

## TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015/16

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### Background

The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the investment reduction of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses.

CIPFA defines treasury management as:

*"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."*

#### Reporting requirements

The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

**Prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy** (this report) - The first, and most important report covers:

- the capital plans (including prudential indicators);
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);
- the treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).

**A mid year treasury management report** – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether the treasury strategy is meeting the strategy or whether any policies require revision.

**An annual treasury report** – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

### **Scrutiny**

The above reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to the Council. This role is undertaken by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

## **Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16**

The strategy for 2015/16 covers two main areas:

### **Capital issues**

- the capital plans and the prudential indicators;
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) strategy.

### **Treasury management issues**

- the current treasury position;
- treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council;
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing strategy;
- policy on borrowing in advance of need;
- debt rescheduling;
- the investment strategy;
- creditworthiness policy; and
- policy on use of external service providers.

These elements cover the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, CLG MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and CLG Investment Guidance.

## **Training**

The increased Member consideration of treasury management matters and the need to ensure officers dealing with treasury management are trained and kept up to date requires a suitable training process for Members and officers. The training needs of treasury management officers are periodically reviewed.

## **Treasury management consultants**

The Council uses Capita Asset Services, Treasury Solutions as its external treasury management advisors.

The Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers.

It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review.

## 2. THE CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2015/16 – 2017/18

The Council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The outputs of the capital expenditure plans are reflected in prudential indicators, which are designed to assist members' overview and confirm capital expenditure plans.

### 2.1 Capital expenditure

This prudential indicator is a summary of the Council's capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. Members are asked to approve the capital expenditure forecasts. It also summarises how these plans are being financed by capital or revenue resources. Any shortfall of resources will result in the need to use additional capital resources or ultimately create a borrowing requirement.

<b>Capital Expenditure</b>					
	2013/14 £000 Actual	2014/15 £000 Budget	2015/16 £000 Estimate	2016/17 £000 Estimate	2017/18 £000 Estimate
<b>Proposed Capital programme:</b>					
Capital expenditure	2,879	7,059	2,797	2,197	1,682
c/f capital schemes*	-	(1,500)	1,500	-	-
	2,879	5,559	4,297	2,197	1,682
<b>Financed by:</b>					
Capital receipts	1,563	4,787	3,625	1,525	1,010
Capital Grants	816	422	422	422	422
General Fund	0	250	250	250	250
Earmarked reserves	500	100	0	0	0
	2,879	5,559	4,297	2,197	1,682

\* This represents an estimate of the schemes planned for 2014/15 that will be incomplete and the budget will therefore be carried-forward into 2015/16.

### 2.2 The Council's borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement)

The second prudential indicator is the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR represents the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure that has not immediately been paid for will increase the CFR.

The calculation of the CFR is taken from amounts held in the balance sheet relating capital expenditure and the associated sources of financing. This includes certain assets which may have been acquired under finance-lease or PFI-type arrangements, where the Council accounts for the asset on its balance sheet, but the asset is not fully financed.

The Council can borrow, provided it ensures such borrowing is affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Estimates of the end of year capital financing requirement for the authority for the current and future years and the actual capital financing requirement at 31st March 2014 are:

<b>Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)</b>					
	31/3/14 £000 Actual	31/3/15 £000 Revised	31/3/16 £000 Estimate	31/3/17 £000 Estimate	31/3/18 £000 Estimate
Total CFR	0	0	0	0	0

### 2.3 Affordability prudential indicators

The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators, but within this framework prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances. The Council is asked to approve the following indicators:

### 2.4 Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet borrowing costs. As the Council is in a net investment position (investment income is greater than interest payable) the calculation results in a negative figure.

Estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream for the current and future years, and the actual figure for 2013/14 are:

<b>Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream</b>					
	2013/14 Actual %	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %	2017/18 Estimate %
Ratio	-2.52	-1.94	-1.78	-1.82	-1.85

## 2.5 Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on council tax

A fundamental indicator of the affordability of capital expenditure plans is its impact on council tax. Any borrowing for capital purposes has an impact on the revenue account and, to the extent that it is not supported by government or other contributions, on council tax. The capital programme is primarily funded through the use of the Council's capital receipt balances. Using capital receipts has the effect of reducing the ability to raise investment income on the balances, and thus impacts upon the revenue budget.

