

BIG THINKING FOR SMALL SCHEMES

Statement of Investment Principles

Chelmsford Star Co-operative Society Limited Employees'
Superannuation Fund

December 2024



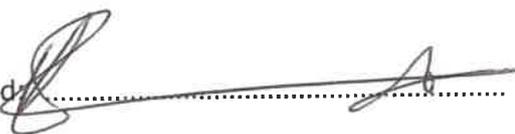
1. Introduction

Under the Pensions Act 1995, trustees are required to prepare and review regularly a Statement of Investment Principles, dealing with certain specific matters.

This statement sets out the principles governing decisions about the investment of the assets of the Chelmsford Star Co-operative Society Limited Employees' Superannuation Fund ("the Fund"). Before preparing it, the Trustees obtained and considered written professional advice from Barker Tatham Investment Consultants Limited as their investment consultants. Prior to finalising this document, they also consulted with the sponsoring employer. Barker Tatham Investment Consultants Limited are licensed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries to provide investment advice.

The Trustees review this Statement on a regular basis and will also do so in response to any material changes to the investment arrangements of the Fund. Formal reviews will be undertaken no less frequently than every 3 years to coincide with the Actuarial Valuations. Any such review will again be based on written expert investment advice and will be in consultation with the Fund's sponsoring employer, the Chelmsford Star Co-operative Society.

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees of the Chelmsford Star Co-operative Society Limited Employees' Superannuation Fund

Signed 

Date: 10.03.25

2. Decision Making

The Trustees distinguish between two types of investment decision:

Strategic investment decisions

These decisions are long-term in nature, and driven by an understanding of the objectives, needs and liabilities of the Fund.

The Trustees take all such decisions. Where appropriate this is after receiving written advice from their investment consultant, and consulting, as appropriate, with the employer.

Examples of such decisions include:

- setting investment objectives;
- setting strategic asset allocation;
- setting benchmarks;
- drafting the Statement of Investment Principles; and
- appointing and removing fund managers.

Work is charged for either by an agreed fee or on a time cost basis. In particular the investment consultant does not receive commission or any other payments in respect of the Fund that might affect the impartiality of their advice. The Trustees believe that this is the most appropriate fee structure for the Fund.

Tactical investment decisions

Tactical investment decisions are based on views of future market movements.

The Trustees employ fund managers to make such judgements, and do not interfere with their decisions. Examples of such decisions include:

- selecting individual stocks;
- temporarily deviating from the strategic asset allocation to take advantage of better market opportunities; and
- timing of entry or exit from a market.

Each investment manager is remunerated by ad valorem charges based on the value of assets managed on behalf of the Fund. The Trustees believe that this is the most appropriate fee structure for the Fund.

The investment consultant and fund managers used by the Trustees are authorised and regulated by the FCA or relevant designated professional bodies.

3. Investment Objectives

The Trustees' overall investment policy is guided by the following objectives:

What constitutes risk?

The Trustees appreciate that the most important aspect of the security of the members' benefits is the continued support of the Fund sponsor. Events that reduce the sponsor's willingness or ability to support the Fund are the biggest potential threats from the members' perspective.

1. The most significant risk from the Trustees' perspective is that the funding level (as calculated in the triennial actuarial valuations) deteriorates.
 - This could jeopardise the deficit recovery plan and necessitate additional contributions from the sponsor.
 - The funding level in percentage terms is of more importance than the size of the deficit in monetary terms.
2. The accounting version of the liabilities (and hence deficit) is less important given that the sponsor has no borrowing requirements.

Appetite for risk

Balance is required here. Taking too little risk can be as damaging for a pension scheme as taking too much risk. The reduction in long-term expected investment returns may push the costs of the Fund to become unsustainably high.

Taking into account the specifics of the Fund, and in particular the improved funding position, the Trustees have confirmed their appetite for risk as "low-to-medium".

This is on a scale of very low (no tolerance for risk whatsoever, regardless of the impact on cost) to very high (risk is irrelevant; maximising long-term expected returns is the only consideration).

Other considerations

- **Net cashflows**
There is no need to take into account short-term cashflows.
- **Exposure to property markets**
The Fund has no existing exposure to property owned by the Chelmsford Star Co-operative Society (e.g., through a charge over the sponsor's property).
- **Flexibility**
There is no specific need to take into account flexibility. (There are no plans known to the Trustees for major changes to the Fund)
- **Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance Issues**
The general approach to environmental and corporate governance issues is covered on page 12.

