

# FINANCE, AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

## 20 NOVEMBER 2017

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

# 10

*The following is the report to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 21 November 2017. The Committee is invited to comment on the report.*

### TITLE OF REPORT: TREASURY MANAGEMENT SECOND QUARTER 2017/18

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: CLLR JULIAN CUNNINGHAM

COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the Treasury Management activities in the second quarter of 2017/18 to the end of September. The current forecast is that the amount of investment interest expected to be generated during the year is £0.320 million. This is a decrease of £0.007 million on the figure reported at first quarter.
- 1.2 To inform Cabinet of the performance against the Prudential and Treasury indicators detailed in the appendix to this report. During the second quarter the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in compliance with the Council's approved Treasury Management Practices.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to note the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 2017.

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Council's continued compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management and the Local Government Act 2003 and that the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.

#### 4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The primary principle governing the Council's investment criteria is the security of its investments, which includes credit, liquidity and market risk (see section 8 below). After this the return (or yield) is then considered, which provides an income source for the Council. The Council's appetite for risk is determined by the Treasury Strategy, which is reviewed each year. In general, greater returns can be achieved by taking on greater risk. Our current strategy has meant that we have been able to achieve a yield that is above the average achieved by the Capita Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire Investment Benchmarking Group.

## 5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 There is ongoing dialogue with the Authority's Cash Manager, Tradition and regular meetings with Treasury advisors (Capita).

## 6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 28 July 2017.

## 7. BACKGROUND

7.1 Members adopted the 2017/18 Treasury Strategy at the meeting of full Council on the 9 February 2017.

7.2 Capita Asset Services Ltd were first contracted to provide Treasury advice for the financial year 2012/13 and this arrangement has been extended until 2017/18, taking advantage of a reduced annual contract cost. The service includes:

- Regular updates on economic and political changes which may impact on the Council's borrowing and investment strategies
- Information on investment counterparty creditworthiness
- Technical updates
- Access to the Technical Advisory Group.

## 8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Appendix A provides the Treasury Management update at the end of the second quarter. This document contains economic background, an interest rate forecast and summary outlook provided by Capita for background context to Treasury activities. The remainder of the document contains an update on the Council's investment strategy.

8.2 In summary, during the second quarter the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in compliance with the Treasury Management Practices.

8.3 The Council generated £0.172 million of interest during the first six months of 2017/18. The average interest rate agreed on new deals during the second quarter by Tradition was 0.76% and in house was 0.30%. The average interest rate on all outstanding investments at the 30 September was 1.00%.

8.4 The Council's activities expose it to a variety of risks (credit, liquidity and market). The Treasury Strategy sets out the Authority's appetite for the level of exposure to these risks.

8.5 **Credit Risk** is the possibility that other parties fail to pay back amounts that have been invested by the Council. This risk is mitigated by assessing the counterparties with whom the Council invests. For banks and building societies that are credit rated by Fitch, they must have a rating greater than BBB. Where building societies do not have a credit rating, then the level of investment is assessed against the overall assets of the institution. Due to the different risks that they are exposed to, the Council splits its investments between banks and building societies and can have a maximum of 75% invested in each.

8.6 The Council also invests with other Local Authorities and Public Corporations (when appropriate opportunities are available) and in Money Market Funds. Money Market Funds are limited to 25% of total investments. A Money Market Fund is a regulated, stand-alone pooled investment vehicle which actively invests its assets in a diversified portfolio of mainly high grade, short-term money market instruments.

8.7 As at 30 September the split of investments was:

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Banks              | 16% |
| Building Societies | 66% |
| Local Authorities  | 6%  |
| Money Market Funds | 12% |

8.8 **Liquidity Risk** is the possibility that the Authority may not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments.

8.9 Cash flow forecasts are prepared to determine the level of funds required to meet the day to day commitments with investments split between the Cash Manager and the In-House team. The In-House investments cover the day to day cash flow activity of the Council whilst the Cash Managers' investments take advantage of higher interest rates for longer term investments when they become available. The level of funds made available to the Cash Manager, currently a total balance of £28.5 million, is primarily determined by the level of expenditure on the Council's Capital programme. The average In-House balance of investments for the first six months was £14.2 million.

8.10 **Market Risk** is the possibility that financial loss might arise as a result of changes in interest rates.

8.11 Investing long term (greater than one year) currently achieves higher interest rates than short term deals. The risk of long term deals are two fold:

- (i) The longer the time period the longer the investment is exposed to default.
- (ii) If the investment has a fixed interest rate, interest rates could rise and the potential to invest at a higher rate will be lost until the investment matures.

8.12 Members have indicated that they are prepared to accept the market risk within the limits expressed in the Treasury Strategy, which allows up to 40% of investments to be invested for longer than 364 days at any one time. At the end of the second quarter the Council had 16.6% (£6.5 million) invested for longer than 364 days. During the second quarter Tradition placed two investments for longer than 364 days. One was at 1.0% for eighteen months and the other was 0.75% for 365 days.

8.13 The **return (or yield)** that the Council achieves is affected by both the level of risk as well as general market conditions. Whilst the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) raised the base rate to 0.5% at its meeting in early November, this was just a reversal of the emergency cut in 2016. It is currently expected that any future rate increases will be very gradual. It is therefore thought that it will still be challenging to find acceptable counterparties willing to pay a reasonable return on cash investments, either long or short term. This issue is expected to continue during 2017/18 and beyond.

8.14 The Council has a negative **Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)** of £16.6 million (as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017), which reflects that it has a high level of cash investments and only £470k of borrowing. The Council currently only has historic borrowing which is not cost effective to repay early

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Cabinet has a responsibility to keep under review the budget of the Council and any other matter having substantial implications for the financial resources of the Council.
- 9.2 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that:  
“every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs.”
- 9.3 The Prudential Indicators comply with the Local Government Act 2003.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The amount of investment interest expected to be generated during the year is £0.320 million.
- 10.2 Potential options for inclusion in the Treasury Strategy are considered as and when identified. Any proposals to amend the Strategy are reported to Full Council, via Cabinet, for approval.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Risks associated with treasury management and procedures to minimise risk are outlined in the Treasury Management Practices document, TMP1, which was adopted by Cabinet in July 2003 and is revisited annually as part of the Treasury Strategy review. The risk on the General Fund of a fall of investment interest below the budgeted level is dependant on banks and building societies need for borrowing. The introduction of the Funding for Lending Scheme which allows financial institutions access to low cost funding from Government for an extended period has impacted on their need to borrow and the rates at which they are prepared to borrow.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this report.

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 There are no direct human resource or equality implications.

## **15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1 Appendix A - Treasury Management Mid Year Review September 2017.

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Treasury Strategy 2017/18  
CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities