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West Midlands Pension Fund - Statement of Accounting Policies 2020/21

a) Fund Account

In the Fund Account, income and expenditure are accounted for in the year in which they accrue by the creation of payables and receivables at the year-end where necessary. However, provision has not been made where the amount payable or receivable in relation to transfers was not agreed at the year-end (see note to the accounts).

b) Contribution Income

Contributions receivable have been included in the accounts on the accruals basis at the rates recommended by the Fund's actuary for basic contributions. Additional contributions (including past service deficit contributions and excluding additional voluntary contributions) as notified by employers for the period have also been included. Past service deficit contributions are accounted for in the year in which they are payable under the schedule of contributions set by the scheme actuary.

Employers' augmentation contributions and pensions strain contributions are accounted for in the period in which the liability arises. Any amount due in year but unpaid is classed as a current financial asset with amounts due after the following year classed as long-term financial assets.

Where employing organisations have not submitted all of the certified returns of contributions payable by the due date for preparation of these accounts, an estimate has been made based on the monthly returns actually received from these bodies.

c) Transfers to and from Other Schemes

Transfer values represent the amounts received and paid during the year for members who had either transferred benefits in or out of the scheme as at 31 March 2021, calculated in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (see notes to the accounts). Transfers in respect of individuals are accounted for when received or paid, which is normally when the member liability is accepted or discharged. Group transfers are accounted for on an accrual's basis in accordance with the terms of the transfer agreement.

Transfers in from members wishing to use the proceeds of their additional voluntary contributions to purchase scheme benefits are accounted for on a receipts basis and are reported within transfers in.

d) Investment Income

i) Interest Income

Interest income is recognised in the Fund Account as it accrues using the effective interest rate of the financial instrument as at the date of acquisition or origination.

ii) Dividend Income

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Dividend income is recognised on the date the shares are quoted ex-dividend. Any amounts not received by the end of the reporting period, where known to be due, have been accrued for in the accounts.

iii) Distributions from Pooled Funds

Distributions from pooled funds are recognised at the date of issue. Investment income arising from the underlying investments of pooled investment vehicles is rolled up and reinvested within the pooled investment vehicles. This is reflected in the relevant unit price and reported within 'Change in Market Value'.

iv) Property-Related Income

Property-related income (consisting primarily of rental income from operating leases) is recognised on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease. Any lease incentives granted are recognised as an integral part of the total rental income over the term of the lease. Contingent rents based on the future amount of a factor that changes other than with the passage of time, such as turnover rents, are only recognised when contractually due.

v) Changes in the Value of Investments

Changes in the net market value of investments (including investment properties) are recognised as income and comprise all realised and unrealised profits/losses during the year.

vi) Stock lending Income

Stock lending income is accounted for on a cash received basis.

e) Taxation

The Fund is a registered public service scheme under section 1(1) of Schedule 36 of the Finance Act 2004 and as such is exempt from UK income tax on interest received and from capital gains tax on the proceeds of investments sold. Income from overseas investments suffers withholding tax in the country of origin, unless exemption is permitted. Irrecoverable tax is accounted for as an expense as it arises.

f) Benefits Payable

Pensions and lump sum benefits payable include all amounts known to be due as at 31 March 2021. Any amounts due but unpaid are disclosed in the Net Assets Statement as current liabilities.

g) Financial Assets

The LGPS Central Pool trading company, LGPS Central Limited, only became licensed to trade on 1 April 2018. The Pension Fund's view is that for 31 March 2021, cost is therefore an appropriate estimate of the fair value of shares held in this company.

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Financial assets are included in the Net Assets Statement on a fair value basis as at the reporting date. A financial asset is recognised in the Net Assets Statement on the date the Fund becomes party to the contractual acquisition of the asset. From this date, any gains or losses arising from changes in the fair value of the asset are recognised in the Fund account.

The values of investments as shown in the Net Assets Statement have been determined at fair value in accordance with the requirements of the Code and IFRS 13 (see note to the accounts). For the purposes of disclosing levels of fair value hierarchy, the Fund has adopted the classification guidelines recommended in Practical Guidance on Investment Disclosures (PRAG/Investment Association, 2016).

h) Freehold and Leasehold Properties

Properties are valued annually as at the year-end by independent valuers on a fair value basis. The market values included in these accounts are contained in a valuation report by the appointed chartered surveyors, as at 31 March 2021. All investment property assets are subject to annual revaluation, one third of the commercial property portfolio is valued fully in March each year with the remaining two thirds being a 'desktop' valuation. Agricultural properties are valued by specialist agricultural valuers at the same date.

i) Foreign Currencies

Investments held in foreign currencies have been valued as set out in paragraph g) above and translated at exchange rates ruling at 31 March 2021.

Dividends, interest and purchases and sales of investments have been accounted for at the spot market rates at the date of transaction. End of year spot market exchange rates have been used to value cash balances held in foreign currency bank accounts, market values of overseas investments and purchases and sales outstanding at 31 March 2021.

j) Derivatives

The Fund uses derivative financial instruments to manage its exposure to specific risks arising from its investment activities. The Fund does not hold derivatives for speculative purposes.

Purchases and sales of derivatives are recognised as follows:

Futures – on close out or expiry the variation margins are recognised as cash receipts or payments depending on whether there is a gain or loss.

Forward currency contracts settlements are reported as gross receipts and payments.

k) Movement in the net market value of investments

Any gains or losses arising on translation of investments into sterling are accounted for as a change in the market value of investments.

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l) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash comprises cash in hand and demand deposits. Cash equivalents are short-term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and that are subject to minimal risk of changes in value.

m) Financial liabilities

The Fund recognises financial liabilities at fair value as at the reporting date. A financial liability is recognised in the Net Assets Statement on the date the Fund becomes party to the liability. From this date any gains or losses arising from changes in the fair value of the liability are recognised by the Fund.

n) Management Expenses

The Fund discloses its management expenses in accordance with the CIPFA guidance Accounting for Local Government Pension Scheme Management Expenses 2016.

All administrative expenses are accounted for on an accrual basis. The costs of Fund officers are recharged to the Fund along with all other costs incurred directly on Fund activities and an apportionment for corporate support services provided by the administering authority.

All investment management expenses are accounted for on an accrual basis. External investment management and custodian fees are agreed in management or custody agreements governing the administration of the individual mandates. Fees are generally based on the valuation of the underlying investments, either being managed or in safe custody. In addition, performance-related fees are negotiated with a number of managers and the amounts of such fees are provided in a note to the accounts.

Where a management fee notification has not been received at the time of preparing these accounts, an estimate based upon the market value of their mandate is used for inclusion in the Fund Account.

The cost of any 'in-house' Fund investment activity is included in investment management expenses.

o) Actuarial Present Value of Promised Retirement Benefits

The actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits is assessed on a triennial basis by the scheme actuary in accordance with the requirements of IAS 19 and relevant actuarial standards. As permitted under the Code, the Fund has opted to disclose the actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits by way of a note to the Net Assets Statement (see note to the accounts).

p) Additional Voluntary Contributions

The Fund provides an additional voluntary contribution (AVC) scheme for its members the assets of which are invested separately from those of the Fund. The Fund has appointed Prudential Assurance Company Limited and Utmost Life and

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Pensions as its AVC providers. AVCs are paid to the provider by employers and are specifically for providing additional benefits for individual contributors. Each contributor receives an annual statement showing the amount held in their account and the movements in the year. AVCs are not included in the accounts in accordance with section 4(1)(b) of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016 but are disclosed as a note only (see note to the accounts).