest itself in volatile returns over short-term periods and a failure to deliver the expected return in the long-term.

4.6 This short-term volatility in investment returns can produce a consequent volatility in the measured financial and funding position of the Fund at successive valuations, with knock on effects on employer contribution rates. The impact on employer rates can be mitigated by use of longer-term actuarial funding models, smoothing adjustments and using volatility reserves at each valuation.

4.7 The Administering Authority recognises that there is a balance to be struck between the investment policies adopted, the actuarial funding models used at valuations and the resultant smoothness of employer contribution rates from one valuation period to the next.

The second aim is to ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet all liabilities as they fall due.

4.8 The Administering Authority recognises the need to ensure that the Fund has, always, sufficient liquid assets to be able to pay pensions, transfer values, costs, charges, and other expenses. It is the Administering Authority's policy that such expenditure is met, in the first instance, from incoming employer and employee contributions to avoid the expense of disinvesting assets. The Administering Authority monitors the position daily to ensure that all cash requirements can be met.

The third aim is to manage employers' liabilities effectively.

4.9 The Administering Authority seeks to ensure that all employers' liabilities are managed effectively. In a funding context, this is achieved by seeking regular actuarial and investment advice, ensuring that employers and Pension Sub-Committee members are properly informed and through regular monitoring of the financial and funding position.

The fourth aim is to maximise the income from investments within reasonable risk parameters.

4.10 The Administering Authority recognises the desirability of maximising investment income within reasonable risk parameters. Investment returns higher than those available on government stocks are sought through investment in other asset classes such as shares and property. The Administering Authority ensures that risk parameters are reasonable by:

- restricting investment to the levels permitted by the Investment Regulations,
- restricting investment to asset classes generally recognised as appropriate for UK pension funds,

- analysing the potential risk represented by those asset classes in collaboration with the Fund's Actuary, Investment Advisors and Fund Investment Managers.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE KEY PARTIES

5.1 The three parties whose responsibilities to the Fund are of particular relevance are the Administering Authority, the Employers, and the Fund Actuary.

Administering Authority

5.2 The key responsibilities of the Administering Authority are set out below.

The first key responsibility is to collect employer and employee contributions and, as far as the Administering Authority is able to, ensuring these contributions are paid by the due date.

5.3 Individual employers must pay contributions in accordance with Regulations 62, 63 and 64 of the Regulations.

5.4 The Administering Authority has advised all employers of its policy on the remittance of pension contributions and the procedures which will be taken in the event of late or non-payment.

5.5 It is a legal requirement that pension contributions be paid to the Fund by the 19th of the month following the month that they were deducted from employees' pay.

5.6 The Administering Authority will ensure that action is taken to recover assets from Admission Bodies whose Admission Agreement has ceased by:

- requesting that the Fund Actuary calculates the deficit at the date of the closure of the Admission Agreement,
- notifying the Admission Body that it must meet any deficit at the cessation of the Agreement.

The second key responsibility is to invest surplus monies in accordance with the Regulations.

5.7 The Administering Authority will comply with the Investment Regulations.

The third key responsibility is to ensure that cash is available to meet liabilities as and when they fall due.

5.8 The Administering Authority recognises this duty and discharges it in the manner set out in the Aims of the Fund in relation to the Funding Strategy.

The fourth key responsibility is to manage the valuation process in consultation with the Fund Actuary.

5.9 The Administering Authority ensures it communicates effectively with the Fund Actuary to:

- agree timescales for the provision of information and provision of valuation results,
- ensure provision of data of suitable accuracy,
- ensure that the Fund Actuary is clear about the Funding Strategy,
- ensure that participating employers receive appropriate communication throughout the process,
- ensure that reports are made available as required by Guidance and Regulation.

The fifth key responsibility is to prepare and maintain a Statement of Investment Principles and a Funding Strategy Statement after due consultation with interested parties.

