

## **Keele Superannuation Scheme**

### **Statement of Investment Principles (“SIP”)**

#### **Purpose of this Statement**

This SIP has been prepared by the Trustee of the Keele Superannuation Scheme (the “Scheme”). This statement sets out the principles governing the Trustee’s decisions to invest the assets of the Scheme.

The Scheme’s investment strategy is derived from the Trustee’s investment objectives. The objectives have been taken into account at all stages of planning, implementation and monitoring of the investment strategy.

Details on the Scheme’s investment arrangements are set out in the Investment Implementation Document (“IID”).

The Statement covers both the Defined Benefit (DB) and Defined Contribution (DC) Sections.

#### **Governance**

The Trustee of the Scheme makes all major strategic decisions including, but not limited to, the Scheme’s asset allocation and the appointment and termination of investment managers.

When making such decisions, and when appropriate, the Trustee takes proper written advice. The Trustee believes that their investment advisers, Isio, are qualified by their ability in, and practical experience, of financial matters, and have the appropriate knowledge and experience. The investment advisers’ remuneration may be a fixed fee or based on time worked, as negotiated by the Trustee in the interests of obtaining best value for the Scheme.

#### **Investment objectives**

The Trustee invests the assets of the Scheme with the aim of ensuring that all members’ current and future benefits can be paid. The Scheme’s funding position will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to assess the position relative to the funding target and whether the investment arrangements remain appropriate to the Scheme’s circumstances. The Scheme’s funding target is specified in the Statement of Funding Principles.

The Scheme’s present investment objective is to achieve a return of around 1.5% per annum above the return on a liability matching portfolio of UK Government bonds.

#### **Investment strategy**

The Trustee takes a holistic approach to considering and managing risks when formulating the Scheme’s investment strategy.

The Scheme’s investment strategy was derived following careful consideration of the factors set out in Appendix B. The considerations include the nature and duration of the Scheme’s liabilities, the risks of investing in the various asset classes, the implications of the strategy (under various scenarios) for the level of employer contributions required to fund the

Scheme, and also the strength of the sponsoring company's covenant. The Trustees considered the merits of a range of asset classes.

The Trustee recognises that the investment strategy is subject to risks, in particular the risk of a mismatch between the performance of the assets and the calculated value of the liabilities. This risk is monitored by regularly assessing the funding position and the characteristics of the assets and liabilities. This risk is managed by investing in assets which are expected to perform in excess of the liabilities over the long term, and also by investing in a suitably diversified portfolio of assets with the aim of minimising (as far as possible) volatility relative to the liabilities.

The assets of the Scheme consist predominantly of investments which are traded on regulated markets.

### **Leverage and collateral management**

The Trustee will adhere to all relevant regulatory guidance and requirements in relation to leverage and collateral management within the Scheme's liability hedging (LDI).

The Trustee, via the Scheme's LDI manager, has a stated collateral management policy / framework. The Trustee has agreed a process for meeting collateral calls should these be made by the Scheme's LDI manager.

### **Investment Management Arrangements**

The Trustee has appointed Mobius Life as the platform provider. The Trustee then selects the underlying investment funds. Both Mobius Life and the investment managers are regulated under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

All decisions about the day-to-day management of the assets have been delegated to the investment managers via a written agreement. The delegation includes decisions about:

- Selection, retention and realisation of investments including taking into account all financially material considerations in making these decisions;
- The exercise of rights (including voting rights) attaching to the investments;
- Undertaking engagement activities with investee companies and other stakeholders, where appropriate.

The Trustee takes investment managers' policies into account when selecting and monitoring managers. The Trustee also takes into account the performance targets the investment managers are evaluated on. The investment managers are expected to exercise powers of investment delegated to them, with a view to following the principles contained within this statement, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The investment managers' remuneration is based upon a percentage value of the assets under management.

As the Scheme's assets are invested in pooled vehicles, the custody of the holdings is arranged by the investment manager.

## Additional voluntary contributions

The Trustee allows members to make Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) as part of the Scheme's overall benefits. The Trustee has AVC policies in place with Utmost Life & Pensions and Clerical Medical. Members can choose from a range of funds offered by their AVC provider.

The AVC options are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate, competitive, and offer value for members. Investment strategies for AVCs are designed to reflect members' varying needs and risk profiles. The Trustee considers the interests of members when setting investment strategies, monitors the performance and charges of AVC funds, and ensures members are kept informed about their options, fund performance, and associated costs.

## Investment Manager Monitoring and Engagement

The Trustee monitors and engages with the Scheme's investment managers and other stakeholders on a variety of issues. Below is a summary of the areas covered and how the Trustee seek to engage on these matters with investment managers.

