

# CBSO Pension Scheme

## Statement of Investment Principles

October 2024

## Introduction

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This document constitutes the Statement of Investment Principles ('the SIP') required under Section 35 of the Pensions Act 1995 (as amended) for the CBSO Pension Scheme ('the Scheme'). 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 and Modification) Regulations 2018.

The Scheme Actuary is Mark Frost of Broadstone, the Investment Adviser is Schroders Solutions (collectively termed 'the Advisers').

The Trustee confirms that, before preparing this SIP, they have consulted with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra ('the Sponsoring Employer') and the Scheme Actuary and have obtained and considered written advice from the Investment Adviser.

The Trustee is responsible for the investment of the Scheme's assets and where they are required to make an investment decision, the Trustee always receive advice from the relevant Advisers first. The Trustee believes that this ensures that they are 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 Investment Solutions Limited ('Schroders Solutions'), hereafter referred to as the 'Investment Manager'.

## Scheme Governance

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The Trustee is responsible for the governance and investment of the Scheme's assets. The Trustee considers 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 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 Sponsoring 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

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The Trustee has defined the investment objective and investment strategy with due regard to the Scheme's liabilities.

The Trustee has taken advice from the Advisers to ensure that the proposed strategy, and the assets held by the Scheme through that strategy, are suitable given its liability profile, the Trustee's objectives, legislative requirements, regulatory guidance and specifications in the trust deed and rules governing the Scheme (the Trust Deed).

## Statutory Funding Requirement

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The Trustee will obtain and consider proper advice on the question of whether the investments and investment strategy are satisfactory having regard to both the investment objectives and the requirement to meet any statutory funding requirements. The funding position 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

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The overall objective of the Scheme is to meet the benefit payments promised as they fall due. The Trustee has set the following qualitative objectives:

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

In quantitative terms, the Trustee invests in a blend of assets that broadly targets a Liability Benchmark Portfolio "LBP" + 3.25% p.a. with a liability hedge which aims to mitigate the change in the liabilities. The Liability Benchmark Portfolio ("LBP") is a portfolio of bond assets that closely, but not exactly matches the behaviour of the Scheme's liabilities. The Trustee decides the blend of these funds to target the appropriate return for the Scheme, this is shown in the Quarterly Monitoring Report.

## Implementation of investment strategy

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The Trustee has delegated the investment of the Scheme assets 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 of pooled funds - (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

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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 its work competently and have 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 its 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 its powers of its 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

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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 Schrodgers Solutions and information in relation to costs associated with investing are included in the quarterly monitoring report. The Trustee is satisfied that its arrangement incentivises the Investment Manager (as detailed further below):

- To align its investment strategy and decision with the Trustee's investment policies such as their return target and restrictions detailed in the Investment Management Agreement, and
- To assess and make decisions based on medium to long-term financial and non-financial performance of an issuer of debt or equity, and to engage with the issuer to improve this medium-long term performance, which are reflected in the Trustee's long-term performance objectives.

The Scheme's investments are generally made via pooled investment funds, in which such 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 Trustee does not have its own voting and engagement policies for the Scheme at this time, but it has the responsibility for the voting and engagement policies that the Investment Manager implements on its behalf and reviews these policies from time to time. The Investment Manager has an ESG policy in place which covers both voting and engagement as part of the overall active ownership strategy.

The Trustee undertakes the engagement directly with its Investment Manager who appoint Underlying Managers to carry out engagement with investee companies directly. The Investment Manager set out its voting and engagement priorities which focus on six themes including climate, Natural Capital and Biodiversity, Human Rights, Human Capital Management, Diversity and Inclusion and Corporate Governance. The Trustee has aligned its engagement priorities with the Investment Manager's.

The Trustee believe those engagement priorities which have been chosen by the Investment Manager will result in better management of financially-material ESG and climate risks, therefore it is expected to improve the financial outcome of the Scheme which ultimately is in the members and beneficiaries' best interest. The Trustee reviews the voting and engagement activity of the Investment Manager on an annual basis including a review of the annual fiduciary management ESG report and will challenge the Investment Manager as necessary on its stewardship activity.

## Arrangement with Underlying Managers

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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 Trustees' objectives. The method and time horizon for evaluating and remunerating Underlying Managers is determined by criteria set by the Investment Manager.

The Trustee acknowledges the potential for conflicts of interest 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 may be required to manage conflicts of interest as are applicable in their jurisdiction of incorporation or operations. The Investment Manager monitors these conflicts as part of its regulatory filings (where available), and as part of ongoing review. The Investment Manager's Conflict of Interest policy was shared with the Trustee.

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

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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 20% of on-risk assets 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 are comfortable it is a reasonable approach to take.

## Derivatives

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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.

## Financially material investment considerations

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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 delegates consideration of financially material factors 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 the Trustee to engage with the Investment Manager and understand the impact of ESG on the portfolio.

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 on-going compliance with other factors, like stewardship as a part of overall engagement.

## Risks

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The Trustee recognises a number of risks involved in the investment of the assets 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 portfolio or ‘LBP’ is used as a proxy for the liabilities in order to measure the approximate changes in the liabilities (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 LBP 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 maybe 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 LBP and can therefore also be assessed as part of the quarterly review process.
  - This risk is also monitored through monthly portfolio updates, quarterly investment performance reviews and annual actuarial 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 the Scheme to control the timing of any investment/disinvestment of assets.
- **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 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 is 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 Employer 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 Employer.

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

## Non-financial matters

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The Trustee does not at present take into account non-financial matters (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:**.....

**Date:**.....

For and on behalf of the Trustee of the CBSO Pension Scheme.