5.10 The Administering Authority will ensure that both documents are prepared and maintained in the required manner.

The sixth key responsibility is to monitor all aspects of the Fund's performance and funding and amend these two documents if required.

5.11 The Administering Authority monitors the investment performance and the financial and funding position of the Fund on a quarterly basis.

5.12 The Statement of Investment Principles and Funding Strategy Statement will be formally reviewed annually unless circumstances dictate earlier amendment.

Individual Employers

5.13 Individual employers are responsible for:

- deducting contributions from employees' pay,
- paying all contributions, including their employer contribution as determined by the Actuary, promptly by the due date,
- paying any interest due under Regulation 66 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018,
- exercising discretions within the regulatory framework and ensuring the Administering Authority has copies of current policies covering those discretions,
- paying for added years in accordance with agreed arrangements,
- paying the Strain on the Fund costs resulting from early retirements or exercises of discretion allowing the early payment of deferred benefits. Payment is due immediately unless it has been agreed that payment can be spread over a short period of years,
- notifying the Administering Authority promptly of all changes to membership, or other changes which affect future funding.
- providing timeous returns annually or monthly, as agreed, and for valuation purposes.
- ensuring that there is suitable covenant protection in place in the event of cessation.
- providing such financial and covenant information as is necessary for the Administering Authority to properly assess the funding risk relating to each employer.

The Fund Actuary

5.14 The key responsibilities of the Fund Actuary are set out below.

The first key responsibility is to prepare valuations.

5.15 The Fund Actuary will prepare valuations, including the setting of employers' contribution rates, after agreeing assumptions with the Administering Authority and having regard to the Funding Strategy Statement and relevant admission agreements.

5.16 Valuations will also be prepared in accordance with generally accepted actuarial methods and reported on in accordance with Technical Actuarial Standards (TAS's) issued by the Financial Reporting Council, to the extent that the TAS's are relevant to the Scheme.

The second key responsibility is to prepare advice and calculations in connection with bulk transfers individual benefit-related matters together with any ad-hoc requirements agreed with the administering authority.

5.17 Such advice will take account of the financial and funding position and Funding Strategy Statement, along with other relevant matters.

6 SOLVENCY

6.1 The Administering Authority will prudently seek to secure the solvency of the Fund. For this purpose, the Administering Authority defines solvency as being achieved when the value of the Fund's assets is greater than or equal to the value of the Fund's liabilities in respect of service prior to the measurement date when measured using 'ongoing' actuarial methods and assumptions.

6.2 Ongoing actuarial methods and assumptions are taken to be measured by use of the Projected Unit method of valuation, using assumptions generally recognised as suitable for an open, ongoing UK pension fund with a sponsoring employer of sound covenant. Where an employer is closed to new members alternative methods may be adopted on the advice of the Fund Actuary.

6.3 The financial assumptions used to assess the financial position will have regard to the yields and long-term returns that are expected from the underlying investment strategy net of costs and less a margin for prudence. The Administering Authority understands the risks of such an approach if those additional returns fail to materialise.

6.4 Consistent with the aim of enabling employer contribution rates to be kept as nearly constant as possible, and having regard to the risks inherent in such an approach, the Administering Authority has also agreed with the Fund Actuary the use of explicit smoothing adjustments and using volatility reserves in making the solvency measurement.

6.5 The Fund will regularly carry out employer covenant reviews to obtain key financial and non-financial information about employers. This can include details of funding sources and financial statements. The results of the covenant reviews are passed to the Fund's Actuary at each actuarial valuation and may be factored into setting any individual employer contributions.

7 FUNDING STRATEGY

Valuation Methods

7.1 Consistent with the aim of enabling employer contribution rates to be kept as nearly constant as possible, contribution rates are set by use of the Projected Unit valuation method for most employers.

7.2 The Projected Unit method produces contribution rates which target solvency over fixed periods in the future. It will tend to produce more stable contribution rates for those employers who expect a future flow of new entrants to the Fund, which would tend to keep the age distribution of members stable.

Valuation assumptions and funding model

7.3 In completing the actuarial valuation it is necessary to formulate assumptions about the factors affecting the Fund's future finances such as inflation, pay increases, investment returns, rates of mortality, early retirement, and staff turnover etc.

7.4 The assumptions adopted at the valuation can therefore be considered as:

- The statistical assumptions which are essentially estimates of the likelihood of benefits and contributions being paid, and
- The financial assumptions which will determine the estimates of the amount of benefits and contributions payable and their current or present value.

Future price inflation

7.5 The base assumption in any valuation is the future level of price inflation over a period commensurate with the duration of the liabilities. This is derived by considering the average difference in yields over the appropriate period from conventional and index linked gilts during the six months straddling the valuation date to provide an estimate of future price inflation as measured by the Retail Price Index (RPI). The RPI assumption adopted as at 31 March 2023 was 3.15% p.a.

Future pension increases

7.6 Pension increases are linked to changes in the level of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Inflation as measured by the CPI has historically been less than RPI due mainly to different calculation methods. A deduction of 0.35% p.a. is therefore made to the RPI assumption to derive the CPI assumption. The CPI assumption adopted as at 31 March 2023 was 2.7% p.a.

Future pay inflation

7.7 As some of the benefits are linked to pay levels at retirement, it is necessary to assume as to future levels of pay inflation. Historically, there has been a close link between price and pay inflation with pay increases exceeding price inflation in the longer term. The long-term pay increase assumption adopted as at 31 March 2023 was CPI plus 1% p.a.

Future investment returns/discount rate

7.8 To determine the value of accrued liabilities and derive future contribution requirements it is necessary to discount future payments to and from the Fund to present day values.

7.9 The discount rate that is applied to the projected liabilities reflects a prudent estimate of the rate of investment return that is assumed to be earned from the underlying investment strategy by considering average market yields in the six months straddling the valuation date. The discount rate so determined may be referred to as the “ongoing” discount rate. The discount rate adopted for the 31 March 2023 valuation was 4.3% p.a.

7.10 For some employers, an adjustment may be made to the discount rate in relation to the remaining liabilities, once all active members are assumed to have retired if at that time (the projected “termination date”), the employer becomes an exiting employer under Regulation 62.

7.11 The Fund Actuary will incorporate such an adjustment after consultation with the administering authority.

7.12 The adjustment to the discount rate for employers may be set to a higher funding target at the projected termination date, so that there are sufficient assets to fund the remaining liabilities on a more prudent basis rather than the ongoing basis if the Fund do not believe that there is another Scheme employer to take on the responsibility of the liabilities after the employer has exited the Fund. The aim is to lower the risk of deficits arising after the termination date.

Asset valuation

7.13 For the purposes of the valuation, the asset value used is the market value of the accumulated Fund at the valuation date adjusted to reflect average market conditions during the six months straddling the valuation date and may also include a volatility reserve as a margin against future adverse experience.

Statistical assumptions

7.14 The statistical assumptions incorporated into the valuation, such as future mortality rates, are based on national statistics. These are adjusted as appropriate to reflect the individual circumstances of the Fund and/or individual employers.

7.15 Further details of all of the assumptions adopted are included in the latest actuarial valuation report.

Pooling of employers

7.16 Consistent with the requirement to keep employer contribution rates as nearly constant as possible, the Administering Authority permits all employers to be treated as a group for the purposes of setting contribution rates.

7.17 An exception to this general rule will be where an employer closes access to the fund for new employees or once employers have had no new membership for a five-year period, the employers will be perceived to have closed fund status. This will have consequences for the liability profile and the actuary may set a separate rate for individual employers in this instance.

7.18 The Administering Authority recognises that common rates can give rise to cross subsidies from one employer to another over time. This can arise from different membership profiles of the different employers and from different experience, for example an excess of ill health retirements from one employer could lead to it being subsidised by other grouped employers. However, over longer time periods it would be expected that the experience will even out between employers and each employer will, on average, pay a fair level of contributions. The benefit of common rate is that it should produce a less volatile contribution rate on average for each individual employer.

Recovery Period

7.19 Where a valuation reveals that the Fund is in surplus or deficiency against the solvency measure, employer contribution rates will be adjusted to target restoration of the solvent position over a period of years (the recovery period). The recovery period applicable is set by the Administering Authority in consultation with the Fund Actuary, with a view to balancing the various funding requirements against the risks involved.

7.20 The Administering Authority recognises that a larger proportion of the Fund's liabilities are expected to arise as benefit payments over long periods of time. However, the Administering Authority also recognises the risk in relying on long recovery periods and has agreed with the Fund Actuary to adopt prudent recovery periods consistent with the objective of keeping employer contribution rates as stable as possible.

Valuation, and Recovery of Exit Payments where an organisation (including an Admission body) ceases to be an employer in the Fund, or in circumstances where it is likely that an organisation will cease to be an employer in the Fund.

7.21 When an organisation (including an admission body) ceases to be an employer participating in the Fund (or, in the opinion of the Administering Authority, is likely to cease to participate in the Fund), the Fund Actuary will carry out a cessation valuation. The Administering Authority will then pursue the recovery of any deficiency from that organisation based on that valuation. The Administering Authority has determined (in line, in particular, with aims one and two set out in Part 2 above) that cessation valuations will be undertaken on a more prudent basis to the on-going funding basis on which contributions are determined for on-going employers. The level of prudence will be set by the actuaries using a stochastic approach with the aim to limit the probability of a deficit arising in the future to 15%. This basis is less volatile than a gilts-cessation basis and should lead to more stable cessation liabilities while providing sufficient protection for the other employers in the Fund. The Administering Authority may, but is not required to, consider making an exception to its policy on the basis used to perform cessation valuations in certain circumstances having regard always to relevant factors including (i) the requirements of the Regulations, (ii) the impact that any such exception may have on other employers and stakeholders in the Fund, (iii) the actuarial advice it receives and (iv) the particular circumstances relating to the exiting employer (for example where there is a merger of employers).

7.22 Any surplus in the Fund in respect of the exiting employer may be treated differently to a payment of an exit credit, subject to the agreement between the relevant parties and any legal documentation. Having regard to any relevant considerations, the administering authority will take the following approach to the payment of exit credits:

(i) Any employer who cannot demonstrate that they have been exposed to underfunding risk during their participation in the Fund will not be entitled to an exit credit payment. This is on the basis that these employers would not have been asked to pay an exit payment had a deficit existed at the time of exit.

(ii) The level of risk that an employer has borne will be considered when determining the amount of any exit credit. It is the responsibility of the exiting employer to set out why the arrangements make payment of an exit credit appropriate.

(iii) Any exit credit payable will be subject to a maximum of the actual employer contributions paid into the Fund.

(iv) The administering authority will pay out any exit credits within six months of the cessation date where possible. A longer time may be agreed between the administering authority and the exiting employer where necessary. For example, if the employer does not provide all the relevant information to the administering authority within one month of the cessation date the administering authority will not be able to guarantee payment within six months of the cessation date.

(v) Under the Regulations, the administering authority has the discretion to consider any other relevant factors in the calculation of any exit credit payable, and they will seek legal advice where appropriate.

7.23 If an employer (other than a transferee[1] admission body) fails and cannot pay the contributions due, Regulations require that all employers in the Fund must pay revised contributions to meet the shortfall.

7.24 In recent years the Administering Authority has adopted a policy of requiring admission bodies (other than transferee[1] admission bodies) to obtain a guarantor. A guarantor is required to agree that it will meet the shortfall if the admission body closes and cannot pay the contributions due.

7.25 Some longer standing admission bodies do not have a guarantor. If one of these were to cease to be an employer in the Fund in circumstances where they could not pay the contributions due, then all employers in the Fund would be required to pay revised contributions to meet the shortfall.

7.26 The position is different for transferee[1] admission bodies. If a transferee admission body fails and cannot pay the contributions due, then the Scheme employer in relation to that transferee admission body must pay revised contributions to meet the shortfall.

7.27 All employers must provide the Administering Authority with such information as it may reasonably request to enable it to review the financial and funding risk relating to participating employers. If it appears to the administering authority that the insolvency risk of an employer is deemed to be material, then the Administering Authority will seek to agree measures (including bonds, security over assets or additional funding or security) with the employer to minimise the risk of any deficit on cessation being met from remaining employers.

Stepping

7.28 Consistent with the requirement to keep employer contribution rates as nearly constant as possible, the Administering Authority will consider, at each valuation, whether new contribution rates should be payable immediately, or should be reached by a series of steps over future years. The Administering Authority will discuss with the Fund Actuary the risks inherent in such an approach and will examine the financial impact and risks associated for each employer. The Administering Authority's policy is to limit the number of permitted steps to three annual steps.

Monitoring of the Financial and Funding Position between Valuations

7.29 The Administering Authority will monitor the financial and funding position of the Fund between triennial valuations. If it is considered appropriate, an indicative interim valuation is carried out. The purpose of this monitoring process is to give employers advance warning of likely changes

[1] a body that is providing or will provide a service or assets in connection with the exercise of a function of a Scheme employer

that may be required following the next triennial valuation. This allows improved budgeting decisions to be made and allows an employer to take an informed decision on paying additional contributions.

Prepayment option

7.30 Employers have the opportunity to advance pay contributions on an annual basis and can receive a reduction in amount on prepayment. This option is predicated upon the principle of receiving contributions sooner than would have otherwise been the case, and all other things being equal, the Fund investing and earning additional investment returns on contributions paid, resulting in a lower contribution requirement over the three years.

7.31 In the case that prepayment is chosen, the advance payment is due by 30 April each year with reductions applied in line with the financial assumptions set by the Fund Actuary.

7.32 The contributions can attract reductions but the notional amounts payable to cover contributions due to the Fund are then subject to annual reviews and a balancing payment will be required from employers in any case of underpayment compared to the amount due in accordance with the Actuary's Rates and Adjustments Certificate, based on actual pensionable payroll during the year. Prepayments are notional amounts, based on the estimated pensionable payroll for future years, as confirmed by the employer to the Fund.

8 IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS AND COUNTER MEASURES

8.1 The Administering Authority's overall policy on risk is to identify all risks to the Fund and to consider the position both in aggregate and at an individual risk level. The Administering Authority will monitor the risks to the Fund and will take appropriate action to limit the impact of these both before, and after, they emerge wherever possible. The main risks to the Fund are set out below.

Demographic (including mortality risk)

8.2 The main demographic risks include changing retirement patterns and longevity. The Administering Authority will ensure that the Fund Actuary investigates these matters at each valuation or, if appropriate, more frequently and reports on developments. The Administering Authority will agree with the Fund Actuary any changes that are necessary to the assumptions underlying the measure of solvency to allow for observed or anticipated changes.

8.3 If significant demographic changes become apparent between valuations, the Administering Authority will notify all participating employers of the anticipated impact on costs that will emerge at the next valuation and will review the bonds that are in place for transferee[1] admitted bodies.

Regulatory & Legislative

8.4 These risks relate to changes in regulations, national pension requirements or HMRC rules. The Administering Authority will keep abreast of all proposed changes and, where possible and after careful consideration, express its opinion during consultation periods. The Administering Authority's policy will be to ask the Fund Actuary to assess the impact on costs of any changes and, where these are likely to be significant, the Administering Authority will notify employers of this likely impact and the timing of any change.

Governance

8.5 The Administering Authority's policy is to require regular communication between itself and employers and to ensure regular reviews of such items as financial and funding positions and legislative changes.

