

# AECOM Group Pension Scheme

## Statement of Investment Principles

December 2022

### Introduction

This document constitutes the Statement of Investment Principles ('the SIP') required under Section 35 of the Pensions Act 1995 (as amended) for the AECOM Group Pension Scheme ('the Scheme'). The Scheme operates on a fully sectionalised basis and this SIP is in respect of the following Sections:

- ✦ Scott Wilson Section
- ✦ CDO Section
- ✦ BM Section

It describes the investment policy being pursued by the Trustee of the Scheme and is in compliance with the Government's voluntary code of conduct for Institutional Investment in the UK ('the Myners Principles') and TPR's Investment Guidance for defined benefit pension schemes. This SIP also reflects the requirements of Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment and Disclosure)(Amendment) Regulations 2019.

The Scheme Actuary is Mark Woodward of Mercer and, the Investment Adviser is Schroders Solutions ("Schroders"), collectively termed 'the Advisers'.

The Trustee confirms that, before preparing this SIP, it has consulted with AECOM Limited ('the Principal Employer') and the Scheme Actuary and has obtained and considered written advice from the Investment Adviser.

The Trustee is responsible for the investment of the Scheme's assets and where it is required to make an investment decision, the Trustee always receives advice from the relevant Advisers first. It believes that this ensures that it is appropriately familiar with the issues concerned.

In accordance with the Financial Services & Markets Act 2000 ('FSMA'), the Trustee sets general investment policy, but has delegated day-to-day investment of the Scheme's assets to be undertaken through the fiduciary management service of Schroders Solutions, hereafter referred to as the 'Investment Manager'.

### Scheme Governance

The Trustee is responsible for the governance and investment of the Scheme's assets. The Trustee considers that the governance structure is appropriate for the Scheme as it allows the Trustee to make the important decisions on investment policy, while delegating the day-to-day aspects to the Investment Manager or the Advisers as appropriate.

The Trustee has appointed an Investment Committee (the 'IC') to deal with investment matters on its behalf. The IC acts as a coordinator between the Investment Adviser, Investment Manager and the Trustee.

The Trustee will review this SIP at least every three years, or following any changes to the investment strategy, and modify it with consultation from the Advisers and the Principal Employer if deemed appropriate. There will be no obligation to change this SIP, the Investment Manager or Adviser as part of such a review.

## Suitability

The Trustee has defined the investment objective and investment strategy for each Section of the Scheme with due regard to that Section's liabilities.

The Trustee has taken advice from the Advisers to ensure that the assets held by the Scheme and the investment strategy for each Section are suitable given that Section's liability profile, the Trustee's objectives, regulatory guidance and specifications in the Trust Deed.

## Statutory Funding Requirement

The Trustee will obtain and consider proper advice on the question of whether the investments and investment strategy for each Section are satisfactory, having regard to both the investment objectives and the requirement to meet any statutory funding requirements. The funding position for each Section is reviewed periodically by the Scheme Actuary, with a full actuarial valuation at least every three years.

The Trustee will consider with the Investment Adviser and the Scheme Actuary whether the results of these actuarial valuations suggest that any change to investment strategy is necessary to ensure continued compliance with the statutory funding requirement.

## Investment Objectives

The overall objective of the Scheme is to meet the benefit payments promised for each Section as they fall due.

The Trustee has set the following qualitative objectives:

1. The acquisition of suitable assets for each Section, having due regard to the risks set out in this Statement, which will generate income and capital growth to pay, together with contributions from members (made in the past) and the Employers, the benefits which each Section of the Scheme provides as they fall due.
2. To limit the risk of the assets (of each Section) being assessed as failing to meet the liabilities of that Section over the long term having regard to any statutory funding requirement.
3. To achieve a return on investments for each Section which is expected to at least meet the Scheme Actuary's assumptions over the long term.

In quantitative terms, the Trustee's current long-term objective for each Section of the Scheme is to target an investment return objective of approximately:

- ✦ Scott Wilson Section – 2.8% per annum (net of fees) in excess of that Section's liability benchmark;
- ✦ CDO Section – 3.0% per annum (net of fees) in excess of that Section's liability benchmark; and
- ✦ BM Section - 1.2% per annum (net of fees) in excess of that Section's liability benchmark

The liability benchmarks are created by Schroders Solutions and are based on the individual Section's Technical Provisions liability cashflows provided by the Scheme Actuary, Mercer. They provide an estimate of the change in value of each Section's liabilities through time, including the impact of changes in interest rates and inflation, with an appropriate adjustment made, so that they are equivalent to gilts +x% p.a. (x% being the "excess performance" defined for each Section above).

