

Croydon Council

REPORT TO:	Pension Committee 19 September 2023
SUBJECT:	The Collective Investment Vehicle for London Local Authorities Pension Funds: Compliance with pooling requirements, review of savings and governance structure.
LEAD OFFICER:	Matthew Hallett – Acting Head of Pensions and Treasury

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 The Committee are asked to note the contents of this report

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT

Sound Financial Management: This Report advises the Committee of relationships between the Pension Fund and the London Collective Investment Vehicle. These relationships are important components of governance and investment arrangements of the Fund.

The decision sought will support the Council priority of OUTCOME 1 “Balances the books, listens to residents and delivers good, sustainable services.”

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

There are no direct financial implications associated with this Report but it advises the Committee of existing financial arrangements which assist in the efficient management of the Fund and which could have an impact on the General Fund of the Council.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 This report advises the Committee of the extent to which the Fund is complying with the pooling requirements of Guidance issued by the, then, Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) in 2015, the savings made through pooling in 2022/23 and the governance structure of the London Collective Investment Vehicle (LCIV).

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 In 2015 the, then, DCLG issued Guidance which set out how the Government expected funds to establish asset pooling arrangements. The stated objectives were to deliver:
- benefits of scale;
 - strong governance and decision making;
 - reduced costs and excellent value for money; and
 - improved capacity and capability to invest in infrastructure.
- 3.2 By the time of the Guidance, as a founder member, Croydon had already voluntarily joined LCIV. LCIV's stated objectives are to deliver broader investment opportunities and enhanced cost efficiencies than funds can achieve individually and overall better risk adjusted performance. It is Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulated and was the first of the eight asset pools in England and Wales to become established. All the London borough funds are members.
- 3.3 Since its founding in 2014 LCIV has developed its governance structure through a Corporate Governance and Controls framework. The key components of the framework are the Shareholder Committee, comprising Leaders and Treasurers of twelve of the London boroughs, and a Board made up of executive and non-executive directors all of whom must meet FCA fitness to serve requirements. Details of the full Governance structure can be accessed online via <https://londonciv.org.uk/governance>
- 3.4 The Croydon Fund's formal involvement in the governance of LCIV is only through attendance at the twice yearly Shareholder General Meeting. Officers are, however, in regular contact with the LCIV officers.
- 3.5 During the development of the pooling concept funds estimated how they could comply with its requirements in the context of their own asset allocation policies. The Council Fund's Investment Strategy Statement, as agreed on 18 September 2018 and current for 2021/22, includes the following:
- 5.3 The Fund holds illiquid assets outside of the London CIV pool. The cost of exiting these strategies early would have a negative financial impact on the Fund. These will be held as legacy assets until such time as they mature. The Fund will continue to invest in illiquid assets outside of the London CIV pool, until suitable strategies are made available by the London CIV pool, in order to meet its asset allocation target.*
- 5.4 Therefore, the proportion of assets that will be invested through the pool will be circa. 65%*
- 3.6 At 31 March 2023 the Fund had investments of £159.8m (9.6% of its investments) invested in sub-funds managed by the LCIV and a further £670.9m (40.1%) managed by Legal and General which is classified within the pooling umbrella. The arrangement with Legal and General was established in 2016 as a way of providing fee discounts to members without moving passive assets into the LCIV. Whilst the Fund is conscious that the proportion of its assets invested through the pool (49.7%) is below the target of 65%, investments will only be made in pool products when this is the optimum strategy.

3.7 A summary of the overall position of the Fund at 31 March 2023 is as follows:

INVESTMENT	£m	%
LCIV related		
Legal and General Equities	670.863	40.1
RBC Equities	77.964	4.7
PIMCO Fixed interest bonds	81.804	4.9
LCIV	0.150	
LCIV related total	830.781	49.7
Non LCIV related total	843.373	50.3
TOTAL	1,674.154	100.0

3.8 Estimated savings made against assumptions of standard fees and costs incurred from the pool investments during 2022/23 were as follows:

	Assets under management at 31 March 2023	Estimated gross fees savings	Management fees and development funding charge	Estimated net fees savings
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Legal and General Equities	670,863	384	32	352
RBC Global Asset Management (UK)	77,964	119	19	100
PIMCO Fixed interest	81,804	226	4	222
LCIV	150			
Development funding charge**			110	(110)
TOTAL	830,781	729	165	564

* LCIV's fixed income stream contributing to the core costs of the Company payable equally by all the shareholders.

3.9 The Committee is invited to note this report

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Officers have consulted with the Fund's advisers in preparing this report.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 There are no financial or risk assessment considerations arising from this report.

Approved by: Allister Bannin on behalf of Jane West, Corporate Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)

6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Burges Salmon LLP (a legal advisor appointed to the Fund) comments that there are no specific legal considerations raised in this report but that it is important that the Fund reviews and regularly considers investment and pooling obligations further to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016, and the Guidance (which was produced further to the 2016 Regulations).

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no immediate workforce impacts arising from the content of this report. Should any arise, these will be managed under Council policies and procedures.

Approved by: Gillian Bevan, Head of HR, Resources and Assistant Chief Executives directorates on behalf of Dean Shoosmith, Chief People Officer.
Date: 5.9.23

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the provisions set out in Sec 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council must therefore have due regard to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 8.2 There are no equality implications arising from this report

Approved by: Naseer Ahmad for Equality Programme Manager, (08/09/2023)

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder impacts arising from this report.

11. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Will the subject of the report involve the processing of 'personal data'?

No.

Has a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) been completed?

No. This report relates to matters relating to the administration of the LGPS and the Croydon Pension Fund.

Approved by: Allister Bannin on behalf of Jane West, Corporate
Director of
Resources (Section 151 Officer)

CONTACT OFFICER:

Matthew Hallett – Acting Head of Pensions and Treasury.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

None.

