

## Investment beliefs

**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.

**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. The Committee is aware that there is need to take investment risk in order to generate a sufficient level of return.

**Return and risk should be considered relative to the Fund's liabilities, funding position and contribution strategy** – the Committee believes that as the funding position of the Fund improves, the level of risk taken by the Fund should reduce as appropriate i.e. only take as much risk as necessary. The Committee believes that there exists a relationship between the level of investment risk taken and the rate of expected investment return. In reducing risk, the Fund's expected return would typically also reduce.

**Long term investing provides opportunities for enhancing returns** - As a long-term investor it is important that the Fund acts as an asset owner. As a long term investor, the Fund may choose to gain additional compensation by investing in assets that are illiquid or may be subject to higher levels of volatility (a premium return is required for any such investments).

**Environmental, social and corporate governance ('ESG') issues can have a material impact on the long term performance of its investments** - the Committee recognises that ESG issues can impact the Fund's returns. The Committee commits to an ongoing development of its ESG policy to ensure it reflects latest industry developments and regulations and ESG is integrated into strategic considerations.

**Climate change and the expected transition to a low carbon economy is a long term financial risk to Fund outcomes** - the Committee recognises that environmental issues can impact the Fund's returns. The Committee aims to be aware of, and monitor, financially material environmental-related risks and issues through the Fund's investment managers and advisors.

**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. However the Committee also recognise that equities can be highly volatile over the short-term.

**Diversification reduces the overall volatility of the Fund's asset returns** - 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. However, the Committee also recognise that there is scope to over diversify and that any desire to diversify needs to be aligned to the Fund's governance arrangements.

**Passive management has a role to play in the Fund's structure** - the Committee recognises that passive management allows the Fund to access certain asset classes (e.g. equities) on a low cost basis and when combined with active management can help reduce the relative volatility of the Fund's performance. There is a belief that passive management is most suitable for markets that are deemed as being more efficient such as developed market equities.

**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. There is a belief that active management is most suitable for markets that are deemed as being less efficient e.g. emerging market equities, specialist markets e.g. infrastructure or where views on the relative value of different asset classes are a targeted source of value e.g. DGF mandates.

**Private markets can offer opportunities** - Private markets can offer opportunities and give higher return due to higher illiquidity premia. However it is recognised that private markets can be more expensive, less transparent (e.g. fees and drivers of return), increase the Fund's governance burden and require ongoing maintenance to achieve target exposure. Such factors must be taken into account when considering such an allocation.

**Choice of benchmark index matters** - the Committee recognises that, for each asset class, there is a range of benchmark indices that they could use. As a result, the Committee focus on the benchmark's underlying characteristics and consider how they may be appropriate for the Fund.

**Rebalancing policies are important** – the Committee recognises that rebalancing the Fund's assets towards the strategic asset allocation is important in achieving the Fund's longer term objectives, in particular following a period of strong or weak market performance.

**Fees and transaction costs matter** - . 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. It also does not seek to move in and out of investments regularly due to the cost drag. The Committee also seek to have transparency on the fees that it is paying to its providers.

**Governance “budget” matters** – The Committee recognises that the resources (and time) involved in deciding upon (and implementing) an investment strategy and structure play a part in any investment decisions made. A low governance approach to accessing markets is likely to be preferred if it can offer similar risk adjusted returns to alternative approaches.

**The London CIV is the Fund's preferred approach to implementation** – the Committee recognises the potential benefits of LGPS pooling. Their preferred route is to implement their investment strategy via the London CIV, subject to carrying out suitable due diligence on the CIV's investment offering.