

## **Appendix A Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19**

### **1. Treasury Management Policy Statement**

- 1.1 The Council defines its treasury management activities as: *“The management of the 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”*.
- 1.2 The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation.
- 1.3 The Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.
- 1.4 This Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code 2011. This requires the Council to approve the Treasury Management Strategy annually and to produce a mid-year report. In addition, Members in both Executive and Scrutiny functions receive monitoring reports and regular reviews. The aim of these reporting arrangements is to ensure that those with ultimate responsibility for the treasury management function appreciate fully the implications of treasury management policies and activities, and that those implementing policies and executing transactions have properly fulfilled their responsibilities with regard to delegation and reporting.
- 1.5 The Act requires the Council to set out its Treasury Management Strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy to set out the Council’s policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

### **2. Annual Investment Strategy**

- 2.1 The Council is required to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy. The Council has regard to the Department of Communities and Local Government’s (CLG) Guidance on Local Government Investments (“the Guidance”) issued in March 2004, any revisions to that guidance, the Audit Commission’s report on Icelandic investments and the 2011 CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (“the CIPFA TM Code”). The Council’s investment priorities are: -
  - (a) the security of capital
  - (b) the liquidity of its investments.
- 2.2 The Council also aims to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.
- 2.3 The borrowing of monies purely to invest or on-lend in order to make a return is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activities.

2.4 The Council only invests in counterparties with a high credit quality in the UK or other countries meeting minimum AA- sovereign rating. The Council understands that changes have taken place to the ratings agencies and that their new methodologies mean that sovereign ratings are now of lesser importance in the assessment process. However, the Council continues to specify a minimum sovereign rating as the underlying domestic and where appropriate, international, economic and wider political and social background will still have an influence on the ratings of a financial institution. Specified and Non-Specified Investment criteria reflects the Council's Treasury advisors (Link Asset Services) suggested methodology to assess short and long term ratings for a counterparty. The proposed minimum credit quality criteria for Specified and Non-Specified Investment, together with Treasury Limits are detailed below (a summary of all investment criteria and limits, together with procedures, is provided in Appendix D):

### **3 Creditworthiness policy**

3.1 The primary principle governing the Council's investment criteria is the security of its investments, although the yield or return on the investment is also a key consideration. Based on this this main principle, the Council will ensure that:

- It maintains a policy covering the categories of financial instruments it will invest in, maximum investment duration, criteria for choosing counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security.
- It has sufficient liquidity in its investments. For this purpose it will set out procedures for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These procedures also apply to the Council's Prudential indicators of the maximum principal sums invested in excess of 364 days.

3.2 The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) will maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the criteria in the Strategy for Specified and Non-Specified Investment and will revise the criteria and submit them to Council for approval as necessary.

3.3 In determining the credit quality, the Council uses the Fitch credit ratings, together with Moody and Standard & Poor's equivalent where rated. Not all counterparties are rated by all three agencies and the Council will use available ratings.

3.4 The Council also uses the creditworthiness service (Colour Coding System) provided by Link Asset Services. This service has been progressively enhanced over the last year and now uses a sophisticated modelling approach including the credit ratings the all three main rating agencies - Fitch, Moodys and Standard and Poors, forming the core element. However, it does not rely solely on the current credit ratings of counterparties. Additional market information is applied to compare the relative security of differing investment counterparties, such as:

- credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies
- Credit Default Swap (CDS) spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings
- sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries

3.5 This modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit watches, credit outlooks and CDS spreads in a weighted scoring system for which the end product is a

series of colour code bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes are also used by the Council to determine the duration for investments and are therefore referred to as durational bands. It is a service which the Council would not be able to replicate using in house resources

3.6 Credit ratings will be monitored whenever an investment is to be made, using the most recent information. The Council is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of the Link creditworthiness service.

- If a downgrade results in the counterparty no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, no further new investment will be made with that counterparty until they meet the Council's criteria again.
- In addition to the use of Credit Ratings the Council will be advised of information in movements in Credit Default Swap 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. However, investments already with the counterparty are likely to remain invested as it would be very expensive and potentially impossible to have the funds returned prematurely. However, the Chief Finance Officer will review the risk and penalties involved in order to determine whether an investment should be returned.

3.8 Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition the Council will also use market data including information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that government support.

