

Report of the Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement)

Treasury Management Policy Statement 2024/25

1. The Council, in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice, defines its treasury management activities as:
The management of the Council'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.
2. The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk as 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 Council.
3. The Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards achieving 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.
4. The Council's borrowing strategy will take account of all legislative requirements, codes of practice and other guidance to ensure that borrowing costs are "affordable, prudent and sustainable" and to mitigate refinancing risk. The Council will only borrow in advance of need where there is a clear business case for doing so and will only do so within the Council's capital financing requirement.
5. The Council's investment strategy will take account of all legislative requirements, codes of practice and other guidance to ensure that priority is given to the security and liquidity of investments.
6. The Council delegates responsibility for the implementation, scrutiny and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to the *Treasury Management Group*, comprising:
 - Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement)
 - Group Manager (Financial Services)
 - Senior Accountant (Financial Strategy & Accounting)
 - Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management)
 - Investments Officer
7. The Council's Treasury Management Policy will be implemented through the following Treasury Management Practices (TMPs). The responsible officer for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions is the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management), who will act in accordance with the policy statement and TMPs.

TMP1 Risk management

8. The Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) will design, implement and monitor all arrangements for the identification, management and control of treasury management risk. Reports will be made on these arrangements in accordance with the procedures set out in *TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements*. The arrangements will seek to cover each of the following risks.
9. **Credit and counterparty risk**

The risk of failure by a counterparty to meet its contractual obligations to the Council under an investment, borrowing, capital, project or partnership financing, particularly as a result of the counterparty's diminished creditworthiness, and the resulting detrimental effect on the Council's capital or revenue resources.
10. The Council regards a key objective of its treasury management activities to be the security of the principal sums it invests. Accordingly, it will ensure that its counterparties and lending limits reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations with which funds may be deposited, and will limit its investment activities to the instruments, methods and techniques referred to in the following paragraphs.
11. The Local Government Act 2003 gives a local authority power to invest for any purpose relevant to its functions or for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs. In exercising this power, the local authority must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
12. Current guidance classifies investments between "specified" and "non-specified". Specified investments are those offering high security and high liquidity. All such investments should be in sterling and with a maturity of no more than a year. Such short-term investments made with the UK Government or a local authority will automatically count as specified investments. In addition, short-term sterling investments with bodies or investment schemes of "high credit quality" will count as specified investments. The Council's policy is to invest surplus funds prudently, giving priority to security and liquidity rather than yield and investing in sterling instruments only. The majority of these will be specified investments.
13. The Council will operate an approved list of counterparties for lending. The lending list will comprise institutions based on minimum ratings (see paragraph below) from at least 2 rating agencies together with Fitch support rating for longer term lending. The list reflects a prudent attitude to lending and uses a combination of ratings issued by the 3 main ratings agencies: Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's. Banks will be assessed for inclusion on the basis of long-term, short-term and support ratings; money market funds (MMFs) on the basis of Sterling MMF ratings.
14. Short-term ratings assess the capacity of an entity to meet financial obligations with maturity of up to and including 12 months and are based on the short-term vulnerability to default. The long-term ratings cover a period in excess of 12 months and are useful as a key indicator impacting on the cost of borrowing for financial institutions. This cost of borrowing will feed through to the ability of the financial institution to obtain funds at reasonable cost to maintain liquidity.

15. MMFs are mutual funds that invest in cash and short-term money market instruments such as government bonds and commercial paper. They allow investors to participate in a more diverse portfolio than direct investment by spreading capital across a variety of institutions. The highest AAA rating reflects an extremely strong capacity to achieve the ‘investment objective of preserving principal and providing shareholder liquidity through limiting credit, market, and liquidity risk’.
16. The Council will monitor ratings from the main agencies along with general market data. The Council will also monitor developments in the financial markets including policy announcements by the Government, Bank of England, regulatory bodies and other international bodies. It will use this information to determine if any changes are required to the above methodology.
17. Bail-in legislation, which aims to ensure that large investors (including local authorities) will rescue failing banks instead of taxpayers, has now been fully implemented in the UK, USA and Germany. This has had an impact on credit ratings, particularly Fitch support ratings. The criteria below take account of these changes.
18. The lending list will include institutions that meet the following criteria from at least 2 rating agencies:

	Long Term	Short Term	GBP MMF
Fitch	A-	F1	AAAmmf
Moodys	A3	P-1	Aaamf
Standard & Poors	A-	A-1	AAAm

Sovereign Rating	AA
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19. However, within the approved list the following minimum criteria will apply, dependent on the terms of the deposit, from at least 2 ratings agencies:

	Fitch Long term	Fitch Support	Moodys Long term	S&P Long term
Instant access	A-	-	A3	A-
Up to 3 months	A-	-	A3	A-
Up to 364 days	AA-	-	AA3	AA-
365 days and over	A	1 or 2	A2	A

20. All investments (up to 365 days duration) with the counterparties in the approved list are considered specified investments.
21. Exceptions (to be determined by the *Treasury Management Group*) to rating criteria may be made in respect of the following:
- 1) UK government
 - 2) UK local authorities

3) The Council's bank

22. The lending list will be approved by the *Treasury Management Group* and monitored by the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) in the light of rating changes and market conditions. Individual institutions or countries may be suspended from the list if felt appropriate. The *Treasury Management Group* may add or remove organisations from the approved list subject to maintaining consistency with the approved criteria.
23. The maximum amount of County Council cash (i.e. not Pension Fund cash) that can be lent to any organisation on the approved list is subject to individual institution limits of £25m. Only two institutions within the same group may be used at any one time. The *Treasury Management Group* may increase the limit for specific institutions by £10 million for investments in call accounts and MMFs with same day liquidity.
24. Investments with the UK government will have no upper limit but in practice limits will be dependent on the liquidity of those investments and may fall within the definition of specified or non-specified investments. Amounts invested in non-specified investments will be limited to £20 million or 15% of the total invested at the time of the investment, whichever is the higher.
25. The Council's current account, through which all treasury management activity operates, is held at Barclays Bank.
26. As a result of the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II), from January 2018 local authorities have been treated as 'retail' clients by investment counterparties by default unless they chose to opt up to 'professional' client status. The Council has chosen to do so with all of its counterparties where required.
27. **Liquidity risk**
The risk that cash will not be available when it is needed, that ineffective management of liquidity creates additional unbudgeted costs, and that the Council's business/service objectives will be thereby compromised.
28. The Council will ensure it has adequate though not excessive cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdraft or standby facilities to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available to it which are necessary for the achievement of its business/service objectives.
29. Summarised cash flow forecasts will be provided on a quarterly basis to the *Treasury Management Group*. Detailed daily cash flow forecasts will be maintained by the Loans Officer. These forecasts will be used as the basis for ensuring adequate cash resources are available in order to support the Council's objectives.
30. The Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) or Investments Officer may approve fixed term investments up to 365 days. Longer periods require permission from either the Service Director (Finance & Procurement) or the Group

Manager (Financial Services) and must comply with the relevant treasury management limits.

31. The Treasury Management Group must also approve any long-term borrowing to ensure (a) that it is within the Council's borrowing limits and (b) that it will not have an adverse impact (in terms of creating a situation in which counterparty limits could be exceeded) on the Council's cash management.

32. Interest rate risk

The risk that fluctuations in the levels of interest rates create an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the Council's finances, against which the Council has failed to protect itself adequately.

33. The Council will manage its exposure to fluctuations in interest rates with a view to containing its interest costs, or securing its interest revenues, in accordance with the amounts provided in its budgetary arrangements as amended in accordance with *TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements*.

34. It will achieve this by the prudent use of its approved financing and investment instruments, methods and techniques, primarily to create stability and certainty of costs and revenues, but at the same time retaining a sufficient degree of flexibility to take advantage of unexpected, potentially advantageous changes in the level or structure of interest rates. This should be subject to the consideration and, if required, approval of any policy or budgetary implications.

35. Regular monitoring of interest rates and monthly monitoring of the Interest Payable and Interest Receivable budgets will be undertaken by the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management), in line with the treasury management indicators, with quarterly reports to the *Treasury Management Group*.

36. Exchange rate risk

The risk that fluctuations in foreign exchange rates create an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the Council's finances, against which the Council has failed to protect itself adequately.

37. The Council will manage its exposure to fluctuations in exchange rates so as to minimise any detrimental impact on its budgeted income/expenditure levels. Exposure will be minimal as the Council's borrowing and investment are all in sterling.

38. Refinancing risk

The risk that maturing borrowings, capital, project or partnership financings cannot be refinanced on terms that reflect the provisions made by the Council for those refinancings, both capital and current (revenue), and/or that the terms are inconsistent with prevailing market conditions at the time.

39. The Council will ensure that its borrowing, private financing and partnership arrangements are negotiated, structured and documented, and the maturity profile of the monies so raised are managed, with a view to managing refinancing risk and obtaining terms which are competitive and as favourable to the Council as can

reasonably be achieved in the light of market conditions prevailing at the time. It will manage the profile of its maturing debt such that excessive refinancing is not required in any one financial year.

