

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-062-2012/13
Date of meeting: 4 February 2013



Portfolio: Finance & Technology

Subject: Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16

Responsible Officer: John Bell (01992 564387).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the Cabinet considers and, after amendment where necessary, recommend the following to Council for approval:

- (a) Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16;
- (b) Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy;
- (c) Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for 2013/14 to 2015/16;
- (d) The rate of interest to be applied to any inter-fund balances; and
- (e) Treasury Management Policy Statement.

Executive Summary:

The Council is required to approve the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators and a statement on the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) before the start of each financial year.

The strategies, as amended if necessary, will be scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee on 7 February 2013 prior to consideration by Council on 19 February 2013.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The proposed decision is necessary to ensure we comply with CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

Other Options for Action:

Members could ask for additional information about the Treasury Management Strategy, or could decide that alternative indicators are required.

Report:

Introduction

1. The Council's treasury activities are strictly regulated by statutory requirements and a professional code of practice (the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management – revised November 2009). There is a requirement for Council to approve its treasury and investment strategy and prudential indicators each year.
2. The Strategy was prepared in line with advice from our treasury advisors Arlingclose. The attached report at Appendix 1 shows the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16.
3. There have been no major changes to the strategy from the current strategy approved in March 2012. However, Members should be aware of the following:

Minimum Revenue Provision

4. Each year the Council has to approve at Full Council its statement on the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). In previous years the Council has been debt free and therefore, we did not have to provide MRP in our accounts. However, the Council took on debt of £185.5m and this would normally require the local authority to charge MRP to the General Fund. CLG have produced regulations to mitigate this impact, whereby we can ignore the borrowing incurred in relation to the Housing Self-financing when calculating MRP and therefore, (for MRP purposes only) we are classed as debt free and do not have to make provision for MRP.

Inter-fund Balances

5. The Council has inter-fund borrowed for many years between the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account and the interest charge made between the funds has been based on the average interest earned on investment for the year. Under draft regulations issued by CIPFA, it is now proposed that the interest rate applicable to any inter-fund borrowing should be approved by Full Council before the start of the financial year. As the Council has been undertaking inter-fund borrowing for many years, it is proposed to continue to use the average interest earned for the year on investments as the rate for any inter-fund borrowing.

Policy Statement

6. The Treasury Management Policy Statement is a high level statement setting out how the Council Treasury function will be undertaken. The Policy Statement was last updated as part of the 2011/12 Treasury Strategy. The Policy is attached at Appendix 2 for Cabinet to consider, no amendments are currently proposed.

Current Investments

7. The Council's investments are all denominated in UK sterling and the treasury officers receive regular information from our treasury advisors on the latest position on the use of Counterparties. The latest information supplied is as follows:

(a) UK Banks and Building Societies:

- (i) A maximum maturity limit of 12 months applies to HSBC, Standard Chartered, Barclays Bank and Nationwide Building Society;

(ii) A maximum maturity limit of 6 months to Lloyds TSB, Bank of Scotland, Royal Bank of Scotland and National Westminster Bank; and

(iii) A maximum maturity limit of 100 days applies to Santander UK plc.

(b) European Banks:

All temporarily suspended for new investments.

(c) Non European Banks:

A maximum maturity limit of 12 months applies to Australian, Canadian and US banks that are on our list.

(d) Money Market Funds:

(i) A maximum exposure limit of 10% of your total investment per MMF; and

8. The Council currently has an investment portfolio of £55m, this will vary from day to day, depending on the cash flow of the authority. A breakdown of this portfolio by Country and length of time remaining on investments are shown in the two tables below.

Country of counterparty	£m
United Kingdom	50.0
Canada and United States of America	0.0
Australia	0.0
Ireland **	5.0
Total	55.0

** Please note that the investments shown under Ireland relates to Money Market Funds that are AAA rated and approved to be used by Arlingclose, however they are domiciled in Ireland for tax purposes only.

Maturity profile of investment as at 7 January 2013	£m
Overnight (Call / Money Market Fund)	15.0
Up to 7 days	0.0
8 days to 1 month	10.0
1 month to 3 months	8.0
3 months to 6 months	10.0
6 months to 9 months	0.0
9 months to 1 year	2.0
Greater than 1 year	10.0
Total	55.0

Resource Implications:

The continued low interest rates, the use of fewer counterparties and the shorter durations of investments have reduced estimated interest income for 2013/14 to £446,000.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council's treasury management activities are regulated by a variety of professional codes and statutes and guidance:

- The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act), which provides the powers to borrow and invest as well as providing controls and limits on this activity;
- The Act permits the Secretary of State to set limits either on the Council or nationally on all local authorities restricting the amount of borrowing which may be undertaken (although no restrictions were made in 2009/10);
- Statutory Instrument (SI) 3146 2003, as amended, develops the controls and powers within the Act;
- The SI requires the Council to undertake any borrowing activity with regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities;
- The SI also requires the Council to operate the overall treasury function with regard to the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services;
- Under the Act the ODPM (now DCLG) has issued Investment Guidance to structure and regulate the Council's investment activities.

Under section 21(1)AB of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 the Secretary of State has taken powers to issue guidance on accounting practices. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision was issued under this section on 8 November 2007.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

The Council's external treasury advisors provided the framework for this report and have confirmed that the content satisfies all regulatory requirements.

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

As detailed in the appendices, a risk aware position is adopted to minimise the chance of any loss of the capital invested by the Council.

Equality and Diversity

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? N/A

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
N/A.

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?

N/A.