As the Council is currently debt-free, the increase in cost equates to the loss in investment interest the Council no longer generates as its capital reserves are consumed. Based upon the proposed Capital Programme in point 2.1 above (including schemes carried-forward into 2015/16), if the cost in lost investment income receipts were borne by the taxpayer, at the bank of England base-rate estimates quoted in this report, the cost per taxpayer in lost investment income receipts would be as follows:

	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £
Cost per 'band D' taxpayer:	1.04	0.71	0.83

## 3. BORROWING

The capital expenditure plans set out in Section 2 provide details of the service activity of the Council. The treasury management function ensures that the Council's cash is organised in accordance with the the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet service activity. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury / prudential indicators, any projected or current debt positions (if any) and the annual investment strategy.

### 3.1 Current portfolio position

The Council's treasury portfolio position at 31 March 2014, with forward projections are summarised below. The table shows the actual external debt (the treasury management operations), against the underlying capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement - CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

£000	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Revised	2015/16 Estimate	2016/17 Estimate	2017/18 Estimate
<b>External Debt:</b>					
Debt at 1 April	0	0	0	0	0
Expected change in Debt	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Actual debt at 31 March</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

£000	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Revised	2015/16 Estimate	2016/17 Estimate	2017/18 Estimate
The Capital Financing Requirement	0	0	0	0	0
Under / (over) borrowing	0	0	0	0	0
Investments	<b>23,600</b>	<b>23,000</b>	<b>23,000</b>	<b>23,000</b>	<b>23,000</b>

Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operates its activities within well defined limits. One of these is that the Council needs to ensure that its total debt, net of any investments, does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2015/16 and the following two financial years (shown as net borrowing above). This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.

The Chief Finance Officer reports that the Council complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in this budget report.

### 3.2 Treasury Indicators: limits to borrowing activity

**The operational boundary.** This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed.

Operational Boundary for External Debt				
	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Borrowing	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
Other long term liabilities	0	0	0	0
Total	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500

**The authorised limit for external debt.** A further key prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

The Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

<b>Authorised Limit for External Debt</b>				
	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Borrowing	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500
Other long term liabilities	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>6,500</b>

### 3.3 Prospects for interest rates

The Council has appointed Capita Asset Services as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The following table gives the Sector central view.

Annual Average %	Bank Rate	PWLB Borrowing Rates (including certainty rate adjustment)		
		5 year	25 year	50 year
Dec 2014	0.50	2.20	3.40	3.40
March 2015	0.50	2.20	3.40	3.40
June 2015	0.50	2.20	3.50	3.50
Sept 2015	0.50	2.30	3.70	3.70
Dec 2015	0.75	2.50	3.80	3.80
March 2016	0.75	2.60	4.00	4.00
June 2016	1.00	2.80	4.20	4.20
Sept 2016	1.00	2.90	4.30	4.30
Dec 2016	1.25	3.00	4.40	4.40
March 2017	1.25	3.20	4.50	4.50
June 2017	1.50	3.30	4.60	4.60
Sept 2017	1.75	3.40	4.70	4.70
Dec 2017	1.75	3.50	4.70	4.70
March 2018	2.00	3.60	4.80	4.80

Until 2013, the economic recovery in the UK since 2008 has been the worst and slowest recovery in recent history. However, growth has rebounded during 2013 and especially during 2014, to surpass all expectations, propelled by recovery in consumer spending and the housing market. Forward surveys are also currently very positive in indicating that growth prospects are strong for 2015, particularly in the services and construction sectors.

There does need to be a significant rebalancing of the economy away from consumer spending to manufacturing, business investment and exporting in order for this initial stage in the recovery to become more firmly established. One drag on the economy is

that wage inflation has been lower than CPI inflation so eroding disposable income and living standards, although income tax cuts have ameliorated this to some extent.

The current economic outlook and structure of market interest rates and government debt yields have several key treasury management implications:

- As for the Eurozone, concerns in respect of a major crisis subsided considerably in 2013. However, the downturn in growth and inflation during the second half of 2014, and worries over the Ukraine situation, Middle East and Ebola, have led to a resurgence of those concerns as risks increase that it could be heading into deflation and a triple dip recession since 2008. Sovereign debt difficulties have not gone away and major concerns could return in respect of individual countries that do not dynamically address fundamental issues of low growth, international uncompetitiveness and the need to for overdue reforms of the economy (as Ireland have done). Counterparty risks therefore remain high. This continues to suggest the use of higher quality counterparties for shorter time periods.
- Investment returns are likely to remain relatively low during 2015/16 and beyond;
- Borrowing interest rates have been volatile during 2014 due to the bouts of good and bad news have promoted optimism, and then pessimism, in the financial markets.

### **3.4 Borrowing strategy**

The Council is currently debt free and is not looking to take on any debt in the near future. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has been funded from the Council's reserves and balances. This strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and counterparty risk is still relatively high.

The Chief Finance Officer will monitor interest rates in the financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to any changing circumstances.

### **3.5 Policy on borrowing in advance of need**

The Council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement estimates, and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.

Risks associated with any borrowing in advance activity will be subject to prior appraisal and subsequent reporting through the mid-year or annual reporting mechanism.



## **4. ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

### **4.1 Investment policy**

The Council's investment policy has regard to the CLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance") and the 2011 revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes ("the CIPFA TM Code"). The Council's investment priorities will be security first, liquidity second and then return.

In accordance with guidance from the CLG and CIPFA, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Council has below clearly stipulated the minimum acceptable credit quality of counterparties for inclusion on the lending list. The creditworthiness methodology used to create the counterparty list fully accounts for the ratings, watches and outlooks published by all three ratings agencies with a full understanding of what these reflect in the eyes of each agency. Using the Sector ratings service potential counterparty ratings are monitored on a real time basis with knowledge of any changes notified electronically as the agencies notify modifications.

Continuing regulatory changes in the banking sector are designed to see greater stability, lower risk and the removal of expectations of Government financial support should an institution fail. This withdrawal of implied sovereign support is anticipated to have an effect on ratings applied to institutions. This will result in the key ratings used to monitor counterparties being the Short term and Long Term ratings only. Viability, Financial Strength and Support Ratings previously applied will effectively become redundant. This change does not reflect deterioration in the credit environment but rather a change of method in response to regulatory changes.

Furthermore, the Council's officers recognise that ratings should not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution and that it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To this end the Council will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as "credit default swaps" and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings. This is fully integrated into the credit methodology provided by the advisors, Sector, in producing its colour codings which show the varying degrees of suggested creditworthiness.

Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.

The aim of the strategy is to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which will also enable diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk.

The intention of the strategy is to provide security of investment and minimisation of risk.

## 4.2 Specified and Non- Specified Investments

Specified Investments are investments offering high security and high liquidity. The investments will be sterling denominated with maturities up to a revised maximum of one year and meet the minimum 'high' credit rating criteria where applicable. Instruments identified for use in the financial year are listed in table below under the 'specified' and 'non-specified' investments categories.

**Non-specified investments** are of greater potential risk and cover deposit periods over one year. Capita continue to maintain the view that, for the time being, clients should look to the short end of the market when making investment decisions and it is the intention of this Council to lend for a maximum period of two years as recommended by Capita for fixed term deposits.

### Specified and Non-Specified Investments

Investment	Specified	Non-Specified
Term deposits with banks and building societies	✓	✓
Term deposits with other UK local authorities	✓	✓
Certificates of deposit with banks and building societies	✓	✓
Gilts	✓	✓
Treasury Bills (T-Bills)	✓	x
Bonds issued by Multilateral Development Banks	✓	✓
Local Authority Bills	✓	x
Commercial Paper	✓	x
Corporate Bonds	✓	✓
AAA rated Money Market Funds	✓	x
Other Money Market and Collective Investment Schemes (including Property Funds)	✓	✓
Debt Management Account Deposit Facility	✓	x

The criteria, time limits and monetary limits applying to institutions or investment vehicles are:

	* Minimum credit criteria / colour band	** Max % of total investments/ £ limit per institution	Max. maturity period
DMADF – UK Government	N/A	£unlimited	6 months
UK Government gilts	UK sovereign rating	£2m	2 years
UK Government Treasury bills	UK sovereign rating	£2m	2 years
Bonds issued by multilateral development banks	UK sovereign rating	£2m	6 months
Money market funds	AAA	£5m per fund	Liquid
Local authorities	N/A	£5m	2 years
Enhance Money Market funds	AAA	£5m per fund	Liquid
Pooled Funds	UK sovereign rating AAA	£4m per fund	2 Years
Term deposits with banks and building societies	Yellow Purple Blue Orange Red Green No Colour	£9m per banking group but £7m per bank/building Society	Up to 5 years Up to 2 years Up to 1 year Up to 1 year Up to 6 Months Up to 3 months Not for use
CDs or corporate bonds with banks and building societies	Yellow Purple Blue Orange Red Green No Colour	£9m per banking group or £7m per bank/building society	Up to 5 years Up to 2 years Up to 1 year Up to 1 year Up to 6 Months Up to 3 months Not for use
Corporate bond funds	UK sovereign rating	£4m in total	Up to 10 Years
Gilt funds	UK sovereign rating	£2m in total	Up to 5 Years
Property funds	UK sovereign rating	£2m in total	Up to 5 Years

### 4.3 Creditworthiness policy

This Council applies the creditworthiness service provided by Capita Asset Services. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:

- credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies;
- CDS spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

This modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit watches and credit outlooks in a weighted scoring system which is then combined with an overlay of CDS spreads for which the end product is a series of colour coded bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes are used by the Council to determine the suggested duration for investments. The Council will therefore use counterparties within the following durational bands:

- Yellow        5 years
- Purple        2 years
- Blue           1 year (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)
- Orange       1 year
- Red            6 months
- Green         3 months
- No colour    not to be used

The Sector creditworthiness service uses a wider array of information than just primary ratings and by using a risk weighted scoring system, does not give undue preponderance to just one agency's ratings.

Typically the minimum credit ratings criteria the Council use will be a short term rating (Fitch or equivalents) of short term rating F1, long term rating A-. The table shown in appendix B shows the current list in use at the time of this report. There may be occasions when the counterparty ratings from one rating agency are marginally lower than these ratings but may still be used. Also banks which are partly nationalised will remain on the lending list even though their ratings are/could be lower than the recommended A-. In these instances consideration will be given to the whole range of ratings available, or other topical market information, to support their use.

All credit ratings will be monitored weekly and upon any adhoc changes. The Council is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of the Sector creditworthiness service.

- if a downgrade results in the counterparty / investment scheme no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.

- in addition to the use of credit ratings the Council will be advised of information in movements in credit default swap spreads against the iTraxx benchmark and other market data on a weekly basis. Extreme market movements may result in downgrade of an institution or removal from the Council's lending list.

#### 4.4 Country limits

The Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of **AAA** from Fitch. The list of countries that qualify using this credit criteria as at the date of this report are shown in Appendix B. This list will be added to, or deducted from, by officers should ratings change in accordance with this policy.

##### Approved countries for investments

###### AAA

- Australia
- Canada
- Finland
- Germany
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Singapore
- Sweden
- U.S.A

**Investment returns expectations.** Bank Rate is forecast to remain unchanged at 0.5% before starting to rise from quarter 3 of 2015.

For its cash flow generated balances, the Council will seek to utilise its business reserve instant access and notice accounts and money market funds in order to benefit from the compounding of interest.

#### 4.5 Council's Banker

The Council banks with Lloyds (Lloyds Banking Group). On adoption of this Strategy, it will meet the minimum credit criteria of A- (or equivalent) long term. It is the Council's intention that even if the credit rating of Lloyds falls below the minimum criteria A- the bank will continue to be used for short term liquidity requirements (overnight and weekend investments) and business continuity arrangements.

The Council has recently completed a procurement exercise for its banking contract. Lloyds Banking Group were awarded a new 5 year contract.

#### 4.6 Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

The annual MRP Statement is disclosed in Appendix C.

#### **4.7 Balanced Budget Requirement**

The Authority complies with the provisions of S32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget.