

# Gloucestershire County Council Pension Fund Funding update report at 31 March 2023

This report is addressed to the Administering Authority of the Gloucestershire County Council Pension Fund. This document should be read in conjunction with the fund's current Funding Strategy Statement.

The purpose of this report is to provide the funding position of the Gloucestershire Pension Fund as at 31 March 2023 and show how it has changed since the previous valuation at 31 March 2022. This report has not been prepared for use for any other purpose and should not be so used. The report should not be disclosed to any third party except as required by law or regulatory obligation or with our prior written consent. Hymans Robertson LLP accept no liability where the report is used by or disclosed to a third party unless such liability has been expressly accepted in writing. Where permitted, the report may only be released or otherwise disclosed in a complete form which fully discloses the advice and the basis on which it is given.

The figures presented in this report are prepared only for the purposes of providing an illustrative funding position and have no validity in other circumstances. In particular, they are not designed to meet regulatory requirements for valuations.

This report also contains the data and assumptions underlying the results and the reliances and limitations which apply to them.

## 1 Results

### 1.1 Funding position update

The table below shows the estimated funding position at 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2023.

Please note that the asset value at 31 March 2023 shown in this report may differ to the actual asset value at that date because it is an estimate based on estimated cashflows (see section 3.2). However, the estimated value is consistent with the liabilities and therefore gives a more reliable estimate of the funding position than the actual asset value at the same date.

The table also shows what assumed investment return would be required at each date for the deficit to be exactly zero, along with the likelihood of the investment strategy achieving this return. An increase in this likelihood corresponds to an improvement in the funding position.

Monetary amounts in £bn	Ongoing basis	Ongoing basis
	31 March 2022	31 March 2023
Assets	3.11	3.07
Liabilities		
– Active members	0.98	0.73
– Deferred pensioners	0.61	0.44
– Pensioners	1.24	1.05
Total liabilities	2.83	2.22
Surplus/(deficit)	0.29	0.85
Funding level	110%	138%
Required return assumption (% pa) for funding level to be 100%	3.7%	3.6%
Likelihood of assets achieving this return	81%	92%

## 1.2 Funding level progression

The chart below shows the estimated funding level (ratio of assets to liabilities) over time between 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2023. It allows for changes in market conditions and other factors described in Appendix A. If the fund has moved to a different basis since 31 March 2022 this may give rise to step changes in the funding level on the date of the change.



## 2 Next steps

### 2.1 Understanding the results

The results at 31 March 2023 in this report are estimates based on rolling forward the fund's funding position from 31 March 2022. You should understand the methodology and limitations of this approach described in appendices A and B.

Decisions should not be based solely on these results and your Hymans Robertson LLP consultant should be contacted to discuss any appropriate action before any is taken. Please also bear in mind that the information is estimated and consider other factors beyond the funding level or surplus/deficit. These could include, but are not limited to, changes to investment strategy, membership profile and covenant strength (where relevant).

Please get in touch with your usual Hymans Robertson contact if you wish to discuss the results in this report further.

## 3 Data and assumptions

### 3.1 Membership data

The membership data underlying the figures in this report was supplied by the fund for the purpose of the valuation at 31 March 2022 and is summarised below:

31 March 2022	Number	Average age	Accrued benefit (£k pa)	Payroll (£k pa)
Active members	19,113	52.4	59,032	325,024
Deferred pensioners	26,072	52.6	34,123	
Pensioners and dependants	18,139	69.7	80,680	

The membership is assumed to evolve over time in line with the demographic assumptions described in the Funding Strategy Statement. Please see Appendix A for details of the rollforward methodology which includes the estimated changes in membership data which have been allowed for.

### 3.2 Cashflows since the valuation at 31 March 2022

We have allowed for the following cashflows in estimating the assets and liabilities at 31 March 2023. Cashflows are assumed to be paid daily. Contributions are based on the estimated payroll, certified employer contributions (including any lump sum contributions) and the average employee contribution rate at 31 March 2022. Benefits paid are projections based on the membership at 31 March 2022.

Estimated cashflows (£k)	31 March 2022 to 31 March 2023
Employer contributions	94,470
Employee contributions	21,471
Benefits paid	91,808
Transfers in/(out)	0

### 3.3 Investment returns since the valuation at 31 March 2022

Investment returns are based on actual returns where available and index returns otherwise.

Investment strategy	Actual/index	From	To	Return
Whole fund	Actual	1 April 2022	31 March 2023	(1.95%)

The total investment return for the whole period is (1.95%).

### 3.4 Financial assumptions

The financial assumptions used to calculate the liabilities are detailed below. For further details please see the Funding Strategy Statement.