40. It will actively manage its relationships with its counterparties in these transactions in such a manner as to secure this objective and will avoid over reliance on any one source of funding if this might jeopardise achievement of the above.

41. The maturity structure and prevailing interest rates are monitored by the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) in line with the limits set in the treasury management indicators, and regular reports are made to the *Treasury Management Group*.

42. Legal and regulatory risk

The risk that the Council itself, or a counterparty with which it is dealing in its treasury management activities, fails to act in accordance with its legal powers or regulatory requirements, and that the Council suffers losses accordingly.

43. The Council will ensure that all its treasury management activities comply with its statutory powers and regulatory requirements. It will demonstrate such compliance, if required to do so, to all parties with whom it deals in such activities. In framing its credit and counterparty policy under *TMP1(1) credit and counterparty risk management*, it will ensure that there is evidence of counterparties' powers, authority and compliance in respect of the transactions they may effect with the Council, particularly with regard to duty of care and fees charged.

44. The Council recognises that future legislative or regulatory changes may impact on its treasury management activities and, so far as it is reasonably able to do so, will seek to minimise the risk of these impacting adversely on the Council.

45. The Council is an administering authority in the Local Government Pension Scheme and is required, under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2009, to invest any fund money that is not needed immediately to make payments. Responsibility for approving and monitoring the implementation of the Pension Fund treasury management strategy has been delegated to the Pension Fund Committee.

46. Fraud, error and corruption, and contingency management

The risk that the Council fails to identify the circumstances in which it may be exposed to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings, and fails to employ suitable systems and procedures and maintain effective contingency management arrangements to these ends. It includes the area of risk commonly referred to as operational risk.

47. The Council will ensure that it has identified the circumstances which may expose it to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings. Accordingly, it will employ suitable systems and procedures, and will maintain effective contingency management arrangements, to these ends.

48. Market risk

The risk that, through adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums the Council borrows and invests, its stated treasury management policies and objectives are compromised, against which effects it has failed to protect itself adequately.

49. The Council will seek to ensure that its stated treasury management policies and objectives will not be compromised by adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums it invests and will accordingly seek to protect itself from the effects of such fluctuations. Decisions on investment in tradeable securities, which risk loss of capital due to market fluctuations, will only be authorised by the *Treasury Management Group*.

TMP2 Performance measurement

50. The Council is committed to the pursuit of value for money in its treasury management activities, and to the use of performance methodology in support of that aim, within the framework set out in its treasury management policy. One key performance measure is income/expenditure against budget, and budget setting for interest payable and receivable is crucially important for effective treasury management.

51. Furthermore, the treasury management function will be the subject of ongoing analysis of the value it adds in support of the Council's stated business or service objectives. Methods of service delivery and the scope for potential improvements will be regularly examined.

52. The Council's positive cashflows tend to be weighted towards the first half of the financial year, with outflows towards the second half of the year. This allows the Council to make investments most days but tends to restrict its use of fixed rate investments to the first half of the year, with most investments being for very short, often overnight, periods. For this reason, cash management returns will be benchmarked against the average **SONIA** (Sterling Over Night Indexed Average) rate, which replaced the LIBID rate in December 2021.

53. Borrowing will be undertaken in accordance with the treasury management strategy and opportunities will to be taken to borrow, with regard to the Council's Capital Financing Requirement and the most recent cashflow forecast, at rates that are considered to be affordable and attractive over the long-term.

TMP3 Decision-making and analysis

54. The Council will maintain full records of its treasury management decisions, and of the processes and practices applied in reaching those decisions, both for the purposes of learning from the past, and for demonstrating that reasonable steps were taken to ensure that all issues relevant to those decisions were taken into account at the time.

55. Treasury management processes and practices are well-documented. These are reviewed and agreed by the *Treasury Management Group* following any material changes. Full records are maintained of all treasury management decisions in order

to demonstrate compliance with these processes and for audit purposes. Where appropriate, decisions are reported to the *Treasury Management Group*.

TMP4 Approved instruments, methods and techniques

56. The Council will undertake its treasury management activities within the limits and parameters defined in *TMP1 Risk management*. Its borrowing activity will be within the prudential limits and may include the following:

- (a) overdraft or short-term loan from an authorised financial institution.
- (b) short-term loan from a local authority.
- (c) long-term loan from an authorised financial institution (to include Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loans).
- (d) the PWLB (or successor).
- (e) loan instruments, including transferable loans up to five years duration and non-transferable of no fixed duration.
- (f) UK Municipal Bonds Agency.

