

# Comet Pension Scheme ('the Scheme')

## Summary Funding Statement 2012

Trustees are required to send members a brief statement giving a regular update of the Scheme's funding position. The Trustee of the Comet Pension Scheme is therefore pleased to provide the annual Summary Funding Statement for 2012. The Trustee is responsible for administering the Scheme and you will receive a statement like this each year to let you have updated information about the funding of the Scheme. The statement refers only to the Comet Pension Scheme (ie your final salary benefits).

### What is the purpose of this statement?

This statement has been produced by the Trustee and its purpose is:

- to summarise the results of the latest actuarial valuation carried out as at 31 March 2010; and
- to state how the funding position may have changed since that valuation was carried out.

### What is an actuarial valuation?

The Scheme Actuary studies the financial position of the Scheme periodically (at least every three years) by carrying out an actuarial valuation. The valuation is used to estimate the amount of money required to pay benefits as they fall due and compare this with the assets held in the Scheme. To make this assessment, the Actuary has to use a number of assumptions about what will happen in the future such as how long people will live, what inflation will be and how much income the Scheme will earn from its investments.

### Previous actuarial valuation

The most recent actuarial valuation of the Scheme was completed as at 31 March 2010 and annual updating reports were produced as at 31 March 2011 and 31 March 2012. The results of the actuarial valuation as at 31 March 2010, the updated funding position as at 31 March 2011 and the updated funding position as at 31 March 2012 are shown below for information.

	31 March 2010 £thousands	31 March 2011 £thousands	31 March 2012 £thousands
Value of assets	239,900	247,000	293,200
Value of past service liabilities	(308,600)	(291,900)	(364,400)
Past service shortfall	(68,700)	(44,900)	(71,200)
Funding level	78%	85%	80%

Following the actuarial valuation as at 31 March 2010 and a subsequent funding update, which took into account the removal of the salary linkage and enhanced transfer value initiatives, a recovery plan was put in place with the aim of removing the remaining shortfall. As a result, Comet Group plc ('Comet') and Kesa Electricals plc ('Kesa') agreed to pay combined additional contributions of £6.1 million per annum until 31 March 2018. Following the sale of Comet by Kesa, the recovery plan was amended and Kesa agreed to pay mitigation lump sums of £3.5 million in February 2012 and £3.65 million by 31 May 2012. In addition to these lump sum payments, Kesa agreed to continue paying contributions of £6.1 million per annum until 31 March 2015 and, in addition, make mitigation payments of £3.9 million per annum until 31 March 2015. Kesa commenced these payments in February 2012.

### The sale of Comet

Following the sale of Comet, Kesa became the principal employer of the Scheme and assumed all of Comet obligations for the Scheme under an agreed Scheme Apportionment Arrangement. Throughout the sale process, the Trustee worked closely with its advisers to ensure that all decisions were reached with the best interests of all members in mind.

Following the sale of Comet, Kesa Electricals plc changed its name to Darty plc.

### Change in the funding position

The following factors have affected the funding position of the Scheme since 31 March 2011, by the approximate amounts shown:

	£m
Past service shortfall as at 31 March 2011	(44.9)
• Interest on deficit	(1.2)
• Change in economic conditions	(61.9)
• Favourable investment returns	29.4
• Deficit reduction contributions	6.1
• Mitigation payments	4.2
• Other items	(2.9)
Past service shortfall as at 31 March 2012	(71.2)

As shown above, it is estimated that these factors have led to the Scheme's funding position worsening by around £26.3 million. Over the same period the ratio of the assets to the estimated liabilities, known as the funding level, will have decreased from 85% to 80%.

### Funding position of the Scheme had it wound-up

The aim of the Trustee is for there to be enough money in the Scheme to pay pensions now and in the future, but this depends on Darty carrying on in business and continuing to pay for the Scheme. If Darty goes out of business or decides to stop paying for the Scheme, it must pay enough money to buy all the benefits built up by members from an insurance company. This is known as the Scheme being 'wound-up'. The comparison of the Scheme's assets to the cost of buying the benefits from an insurance company is known as the "solvency position".

A test of this solvency position at 31 March 2010 showed that the Scheme's assets could not have paid for the full benefits of all members to be provided by an insurance company if the Scheme had wound up at that date. If the Scheme had wound up on 31 March 2010 then it is estimated that the amount needed to buy the Scheme benefits in full from an insurance company would have been £547 million (that is, a shortfall of £307 million). This figure is just an estimate and is not meant to imply that the Trustee or Darty are considering winding-up the Scheme. It is just another piece of information that we are required to tell you and we hope will help you understand the financial security of your benefits.

### Payments to the Company

The Trustee is required to make an annual statement on any payment from the Scheme that has been made to either Comet or Darty. We can confirm that there have not been any payments to either Comet or Darty out of Scheme funds since the inception of the Scheme.

### How are the Scheme's assets invested?

The Trustee employs specialist fund managers to look after the day to day investment of the Scheme's assets. We set the investment strategy and monitor the fund managers' performance on a regular basis. We invest in a broad range of assets, limiting the amount invested in a particular class of assets (as set out in the Statement of Investment Principles dated March 2012) as follows:

Company shares (equities)	30.0%
Government securities (gilts)	15.0%
Corporate bonds	20.0%
Other investments	35.0%

A fuller breakdown of the Scheme's investment strategy (Statement of Investment Principles) is available on the website.

### **The Scheme's financial security**

The Scheme's assets are held separately from Darty's assets. If the Scheme was to wind-up (come to an end), then, as previously stated, Darty would be required to pay enough into the Scheme to enable members' benefits to be secured with an insurance company. The Government established the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) to pay benefits to members if the Scheme is wound-up when the Scheme and Darty do not have enough money to cover the cost of buying all members' benefits with an insurer. The pension you would receive from the PPF is likely to be less than the full benefit you have earned in the Scheme, depending on your age and when your benefits were earned.

**Further information is available on the PPF website at [www.pensionprotectionfund.org.uk](http://www.pensionprotectionfund.org.uk) or you can write to the Pension Protection Fund at Knollys House, 17 Addiscombe Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6SR.**

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

If you have any questions, or would like any more information, please write to the Comet Pension Scheme, Punter Southall, Tempus Court, Onslow Street, Guildford, GU1 4SS. A list of the documents available is attached. If you want to be sent a copy of any of these documents please contact Punter Southall at the address shown above. We send you a Summary Funding Statement each year, so if you change address you should let us know so that we can update our records. A form for you to use for this purpose is available on request from Punter Southall.

### **Additional documents available from [www.comet-pensions.co.uk](http://www.comet-pensions.co.uk)**

#### **The Statement of Investment Principles**

This explains the Trustee's principles for investing the money in the Scheme.

#### **The Annual Report and Accounts of the Comet Pension Scheme**

This shows the Scheme's annual income and expenditure.

#### **Pension Scheme Benefits**

This website is a guide to the various benefits provided by the Scheme.

### **Additional documents available on request from Punter Southall**

#### **The Formal Actuarial Valuation Report as at 31 March 2010**

This contains the details of the Scheme Actuary's check of the Scheme's financial situation as at 31 March 2010.

#### **Statement of Funding Principles**

This sets out the Scheme's funding plan.

#### **The Schedule of Contributions and Recovery Plan**

These explain how the funding shortfall is being made up including how much money Darty is paying into the Scheme. A certificate from the Scheme Actuary is included showing that these contributions were expected to be sufficient at the specified date.

#### **Annual Updating Valuation Report**

This shows the Scheme Actuary's review of the Scheme's financial situation as at 31 March 2011 and 31 March 2012.