Areas for engagement	Method for monitoring and engagement	Circumstances for additional monitoring and engagement
Performance, Strategy and Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Trustee receives a quarterly performance report which details information on the underlying investments' performance, strategy and overall risks, which are considered at the relevant Trustee's meeting.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There are significant changes made to the investment strategy.</li></ul>
Environmental, Social, Corporate Governance factors and the exercising of rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Trustee's investment managers provide annual reports on how they have engaged with issuers regarding social, environmental and corporate governance issues.</li><li>The Trustee receives information from their investment advisers on the investment managers' approaches to engagement.</li><li>The Trustee will engage, via their investment adviser, with investment managers and/or other relevant persons about relevant matters (including the Scheme's stewardship priorities) at least annually. The Trustee will</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The manager has not acted in accordance with their policies and frameworks.</li><li>The manager's stewardship policies and priorities are not in line with the Trustee's policies and any priorities in this area.</li></ul>

	share any agreed stewardship priorities to ensure alignment in voting and engagement activity.	
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Through the engagement described above, the Trustee will work with the platform provider to improve their alignment with the above policies. Where sufficient improvement is not observed, the Trustee will review the relevant investment manager's appointment and will consider terminating the arrangement.

### **Employer-related investments**

The policy of the Trustee is to not hold any employer-related investments as defined in the Pensions Act 1995 and the Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations 2005 except where the Scheme invests in collective investment schemes that may hold employer-related investments. In this case, the total exposure to employer-related investments will not exceed 5% of the Scheme's total asset value. The Trustee will monitor this on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance.

### **Direct investments**

Direct investments, as defined by the Pensions Act 1995, are products purchased without delegation to an investment manager through a written contract. When selecting and reviewing any direct investments, the Trustee will obtain appropriate written advice from their investment advisers.

### **Compliance**

This Statement has been prepared in compliance with the Pensions Act 1995, the Pensions Act 2004, and the Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations 2005. Before preparing or subsequently revising this Statement, the Trustee consulted the sponsoring company and took appropriate written advice. The Statement is reviewed at least every three years, and without delay after any significant change in the investment arrangements.

**Date: 26 March 2026**

## **Appendix A – Investment Beliefs**

### **1. Investment strategy is the most important decision and should be based on clear objectives**

Our long-term goal is to generate returns required to fund our members' current and future pensions.

Clear objectives are at the heart of our investment strategy. Risk tolerance, return requirement and time frame are our central considerations.

Our strategy should aim to achieve the objectives with a high degree of confidence across a range of possible economic scenarios.

### **2 There is more to robust portfolio construction than diversification alone**

Excessive diversification can introduce inefficiency, cost, and fail to protect our portfolio in a downturn.

***Pay-off profile of assets:*** We tailor the expected pay-off profile of the Scheme's investments around our required objectives.

***Excess liquidity of our Scheme:*** We utilise excess liquidity in order to access any illiquidity premium (when illiquidity is rewarded), taking into consideration known cash flow requirements and the need for flexibility.

***True diversification:*** We optimise true diversification of underlying risk drivers.

### **3 We aim to select the most appropriate opportunities in the market**

A strategy that buys the right asset, at a fair price, will serve us better than buying the wrong asset at a cheap price.

We consider the most appropriate potential market opportunities in order to help us achieve our long-term objectives.

### **4 A long-term mind-set can be used to enhance returns**

As a long-term investor we pursue incremental growth that rewards adherence to our strategic plan, rather than pursuing short term opportunities rewarding speculation.

We will mitigate or manage risks that we are not rewarded for.

Returns are more predictable over a longer time period, as risk is diversified across different economic cycles.

### **5 Excessive costs will erode performance**

An appealing investment opportunity can be wholly undermined by too high a cost base.

Passive management, where viable, is considered the default approach.

Active management is employed where value-add can be expected with confidence.

### **6 Good governance improves our decision making**

We continuously strive to enhance our knowledge of the investment opportunities and risks facing the Scheme.

We monitor the performance of our strategy and investment managers to improve our decision making.

#### **7 Our investment process reflects our beliefs on responsible investing and Stewardship**

We consider environmental, social and corporate governance factors when selecting, monitoring and engaging in the investments we make. Our ESG specific investment beliefs are set out in the ESG Policy Statement.

## Appendix B – Risks, Financially Material Considerations (including ESG and climate change) and Non-Financial matters

A non-exhaustive list of risks and financially material considerations that the Trustee has considered and sought to manage is shown below.

The Trustee adopts an integrated risk management approach. The three key risks associated within this framework and how they are managed are stated below:

Risks	Definition	Policy
Investment	The risk that the Scheme's position deteriorates due to the assets underperforming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selecting an investment objective that is achievable and is consistent with the Scheme's funding basis and the sponsoring company's covenant strength.</li> <li>Investing in a diversified portfolio of assets.</li> </ul>
Funding	The extent to which there are insufficient Scheme assets available to cover ongoing and future liability cash flows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding risk is considered as part of the investment strategy review and the actuarial valuation.</li> <li>The Trustee will agree an appropriate basis in conjunction with the investment strategy to ensure an appropriate journey plan is agreed to manage funding risk over time.</li> </ul>
Covenant	The risk that the sponsoring company becomes unable to continue providing the required financial support to the Scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When developing the Scheme's investment and funding objectives, the Trustee takes account of the strength of the covenant ensuring the level of risk the Scheme is exposed to is at an appropriate level for the covenant to support.</li> </ul>

The Scheme is exposed to a number of underlying risks relating to the Scheme's investment strategy, these are summarised below:

Risk	Definition	Policy
Interest rates and inflation	The risk of mismatch between the value of the Scheme assets and present value of liabilities from changes in interest rates and inflation expectations.	To hedge some of these risks on the Technical Provisions basis through the LDI portfolio.

Liquidity	Difficulties in raising sufficient cash when required without adversely impacting the fair market value of the investment.	To maintain a sufficient allocation to liquid assets so that there is a prudent buffer to pay members benefits as they fall due (including transfer values), and to provide collateral to the LDI manager.
Market	Experiencing losses due to factors that affect the overall performance of the financial markets.	To remain appropriately diversified and hedge away any unrewarded risks, where practicable.
Credit	Default on payments due as part of a financial security contract.	To appoint investment managers who actively manage this risk by seeking to invest only in debt securities where the yield available sufficiently compensates the Scheme for the risk of default.
Environmental, Social and Governance	Exposure to Environmental, Social and Governance factors, including but not limited to climate change, which can impact the performance of the Scheme's investments.	To appoint managers who satisfy the following criteria, unless there is a good reason why the manager does not satisfy each criteria: 1. Responsible Investment ('RI') Policy / Framework 2. Implemented via Investment Process 3. A track record of using engagement and any voting rights to manage ESG factors 4. ESG specific reporting 5. UN PRI signatory The Trustee monitors the managers on an ongoing basis.
Currency	The potential for adverse currency movements to have an impact on the Scheme's investments.	To invest in funds that hedge the majority of currency risk as far as practically possible.
Non-financial	Any factor that is not expected to have a financial impact on the Scheme's investments.	Non-financial matters are not taken into account in the selection, retention or realisation of investments.

## Appendix C

The Trustee has the following policies in relation to the investment management arrangements for the Scheme:

<p><b>How the investment managers are incentivised to align their investment strategy and decisions with the Trustee’s policies.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the Scheme is invested in pooled funds, there is not scope for these funds to tailor their strategy and decisions in line with the Trustee’s policies. However, the Trustee invests in a portfolio of pooled funds that are aligned to the strategic objective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How the investment managers are incentivised to make decisions based on assessments of medium to long-term financial and non-financial performance of an issuer of debt or equity and to engage with them to improve performance in the medium to long-term.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trustee reviews the investment managers’ performance relative to medium and long-term objectives as documented in the investment management agreements.</li> <li>The Trustee monitors the investment managers’ engagement and voting activity on an annual basis as part of their ESG monitoring process.</li> <li>The Trustee does not incentivise the investment managers to make decisions based on non-financial performance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How the method (and time horizon) of the evaluation of investment managers’ performance and the remuneration for their services are in line with the Trustee’s policies.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trustee reviews the performance of all of the Scheme’s investments on a net of cost basis to ensure a true measurement of performance versus investment objectives.</li> <li>The Trustee evaluates performance over the time period stated in the investment managers’ performance objective, which is typically 3 to 5 years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The method for monitoring portfolio turnover costs incurred by investment managers and how they define and monitor targeted portfolio turnover or turnover range.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trustee does not directly monitor turnover costs. However, the investment managers are incentivised to minimise costs as they are measured on a net of cost basis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The duration of the Scheme’s arrangements with the investment managers</b></p>	<p>The duration is flexible and the Trustee will from time-to-time consider the appropriateness of these investments and whether they should continue to be held.</p>
<p><b>Voting Policy - How the Trustee expects investment managers to vote on their behalf</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trustee has acknowledged responsibility for the voting policies that are implemented by the Scheme’s investment managers on their behalf.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement Policy - How the Trustee will engage with</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trustee has acknowledged responsibility for the engagement policies that are</li> </ul>

<b>investment managers, direct assets and others about 'relevant matters'</b>	implemented by the Scheme's investment managers on their behalf. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Trustee, via their investment advisers, will engage with managers about 'relevant matters' at least annually.</li></ul>
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