3.9 The Council receives updates from Link on future changes to Money Market Funds (MMF) that might affect the liquidity or risk of the fund. The Council is likely to change its approach to the use of MMF should liquidity or risk be adversely affected.

3.10 The Municipal Bond Agency is currently in the process of being set up and it is likely to be offering loans to local authorities in the near future. It is also hoped that the borrowing rates will be lower than those offered by the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). The Council intends to make use of this new source of borrowing as and when appropriate.

#### **4 Country limits**

4.1 The Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from UK or selected countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- from Fitch Ratings (or equivalent from other agencies if Fitch does not provide). This is part of the criteria used to produce the Council's Counterparty List.

#### **5 Current Investments and Interest Rate Forecast**

5.1 At the 31 December 2017 the Council had £73.03Million on deposit with various the institutions.

5.2 **Interest Rate Forecast** - The Bank of England base rate remains at 0.5% as at 31 December 2017. Link now forecast that Bank Rate will increase gradually by 0.25% to 0.75% in December 2018 with a further 0.25% increase to 1.00% in December 2019. Current indicative investment rates provided by Link as below:

Investment Rate	
One Month	0.40%
Three Months	0.45%
Six Months	0.55%
One Year	0.70%

Source: Link Asset Services Executive Summary 29/01/2017

The Council has budgeted for investment returns of 0.55% in 2017/18 and is budgeting for returns of 0.7 % in 2018/19.

## 6 Borrowing Strategy and Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need

- 6.1 The Operational Boundary and Authorised Borrowing Limits must be approved as part of the Prudential Code Indicators before the start of each financial year. The revised 2017/18 limits and proposed limits for 2018/19 are:-

	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Operational Boundary	237,080	243,776
Authorised Limit	246,470	253,166

- 6.2 Based on the capital programme 2018/19 (February 2018 Update) resourcing projections, the Council has the following new borrowing requirements in 2018/19:
- General Fund £7,636,700. (£2,036,700 in relation to the 10 year plan for the garages estates approved by Council on 20 July 2016. £5,600,000 in relation to the Investment Property strategy approved by Council on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017.)
  - HRA £Nil.
- 6.3 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 considered carefully to ensure value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.
- 6.4 In determining whether borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need the Council will;
- ensure that there is a clear link between the capital programme and maturity profile of the existing debt portfolio which supports the need to take funding in advance of need
  - ensure the ongoing revenue liabilities created, and the implications for the future plans and budgets have been considered
  - evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow
  - consider the merits and demerits of alternative forms of funding
  - consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use.

## **7 End of year investment report**

- 7.1 At the end of the financial year, the Council will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Outturn Report.

## **8 Policy on the use of external service providers**

- 8.1 In July 2016, the Council tendered for its treasury management advisors. As a result of which, Link Asset Services (formerly known as Capita Asset Services) was reappointed on a five year contract. The new contract commenced on 26 October 2016.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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.

## **9 Scheme of Delegation and Role of Section 151 officer**

- 9.1 The Council has the role of:
- receiving and reviewing reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities
  - approval of annual strategy.
  - approval of/amendments to the organisation's adopted clauses, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices
  - budget consideration and approval
  - approval of the division of responsibilities
  - receiving and reviewing regular monitoring reports and acting on recommendations
  - approving the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment.
- 9.2 The Audit Committee has the role of reviewing the policy and procedures and making recommendations to Council
- 9.3 The Section 151 Officer has the role of:
- recommending clauses, treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance
  - submitting regular treasury management policy reports
  - submitting budgets and budget variations
  - receiving and reviewing management information reports
  - reviewing the performance of the treasury management function
  - ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources and skills, and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function
  - ensuring the adequacy of internal audit, and liaising with external audit

- recommending the appointment of external service providers.

9.4 Reporting arrangement to the Council and the Audit Committee is as below:

Area of Responsibility	Council Committee	Frequency
Treasury Management Policy Statement (revised)	Council	Initial adoption in 2010
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy	Council	Annually before the start of the year
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / MRP policy – mid-year report	Council	Annually before the end of the year
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / MRP policy – updates or revisions at other times	Council	As required.
Annual Treasury Outturn Report	Council	Annually by 30 <sup>th</sup> November
Scrutiny of Treasury Management Strategy	Audit Committee	Annually before the start of the year
Scrutiny of Treasury Management performance	Audit Committee	Quarterly (General Fund updates)