57. For investing purposes, the Council may use the following financial instruments:

- a) call or notice accounts
- b) fixed term deposits
- c) callable deposits
- d) structured deposits
- e) certificates of deposits
- f) money market funds
- g) UK Treasury Bills
- h) UK government bonds

58. For sterling money market funds, the Council will limit their use to those with minimum total assets of £5 billion. For UK Treasury bills and UK government bonds the objective will be to hold until maturity but their tradeability gives the flexibility to realize these instruments earlier for liquidity purposes or in the event of significant capital gains. The Council will use forward dealing for both investing and borrowing where market conditions indicate that this approach offers better value for money.

TMP5 Organisation, clarity and segregation of responsibilities and dealing arrangements

59. The Council considers it essential, for the purposes of the effective control and monitoring of its treasury management activities, for the reduction of the risk of fraud or error, and for the pursuit of optimum performance, that these activities are structured and managed in a fully integrated manner, and that there is at all times a clarity of treasury management responsibilities.

60. The principle on which this will be based is a clear distinction between those charged with setting treasury management policies and those charged with implementing and controlling these policies, particularly with regard to the execution and transmission of funds, the recording and administering of treasury management decisions, and the audit and review of the treasury management function.

61. If the Council intends, because of lack of resources or other circumstances, to depart from these principles, the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury

Management) will ensure that the reasons are properly reported in accordance with *TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements*, and the implications properly considered and evaluated.

62. The Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) will ensure that there are clear written statements of the responsibilities for each post engaged in treasury management, and the arrangements for absence cover. The Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) will also always ensure that those engaged in treasury management shall follow the policies and procedures set out.

63. The Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) will ensure that there is proper documentation for all deals and transactions, and that procedures exist for the effective transmission of funds.

64. The current responsibilities are outlined below.

- Treasury management strategy, policies and practices are set by the County Council.
- Responsibility for the implementation, scrutiny and regular monitoring of the treasury management policies and practices is delegated to the *Treasury Management Group*.
- The responsible officer for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions is the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management), who will act within the parameters set by the Treasury Management Policy Statement and TMPs and decisions of the *Treasury Management Group*. The Investments Officer will act as deputy to the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) in his or her absence.

65. The current procedures are outlined below.

- Daily cash flow forecasts will be maintained by the Loans Officer. Annual cash flow forecasts will be provided to the *Treasury Management Group* on a quarterly basis.
- The daily procedures for cash flow monitoring, placing deals, transmission of funds and documentation can now be carried out remotely and are set out in the Treasury Management Procedure Manual. These procedures are usually carried out by the Loans Officer, with absences covered by another officer under the responsibility of the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) or by an identified and trained officer from the wider finance team.
- The officer dealing on the money markets each day must prepare a cash flow forecast for that day based on the most up-to-date information available and this must be checked by the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management), or another trained officer, before that day's deals are carried out. Before conducting a deal, the officer will confirm that the credit ratings of the counterparty are in line with the approved policy.
- Deals must be within the limits set out in *TMP1 Risk management*. Dealing staff must be aware of the principles set out in UK Money Markets Code 2021 published by the Bank of England. Documentation must be kept in accordance with the Cash Process Notes.

- The transfer of funds will normally be actioned by CHAPS transfer through the banking system. Separate authorisation is required by a senior officer of the Council to release the payment.

66. Individual deal limits specified in *TMP1 Risk management* apply to all staff placing deals. Any borrowing or lending for periods greater than 365 days may only be actioned on the authority of any two of the following members of Treasury Management Group:

- Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management)
- Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure and Improvement)
- Group Manager (Financial Services)

Money may only be lent to institutions or funds on the *Approved List*.

TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements

67. The Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure and Improvement) will ensure that regular reports are prepared and considered on the implementation of the Council's treasury management strategy and policies; on the effects of decisions taken and transactions executed in pursuit of those policies; on the implications of changes, particularly budgetary, resulting from regulatory, economic, market or other factors affecting its treasury management activities; and on the performance of the treasury management function.

68. Full Council will receive:

- an annual report on the strategy to be pursued in the coming year.
- a mid-year review.
- an annual report on the performance of the treasury management function in the past year and on any circumstances of non-compliance with the Council's treasury management policy statement and TMPs.

69. The *Treasury Management Group* will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks and on compliance with and suggested revisions to policy. Members of the *Treasury Management Group* will be informed of any breach of the principles contained in TMP5.