4. Myners' Investment Principles

The Trustees recognise the relevance to pension schemes of the Myners' Investment Principles that were published by the Government in October 2001 and updated in March 2008. The Fund's adherence to (or otherwise) the Myners' Investment Principles is set out below.

Principle 1: Effective Decision-Making

"Trustees should ensure that decisions are taken by persons or organisations with the skills, knowledge, advice and resources necessary to take them effectively and monitor their implementation."

"Trustees should have sufficient expertise to be able to evaluate and challenge the advice they receive and manage conflicts of interest."

- The Trustees make investment decisions by consulting with professionals that they believe to be best equipped to give that advice. Long-term strategic investment decisions are made in consultation with the Fund's investment consultant, whereas tactical decisions are made by the appropriate fund manager.

Principle 2: Clear Objectives

"Trustees should set out an overall investment objective(s) for the fund that takes account of the scheme's liabilities, the strength of the sponsor covenant and the attitude to risk of both the trustees and the sponsor, and clearly communicate these to advisers and investment managers."

- The Trustees have formally reviewed their investment objectives with the assistance of their investment consultant.
- The investment objectives are explicitly stated in Section 3 of this document.
- The strength of the sponsor's covenant is reviewed on a regular basis.
- All the assets of the Fund are invested via pooled funds. In each case, the fund manager has an explicit benchmark and outperformance target, as well as clear constraints within which to operate.
- The Fund's overall investment objective is supported by the Fund's Asset Liability Model and the Fund's employer covenant.

Principle 3: Risk and Liabilities

"In setting and reviewing their investment strategy, trustees should take account of the form and structure of liabilities. These include the strength of the sponsor covenant, the risk of sponsor default and longevity risk."

- In reviewing the investment strategy, the Trustees commissioned an Asset Liability Model (ALM) from his investment consultant. This explicitly took account of the form and structure of the liabilities, as well as longevity risk.
- This ALM was used to find a strategy which best met the Trustees' investment objectives. Those investment objectives were influenced by the strength of the sponsor covenant and the risk of sponsor default.

Principle 4: Performance Assessment

"Trustees should arrange for the formal measurement of the performance of the investments, investment managers and advisors. Trustees should also periodically make a formal policy assessment of their own effectiveness as a decision-making body and report on this to scheme members."

- The Trustees currently receive:
 - quarterly performance reports from the fund managers;
 - quarterly monitoring reports from the investment consultant; and
 - annual audited accounts.
- The investment monitoring reports include an assessment of how successful the trustees' investment strategy has been in improving the funding position of the Fund.

Principle 5: Responsible Ownership

"Trustees should adopt, or ensure their investment managers adopt, the Institutional Shareholders' Committee (ISC) Statement of Principles on the responsibilities of shareholders and agents. A statement of the scheme's policy on responsible ownership should be included in the Statement of Investment Principles. Trustees should report periodically to members on the discharge of such responsibilities."

- We have requested the managers to state their adherence to the ISC Statement of Principles and the Stewardship Code.
- The Trustees' policy on responsible ownership is described in Section 6 of this Statement of Investment Principles.
- The Trustees will report on the Fund's policy on responsible ownership in the annual report to members and the annual summary funding statement.

Principle 6: Transparency and Reporting

"Trustees should act in a transparent manner, communicating with stakeholders on issues relating to their management of investment, its governance and risks, including performance against stated objectives.

Trustees should provide regular communication to members in the form they consider most appropriate."

- Members are provided with annual summary funding statements, and also information on this is provided in the Fund's annual report to members.
- A copy of this Statement of Investment Principles is available to members on request and also on a dedicated website.
- Other documents such as actuarial valuation reports, the Statement of Funding Principles, the schedule of contributions and the annual report and accounts are also available to members on request.
- A representative from the employer regularly attends Trustee meetings and this helps communication with the employer over investment matters.

5. Implementation

The Trustees set their strategy based on the objectives set out in Section 3 and written advice from the investment consultants. The Trustees last reviewed their strategy in October 2024 and this was implemented at the end of November 2024.

