

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Policy on Contribution Reviews

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the administering authority's approach to renewing contributions between triennial valuations. It should be noted that this statement is not exhaustive and individual circumstances may be taken into consideration where appropriate.

Aims and objectives

- 1.2 The administering authority's aims and objectives related to this policy are as follows:
- To provide employers with clarity around the circumstances where contribution rates may be reviewed between valuations.
 - To outline specific circumstances where contribution rates will not be reviewed.

Background

- 1.3 The Fund may amend contribution rates between valuations for 'significant change' to the liabilities or covenant of an employer. Such reviews may be instigated by the Fund or at the request of a participating employer. Any review may lead to a change in the required contributions from the employer.

Guidance and regulatory framework

- 1.4 Regulation 64 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended) sets out the way in which LGPS funds should determine employer contributions, including the following;
- 1.5 Regulation 64 (4) – allows the administering authority to review the contribution rate if it becomes likely that an employer will cease participation in the Fund, with a view to ensuring that the employer is fully funded at the expected exit date.
- 1.6 Regulation 64A - sets out specific circumstances where the administering authority may revise contributions between valuations (including where a review is requested by one or more employers).

This policy also reflects statutory guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on preparing and maintaining policies relating to the review of employer contributions. Interested parties may want to refer to an accompanying guide that has been produced by the Scheme Advisory Board.

Statement of principles

- 1.7 This Statement of Principles covers review of contributions between valuations. Each case will be treated on its own merits, but in general:
- The administering authority reserves the right to review contributions in line with the provisions set out in the LGPS Regulations.
 - The decision to make a change to contribution rates rests with the administering authority, subject to consultation with employers during the review period.
 - Full justification for any change in contribution rates will be provided to employers.
 - Advice will be taken from the Fund actuary in respect of any review of contribution rates.
 - Any revision to contribution rates will be reflected in the Rates & Adjustment certificate.

Policy

1.8 Circumstances for review

The Fund would consider the following circumstances as a potential trigger for review:

- in the opinion of an administering authority there are circumstances which make it likely that an employer (including an admission body) will become an exiting employer sooner than anticipated at the last valuation;
- an employer is approaching exit from the Fund within the next two years and before completion of the next triennial valuation;
- there are changes to the benefit structure set out in the LGPS Regulations which have not been allowed for at the last valuation;
- it appears likely to the administering authority that the amount of the liabilities arising or likely to arise for an employer or employers has changed significantly since the last valuation;
- it appears likely to the administering authority that there has been a significant change in the ability of an employer or employers to meet their obligations (e.g. a material change in employer covenant, or provision of additional security);
- it appears to the administering authority that the membership of the employer has changed materially such as bulk transfers, significant reductions to payroll or large-scale restructuring; or
- where an employer has failed to pay contributions or has not arranged appropriate security as required by the administering authority.

Employer requests

- 1.9 The administering authority will also consider a request from any employer to review contributions where the employer has undertaken to meet the costs of

that review and sets out the reasoning for the review (which would be expected to fall into one of the above categories, such as a belief that their covenant has changed materially, or they are going through a significant restructuring impacting their membership).

1.10 The administering authority will require additional information to support a contribution review made at the employer's request. The specific requirements will be confirmed following any request and this is likely to include the following:

- a copy of the latest accounts;
- details of any additional security being offered (which may include insurance certificates);
- budget forecasts; and/or Tower Hamlets Pension Fund
- information relating to sources of funding.

The costs incurred by the administering authority in carrying out a contribution review (at the employer's request) will be met by the employer. These will be confirmed upfront to the employer prior to the review taking place.

Other employers

1.11 When undertaking any review of contributions, the administering authority will also consider the impact of a change to contribution rates on other Fund employers. This will include the following factors:

- The existence of a guarantor.
- The amount of any other security held.
- The size of the employer's liabilities relative to the whole Fund.

The administering authority will consult with other Fund employers as necessary.

Effect of market volatility

1.12 Except in circumstances such as an employer nearing cessation, the administering authority will not consider market volatility or changes to asset values as a basis for a change in contributions outside a formal valuation.

1.13 Where revisions to contribution rates are necessary, the Fund will provide the employer with a note of the information used to determine these, including:

- Explanation of the key factors leading to the need for a review of the contribution rates, including, if appropriate, the updated funding position.
- A note of the new contribution rates and effective date of these.
- Date of next review.
- Details of any processes in place to monitor any change in the employer's circumstances (if appropriate), including information required by the administering authority to carry out this monitoring.

The Rates & Adjustments certificate will be updated to reflect the revised contribution rates.

Related Policies

- 1.14 The fund's Funding Strategy Statement should be read in conjunction with this document. In particular, exiting employers should familiarise themselves with:
- Section 2 – How does the Fund calculate employer contributions?
 - Appendix D – Actuarial assumptions (specifically section D5).