Assumption	31 March 2022	31 March 2023
Funding basis	Ongoing	Ongoing
Discount rate methodology	Expected returns on the Whole Fund strategy over 20 years with a 75% likelihood	Expected returns on the Whole Fund strategy over 20 years with a 75% likelihood
Discount rate (% pa)	4.2%	5.8%
Pension increase methodology	Expected CPI inflation over 20 years with a 50% likelihood	Expected CPI inflation over 20 years with a 50% likelihood
Pension increases (% pa)	2.7%	2.3%

Salary increases are assumed to be 0.5% pa above pension increases, plus an additional promotional salary scale.

### 3.5 Demographic assumptions

Demographic assumptions are set out in the Funding Strategy Statement. All demographic assumptions, including longevity assumptions, are the same as at the most recent valuation at 31 March 2022.

Life expectancies from age 65, based on the fund's membership data at 31 March 2022, are as follows. Non-pensioners are assumed to be aged 45 at that date.

Life expectancy from age 65 (years)	Ongoing basis	
	Male	Female
Pensioners	21.9	24.6
Non-pensioners	22.6	26.0

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## Appendix A - Technical information

### A.1 Funding update methodology

The last formal valuation of the fund was carried out as at 31 March 2022. The results in this report are based on projecting the results of this valuation forward to 31 March 2023 using approximate methods. The rollforward allows for

- estimated cashflows over the period as described in section 3.2;
- investment returns over the period (estimated where appropriate) as described in section 3.3;
- changes in financial assumptions as described in section 3.4;
- estimated additional benefit accrual.

The CARE, deferred and pensioner liabilities at 31 March 2023 include a total adjustment of 7.2% to reflect the difference between actual September CPI inflation values and the assumption made at 31 March 2022. The adjustment for each year's actual inflation is applied from 1 October that year, cumulative with prior years' adjustments, which may lead to step changes in the funding level progression chart.

In preparing the updated funding position at 31 March 2023 no allowance has been made for the effect of changes in the membership profile since 31 March 2022. The principal reason for this is that insufficient information is available to allow me to make any such adjustment. Significant membership movements, or any material difference between estimated inputs and actual ones, may affect the reliability of the results. The fund should consider whether any such factors mean that the rollforward approach may not be appropriate.

No allowance has been made for any early retirements or bulk transfers since 31 March 2022. There is also no allowance for any changes to Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) benefits except where noted in the formal valuation report or Funding Strategy Statement.

### A.2 Sensitivity of results to assumptions

The results are particularly sensitive to the real discount rate assumption (the discount rate net of pension increases) and the assumptions made for future longevity.

If the real discount rate used to value the accrued liabilities decreases then the value placed on those liabilities will increase. If the real discount rate was 1.0% pa lower then the liabilities at 31 March 2023 would increase by approximately 23%.

In addition, the results are sensitive to unexpected changes in the rate of future longevity improvements. If life expectancies improve at a faster rate than allowed for in the assumptions then, again, a higher value would be placed on the liabilities. An increase in life expectancy of 1 year would increase the accrued liabilities by around 3-5%.

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## Appendix B - Reliances and limitations

The last formal valuation of the fund was carried out as at 31 March 2022 and these calculations rely upon the results of that valuation. The reliances and limitations that applied to that valuation apply equally to these results. The results of the valuation have been projected forward using approximate methods. The margin of error in these approximate methods increases as time goes by. The method may not be appropriate if there have been significant data changes since the previous formal valuation (for example redundancy exercises, significant unreduced early retirements, ill health retirements and bulk transfers). The methodology assumes that actual experience since the valuation at 31 March 2022 has been in line with our expectations.

The data used in this exercise is summarised in section 3. Data provided for the purposes of the formal valuation at 31 March 2022 was checked at the time for reasonableness and consistency with other sources. Data provided since then (eg actual investment returns) has been used as-is. The data is the responsibility of the Administering Authority and the results rely on the data.

The results in this schedule are based on calculations run on 19 May 2023 using the data set out in section 3. Any other factors coming to light after this report was prepared have not been allowed for and could affect the results. If any data has materially changed since 19 May 2023 the results could be materially different if they were recalculated.

Some financial assumptions may be based on projections from our Economic Scenario Service (ESS) model which is only calibrated at each monthend. Results between monthends use the latest available calibration, adjusted in line with the movement in market conditions. This adjustment is approximate and there may be step changes at monthend dates when a new ESS calibration is factored in.

The methodology underlying these calculations mean that the results should be treated as indicative only. The nature of the fund's investments means that the surplus or deficit identified in this report can vary significantly over short periods of time. This means that the results set out should not be taken as being applicable at any date other than the date shown.

As with all modelling, the results are dependent on the model itself, the calibration of the underlying model and the various approximations and estimations used. These processes involve an element of subjectivity and may be material depending on the context. No inferences should be drawn from these results other than those confirmed separately in writing by a consultant of Hymans Robertson LLP.

Decisions should not be based solely on these results and your Hymans Robertson LLP consultant should be contacted to discuss any appropriate action before any is taken. Hymans Robertson LLP accepts no liability if any decisions are based solely on these results or if any action is taken based solely on such results.

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