

# *Statement of Investment Principles for the Ikon Pension Plan February 2024*

## **1. Introduction**

This Statement of Investment Principles ("SIP") sets out the policy of Ricoh Pensions Trustee Limited ("the Trustee") on various matters governing decisions about the investments of the Ikon Pension Plan ("the Plan"), a Plan with Defined Benefit ("DB") and Defined Contribution ("DC") sections. This SIP replaces the previous SIP dated May 2023.

The SIP is designed to meet the requirements of Section 35 (as amended) of the Pensions Act 1995 ("the Act"), the Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations 2005 (as amended) and the Pension Regulator's guidance for defined benefit pension schemes (March 2017) and the Occupational Pension Schemes (Charges and Governance) Regulations 2015.

This SIP has been prepared after obtaining and considering written professional advice from LCP, the Plan's investment adviser, whom the Trustee believes to be suitably qualified and experienced to provide such advice. The advice considers the suitability of investments including the need for diversification given the circumstances of the Plan and the principles contained in this SIP. The Trustee has consulted with the relevant employer in producing this SIP.

The Trustee will review this SIP from time to time and, with the help of its advisers, will amend it as appropriate. These reviews will take place as soon as practicable after any significant change in investment policy or in the demographic profile of the relevant members in respect of the DC Section and at least once every three years.

- **Appendix 1** sets out details of the Plan's investment governance structure, including the key responsibilities of the Trustee, investment advisers and investment managers. It also contains a description of the basis of remuneration of the investment adviser and the investment managers.
- **Appendix 2** sets out the Trustee's policy towards risk appetite, capacity, measurement and management.

Details on the Plan's investment manager arrangements are set out in a separate Statement of Investment Arrangements ("SIA").

## **2. Investment objectives**

The primary objective for the DB Section is to ensure that the Plan should be able to meet benefit payments as they fall due. In addition to this primary objective, the Trustee has additional objectives. These are as follows:

- that the expected return on the Plan's assets is maintained between gilts + 1.1% pa and gilts + 1.4% pa (based on assumptions as at 30 September 2023), whilst managing and maintaining investment risk at an appropriate level. What the Trustee determines to be an appropriate level of risk is set out in Appendix 2.

- that the Plan should be fully funded on a technical provisions basis (ie the asset value should be at least that of its liabilities on this basis). The Trustee is aware that there are various measures of funding, and has given due weight to those considered most relevant to the Plan.

The Trustee's primary objective for the DC Section and the in-house AVC Scheme is to provide a secure investment with a low risk return for members by investing the assets in a prudent manner.

### **3. Investment strategy**

The Trustee, with the help of its advisers and in consultation with the employer, reviewed the investment strategy for the DB Section in March 2020, February 2023 and November 2023, considering the objectives described in Section 2 above.

#### **3.1. DB investment strategy**

The result of the March 2020 review for the DB Section was that the Trustee agreed that the investment strategy of the DB Section should invest in a diversified range of credit investments to aim to generate returns, as well as leveraged liability driven investment ("LDI") arrangements to reduce the DB Section's exposure to interest rate risk and inflation risk. Following the November 2023 review, the Trustee agreed to change the expected return objective to a target of "between gilts + 1.1% and gilts + 1.4% pa", to provide flexibility to enable the Trustee to maintain the target level of hedging, whilst also targeting a reasonable level of return.

#### **3.2. DC and AVC investment arrangements**

The DC Section's (the Ikon Retirement Savings Plan's) assets are invested separately, with the objective of generating a reasonable return over the long-term, whilst diversifying the investments in a low-governance manner.

The Plan's AVCs are invested in accordance with individual members' choices. The Trustee aims to make an appropriate range of funds available to members.

### **4. Considerations in setting the investment arrangements**

When deciding how to invest the Plan's assets, the Trustee considers several risks, including, but not limited to, those set out in Appendix 2. Some of these risks are more quantifiable than others, but the Trustee has tried to allow for the relative importance and magnitude of each risk.

The Trustee considered a wide range of asset classes for investment, taking account of the expected returns and key individual risks associated with those asset classes as well as how these risks can be mitigated where appropriate.

In setting the strategy for the DB Section the Trustee considered:

- the Plan's investment objectives, including the target return required to meet the Trustee's investment objectives;

- the Plan's cash flow requirements in order to meet benefit payments in the near to medium term;
- the best interests of all members and beneficiaries;
- the circumstances of the Plan, including the profile of the benefit cash flows (and the ability to meet these in the near to medium term), the funding level, and the strength of the employer covenant;
- the risks, rewards and suitability of a number of possible asset classes and investment strategies and whether the return expected for taking any given investment risk is considered sufficient given the risk being taken;
- the need for appropriate diversification between and within different asset classes to ensure that both the Plan's overall level of investment risk and the balance of individual asset risks are appropriate;
- any other considerations which the Trustee considers financially material over the time horizon that the Trustee considers is needed for the funding of future benefits by the investments of the Plan; and
- the Trustee's investment beliefs about how investment markets work, and which factors are most likely to impact investment outcomes.

In determining the investment arrangements for the DC Section the Trustee considered:

- the best interests of all members and beneficiaries;
- the profile of the membership and what this is likely to mean for the choices members might make upon reaching retirement;
- the risks, rewards and suitability of a number of possible asset classes and whether the return expected for taking any given investment risk is considered sufficient given the risk being taken;
- the need for appropriate diversification within the default strategy to ensure that, for each such option, both the overall level of investment risk and the balance of individual asset risks are appropriate;
- the need for appropriate diversification within the other investment options offered to members;
- any other considerations which the Trustee considers financially material over the periods until members' retirement, or any other timeframe which the Trustee believes to be appropriate; and
- the Trustee's investment beliefs about how investment markets work and which factors are most likely to impact investment outcomes.

The Trustee's key investment beliefs, which influenced the setting of the investment arrangements for the DB and DC Section's, are as follows:

- asset allocation is the primary driver of long-term returns;
- risk-taking is necessary to achieve return, but not all risks are rewarded;

- equity, credit and illiquidity are the primary rewarded risks;
- risks that do not have an expected reward should generally be avoided, hedged or diversified;
- investment markets are not always efficient and there may be opportunities for good active managers to add value;
- environmental, social and governance (“ESG”) factors are likely to be one area of market inefficiency and so managers may be able to improve risk-adjusted returns by taking account of ESG factors;
- investment managers who can consistently spot and profitably exploit market opportunities are difficult to find and therefore passive management, where available can be usually better value;
- long-term environmental, social and economic sustainability is one factor that trustees should consider when making investment decisions;
- climate change is a financially material systemic issue that presents risks and opportunities for the Scheme over the short, medium and long term;
- aligning our assets with net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 where practicable is expected to help reduce the risks to the Scheme from climate change;
- to be effective, a net zero programme needs to be consistent with climate science, with both short-term and long-term targets and a focus on real world impacts;
- voting and engagement are important and can create long term value which is in the best interest of Scheme members and therefore we encourage managers to improve their voting and engagement practices;
- collaborative investor action can help address systemic risks, for example we believe net zero alignment, if implemented well, could be an effective approach to addressing climate risk; and
- costs have a significant impact on long-term performance and therefore obtaining value for money from the investments is important.

The Trustee’s key investment beliefs and understanding of the Plan’s membership are reflected in the design of the default and other lifestyle options, and in the range of other funds made available to members.

## **5. Implementation of the investment arrangements**

Before investing in any manner, the Trustee obtains and considers proper written advice from its investment adviser on the question of whether the investment is satisfactory, having regard to the need for suitable and appropriately diversified investments.

Details of the investment managers are set out in the separate Statement of Investment Arrangements.

The Trustee has signed agreements with the investment managers in respect of the Plan’s assets setting out in detail the terms on which the portfolios are to be managed. The

investment managers' primary role is the day-to-day investment management of the investments.

The Trustee and investment managers to whom discretion has been delegated exercise their powers to giving effect to the principles in this Statement of Investment Principles, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Trustee has limited influence over managers' investment practices because all the Plan's assets are held in pooled funds, but it encourages its managers to improve their practices where appropriate.

The Trustee's view is that the fees paid to the investment managers, and the possibility of their mandate being terminated, ensure they are incentivised to provide a high quality service that meets the stated objectives, guidelines and restrictions of the fund. However, in practice managers cannot fully align their strategy and decisions to the (potentially conflicting) policies of all their pooled fund investors in relation to strategy, long-term performance of debt/equity issuers, engagement and portfolio turnover.

It is the Trustee's responsibility to ensure that the managers' investment approaches are consistent with its policies before any new appointment, and to monitor and to consider terminating any existing arrangements that appear to be investing contrary to those policies. The Trustee expects investment managers, where appropriate, to make decisions based on assessments of the longer term financial and non-financial performance of debt/equity issuers, and to engage with issuers to improve their performance. It assesses this when selecting and monitoring managers.

The Trustee evaluates investment manager performance by considering performance over both shorter and longer-term periods as available. Except in closed-ended funds where the duration of the investment is determined by the fund's terms, the duration of a manager's appointment will depend on strategic considerations and the outlook for future performance. Generally, the Trustee would be unlikely to terminate a mandate on short-term performance grounds alone.

The Trustee's policy is to evaluate each of its investment managers by reference to the manager's individual performance as well as the role it plays in helping the Plan meet its overall long-term objectives, taking account of risk, the need for diversification and liquidity. Each manager's remuneration, and the value for money it provides, is assessed in light of these considerations.

The Trustee recognises that portfolio turnover and associated transaction costs are a necessary part of investment management and that the impact of portfolio turnover costs is reflected in performance figures provided by the investment managers. The Trustee expects its investment consultant to incorporate portfolio turnover and resulting transaction costs as appropriate in its advice on the Plan's investment mandates.

## **6. Realisation of investments**

The investment managers have discretion over the timing of realisation of investments of the Plan within the portfolios that they manage, and in considerations relating to the liquidity of investments.

For the DB Section, when appropriate, the Trustee, on the administrators' recommendation, decides on the amount of cash required for benefit payments and other outgoings and informs the investment managers of any liquidity requirements. The Trustee's preference is for investments that are readily realisable but recognise that achieving a well-diversified portfolio may mean holding some investments that are less liquid. In general, the Trustee's policy is to receive income from some of the portfolios where appropriate, disinvest from the most liquid and stable investments to meet cash flow requirements when necessary, and to consider rebalancing the portfolio from time to time.

For the non-internally invested DC Section assets, the Trustee's policy is to invest in funds that offer daily dealing to enable members to readily realise their investments.

## **7. Financially material considerations and non-financial matters**

The Trustee has considered how environmental, social, governance ("ESG") and ethical factors should be taken into account in the selection, retention and realisation of investments, given the time horizon of the Plan and its members.

The Trustee's ambition is to align the Scheme's assets with net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 through selecting managers, and investing in funds, with credible net zero targets in due course.

The Trustee expects its investment managers to take account of financially material considerations (including climate change and other ESG considerations). The Trustee seeks to appoint managers that have appropriate skills and processes to do this, and from time to time reviews how its managers are taking account of these issues in practice.

The Trustee has limited influence over managers' investment practices where assets are held in pooled funds, but it encourages its managers to improve their practices where appropriate.

The Trustee does not consider any non-financial matters (ie matters relating to the ethical and other views of members and beneficiaries, rather than considerations of financial risk and return) in the selection, retention and realisation of investments.

## **8. Voting and engagement**

The Trustee recognises its responsibilities as owners of capital, and believes that good stewardship practices, including monitoring and engaging with investee companies, and exercising voting rights attaching to investments, protect and enhance the long-term value of investments.

The Trustee seeks to appoint managers that have strong stewardship policies and processes, reflecting where relevant the recommendations of the UK Stewardship Code issued by the

Financial Reporting Council, and from time to time the Trustee reviews how these are implemented in practice.

The Trustee has delegated to its investment managers the exercise of rights attaching to investments, including voting rights, and engagement with issuers of debt and equity and other relevant persons about relevant matters such as performance, strategy, capital structure, management of actual or potential conflicts of interest, risks and ESG considerations. The Trustee expects the managers to undertake engagement in line with their stewardship policies, considering the long-term financial interests of investors.

The Trustee monitors managers' activities in relation to ESG factors, voting and engagement from time to time. The Trustee seeks to understand how they are implementing their stewardship policies in practice to check that their stewardship is effective and aligned with their expectations.

The Trustee has selected Climate Change as a priority ESG theme to provide a focus for its monitoring of investment managers' voting and engagement activities. The Trustee reviews the themes from time to time and updates it if appropriate. The Trustee communicates its stewardship priorities to its managers and also confirm its more general expectations in relation to ESG factors, voting and engagement.

If its monitoring identifies areas of concern, the Trustee will engage with the relevant manager to encourage improvements.

## *Investment governance, responsibilities, decision-making and fees*

The Trustee has decided on the following division of responsibilities and decision-making for the Plan. This division is based upon the Trustee's understanding of the various legal requirements placed upon it, and its view that the division of responsibility allows for efficient operation and governance of the Plan overall. The Trustee's investment powers are set out within the Plan's governing documentation.

### **1. Trustee**

In broad terms, the Trustee is responsible in respect of investment matters for:

- developing a mutual understanding of investment and risk issues with the employer;
- setting the investment strategy, in consultation with the employer;
- formulating a policy in relation to financially material considerations, such as those relating to ESG considerations (including but not limited to climate change);
- formulating a policy on taking account of non-financial matters in the selection, retention and realisation of investments;
- setting the policy for rebalancing between asset classes;
- setting a policy on the exercise of rights (including voting rights) and undertaking engagement activities in respect of the investments;
- putting effective governance arrangements in place and documenting these arrangements in a suitable form;
- appointing, monitoring, reviewing and dismissing investment managers, investment advisers, actuary and other service providers;
- monitoring the exercise of the investment powers that they have delegated to the investment managers and monitoring compliance with Section 36 of the Act;
- communicating with members as appropriate on investment matters, such as the Trustee's assessment of its effectiveness as a decision-making body, the policies regarding responsible ownership and how such responsibilities have been discharged;
- reviewing the investment policy as part of any review of the investment strategy;
- reviewing the content of this SIP from time to time and modifying it if deemed appropriate; and
- consulting with the employer when reviewing the SIP.

### **2. Investment managers**

In broad terms, the investment managers will be responsible for:



- managing the portfolios of assets according to their stated objectives, and within the guidelines and restrictions set out in their respective investment manager agreements and/or other relevant governing documentation;
- taking account of financially material considerations (including climate change and other ESG considerations) as appropriate when managing the portfolios of assets;
- exercising rights (including voting rights) attaching to investments and undertaking engagement activities in respect of investments;
- providing the Trustee with regular information concerning the management and performance of their respective portfolios; and
- having regard to the provisions of Section 36 of the Act insofar as it is necessary to do so.

The custodians of the portfolios (whether there is a direct relationship between the custodian and the Trustee or not) are responsible for safe keeping of the assets and facilitating all transactions within the portfolios.

### 3. Investment adviser

In broad terms, the investment adviser will be responsible, in respect of investment matters, as requested by the Trustee, for:

- advising on how material changes within the Plan's benefits, membership, and funding position may affect the manner in which the assets should be invested and the asset allocation policy;
- advising on a suitable fund range and default strategy for the Plan, and how material changes to legislation or within the Plan's benefits and membership may impact this;
- advising on the selection, and review, of the investment managers, incorporating its assessment of the nature and effectiveness of the managers' approaches to financially material considerations (including climate change and other ESG considerations); and
- participating with the Trustee in reviews of this SIP.

### 4. Fee structures

The Trustee recognises that the provision of investment management and advisory services to the Plan results in a range of charges to be met, directly or indirectly, by deduction from the Plan's assets.

The Trustee has agreed Terms of Business with the Plan's actuarial and investment advisers, under which work undertaken is charged for by an agreed fixed fee or on a "time-cost" basis.

The investment managers receive fees calculated by reference to the market value of assets under management and also in some cases a performance related fee. The fee rates are believed to be consistent with the managers' general terms for institutional clients and are considered by the Trustee to be reasonable when compared with those of other similar providers. See also Section 5 of the SIP.

The fee structure used in each case has been selected with regard to existing custom and practice, and the Trustee's view as to the most appropriate arrangements for the Plan. However, the Trustee will consider revising any given structure if and when it is considered appropriate to do so.

#### 5. Performance assessment

The Trustee is satisfied, taking into account the external expertise available, that there are sufficient resources to support its investment responsibilities. The Trustee believes that it has sufficient expertise and appropriate training to carry out its role effectively.

