

November 2022



To all members of the Fund

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Dear Member

### **The Port of London Authority Pension Fund (“the Fund”)**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Committee of Management, who are responsible for the running of your pension fund. The purpose of the letter is to provide you with an update and reassurance on how the Committee of Management is reacting to the impact of the recent market volatility and to issue your annual funding statement.

#### **Market Volatility - Background**

You may have read in the national press about pension schemes and Liability Driven Investments (LDI), the PLA Fund use this type of fund which protects against shocks in interest rates and inflation. This is to ensure more stable funding levels. Most LDI mandates use a degree of leverage to achieve the desired level of protection (hedging); they borrow money to gain more market exposure through further gilt purchase. The collateral for this borrowing is typically made up of qualifying bonds and cash.

#### **What has happened in the last few weeks**

The speed of the rising interest rates meant that LDI managers have been forced to call cash at short notice to maintain the level of protection.

The Fund was well positioned to come through this liquidity crisis. The Committee had undertaken several steps this year to reduce risk in the Fund by disinvesting from growth assets. The Fund's Committee was not required to make such a decision and was not a forced seller of gilts and the Fund has maintained its interest rate and inflation sensitivity hedges.

All LDI managers are now calling for more cash to support their hedging programs to improve the resilience and there was a further requirement to disinvest from the Fund's growth assets within the portfolio.

#### **Assurances**

The Committee would like to provide you with the following assurances:

- The Fund is still in a strong position and is supported by the resources of the Authority.
- Members; benefits and options are unaffected.
- The Committee and its advisers continue to monitor the impact of the market volatility on the assets of the Fund.
- For those of you with AVCs, the impact of recent events on the value of your AVC investments will vary depending on what you are invested in. The effect on your AVC benefits at retirement will also vary depending on the length of time you are away from taking your retirement benefits and the form in which you are planning to take your benefits (i.e. annuity, cash).

#### **Annual Funding Statement**

To comply with legislation, you will receive an annual statement from the Committee of Management providing details regarding the Fund's funding position. This statement will be based on calculations carried out when the Fund had its last formal valuation. Such valuations are typically carried out every three years and, for the PLA Pension Fund, the latest valuation was as at 31 March 2021. The next actuarial valuation of the Fund will be undertaken as at 31 March 2024.

The 2021 valuation was carried out in accordance with the government's funding regime, overseen by the Pensions Regulator. Under these rules the Committee of Management has greater powers to decide the contributions that should be paid to the Fund. The Regulator issues guidelines for trustees on funding their pension schemes. The Committee of Management intends to be fully compliant with the Regulator's guidance.

The attached statement refers to the funding position as at 31 March 2021. At this point, the funding level of the Fund was estimated to be 89% with a deficit of £49.1M.

The attached statement also details what would happen to your benefits if the Fund were to wind-up. Please note that it is a legislative requirement that all trustees of defined benefit pension schemes include such a section in the summary funding statement. Therefore, this information is designed to be informative – it does not mean that the Port of London Authority is thinking of winding up the Fund.

**Additional Fund documents are available on request**

- Statement of Funding Principles - This explains how the Fund is to be funded.
- Statement of Investment Principles - This explains how the Committee of Management invests the assets of the Fund.
- Schedule of Contributions - This shows how much money is being paid into the Fund.
- Annual Report and Accounts - This shows the Fund's income and expenditure in the year up to 31 March 2022.
- Actuarial Valuation Report - This report details the Actuary's check on the Fund's situation as at 31 March 2021.
- Member booklet.
- Benefit Statement - If you are not getting a pension from the Fund (and have not received a benefit statement in the last 12 months) you can ask for a statement that provides an illustration of your pension benefits.
- Trust Deed and Rules. - These details the Rules and benefits of the Fund.
- Recovery Plan. - This document sets out how any shortfall in the Fund will be eliminated.

If you have any questions, please write to me at the above address.

Finally, we hope that you and your family keep safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Bottacchi', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

D Bottacchi (Miss)  
Fund Secretary

# Port of London Authority Pension Fund (the “Fund”)

Dear Member

November 2022

## **SUMMARY FUNDING STATEMENT FOR 2022**

It is the responsibility of the Committee of Management to make sure that a full valuation of the Fund is carried out every 3 years. In addition, the Committee of Management must, by law, provide you with an annual statement of how the Fund is funded and remind you of the results of the last full valuation.

### **How is my pension funded?**

The Port of London Authority (the “Authority”) pays contributions so that the Fund can pay pensions and other benefits to members. Active members also pay contributions to the Fund at a varying rate that is dependent on their chosen accrual rate. All the Fund assets are in one common fund. Members do not have separate individual holdings apart from their Additional Voluntary Contributions.

The Committee of Management obtains regular valuations from the Scheme Actuary which provide an estimate of the assets needed today to meet the payment of benefits allowing for future investment returns. Using this information, the Committee of Management and the Authority come to an agreement on how much the Authority should pay to keep the Fund’s funding on track against this funding target.

The Pensions Regulator has powers to direct matters affecting the funding of the Fund in certain circumstances. No such directions have ever been made in relation to the Fund.

### **Results of the last Valuation**

The latest valuation of the Fund showed that on 31 March 2021 the funding position was as follows:

Assets	£379.4m
Amount assessed as needed to provide benefits (“Liabilities”)	£428.4m
Surplus / (Deficit)	(£49.0m)
Funding level	89%

Following discussions between the Committee of Management and the Authority, it was agreed the Authority would pay contributions to the Fund at the rates set out below

#### ***In respect of the future accrual of benefits***

For members who have entered into a salary sacrifice agreement with the Port of London Authority:

1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 – 29.9% of Pensionable Salaries for higher rate members and 22.43% of Pensionable Salaries for lower rate members.

From 1 September 2023 – 35.6% of Pensionable Salaries for higher rate members and 26.7% of Pensionable Salaries for lower rate members.

For members who have not entered into a salary sacrifice agreement with the Port of London Authority:

1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 – 19.93% of Pensionable Salaries for higher rate members and 14.95% of Pensionable Salaries for lower rate members.

From 1 September 2023 – 23.73% of Pensionable Salaries for higher rate members and 17.8% of Pensionable Salaries for lower rate members.

The above rates, when combined with the member contributions, are equal to the estimated cost of the benefits accruing to active members.

#### ***In respect of the shortfall in funding***

1 April 2021 to 31 December 2022

£4,250,000 per annum

1 January 2023 to 31 October 2028

£4,250,000 per annum, increased each year in line with the increase in CPI inflation over the year to September of the preceding year

The contribution rates will be reviewed as part of the next actuarial valuation as at 31 March 2024.

### **Change in funding position between 31 March 2020 and 31 March 2021**

The Committee of Management monitors the funding position between valuations. The previous report by the Scheme Actuary showed that as at 31 March 2020, the funding level of the Fund was estimated to be 81% with a deficit of £83.7 million. The position has improved since the last statement, primarily due to higher than expected asset returns over the period, changes in market conditions which have reduced the value of the liabilities and contributions paid towards the

deficit by the Authority. These items have been partially offset by changes to the actuarial assumptions following the recent actuarial valuation which have increased the value of the liabilities.

You should be aware that the factors affecting the funding level are very changeable, particularly stock market performance, interest rates and life expectancy. This means that the funding level can go up or down in the future.

### **Payment to the Authority**

There has not been any refund of surplus to the Authority out of the Fund.

### **The importance of the Employer's support**

The Committee of Management's objective is to have enough money in the Fund to pay pensions now and in the future. However, this relies on the on-going existence of the Authority and its support for the Fund because:

- Assets can go down as well as up, and when there is a shortfall, the Authority will usually need to put in more money; and
- The cost of benefits may increase so that the Authority will need to put in more money.

### **What would happen if the Fund started to wind up?**

The Rules of the Fund do not state how the benefits will be provided in the event of a winding up. If the Fund winds up, you may not receive the full amount of pension you have earned even if the Fund is fully funded on its target funding level. However, whilst the Fund remains ongoing, even though funding may temporarily be below target, pensions will continue to be paid in full.

If the Fund were to wind up, the Authority would be required to pay enough into the Fund to enable your benefits to be completely secured with an insurance company. At 31 March 2021, the estimated amount that the insurance company would require (full solvency) was approximately £536m. This means that there was a shortfall from full solvency of approximately £157m. Please note that this information is designed to be informative - it does not imply that the Fund will wind up.

In the event of a wind up, it may be the case that the Authority is unable to pay the full amount required by the insurance company. If the Authority became insolvent, the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) might be able to take over the Fund and pay compensation to members. The PPF has been set up by the government to help protect members' pensions where a company becomes insolvent, although it does not guarantee to pay full benefits. Further information and guidance is available on the PPF's website at [www.pensionprotectionfund.org.uk](http://www.pensionprotectionfund.org.uk). Or, you can write to the Pension Protection Fund at PO Box 254, Wymondham, NR18 8DN.

### **Why does the Committee of Management's funding plan not call for full solvency at all times?**

The full solvency position assumes that benefits will be secured by buying insurance policies. Insurers are required to take a very cautious view of the future, include a profit margin and make an allowance for their expenses. By contrast, our funding plan assumes that the Authority continues to financially support the Fund, while adopting less cautious assumptions about the future.

### **What is the Fund invested in?**

The Committee of Management's policy is to invest in a broad range of assets to get the best return possible while taking account of the liabilities of the Fund, and the risks of having too much money in any one type of investment. We currently aim to invest in the following broad proportions:

Equities	20%	Diversified Growth Funds	14%
Multi Asset Credit	35%	Liability Driven Investment	19%
Infrastructure	12%		

This policy is reviewed regularly and is formalised in the Fund's Statement of Investment Principles.

### **Use of personal data**

In providing actuarial services to the Committee of Management, including preparing this Summary Funding Statement, the Committee of Management, its adviser Aon and the Scheme Actuary require access to personal data about members and their dependants. The Data Protection Act governs how the Committee of Management, Aon and the Scheme Actuary use and store personal data. Members can find out more information about how their personal information is used in the provision of actuarial services at <https://www.aon.com/unitedkingdom/products-and-services/human-capital-consulting/aon-hewitt-actuarial-services-privacy-statement.jsp>. Should you have any questions regarding the processing of your personal information, you should contact the Secretary in the first instance. General guidance is also available from the Information Commissioner's website.

### **Where can I get further information?**

If you have any other questions, or would like any more information about the Fund, please contact the Secretary. Please help us to keep in touch with you by telling us if you change address. Please note that if you are an active member and considering leaving the Fund, we suggest that you consult an independent financial adviser before taking any action.