TMP7 Budgeting, accounting and audit arrangements

70. The Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement) will prepare, and the Council will approve and, if necessary, from time to time will amend, an annual budget for treasury management, which will bring together all the costs involved in running the treasury management function, together with associated income. The matters to be included in the budget will at minimum be those required by statute or regulation, together with such information as will demonstrate compliance with *TMP1 Risk management*, *TMP2 Performance measurement*, and *TMP4 Approved instruments, methods and techniques*.

71. The Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement) will exercise effective controls over this budget and will report upon and recommend any changes required in accordance with *TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements*.

72. The Council accounts for its treasury management activities, for decisions made and transactions executed, in accordance with appropriate accounting practices and standards, and with statutory and regulatory requirements in force for the time being.
73. The impact of expected borrowing and investment activity is dealt with in the Council's budget book. Systems and procedures are subject to both internal and external audit and all necessary information and documentation is provided on request.

TMP8 Cash and cash flow management

74. Unless statutory or regulatory requirements demand otherwise, all monies in the hands of the Council will be under the control of the Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement), and will be aggregated for cash flow and investment management purposes. Cash flow projections will be prepared on a regular and timely basis, and the Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement) will ensure that these are adequate for the purposes of monitoring compliance with *TMP1(2) liquidity risk management*. A separate arrangement holds for any Pension Fund cash, for which separate cashflow projections are prepared.
75. As outlined in TMP5, daily cash flow forecasts are prepared in accordance with the team's Cash Process Notes, and summarised weekly and annual forecasts are regularly provided to the *Treasury Management Group*.

TMP9 Money laundering

76. The Council is alert to the possibility that it may become the subject of an attempt to involve it in a transaction involving the laundering of money. Accordingly, it will maintain procedures for verifying and recording the identity of counterparties and reporting suspicions, and will ensure that staff involved in this are properly trained.
77. All treasury management activity with banks other than the Council's own bank is actioned through CHAPS transfers to/from nominated accounts. Suspicions that a third party is attempting to involve the County Council in money laundering will be reported to the Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement).

TMP10 Training and qualifications

78. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff involved in the treasury management function are fully equipped to undertake the duties and responsibilities allocated to them. It will therefore seek to appoint individuals who are both capable and experienced and will provide training for staff to enable them to acquire and maintain an appropriate level of expertise, knowledge and skills.
79. The person specifications for the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) and the Investments Officer require a CCAB qualification and other members of the treasury team have the option to be supported to attain professional qualifications from the Association of Accounting Technicians, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy or the Association of Corporate Treasurers. The members of the *Treasury Management Group* are also required to be CCAB or ACT qualified.

80. Professional qualifications will be supplemented by relevant training courses, and attendance at seminars and conferences for all team members as and when these become available. The Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) will recommend and implement the necessary arrangements. Requests and suggestions for training may be discussed at any time with the Senior Accountant (Pensions & Treasury Management) and also feature as part of the EPDR process.
81. The *Treasury Management Group* will ensure that board/council members tasked with treasury management responsibilities have access to training relevant to their needs and those responsibilities. Those charged with governance recognise their individual responsibility to ensure that they have the necessary skills to undertake their role effectively.

TMP11 Use of external service providers

82. The Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the Council at all times. It also recognises that there may be potential value in employing external providers of treasury management services, in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. However, it does not currently employ the services of any specialist treasury management advisers.
83. In the employment of such service providers, the Council will ensure it does so for reasons which have been submitted to a full evaluation of the costs and benefits. It will also ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed, documented and subjected to regular review. It will also ensure, where feasible and necessary, that a spread of service providers is used, to avoid over-reliance on one or a small number of companies. Where services are subject to formal tender or re-tender arrangements, legislative requirements will be observed. The monitoring of such arrangements rests with the responsible officer.
84. The Council currently uses broking companies to act as intermediaries in lending and borrowing activity, although it will also carry out this activity directly with counterparties when opportunities arise and when settlement details can be adequately verified.

TMP12 Corporate governance

85. The Council is committed to the pursuit of proper corporate governance throughout its businesses and services, and to establishing the principles and practices by which this can be achieved. Accordingly, the treasury management function and its activities will be undertaken with openness and transparency, honesty, integrity and accountability.
86. The Council has adopted and implemented the key provisions of the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code (2021 edition) and reports are made in accordance with the approved policy. The Council's constitution includes schemes of delegation covering treasury management activities.
87. These measures are considered vital to the achievement of proper corporate governance in treasury management, and the responsible officer will monitor and, if necessary, report upon the effectiveness of these arrangements.