It is the Trustee's policy to assess the performance of the Plan's investments, investment providers and professional advisers from time to time. See Section 5 of the SIP. The Trustee will also periodically assess the effectiveness of its decision-making and investment governance processes and will decide how this may then be reported to members.

#### 6. Working with the Plan's employer

When reviewing matters regarding the Plan's investment arrangements, such as the SIP, the Trustee seeks to give due consideration to the employer's perspective. While the requirement to consult does not mean that the Trustee needs to reach agreement with the employer, the Trustee believes that better outcomes will generally be achieved if the Trustee and employer work together collaboratively.

### **1. Risk appetite and risk capacity**

Risk appetite is a measure of how much risk the Trustee is willing to bear within the Plan in order to meet its investment objectives. Taking more risk is expected to mean that those objectives can be achieved more quickly, but it also means that there is a greater likelihood that the objectives are missed, in the absence of remedial action. Risk capacity is a measure of the extent to which the Trustee can tolerate deviation from its long-term objectives before attainment of those objectives is seriously impaired. The Trustee aims to strike the right balance between risk appetite and risk capacity.

When assessing the risk appetite and risk capacity, the Trustee considered a range of qualitative and quantitative factors, including:

- the strength of the employer's covenant and how this may change in the near/medium future;
- the agreed journey plan and employer contributions;
- the Plan's funding target;
- the Plan's liability profile, its interest rate and inflation sensitivities, and the extent to which these are hedged;
- the Plan's cash flow and target return requirements; and
- the level of expected return and expected level of risk (as measured by Value at Risk ("VaR")), now and as the strategy evolves.

When deciding on the investment strategy, the Trustee believed the level of risk to be appropriate given the Trustee's and employer's risk appetite and capacity, given the Plan's objectives.

### **2. Approach to managing and monitoring investment risks**

The Trustee considers that there are several different types of investment risk that are important to manage and monitor. These include, but are not limited to:

#### **2.1. Risk of inadequate returns**

For the DB Section, a key objective of the Trustee is that, over the long-term, the Plan should generate its target return so that it has adequate assets to meet its liabilities as they fall due. The Trustee therefore invests the assets of the Plan to produce a sufficient long-term return in excess of the liabilities. There is also a risk that the performance of the Plan's assets and liabilities diverges in certain financial and economic conditions in the short term. This risk has been considered in setting the investment strategy and is monitored by the Trustee on a regular basis.

In the DC Section, as members' benefits are dependent on the investment returns achieved, it is important that investment options are available which can be expected to produce adequate real returns over the longer term.

**Appendix 2 (cont)**

## **2.2. Credit risk**

This is the risk that a borrower will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to meet required payments for a contractual obligation.

The Plan is subject to credit risk because it invests in a variety of bonds and loans via pooled funds. The Trustee manages its exposure to credit risk by only investing in pooled funds that have a diversified exposure to different credit instruments and issuers.

## **2.3. Currency risk**

Whilst the majority of the currency exposure of the Plan's assets is to Sterling, the Plan is subject to currency risk because some of the Plan's investments are held in overseas markets. The Trustee where possible invests in funds which hedge the vast majority of the Plan's exposure to overseas currencies back to Sterling and considers that any remaining amount of currency exposure that exists is appropriate.

## **2.4. Interest rate and inflation risk**

The DB Section's assets are subject to interest rate and inflation risk because some of the Section's assets are held in bonds / interest rate swaps, via pooled funds. However, the interest rate and inflation exposure of the Section's assets hedges part of the corresponding risks associated with the Section's liabilities.

The Trustee considers interest rate and inflation risks to be generally unrewarded investment risks.

As a result, the Trustee aims to have a high level of hedging of the DB Section's exposure to interest rate risk and inflation risk, by investing in a mixture of bonds as well as leveraged LDI arrangements.

The net effect of the Trustee's approach to interest and inflation risk will be to reduce the volatility of the funding level, and so the Trustee believes that it is appropriate to manage exposures to these risks in this manner and to review them on a regular basis.

The DC Section's assets may also be subject to interest rate and inflation risk. However, interest rates and inflation are not expected to be the main driver of returns over the long term.

**2.5. Environmental, social and governance (“ESG”) risks**

Environmental, social and corporate governance (“ESG”) factors are sources of risk to the Plan’s investments which could be financially material, over both the short and longer term. These potentially include risks relating to factors such as climate change, unsustainable business practices, and unsound corporate governance. The Trustee seeks to appoint investment managers who will manage these risks appropriately on their behalf and from time to time reviews how these risks are being managed in practice.

**2.6. Illiquidity/marketability risk**

For the DB Section, this is the risk that the Plan is unable to realise assets to meet benefit cash flows as they fall due, or that the Plan will become a forced seller of assets in order to meet benefit payments. The Trustee is aware of the Plan’s cash flow requirements and believes that this risk is managed by maintaining an appropriate degree of liquidity across the Plan’s investments and by investing in income generating assets, where appropriate.

For the DC Section, this is the risk that core financial transactions, such as investing members’ contributions, are not processed promptly due to lack of liquidity in the investments. The Trustee manages this risk by only using pooled funds with daily dealing.

**2.7. Risk from lack of diversification**

This is the risk that failure of a particular investment, or the general poor performance of a given investment type, could materially adversely affect the Plan’s assets. The Trustee believes that the Plan’s DB assets and DC strategy are adequately diversified between different asset classes and within each asset class, and reviews the strategy periodically.

**2.8. Investment manager risk**

This is the risk that an investment manager fails to meet its investment objectives. Prior to appointing an investment manager, the Trustee receives written advice from a suitably qualified individual and will undertake an investment manager selection exercise. The Trustee monitors the investment managers on a regular basis to ensure they remain appropriate for its selected mandate.

**2.9. Counterparty risk**

This is the risk that one party to a contract (such as a derivative instrument) causes a financial loss to the other party by failing to discharge a contractual obligation. This risk applies in particular for those contracts that are traded directly between parties, rather than traded on a central exchange.

In particular, derivative contracts are used within the DB Section’s LDI portfolio to efficiently match a portion of the DB Section’s liabilities. Counterparty risk is

managed by the investment manager within the LDI portfolio through careful initial selection and ongoing monitoring of trading counterparties, counterparty diversification and a robust process of daily collateralisation of each contract, to ensure that counterparty risk is limited, as far as possible, to one day's market movements.

#### 2.10. Collateral adequacy risk

The DB Section is invested in an LDI portfolio to provide protection ("hedging") against adverse changes in interest rates and inflation expectations. The LDI manager may from time to time call for additional cash to be paid to the LDI portfolio in order to support a given level of leverage. Collateral adequacy risk is the risk that the Trustee when requested to do so will not be able to post additional cash to the LDI fund within the required timeframe. A potential consequence of this risk is that the DB Section's interest rate and inflation hedging could be reduced and that the Section's funding level could suffer subsequently as a result. In order to manage this risk, the Trustee monitors the collateral headroom within the LDI portfolio and ensures that the Section has a sufficient allocation to liquid assets which can be readily realised, so that cash can be posted to the LDI manager at short notice.

#### 2.11. Risk from excessive charges

Within the DC Section, if the investment management charges together with other charges levied on, for example, transfers or early retirement are excessive, then the value of a member's account will be reduced unnecessarily. The Trustee is comfortable that the charges applicable to the Section are in line with market practice and assess regularly whether these represent good value for members.

#### 2.12. Other non-investment risks

The Trustee recognises that there are other, non-investment, risks faced by the Plan, and takes these into consideration as far as practical in setting the Plan's investment arrangements.

Examples for the DB Section include:

- longevity risk (the risk that members live, on average, longer than expected); and
- sponsor covenant risk (the risk that, for whatever reason, the sponsoring employer is unable to support the Plan as anticipated).

Together, the investment and non-investment risks give rise generally to funding risk. This is the risk that the Plan's funding position falls below what is considered an appropriate level. The Trustee regularly reviews progress towards the Plan's funding target, both in the longer-term as well as against short-term milestones, comparing the actual versus the expected funding level.

By understanding, considering and monitoring the key risks that contribute to funding risk, the Trustee believes that it has appropriately addressed and are positioned to manage this general risk.

**Appendix 2 (cont)**