The Trustee invests in a blend of the following building blocks (where relevant for each Section) in order to target the respective return objectives and to mitigate the funding level impact of changes in liabilities:

- **Dynamic Growth assets:** Invested in a diversified range of liquid return-seeking assets with asset allocation and manager selection delegated to the Investment Manager, within asset class ranges set by the Trustee.
- **Illiquid Growth assets:** Invested in return seeking assets in private markets, with a lock-up of 18 months or more.
- **Equity Derivative Overlay Strategy (EDOS):** Invested in a combination of gilts and equity derivatives to capture equity return exposure whilst also retaining gilt collateral to support the liability hedge; enabling an efficient use of capital
- **Cashflow matching credit (CFMC) assets:** Invested in assets which distribute income/capital in order to reduce Cash flow risk, whilst also mitigating some of the interest rate risk inherent in the liabilities
- **Liability hedging assets:** A bespoke segregated liability hedge designed to reduce the interest rate and inflation risk inherent in the Technical Provisions liabilities

The Sections' strategic targets are broadly as follows:

	Scott Wilson	CDO	BM
<b>Dynamic Growth Assets (plus Illiquid Growth Assets)</b>	50.0%	55.0%	26.0%
<b>Equity Derivative Overlay Strategy</b>	20.0%	20.0%	-
<b>Cashflow Matching Credit</b>	-	4.0%	15.0%
<b>Liability Hedging Assets</b>	30.0%	21.0%	59.0%
<b>Liability Hedging Level</b>	90% - 105% of Assets	90% - 105% of Assets	90% - 105% of Technical Provisions liabilities

## Implementation of investment strategy

The Trustee has delegated the investment of the assets (of each Section of the Scheme) to the Investment Manager, which has discretion to invest the Scheme assets in underlying securities and funds, either directly or through the use of other investment managers (hereafter referred to as the 'Underlying Managers') to run the portfolio on a day-to-day basis. The Trustee has acknowledged and considered with sufficient diligence the potential conflict that may arise from the Investment Manager and the Investment Adviser being the same organisation.

## Monitoring

The Trustee will monitor the performance of the Investment Manager against the agreed performance objectives.

The Trustee, or any other suitably qualified Adviser on behalf of the Trustee, will regularly review the activities of the Investment Manager to satisfy themselves that the Investment Manager continues to carry out their work competently and has the appropriate knowledge and experience to manage the assets of the Scheme.

As part of this review, the Trustee will consider whether or not the Investment Manager:

- Is carrying out their function competently.
- Has regard to the need for diversification of investments.
- Has regard to the suitability of each investment and each category of investment.
- Has been exercising their powers of investment with a view to giving effect to the principles contained in this SIP, so far as is reasonably practical.

If the Trustee is not satisfied with the Investment Manager it will ask the Investment Manager to take steps to rectify the situation. If the Investment Manager still does not meet the Trustee's requirements, the Trustee will remove the Investment Manager and appoint another.

## Corporate Governance and Stewardship

The Trustee and Investment Manager have agreed, and will maintain, formal agreements setting out the scope of the Investment Manager's activities, charging basis and other relevant matters. The Investment Manager has been provided with a copy of this SIP and is required to exercise its powers with a view to giving effect to the principles contained herein and in accordance with subsection (2) of Section 36 of the Pensions Act 1995.

The Trustee has appointed the Investment Manager to implement the Scheme's investment strategy. The Investment Manager manages assets directly on behalf of the Trustee as well as having delegated authority to appoint, monitor and change the underlying managers.

The Investment Manager is appointed to carry out its role on an ongoing basis. The Trustee periodically reviews the overall value-for-money of using Schroders Solutions, and information in relation to costs associated with investing is included in the quarterly monitoring report. The Investment Manager's remuneration is based on the Scheme's asset size, and the Investment Manager is therefore incentivised to maximise the Scheme's asset size over the long term. The Trustee is satisfied that these arrangements incentivise the Investment Manager:

- to align its investment strategy and decisions with the Trustee's investment policies, such as their return target and the restrictions detailed in the Investment Management Agreement, and
- to assess and make decisions based on the medium- to long-term financial and non-financial performance of issuers of debt or equity, and to engage with such issuers to improve this medium- to long-term performance. The success of such engagement will contribute to the Scheme's performance, which is measured relative to the Trustee's long-term performance objectives.

The Scheme's investments are generally made via pooled investment funds, in which the Scheme's investments are pooled with those of other investors. As such, direct control of the process of engaging with the companies that issue these securities, whether for corporate governance purposes (such as capital structure) or other financially material considerations, is delegated to the Underlying Managers.

The Trustee has delegated responsibility for monitoring and voting on decisions relating to their Underlying Manager holdings to the Investment Manager. The Investment Manager has in place a voting policy which sets out how it will aim to vote at a general meeting of a pooled fund. For any special resolutions or extraordinary

general meetings, the proposed votes of Investment Manager are subject to additional sign-off by the appropriate representative of the Investment Manager.

The Investment Manager undertakes regular reviews of all Underlying Managers. These reviews incorporate benchmarking of performance and fees, with some managers on performance-related fees as well as performance reviews (including understanding key drivers of performance), investment due diligence meetings and operational due diligence reviews. The Investment Manager reviews the governance structures of Underlying Managers, as well as assessing whether their fees, expenses (and any other charges) are in line with industry peers at inception and from time to time whilst invested.

Where it can be determined, the Investment Manager assesses whether Underlying Manager remuneration arrangements are aligned with the Trustee's objectives. The method and time horizon for evaluating and remunerating Underlying Managers is determined by criteria set by the Investment Manager, as detailed above.

The Trustee acknowledges the inherent potential for conflicts of interest which exist as part of ongoing Investment management business activities. As an FCA regulated firm, the Investment Manager is required to prevent or manage conflicts of interest. Where Underlying Managers are also regulated, they are likely to be subject to such requirements to manage conflicts of interest as are applicable in their jurisdiction of incorporation or operations. The Investment Manager directly monitors these as part of their regulatory filings (where available), the Investment Manager also monitors this as part of ongoing review. The Investment Manager's Conflict of Interest policy is available publicly here:

<https://www.schroders.com/en/identification-and-management-of-conflicts-of-interest>

The Investment Manager oversees the turnover costs incurred by Underlying Managers as part of its ongoing monitoring process and evaluates such costs to determine if they are in line with peer groups and the Investment Manager's expectations. Where there are material deviations the Investment Manager engages with Underlying Managers to understand the rationale for such deviations and take appropriate action.

## **Realisation of investments**

The majority of assets are held in underlying pooled funds, most of which can be realised easily if the Trustee so requires.

The Investment Manager is permitted to hold up to 25% of on-risk assets (for each Section with the exception of the BM Section) in illiquid investments (as defined in the Fiduciary Management Agreement), which the Trustee acknowledges can take additional time to realise. The Trustee has considered this risk against the possibility of needing to realise these assets and is comfortable it is a reasonable approach to take.

## **Derivatives**

The Trustee may enter into contracts with counterparties, including investment banks, in order to execute derivative transactions. The Trustee has taken advice on the suitability of the contracts and has delegated responsibility to the Investment Manager to implement these instruments on its behalf. Derivative instruments are typically used for risk management purposes in the portfolio.

## **Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)**

For all Sections, historically members had the option to obtain further benefits by paying Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) to the Scheme. The liabilities in respect of these AVCs are equal to the value of the investments made by the contributions. From time to time the Trustee reviews the choice of investments available to members to ensure they remain appropriate to the members' needs.

## Externally Managed Assets

The Scheme also has some legacy investments which are illiquid in nature and therefore do not fall within the Investment Manager's mandate. The Scott Wilson Section has an investment in the Carlyle Strategic Partners III (CSP III) fund. The Investment Manager periodically reviews opportunities to sell this holding on the secondary market.

## Financially material investment considerations

These considerations which include the below "Risks" can affect the long-term financial performance of investments and can (but do not have to) include environmental, social and governance factors (otherwise known as "ESG") where relevant. All references to ESG also include climate change.

The Trustee's policy is to delegate consideration of financially material factors, including ESG to the Investment Manager who considers these when constructing the portfolio, including looking at Underlying Managers. All references to ESG relate to financial factors only. As part of its ongoing monitoring, the Trustee reviews some key metrics on a regular basis that are provided by the Investment Manager covering ESG which enable it to engage with the Investment Manager and understand the impact of ESG on the portfolio it is invested in.

ESG factors and stewardship are considered, in the context of long term performance, by the Investment Manager as part of the manager selection criteria. This review occurs before they are approved for investment in the portfolio. Once an Underlying Manager is appointed, the Investment Manager monitors the ESG implementation and ongoing compliance with other factors, such as stewardship, as a part of overall engagement.

## Risks

The Trustee recognises a number of risks involved in the investment of the assets of each Section of the Scheme. These risks, and how they are measured and managed, include:

- **Funding and asset/liability mismatch risk** – the risk that the funding level is adversely affected due to a mismatch between the assets and liabilities. This risk is managed in the following ways:
  - A liability benchmark is used as a proxy for the liabilities in order to measure the approximate changes in the liabilities of each Section (due to changes to the relevant gilt yields only). The Trustee monitors this change relative to the change in asset values on a quarterly basis. The objective is reviewed following each actuarial review, or when significant market or Scheme events (e.g. a significant change in inflation expectations) imply that an amendment may be appropriate.
  - The Trustee also recognises the risk of a negative impact on the funding level due to changes in the actuarial assumptions used to calculate the liabilities and variation in experience. This is managed by aiming for a higher overall investment return than implied by the liability discount rate.
  - When setting and reviewing investment strategy, the Trustee examines how the investment strategy impacts on downside risk. Downside risk of the investment strategy is also measured by reference to the liability benchmark and can therefore also be assessed as part of the quarterly review process.
  - This risk is also monitored through regular actuarial and investment reviews including monthly portfolio updates.
- **Underperformance risk** – the risk of underperforming the benchmarks and objectives set by the Trustee. This risk is minimised using the following techniques:

- Appropriate diversification across asset classes, within sectors and between individual stocks to minimise the effect of a particular stock or sector performing badly.
- The use of instruments and strategies designed to control the extent of downside exposure.
- The selective use of active management when appropriate given market conditions, the asset class considered and where the benefits (risk and/or return) are expected to outweigh the additional costs/fees.
- Regular monitoring of the managers' performance, processes and capabilities with respect to their mandate and by the diversification across multiple Underlying Managers by the Investment Manager.
- **Cash flow risk** – addressed through the monitoring of the cash flow requirement of each Section of the Scheme to control the timing of any investment/disinvestment of assets.
  - The Trustee has also put in place a dedicated cashflow matching portfolio (for some BM Section and CDO Sections of the Scheme) that is intended to mitigate the risk caused by significantly high levels of benefit payments.
- **Concentration risk** – the risk of an adverse influence on investment values from the concentration of holdings is reduced by the diversification of the assets.
- **Counterparty risk** – the risk of a counterparty to an agreement not carrying out his side of the deal. Where derivatives are used, the risk of counterparty default is reduced through the requirement in the relevant documentation that regular collateral or margin payments be made. It is also considered in the selection of counterparties and the incorporation of protection mechanisms in the documentation in the event of a downgrade in credit quality of an existing counterparty.
- **Country risk** – the risk of an adverse influence on investment values from political intervention is reduced by diversification of the assets across many countries.
- **Currency risk** – the risk that fluctuations in the value of overseas currencies affect the total return of the Scheme's investments (for each Section) when compared to a Sterling benchmark. The Trustee mitigates this risk by electing to allow the Investment Manager to use currency hedging.
- **Default risk** – the risk of income from assets not being paid when promised. This is addressed through restrictions for the Investment Manager and Underlying Managers, e.g. a minimum credit rating of the bonds they are allowed to buy and also a high proportion of the bonds held are government bonds which have little default risk.
- **ESG risk** – the risk of adverse performance due to ESG related factors including climate change. This is addressed by the Investment Manager's ESG assessment at the point of investment with Underlying Managers. A summary of the overall ESG characteristics in the portfolio in the quarterly governance report.
- **Mismanagement risk** – the risk of unsuitable investment activity by the Investment Manager. This is addressed in the agreement with the Investment Manager, and in turn by the Investment Manager with the Underlying Managers, which contain restrictions on the proportion and type of asset classes that the Investment Manager or Underlying Managers may invest in.
- **Organisational risk** – the risk of inadequate internal processes leading to problems for the Scheme. This is addressed through regular monitoring of the Investment Manager and Advisers by the Trustee, and of the Underlying Managers by the Investment Manager.

- **Sponsor risk** – the risk of the sponsoring employers ceasing to exist which, for reasons of prudence, has been taken into account when setting the asset allocation strategy. The Trustee regularly reviews the covenant of the sponsoring employers.

The Trustee will keep these risks and how they are measured and managed under regular review.

## **Non-financially material investment considerations**

The Trustee does not at present take into account non-financially material factors (such as members' ethical considerations, social and environmental impact matters or future quality of life considerations for members and beneficiaries) when making investment decisions as there is no likely common view on any ethical matters which members are likely to hold. At this time the Trustee has no plans to seek the views of the membership on ethical considerations.

Signed: by the Chairman

Date: 12 December 2022

For and on behalf of the Trustee of the AECOM Group Pension Scheme