The Trustees have expressed that their primary investment objective is to protect the Fund's funding level on an ongoing basis, protecting it from fluctuations in long-term interest rates or inflation expectations. The target level of hedging for both risks is 100% (up to the value of the assets), whilst optimising the long-term expected returns above gilts subject to level of risk stated in the investment objectives outlined in Section 3.

As investment markets (particularly interest rates and inflation expectations) move, the split between the assets below will vary. There is no automatic rebalancing as this could lead to the interest rate or inflation exposures of the Fund being over- or under-hedged. Instead, the hedges are monitored on a quarterly basis by the investment consultants. Remedial action is recommended when appropriate.

The table below gives the targeted allocation following the investment strategy review in October 2024:

Manager	Fund	Targeted allocation
Fulcrum	Diversified Core Absolute Fund	10.1%
Lombard Odier	All Roads Fund	10.1%
Pictet	Dynamic Asset Allocation Fund	10.1%
LGIM	Global Equity Fixed Weights (50:50) GBP Currency Hedged Index Fund	20.2%
Growth Assets Subtotal		50.5%
Insight	Enhanced Selection Longer Real Fund	7.6%
Insight	Enhanced Selection Longer Nominal Fund	8.6%
LGIM	Over 15 Year Index-Linked Gilts Index Fund	19.7%
	Over 15 Year Gilts Index Fund	3.0%
LGIM	All Stocks Gilts Index Fund	6.1%
Insight	Liquidity Plus Fund	4.5%
Hedging Assets Subtotal		49.5%
Total		100.0%

Fulcrum - Diversified Core Absolute Fund

- This fund targets equity-like returns with about half to two thirds of the volatility over an investment cycle.
- It does this using a variety of asset classes, changing the mix to suit market conditions.

Lombard Odier – All Roads Fund

- This fund targets equity-like returns with about half to two thirds of the volatility over an investment cycle.
- It does this using a variety of asset classes, changing the mix to suit market conditions.

Pictet – Dynamic Asset Allocation Fund

- This fund targets equity-like returns with about half to two thirds of the volatility over an investment cycle.
- It does this using a variety of asset classes, changing the mix to suit market conditions.

LGIM - Global Equity Fixed Weights (50:50) GBP Currency Hedged Index Fund

- This Legal & General Investment Management Fund invests in global equities.
- The asset distribution is split approximately 50% in the ordinary shares of companies registered in the UK, and 50% in the ordinary shares of companies registered in countries outside the UK.
- The asset distribution between the four geographic regions outside the UK is approximately 17.5% North America, 17.5% Europe (ex UK), 8.75% Japan and 6.25% Asia Pacific (ex-Japan). The Asia Pacific (ex-Japan) exposure includes the advanced emerging markets.
- Currency hedging is achieved through investments in the underlying regional hedged funds which use spot and forward FX contracts, futures and cash instruments.
- The objective of the fund is to match the return of the index for each region within tracking error tolerances.
- These tolerances vary from $\pm 0.25\%$ p.a. for UK equities to $\pm 0.75\%$ for the Asia Pacific region equities.

Insight – LDI Enhanced Selection Funds

- These funds aim to protect the Fund from movements in either long-term interest rates or expected inflation.
- These funds use derivatives and gilts to hedge these risks.
- If long-term interest rates fall, or inflation expectations rise then the value of the Fund's liabilities will increase. These funds will mitigate the impact on the Fund's funding level by rising by a similar amount.
- However, the reverse is also true. If the liabilities fall in value, these funds will also fall. They are volatile.

LGIM – Over 15 Year Index-Linked Gilts Index Fund

- The investment objective of the fund is to track the performance of the FTSE Actuaries UK Index Linked Gilts Over 15 Years Index to within $\pm 0.25\%$ p.a. for two years out of three.

LGIM – Over 15 Year Gilts Index Fund

- The investment objective of the fund is to track the performance of the FTSE Actuaries UK Conventional Gilts Over 15 Years Index to within $\pm 0.25\%$ p.a. for two years out of three.

LGIM – All Stocks Gilts Index Fund

- This fund is invested predominantly in UK Gilts with credit ratings of AA.
- The fund aims to track the performance of the FTSE Actuaries UK Conventional Gits All Stocks Index to within $\pm 0.25\%$ p.a. for two years out of three.

Insight – Liquidity Plus Fund

- This fund aims to provide income together with stability of capital by investing in money market instruments and short-term fixed income and variable rate bonds.

Meeting cash calls for the Pooled LDI funds

The Scheme is to have a standing instruction in place to make transactions automatically in the event of Cash Calls or Cash Distribution from the LDI funds (the "Insight – LDI Enhanced Selection Funds") to maintain the level of hedging. In the event of a cash call, monies will be taken equally from the three Diversified Growth Funds (Fulcrum, Lombard Odier and Pictet). In the event of a Cash Distribution, monies will pay equally to the three Diversified Growth Funds.

6. Prescribed Matters

Introduction

This section covers those matters prescribed in Sections 35 and 36 of The Pensions Act 1995, The Pensions Act 2004 and the 2005 Investment Regulations 2005/3378 (as amended from time to time).

Choosing Investments

The assets of the Fund are invested in pooled vehicles. Selection of the individual underlying assets has been wholly delegated to the fund managers listed in the Appendix.

Kinds of Investments

The Trustees may invest in the following asset classes (via the fund managers) on behalf of the Fund:

- UK equities
- Overseas equities
- Corporate bonds
- Gilts (conventional and index-linked)
- Cash
- Overseas bonds
- Property
- Derivatives

The presence of an asset class on the list does not imply that the Fund is currently invested in such assets.

Balance between Investments

The Trustees recognise the advantages of diversification between UK and overseas investment in equities from the perspective of:

- Reducing the risk that results from investment in any one particular market; and
- Enhancing return.

Risk

The Trustees pay close regard to the risks that may arise through a mismatch between the Fund's assets and its liabilities, and to the risks that may arise from the lack of diversification of investments. They believe that the investment policies to be followed by their investment managers do have adequate regard to the need to diversify within each asset class as well as in terms of stock selection.

Under the Pensions Act 2004, trustees must now state their policy on the ways in which risks are to be measured and managed. These are set out below.

- **Solvency / funding risk:**
 - is managed through setting an investment strategy (primarily asset allocation) with an appropriate level of risk.
 - is measured using an Asset Liability Model from the investment consultant.
 - is monitored in quarterly reports from the investment consultant.

- **Manager risk:**
 - is managed through selecting funds with a suitable target level of risk, and that the investment consultant have deemed the managers' risk controls as acceptable.
 - is measured and monitored from quarterly reports from the fund managers and the investment consultant.

- **Liquidity risk:**
 - is managed by ensuring that the majority of the pooled funds used by the Fund are liquid.

- **Political risk:**
 - is managed by investing globally.

- **Sponsor risk:**
 - is managed via the actuarial valuation process.
 - is measured and monitored by regular assessment of the Sponsor's covenant by the Trustees.

Expected Return on Investments

Gilts are the easiest asset class for which to predict the long-term returns. Providing that they are held to maturity, and ignoring reinvestment risk, the return on gilts over their lifetime will be the current Gross Redemption Yield (GRY).

The Trustees base their expected investment returns for other asset classes on this GRY as a starting point. Over the long-term, they expect the following returns per year over and above that of gilts:

Developed market equities	+3.00%
Diversified Growth Funds	+2.50%
Gilts	-
LDI Funds	-

Realisation of Investments

The Fund's assets are invested in the investment managers' pooled vehicles, which in turn invest in securities traded on recognised exchanges. The Trustees conclude that the majority of the Fund's investments can be realised at short notice if necessary.

Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance Policies

In endeavouring to invest in best financial interests of the beneficiaries, the Trustees have elected to invest through pooled funds. They acknowledge that they cannot directly influence the environmental, social and governance ("ESG") policies and practices of the companies in which the pooled funds invest. The Trustees also acknowledge that where pooled index fund vehicles are employed which track composite market indices it is not always possible to take ESG considerations into account due to the nature of the investment.

In Principle, the Trustees believe that ESG factors can have an impact on the performance of its investments and that the management of ESG risks and the exploitation of ESG opportunities, especially in relation to climate change, can add value to the portfolio. To that effect, the Trustees expects its fund managers, where appropriate, to have integrated ESG factors as part of their investment analysis and decision-making process.

Appropriate weight will be given to ESG factors in the appointment of fund managers.

The Trustees' views that the stewardship responsibilities attached to the ownership of shares is important but recognise that investment in pooled funds limits their ability to be fully involved. The Trustees expect their investment managers to report in detail on how they have exercised voting rights attached to shares (including across passive equity mandates). Managers are expected to be signatories to the FRC UK Stewardship Code.

On 6 June 2019, the Government published the Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment and Disclosure) (Amendment) Regulations which expand the requirements for Statements of Investment Principles such as this. To be compliant with these regulations by 1 October 2020, the Trustees have set further ESG policies.

The Trustees' policies are set out below:

- **How they incentivise their appointed investment managers to align investment strategy and decisions with the trustees' policies, including risk, return and ESG.**

The Fund invests solely in pooled funds where fees charged are a combination of fixed fees and a proportion of the assets under management. There are no performance-related components of the fees.

The only incentivisation that the Trustees can exert is through the decision to retain or to liquidate their holdings in each fund.

The investment strategies of the pooled funds are aligned to the Trustees' investment objectives by selecting funds with suitable characteristics:

- Benchmarks
- Risk budgets
- Constraints
- Approaches (this includes ESG where appropriate)

The Trustees maximise the probability of its investment objectives being met by selecting an appropriate and Fund-specific combination of such funds with advice from their investment consultant.

- **How the asset manager is incentivised to make decisions on assessments about medium to long term financial and non-financial performance of an issuer of debt or equity. Also, how the managers are incentivised to engage with the issuers in order to improve their performance.**

Active fund managers are retained subject to, amongst other criteria, achieving adequate medium- to long- term performance. In order to do so, they will need to make assessments about the medium to long term financial performance of debt and equity issuers. They will also need to assess non-financial performance in as much as it may be a source of risk.

It also incentivises them to engage with issuers where this is in the financial interests of the fund (i.e. where it will make a material impact on the performance of the fund).

Passive fund managers are not expected to make assessments about the financial or non-financial performance of the issuers of securities they invest in.

- **How the method and time horizon of the evaluation of managers' performance and remuneration are in line with the trustees' policies.**
The Trustees receive quarterly reports from the fund managers and quarterly analysis from their investment consultant. The investment consultant takes into account the performance of the fund managers but does not restrict their analysis to performance alone. However, given these funds are passively managed, the performance is expected to be broadly in line with the benchmarks.

Performance is compared to the benchmark and tracking error target of each fund, in order to ensure that this is in alignment to the objectives and policies of the Trustee.

In selecting pooled funds, the Trustees and their investment consultant take into account the fees charged by the fund manager. These are judged in terms of value for money given the nature of the fund, particularly the asset class and outperformance target.

Fund managers need to give the Trustees notice if they plan to change the level of the fees. If this occurs, the Trustee seeks advice from its investment consultant on whether to retain or replace the manager.

- **How the trustees monitor portfolio turnover costs incurred by the manager/s (and how they define and monitor targeted portfolio turnover or turnover range).**

Given the size of the Fund's investment it would not be cost effective to monitor the turnover or turnover costs directly. The performance figures that the Trustees and its

investment consultant analyse are net of transactions costs, so this is taken into account indirectly.

The Trustees do not believe that they should micro-manage the level of turnover provided that the net outcome to the Fund is acceptable.

- **The duration of their arrangement with the asset manager.**

In order to maintain an incentive for the fund manager to performance well, the Trustees do not enter any fixed term arrangements with their manager. Investments in each pooled fund are only retained for as long as the aim of the fund is consistent with the overall investment objectives of the Fund, and the Trustees have confidence that the fund managers can credibly deliver that aim in a cost-effective manner.

Appendix: Third Party Arrangements

Advisors

The following advisors assist the Trustees:

Fund Actuary

Ms K Powe
Mercer
Belvedere
12 Booth Street
Manchester
M2 4AW

Pension Consultant

Mercer
Belvedere
12 Booth Street
Manchester
M2 4AW

Bankers

Santander plc
Bridle Road
Bootle
Merseyside
L30 4GB

Auditor

Rickard Luckin Limited
Aquila House
Waterloo Lane
Chelmsford
CM1 1BN

Investment Consultant

Barker Tatham Investment Consultants Ltd
Hubspace 318, Level 3, Sunley House
Bedford Park
Croydon
CR0 2AP

Fund Managers

The Trustees have appointed the following fund manager:

Mobius Life Limited

3rd Floor
20 Gresham Street
London EC2V 7JE