Statistical/Financial (investment & inflation risk)

8.6 This covers items such as the performance of markets and the Fund's investment managers, asset reallocation in volatile markets, pay and price inflation varying from anticipated levels, or the effect of possible increases in employer contribution rates on service delivery and on employers.

8.7 The Administering Authority reviews each investment manager's performance quarterly and regularly considers the asset allocation of the Fund. It will also receive quarterly update on the effect of market movements on the Fund's overall financial and funding position.

Solvency Measure

8.8 The Administering Authority recognises that allowing for future investment returns in excess of those available on government bonds introduces an element of risk, in that those additional returns may not materialise. The Administering Authority's policy will be to monitor the underlying position assuming no such excess returns are achieved to ensure that the funding target remains realistic relative to the risk position.

Smoothing

8.9 The Administering Authority recognises that utilisation of a smoothing adjustments and volatility reserves introduces an element of risk, in that they may not produce the only measure of the underlying financial and funding position. The Administering Authority's policy is to review the impact of such adjustments at each valuation to ensure that they remain within acceptable limits.

Recovery Period

8.10 The Administering Authority recognises that permitting deficiencies to be eliminated over a recovery period rather than immediately introduces a risk that action to restore solvency is insufficient between successive measurements. The Administering Authority's policy is to discuss the risks inherent in each situation with the Fund Actuary and to limit the permitted length.

Stepping

8.11 The Administering Authority recognises that permitting contribution rate changes to be introduced by annual steps rather than immediately introduces a risk that action to restore solvency is insufficient in the early years of the process. The Administering Authority's policy is to discuss risks inherent in each situation with the Fund Actuary and limit the number of permitted steps to three annual steps.

Prepayment option

8.12 Prepayment may or may not result in higher investment returns being credited to the employer assets in the Fund. Beyond, the initial discount available on the cash contribution requirement, the principle of the prepayment option provides certainty of employer contribution, and the associated short-term cash advantages assume a positive investment return being obtained of at least the level assumed in the actuarial valuation. The extent to which there are lower returns for the period, reducing the financial benefits of the arrangement, future contribution requirements may be higher.

9 LINKS TO INVESTMENT POLICY AS SET OUT IN THE STATEMENT OF INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

9.1 The Administering Authority has produced this Funding Strategy Statement having taken an overall view of the level of risk in the investment policy set out in the Statement of Investment Principles and the funding policy set out in this statement.

9.2 In order to assist in setting the Fund's investment policy, an investment strategy review is carried out. This study examines the Fund's current investment strategy's appropriateness in light of the nature of the Fund's liabilities. The study is carried out at the total Fund level, not at the level of each employer. The strategic asset allocation benchmark adopted is set in reference to the nature of the Fund's liabilities.

9.3 The strategic asset allocation implemented is based upon an investment strategy review conducted by the Fund's Investment Advisor, Isio, and in reference to the nature of the liabilities as outlined in the Fund's 31 March 2017 actuarial valuation. The strategy review concluded that a diversified portfolio, investing across active equities (55%), passive equities (10%), property (12%), bonds (13%) and alternative and opportunistic investments (10%) remains a suitable long-term strategic asset ambition for the Fund. The degree and nature of risks attaching to such a portfolio, when taken in conjunction with the expected returns, were considered by the Committee to be appropriate for the Fund at that time.

9.4 The Administering Authority will continue to monitor the suitability of the investment policy in the light of the Fund's developing liabilities and finances.

9.5 The Administering Authority will continue to review the Funding Strategy Statement and the Statement of Investment Principles to ensure that the overall risk profile remains appropriate. Such reviews may use asset liability modelling or other analysis techniques.

10 FUTURE MONITORING

10.1 The Administering Authority plans to review formally this Statement as part of the triennial valuation process unless circumstances arise which require earlier action.

10.2 The Administering Authority will monitor the financial and funding position of the Fund on an appropriate basis at regular intervals between valuations and will discuss with the Actuary whether any significant changes have arisen that require action.