

Treasury Management Strategy Statement

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and
Annual Investment Strategy

2023/24

1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 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 funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need 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. On occasion, when it is prudent and economic, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

The contribution the treasury management function makes to the authority is critical, as the balance of debt and investment operations ensure liquidity or the ability to meet spending commitments as they fall due, either on day-to-day revenue or for larger capital projects. The treasury operations will see a balance of the interest costs of debt and the investment income arising from cash deposits affecting the available budget. Since cash balances generally result from reserves and balances, it is paramount to ensure adequate security of the sums invested, as a loss of principal will in effect result in a loss to the General Fund Balance.

CIPFA defines treasury management as:

"The management of the local authority's borrowing, 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."

Whilst any commercial initiatives or loans to third parties will impact on the treasury function, these activities are generally classed as non-treasury activities, (arising usually from capital expenditure), and are separate from the day-to-day treasury management activities.

1.2 Reporting requirements

1.2.1 Capital Strategy

The CIPFA 2021 Prudential and Treasury Management Codes require all local authorities to prepare a capital strategy report which will provide the following:

- a high-level, long-term overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed
- the implications for future financial sustainability

The aim of the capital strategy is to ensure that all elected members on the full council fully understand the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

The capital strategy is reported separately from this Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

1.2.2 Treasury Management reporting

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

- a. Prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy** (this report) - The first, and most important report is forward looking and 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 annual investment strategy, (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).
- b. A mid-year treasury management report** (presented to Audit & Scrutiny Committee) – This is primarily a progress report and will update members on the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether any policies require revision.
- c. An annual treasury report** (presented to Audit and Scrutiny Committee) – This is a backward-looking review document and provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Scrutiny

It is the responsibility of Full Council to approve the Treasury Management Strategy, following consideration of the strategy by Financial Policy Panel.

The Council has delegated responsibility for monitoring treasury management performance (the mid-year and annual performance reports above) and policies to Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

1.3 Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24

The strategy for 2023/24 covers two main areas:

Capital issues

- the capital expenditure plans and the associated prudential indicators;
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy.

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
- the policy on use of external service providers.

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

1.4 Training

The CIPFA Code requires the responsible officer to ensure that members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management. This especially applies to members responsible for scrutiny. In order to meet this requirement, during the last year, all members including Audit & Scrutiny have had the opportunity to receive a training presentation from the Council's external treasury management advisors, Link Group Treasury Solutions and further training will be arranged as required.

The training needs of treasury management officers are periodically reviewed.

1.5 Treasury management consultants

The Council uses Link Group, 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 the services of our external service providers. All decisions will be undertaken with regards to all available information, including, but not solely, our treasury advisers.

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 2023/24 – 2025/26

The Council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the capital expenditure plans is reflected in the 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:

Capital expenditure	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£000	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Strategy & Resources	333	721	250	250	290
Environment & Safe Communities	873	1,173	451	135	175
Community & Wellbeing	529	2,002	1,013	785	885
Licensing & Planning Policy	0	0	0	0	0
Total services	1,735	3,896	1,714	1,170	1,350
Residential property fund	228	0	1,017	0	0
Commercial property fund*	0	0	49,569	0	0
Total	1,963	3,896	52,300	1,170	1,350

* The Council retains the in-Borough commercial property investment fund – for regeneration purposes – which has a remaining balance available for investment of £49.6m, from the original fund balance of £80m. The fund was established by the Council across 2016/17 and 2017/18 and can be financed from prudential borrowing.

For the purposes of forecasting, the full £49.6m balance is projected to be spent in 2023/24, however, actual expenditure will depend on the timing of when suitable acquisitions are identified. It is possible that should a suitable property be identified in the current financial year, expenditure will be incurred in 2022/23. This possibility is reflected in the prudential indicators for the operational boundary and authorised debt limit.

Other long-term liabilities - The above financing need excludes other long-term liabilities, such as leasing arrangements that already include borrowing instruments.

The table below summarises the above capital expenditure plans and how these plans are being financed by capital or revenue resources. Any shortfall of resources results in a funding borrowing need.

Capital expenditure	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Core capital programme	1,735	3,896	1,714	1,170	1,350
Residential property fund	228	0	1,017	0	0
Commercial property fund	0	0	49,569	0	0
Total Expenditure	1,963	3,896	52,300	1,170	1,350
Financed by:					
Capital receipts	229	973	348	0	0
Capital grants (inc DFG)	455	1,579	785	785	785
S106 and CIL	881	910	80	0	0
Revenue	398	434	1,518	385	565
Total Financing	1,963	3,896	2,731	1,170	1,350
Net financing need for the year	0	0	49,569	0	0

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 is simply the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's indebtedness and so its underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure above, which has not immediately been paid for through a revenue or capital resource, will increase the CFR.

The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which broadly reduces the indebtedness in line with each asset's life, and so charges the economic consumption of capital assets as they are used.

The CFR includes any other long-term liabilities (e.g. finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the Council's borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a borrowing facility by the lease provider and so the Council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes. The Council currently has £2.287m of such assets within the CFR. The Council is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

Capital Financing Requirement	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Opening CFR	90,277	88,895	87,456	135,561	133,533
Unfinanced capex - commercial properties	0	0	49,569	0	0
Finance Leases	34	0	0	0	0
Less MRP	(1,416)	(1,439)	(1,464)	(2,028)	(2,101)
Closing CFR	88,895	87,456	135,561	133,533	131,432
Movement in CFR	(1,382)	(1,439)	48,105	(2,028)	(2,101)

A key aspect of the regulatory and professional guidance is that elected members are aware of the size and scope of any commercial activity in relation to the authority's overall

financial position. The capital expenditure figures shown in 2.1 and the details above demonstrate the scope of this activity and, by approving these figures, consider the scale proportionate to the Authority's remaining activity.

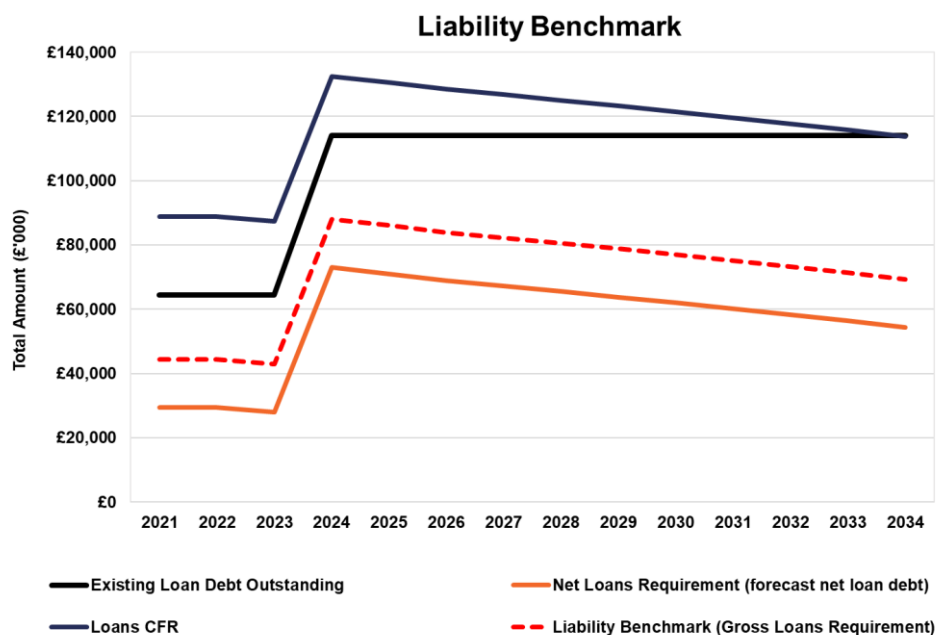
2.3 Liability Benchmark

A third and new prudential indicator for 2023/24 is the Liability Benchmark (LB). The Authority is required to estimate and measure the LB for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years, as a minimum.

There are four components to the LB: -

1. **Existing loan debt outstanding:** the Authority's existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.
2. **Loans CFR:** this is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP.
3. **Net loans requirement:** this will show the Authority's gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flows forecast.
4. **Liability benchmark (or gross loans requirement):** this equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance.

This Council's forecast liability benchmark is shown for the next ten years in the following chart:



2.4 Core funds and expected investment balances

The application of resources (capital receipts, reserves etc.) to either finance capital expenditure or other budget decisions to support the revenue budget will have an ongoing impact on investments unless resources are supplemented each year from new sources (asset sales etc.). Detailed below are estimates of the year-end balances for each resource and anticipated day-to-day cash flow balances.

Year End Resources	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£'000	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fund balances / reserves	2,853	3,096	3,096	3,096	3,096
Capital receipts	3,821	3,480	3,132	3,132	3,132
Earmarked revenue reserves	23,255	12,652	12,652	12,652	12,652
CIL	9,320	8,075	9,375	10,675	11,975
S106 funds	2,311	1,594	1,594	1,594	1,594
Total core funds	41,560	28,897	29,849	31,149	32,449
Working capital*	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
(Under)/over borrowing	(22,181)	(22,180)	(22,180)	(22,181)	(22,181)
Expected investments	26,379	13,717	14,669	15,968	17,268

*Working capital balances shown are estimated year-end; these may vary.

2.5 Minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy statement

The Council is required to pay off an element of the accumulated General Fund capital spend each year (the CFR) through a revenue charge (the minimum revenue provision - MRP), although it is also allowed to undertake additional voluntary payments if required (voluntary revenue provision - VRP).

DLUCH regulations have been issued which require the full Council to approve **an MRP Statement** in advance of each year. A variety of options are provided to councils, so long as there is a prudent provision. The Council is recommended to approve the following MRP Statement:

For all unsupported borrowing (including finance leases) the MRP policy will be:

- **Asset life method** – MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, in accordance with the regulations.

This method provides for a reduction in the borrowing need over approximately the asset's life.

Repayments included in annual finance leases are applied as MRP.

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 relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet this service activity and the Council's capital strategy. 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, the current and projected debt positions and the annual investment strategy.

3.1 Current portfolio position

The overall treasury management portfolio as at 31 March 2022 and the position as at 30 November 2022 are shown below for both borrowing and investments.

Treasury Portfolio	Actual at 31 March 2022		At 30 November 2022	
	£000	%	£000	%
Treasury Investments				
Banks & Building Societies	10,000	29%	30,000	81%
Money Market Funds	25,000	71%	7,200	19%
Total Managed In House	35,000	100%	37,200	100%
Aberdeen Asset Management Fund	0	0%	0	0%
Total Managed Externally	0	0%	0	0%
Total Treasury Investments	35,000	100%	37,200	100%
Treasury External Borrowing				
PWLB	64,427	100%	64,427	100%
Total External Borrowing	64,427	100%	64,427	100%
Net treasury investments / (borrowing)	-29,427	-	-27,227	-

The Council's forward projections for borrowing are summarised below. The table shows the actual external debt, against the underlying capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement - CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

£'000	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
External Debt					
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Debt at 1 April	90,277	88,895	87,456	135,561	133,533
Expected change in debt	0	0	49,569	0	0
Other long-term liabilities	0	0	0	0	0
Less MRP	(1,416)	(1,439)	(1,464)	(2,028)	(2,101)
Less use of internal funds	(22,181)	(22,181)	(22,181)	(22,181)	(22,181)
Actual gross debt at 31 March including finance leases	66,714	65,275	113,380	111,352	109,251
The Capital Financing Requirement	88,895	87,456	135,561	133,533	131,432
(Under)/over borrowing**	(22,181)	(22,180)	(22,180)	(22,181)	(22,181)

Within the above figures the level of debt relating to commercial activities / non-financial investment is:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
External Debt for commercial property fund (i.e. excluding finance lease debt)					
Actual debt at 31 March £m	64,427	64,427	112,532	110,504	108,403
Percentage of total external debt %	97	99	99	99	99

Within the range of 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 gross debt 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 2022/23 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue or speculative 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. In most cases, this would be a similar figure to the CFR, but may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual debt and the ability to fund under-borrowing by other cash resources.

Operational boundary £'000	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Debt relating to commercial property fund	90,277	88,895	137,025	135,561	133,533
Other long term liabilities	2,287	1,877	1,467	1,028	556
Total	92,564	90,772	138,493	136,589	134,089

The operational boundary and authorised debt limits provide for the possibility that the remaining £49.6m balance within the Council's Commercial Property Acquisition Fund could be spent in 2023/24 if suitable properties are identified.

The authorised limit for external debt. This is a key prudential indicator and represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a legal 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.

1. 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.
2. The Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

Authorised limit £'000	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Debt relating to commercial property fund	90,277	145,000	145,000	145,000	145,000
Other long term liabilities	2,287	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Total	92,564	148,000	148,000	148,000	148,000

3.3 Prospects for interest rates

The Council has appointed Link Group as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. Link provided the following forecasts on 08 November 2022. These are forecasts for certainty rates, gilt yields plus 80bps:

Link Group Interest Rate View	08.11.22												
	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25
BANK RATE	3.50	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave eamings	3.60	4.30	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.50	2.50
6 month ave eamings	4.20	4.50	4.60	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.40	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.60	2.60
12 month ave eamings	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.50	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.10
10 yr PWLB	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20
25 yr PWLB	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20

3.4 Borrowing strategy

The Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as medium and longer dated borrowing rates are expected to fall from their current levels once prevailing inflation concerns are addressed by tighter near-term monetary policy. In addition, counterparty risk is an issue that needs to be considered.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2023/24 treasury operations. The Chief Finance Officer will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances:

- * *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in borrowing rates, (e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then borrowing would be postponed.*
- * *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in borrowing rates than that currently forecast, perhaps arising from an acceleration in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity, or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are lower than they are projected to be in the next few years.*

Any decisions will be reported to the appropriate decision-making body at the next available opportunity.

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.

3.6 Debt rescheduling

Rescheduling of current borrowing in our debt portfolio is unlikely to occur as there is still a large difference between premature redemption rates and new borrowing rates.

If rescheduling was done, it would be reported to the appropriate Committee at the earliest meeting

4 ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Investment policy – management of risk

The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and CIPFA have extended the meaning of ‘investments’ to include both financial and non-financial investments. This report deals solely with treasury (financial) investments, (as managed by the treasury management team). Non-financial investments, essentially the purchase of income yielding assets, are covered in the Capital Strategy, (Appendix 10).

The Council’s investment policy has regard to the following: -

- DLUHC’s Guidance on Local Government Investments (“the Guidance”)
- CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes 2021 (“the Code”)
- CIPFA Treasury Management Guidance Notes 2021

The Council’s investment priorities will be security first, portfolio liquidity second and then yield, (return). The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and with the Council’s risk appetite. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to maintain a degree of liquidity to cover cash flow needs but to also consider “laddering” investments for periods up to 12 months with high credit rated financial institutions, whilst investment rates remain elevated, as well as wider range fund options.

The above guidance from the DLUHC and CIPFA places a high priority on the management of risk. This authority has adopted a prudent approach to managing risk and defines its risk appetite by the following means: -

1. Minimum acceptable **credit criteria** are applied in order to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties. This also enables diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk. The key ratings used to monitor counterparties are the short term and long-term ratings.
2. **Other information:** ratings will not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution; 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 achieve this consideration 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.
3. **Other information sources** used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the financial sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.
4. This authority has defined the list of **types of investment instruments** that the treasury management team are authorised to use. There are two lists in appendix 5.4 under the categories of ‘specified’ and ‘non-specified’ investments.
 - **Specified investments** are those with a high level of credit quality and subject to a maturity limit of one year or have less than a year left to run to maturity if originally they were originally classified as being non-specified investments solely due to the maturity period exceeding one year.
 - **Non-specified investments** are those with less high credit quality, may be for periods in excess of one year, and/or are more complex instruments which require greater consideration by members and officers before being authorised for use.

5. **Non-specified and loan investment limits.** The Council has determined that it will set a limit to the maximum exposure of the total treasury management investment portfolio to non-specified treasury management investments of 50%
6. **Lending limits**, (amounts and maturity), for each counterparty will be set through applying the matrix table in paragraph 4.2.
7. **Transaction limits** are set for each type of investment in 4.2.
8. This authority will set a limit for its investments which are invested for **longer than 365 days**, (see paragraph 4.4).
9. Investments will only be placed with counterparties from countries with a specified minimum **sovereign rating**, (see paragraph 4.3).
10. This authority has engaged **external specialists** to provide expert advice on how to optimise an appropriate balance of security, liquidity and yield, given the risk appetite of this authority in the context of the expected level of cash balances and need for liquidity throughout the year.
11. All investments will be denominated in **sterling**.

However, this authority will also pursue **value for money** in treasury management and will monitor the yield from investment income against appropriate benchmarks for investment performance. Regular monitoring of investment performance will be carried out during the year.

4.2 Creditworthiness policy

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

1. "watches" and "outlooks" from credit rating agencies;
2. CDS spreads that may give early warning of changes in credit ratings;
3. sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

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

- Yellow 5 years
- Dark pink 5 years for Ultra-Short Dated Bond Funds with a credit score of 1.25
- Light pink 5 years for Ultra-Short Dated Bond Funds with a credit score of 1.5
- Purple 2 years
- Blue 1 year (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)
- Orange 1 year
- Red 6 months
- Green 100 days
- No colour not to be used

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

Typically, the minimum credit ratings criteria the Authority uses will be a short-term rating (Fitch or equivalents) of F1 and a long-term rating of A-. There may be occasions when the counterparty ratings from one rating agency are marginally lower than these ratings but may still be used. 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. The Authority 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 / investment scheme no longer meeting the Authority's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.
- in addition to the use of credit ratings the Authority will be advised of information in movements in Credit Default Swap spreads against the iTraxx European Senior Financials benchmark and other market data on a daily basis via its Passport website, provided exclusively to it by Link. Extreme market movements may result in downgrade of an institution or removal from the Authority's lending list.

Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition, this Authority will also use market data and market information, as well as information on any external support for banks to help support its decision-making process.

Y	Pi1	Pi2	P	B	O	R	G	N/C
1	1.25	1.5	2	3	4	5	6	7
Up to 5yrs	Up to 5yrs	Up to 5yrs	Up to 2yrs	Up to 1yr	Up to 1yr	Up to 6mths	Up to 100days	No Colour

	Colour (and long-term rating where applicable)	Money limit	Transaction limit	Time limit
Banks	Yellow	£5m	£5m	5 yrs
Banks	Purple	£5m	£5m	2 yrs
Banks	Orange	£5m	£5m	1 yr
Banks – part nationalised	Blue	£5m	£5m	1 yr
Banks	Red	£5m	£5m	6 mths
Banks	Green	£5m	£5m	100 days
Banks	No Colour	Not to be used	Not to be used	
Limit 3 category – Authority's banker (where "No Colour")	Natwest	£5m	£5m	1 day
Other institutions limit – Building Societies	-	£5m	£5m	1 yr
DMADF	UK sovereign rating	unlimited	£5m	6 mths
Local authorities	n/a	£5m	£5m	1 yr
Housing associations	Colour bands	£5m	£5m	As per colour band

	Fund rating	Money Limit		Time Limit
Money Market Funds CNAV	AAA	£5m	£5m	liquid
Money Market Funds LVNAV	AAA	£5m	£5m	liquid
Money Market Funds VNAV	AAA	£5m	£5m	liquid
Ultra-Short Dated Bond Funds with a credit score of 1.25	Dark Pink / AAA	£5m	£5m	liquid
Ultra-Short Dated Bond Funds with a credit score of 1.50	Light Pink / AAA	£5m	£5m	liquid

The proposed criteria for specified and non-specified investments are shown in section 6.

Creditworthiness.

Significant levels of downgrades to Short and Long-Term credit ratings have not materialised since the crisis in March 2020. In the main, where they did change, any alterations were limited to Outlooks. However, more recently the UK sovereign debt rating has been placed on Negative Outlook by the three major rating agencies in the wake of the Truss/Kwarteng unfunded tax-cuts policy. Although the Sunak/Hunt government has calmed markets, the outcome of the rating agency reviews is unknown at present, but it is possible the UK sovereign debt rating will be downgraded. Accordingly, when setting minimum sovereign debt ratings, this Authority will not set a minimum rating for the UK.

CDS prices

Although bank CDS prices, (these are market indicators of credit risk), spiked upwards during the days of the Truss/Kwarteng government, they have returned to more average levels since then. However, sentiment can easily shift, so it will remain important to undertake continual monitoring of all aspects of risk and return in the current circumstances. Link monitor CDS prices as part of their creditworthiness service to local authorities and the Authority has access to this information via its Link-provided Passport portal.

4.3 Other limits

Due care will be taken to consider the exposure of the Council's total investment portfolio to non-specified investments, countries, groups and sectors.

- a) **Non-specified treasury management investment limit.** The Council has determined that it will limit the maximum total exposure of treasury management investments to non-specified treasury management investments as being 50% of the total treasury management investment portfolio.
- b) **Country limit.** The Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from the UK and from countries with a **minimum sovereign credit rating of AA-** from Fitch or equivalent. The list of countries that qualify using this credit criteria as at the date of this report are shown in section 7. This list may be added to, or deducted from, by officers should ratings change in accordance with this policy.
- c) **Other limits.** In addition:
 - no more than 50% will be placed with any non-UK country at any time;
 - limits in place above will apply to a group of companies;
 - sector limits will be monitored regularly for appropriateness.

4.4 Investment strategy

In-house funds. Investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (i.e., rates for investments up to 12 months). Greater returns are usually obtainable by investing for longer periods. The current shape of the yield curve suggests that is the case at present, but there is the prospect of Bank Rate peaking in the first half of 2023 and possibly reducing as early as the latter part of 2023 so an agile investment strategy would be appropriate to optimise returns.

Accordingly, while most cash balances are required in order to manage the ups and downs of cash flow (amend as appropriate), where cash sums can be identified that could be invested for longer periods, the value to be obtained from longer-term investments will be carefully assessed.

Investment returns expectations.

The current forecast shown in paragraph 3.3, includes a forecast for Bank Rate to reach 4.5% in Q2 2023.

The suggested budgeted investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to about three months during each financial year, (based on a first increase in Bank Rate in quarter 2 of 2022), are as follows.:

Average earnings in each year	
2022/23 (remainder)	3.95%
2023/24	4.40%
2024/25	3.30%
2025/26	2.60%
2026/27	2.50%
Years 6 to 10	2.80%
Years 10+	2.80%

As there are so many variables at this time, caution must be exercised in respect of all interest rate forecasts.

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

Investment treasury indicator and limit - total principal funds invested for greater than 365 days. These limits are set with regard to the Council's liquidity requirements and to reduce the need for early sale of an investment and are based on the availability of funds after each year-end.

The Council is asked to approve the following treasury indicator and limit:

Upper limit for principal sums invested for longer than 365 days			
£m	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Principal sums invested for longer than 365 days	£10m	£10m	£10m
Current investments as at 31/12/22 in excess of 1 year maturing in each year	£0m	£0m	£0m

4.5 Investment performance

Following the cessation in 2021 of LIBOR and the associated 7 day LIBID, which was previously used to benchmark the Council's treasury investment performance, the new benchmark is recommended to be 7 day SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Average) rate. This is the risk-free rate for sterling markets administered by the Bank of England.

SONIA is based on actual transactions and reflects the average of the interest rates that banks pay to borrow sterling overnight from other financial institutions and other institutional investors. The now-defunct LIBOR had been based on estimated rates.

4.6 End of year investment report

At the end of the financial year, the Council will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Management Performance report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee, in line with the Constitution.

4.7 External fund managers

Currently (31/12/22) the Council has no funds deposited with its external fund manager, Aberdeen Asset Management. However, when the external fund manager is utilised, they will comply with the Annual Investment Strategy. The agreement between the Council and the fund manager additionally stipulates guidelines on duration and other limits to contain and control risk.

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

5.1.1 Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£000	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Strategy & Resources	333	721	250	250	290
Environment & Safe Communities	873	1,173	451	135	175
Community & Wellbeing	529	2,002	1,013	785	885
Licensing & Planning Policy	0	0	0	0	0
Total services	1,735	3,896	1,714	1,170	1,350
Residential property fund	228	0	1,017	0	0
Commercial property fund	0	0	49,569	0	0
Total	1,963	3,896	52,300	1,170	1,350

5.1.2 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:

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long-term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.

%	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Ratio	12%	10%	18%	32%	30%

The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in this budget report.

5.1.3 Maturity structure of borrowing

Maturity structure of borrowing. These gross limits are set to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits.

The Council is asked to approve the following treasury indicators and limits:

Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2023/24

	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	20%
12 months to 2 years	0%	20%
2 years to 5 years	0%	20%
5 years to 10 years	0%	20%
10 years to 20 years	0%	20%
20 years to 30 years	0%	20%
30 years to 40 years	0%	20%
40 years to 50 years	0%	100%
Maturity structure of variable interest rate borrowing 2023/24		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	0%
12 months to 2 years	0%	0%
2 years to 5 years	0%	0%
5 years to 10 years	0%	0%
10 years to 20 years	0%	0%
20 years to 30 years	0%	0%
30 years to 40 years	0%	0%
40 years to 50 years	0%	0%

5.1.4. Control of interest rate exposure

Please see paragraphs 3.3, 3.4 and 4.4.

5.2 INTEREST RATE FORECASTS 2022-2025

Please see paragraph 3.3.

5.3 ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Against a backdrop of stubborn inflationary pressures, the easing of Covid restrictions in most developed economies, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and a range of different UK Government policies, it is no surprise that UK interest rates have been volatile right across the curve, from Bank Rate through to 50-year gilt yields, for all of 2022.

Market commentators' misplaced optimism around inflation has been the root cause of the rout in the bond markets with, for example, UK, EZ and US 10-year yields all rising by over 200bps since the turn of the year. The table below provides a snapshot of the conundrum facing central banks: inflation is elevated but labour markets are extra-ordinarily tight, making it an issue of fine judgment as to how far monetary policy needs to tighten.

	UK	Eurozone	US
Bank Rate	3.0%	1.5%	3.75%-4.00%
GDP	-0.2%q/q Q3 (2.4%/y/y)	+0.2%q/q Q3 (2.1%/y/y)	2.6% Q3 Annualised
Inflation	11.1%/y/y (Oct)	10.0%/y/y (Nov)	7.7%/y/y (Oct)
Unemployment Rate	3.6% (Sep)	6.6% (Sep)	3.7% (Aug)

6 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (TMPs)

6.1 TMP1 – CREDIT AND COUNTERPARTY RISK MANAGEMENT

The DLUHC issued Investment Guidance in 2018, and this forms the structure of the Council's policy below. These guidelines do not apply to either trust funds or pension funds which operate under a different regulatory regime.

The key intention of the Guidance is to maintain the current requirement for councils to invest prudently, and that priority is given to security and liquidity before yield. In order to facilitate this objective the guidance requires this Council to have regard to the CIPFA publication Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes. This Council adopted the Code on 13/04/2012 and will apply its principles to all investment activity. In accordance with the Code, the Chief Finance Officer has produced its treasury management practices (TMPs). This part, TMP 1(1), covering investment counterparty policy requires approval each year.

Annual investment strategy - The key requirements of both the Code and the investment guidance are to set an annual investment strategy, as part of its annual treasury strategy for the following year, covering the identification and approval of following:

- The strategy guidelines for choosing and placing investments, particularly non-specified investments.
- The principles to be used to determine the maximum periods for which funds can be committed.
- Specified investments that the Council will use. These are high security (i.e. high credit rating, although this is defined by the Council, and no guidelines are given), and high liquidity investments in sterling and with a maturity of no more than a year.
- Non-specified investments, clarifying the greater risk implications, identifying the general types of investment that may be used and a limit to the overall amount of various categories that can be held at any time.

The investment policy proposed for the Council is:

Strategy guidelines – The main strategy guidelines are contained in the body of the treasury strategy statement.

Specified investments – These investments are sterling investments of not more than one-year maturity, or those which could be for a longer period but where the Council has the right to be repaid within 12 months if it wishes. They also include investments which were originally classed as being non-specified investments, but which would have been classified as specified investments apart from originally being for a period longer than 12 months once the remaining period to maturity falls to under 12 months. These are considered low risk assets where the possibility of loss of principal or investment income is small. These would include sterling investments which would not be defined as capital expenditure with:

1. The UK Government (such as the Debt Management Account deposit facility, UK treasury bills or a gilt with less than one year to maturity).
2. Supranational bonds of less than one year's duration.
3. A local authority, housing association, parish council or community council.
4. Pooled investment vehicles (such as money market funds) that have been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency. For category 4 this covers pooled investment vehicles, such as money market funds, that have been awarded a high credit rating by Standard and Poor's, Moody's and / or Fitch rating agencies.
5. A body that is considered of a high credit quality (such as a bank or building society). For category 5 this covers bodies with a minimum Short Term rating of F1 (or the equivalent) as rated by Standard and Poor's, Moody's and / or Fitch rating agencies.

Within these bodies, and in accordance with the Code, the Council has set additional criteria to set the time and amount of monies which will be invested in these bodies, as disclosed in the investment strategy in section 4.

Non-specified investments – are any other type of investment (i.e. not defined as specified above). The identification and rationale supporting the selection of these other investments and the maximum limits to be applied are set out below.

	Non-Specified Investment Category	Limit (£ or %)
a.	<p>Supranational bonds greater than 1 year to maturity</p> <p>(a) Multilateral development bank bonds - These are bonds defined as an international financial institution having as one of its objects economic development, either generally or in any region of the world (e.g. European Reconstruction and Development Bank etc.).</p> <p>(b) A financial institution that is guaranteed by the United Kingdom Government (e.g. National Rail)</p> <p>The security of interest and principal on maturity is on a par with the Government and so very secure. These bonds usually provide returns above equivalent gilt edged securities. However the value of the bond may rise or fall before maturity and losses may accrue if the bond is sold before maturity.</p>	<p>AAA long term ratings, 50% of money invested through external fund manager. Restriction of 5yrs maximum maturity</p>
b.	<p>Gilt edged securities with a maturity of greater than one year. These are Government bonds and so provide the highest security of interest and the repayment of principal on maturity. Similar to category (a) above, the value of the bond may rise or fall before maturity and losses may accrue if the bond is sold before maturity.</p>	<p>50% of money invested through external fund manager. Restriction of 10yrs maximum maturity</p> <p>50% of money invested through external fund manager. Restriction of 10yrs maximum maturity</p>
c.	<p>The Council's own banker if it fails to meet the basic credit criteria. In this instance balances will be minimised as far as is possible.</p>	<p>In this instance balances will be minimised as far as is possible.</p>
d.	<p>Building societies not meeting the basic security requirements under the specified investments. The operation of some building societies does not require a credit rating, although</p>	<p>£5m per institution.</p>

	in every other respect the security of the society would match similarly sized societies with ratings. The Council may use such building societies which have a minimum asset size of £1bn but will restrict these type of investments to 12 months.	
e.	Any bank or building society that has a minimum long term credit rating of A-, for deposits with a maturity of greater than one year (including forward deals in excess of one year from inception to repayment).	Maximum of 50% on investments over 1yr
f.	Any non-rated subsidiary of a credit rated institution included in the specified investment category. These institutions will be included as an investment category subject to the parent bank providing an appropriate guarantee and meeting the ratings outlined above.	£5m per institution.
g.	Share and loan capital in a body corporate – The use of these instruments will be deemed to be capital expenditure, and as such will be an application (spending) of capital resources. Revenue resources will not be invested in corporate bodies. See note 1 below.	Maximum £5m per institution, subject to minimum rating of AA- (long term). The exception is Epsom & Ewell Property Investment Company Limited (EEPIC) - Council has separately authorised share capital and loans to EEPIC.

NOTE 1. This Authority will seek further advice on the appropriateness and associated risks with investments in these categories.

The monitoring of investment counterparties - The credit rating of counterparties will be monitored regularly. The Council receives credit rating information (changes, rating watches and rating outlooks) from Link Asset Services as and when ratings change, and counterparties are checked promptly. On occasion ratings may be downgraded when an investment has already been made. The criteria used are such that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria will be removed from the list immediately by the Chief Finance Officer, and if required new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.

Use of external fund managers – It is the Council's policy to use external fund managers for part of its investment portfolio when required. The fund managers will use both specified and non-specified investment categories and are contractually committed to keep to the Council's annual investment strategy.

The Council fully appreciates the importance of monitoring the activity and resultant performance of its appointed external fund manager. In order to aid this assessment, the Council is provided with a suite of regular reporting from its manager.

6.2 TMP2 Performance measurement

The Council has a number of approaches to evaluating treasury management decisions: -

- a. Monthly reviews carried out by the treasury management team.
- b. Reviews with our treasury management consultants & external fund manager.
- c. Annual review after the end of the year as reported formerly to Audit & Scrutiny Committee.
- d. Half yearly monitoring reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee.
- e. Quarterly budget monitoring reports to Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

The treasury management team holds reviews with our consultants every 6 months to review the performance of the investment and debt portfolios.

An Annual Treasury Report is submitted to Audit & Scrutiny each year after the close of the financial year, which reviews the performance of the investment portfolio. This report contains the following: -

- a. average investments held during the financial year and average interest rates
- b. investment strategy for the year compared to actual strategy
- c. explanations for variance between original strategies and actual
- d. comparison of return on investments to the investment benchmark
- e. compliance with Prudential and Treasury Indicators

The performance of investment earnings will be measured against the following benchmarks: -

- a. In house investments
7 day SONIA
- b. External fund manager
7 day SONIA

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's policy is to appoint external investment fund managers to manage a proportion of its cash and will comply with the Local Authorities (Contracting Out of Investment Functions) Order 1996 [SI 1996 No 1883].

The delegation of investment management to external managers will entail the following:

- Formal contractual documentation;
- Agreement on terms for early termination of the contract;
- Setting of investment instruments, constraints/parameters/conditions
- Setting of investment counterparty limits;
- Setting a performance measurement benchmark and a performance target;
- Frequency of performance reporting;

- Frequency of meetings with investment managers;

The Code of Practice places an obligation on the Council to monitor the performance of the fund managers. This Council has appointed Link Asset Services to assist in this respect.

6.3 TMP3 Decision – making and analysis

Epsom & Ewell Borough 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. The issues to be addressed and processes and practices to be pursued in reaching decisions are detailed in the scheduled to this document.”

The Treasury team will ensure that the following records will be retained: -

- Daily cash balance forecasts
- Money market rates obtained by telephone from brokers
- Dealing slips for all money market transactions
- Brokers' confirmations for investment transactions
- Confirmations from borrowing institutions where deals are done directly
- Contract notes received from fund manager
- Fund manager valuation statements

Processes to be pursued:

- Cash flow analysis
- Investment maturity analysis
- Ledger reconciliation
- Performance management information

6.4 TMP4 Approved instruments, methods and techniques

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will undertake its treasury management activities by employing only those instruments, methods and techniques detailed in the Treasury Management Strategy and within the limits and parameters defined.

6.5 TMP5 Organisation, clarity and segregation of responsibilities and dealing arrangements

Allocation of responsibilities

(i) Full Council

- approval of annual treasury management strategy.

(ii) Financial Policy Panel

- reviewing and advising on the treasury management strategy prior to approval at Full Council

(iii) Audit & Scrutiny Committee

- receiving and reviewing reports on treasury management policies, performance and activities
- approval of amendments to the organisation's adopted clauses, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices
- receiving and reviewing annual monitoring reports and acting on recommendations
- receiving and reviewing half yearly and annual performance monitoring report and acting on recommendations

(iv) Chief Finance Officer

- reviewing the treasury management policy and procedures and making recommendations to the responsible body.

Principles and Practices Concerning Segregation of Duties

The following duties must be undertaken by separate officers: -

Dealing	Negotiation and approval of deal. (Dealer 1) Production of transfer note. (Dealer 1)
Bank	Entry of transaction onto bank (Finance Officer)
Authorisation/Payment of Deal	Approval and payment. (Dealer 2)
Accounting Entry	Processing of accounting entry (Exchequer Team) Reconciliation of cash control account. (Exchequer Team)
Bank	Bank reconciliation (Exchequer Team)

Statement of the treasury management duties/responsibilities of each treasury post**The responsible officer**

The responsible officer is the person charged with professional responsibility for the treasury management function and in this Council is the Chief Finance Officer. This person will carry out the following duties: -

- 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.
- The responsible officer has delegated powers through this policy to take the most appropriate form of borrowing from the approved sources, and to make the most appropriate form of investments in approved instruments.
- The responsible officer may delegate his power to borrow and invest to members of his staff. The finance must conduct all dealing transactions, or staff authorised by the responsible officer to act as temporary cover for leave/sickness.
- The responsible officer will ensure that Treasury Management Policy is adhered to, and if not will bring the matter to the attention of elected members as soon as possible.
- Prior to entering into any capital financing, lending or investment transaction, it is the responsibility of the responsible officer to be satisfied, by reference to the Council's legal department and external advisors as appropriate, that the proposed transaction does not breach any statute, external regulation or the Council's Financial Regulations
- It is also the responsibility of the responsible officer to ensure that the Council complies with the requirements of The Non-Investment Products Code (formerly known as The London Code of Conduct) for principals and broking firms in the wholesale markets.

The Chief Accountant

The responsibilities of this post will be: -

- a) execution of transactions
- b) adherence to agreed policies and practices on a day-to-day basis
- c) maintaining relationships with counterparties and external service providers
- d) supervising treasury management staff
- e) monitoring performance on a day-to-day basis
- f) submitting management information reports to the responsible officer
- g) identifying and recommending opportunities for improved practices

The Head of the Paid Service – the Chief Executive

The responsibilities of this post will be: -

- a) Ensuring that the system is specified and implemented
- b) Ensuring that the responsible officer reports regularly on treasury policy, activity and performance.

The Monitoring Officer

The responsibilities of this post will be: -

- a) Ensuring compliance by the responsible officer with the treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices and that they comply with the law.
- b) Being satisfied that any proposal to vary treasury policy or practice complies with law or any code of practice.
- c) Giving advice to the responsible officer when advice is sought.

Internal Audit

The responsibilities of Internal Audit will be: -

- a) Reviewing compliance with approved policy and treasury management practices.
- b) Reviewing division of duties and operational practice.
- c) Assessing value for money from treasury activities.
- d) Undertaking probity audit of treasury function.

Absence Cover Arrangements

Four officers within the Finance Team have the authority to place deals, with a further three officers able to input trades onto the system ready for authorisation.

Dealing

The following posts are authorised to deal and/or input trades: -

- Head of Finance
- Chief Accountant
- 2 Senior Accountants
- 3 Accountants

6.6 TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will ensure that regular reports are prepared and considered on the implementation of its treasury managements policies; on the effects of decisions taken and transactions executed in pursuit of those policies; on the implementations 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.

As a minimum, members will receive:

- an annual report on the strategy and plan to be pursued in the coming year, to Full Council

- a mid-year review on the current performance of the treasury management function, to Audit & Scrutiny Committee
- an annual report on the performance of the treasury management function, to Audit & Scrutiny Committee, on the effects of the decisions taken and the transactions executed in the past year, and on any circumstances of non-compliance with the organisation's treasury management policy statement and TMPs.

6.7 TMP7 Budgeting, accounting and audit arrangements

The Chief Finance Officer will prepare, and Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will approve and, if necessary, from time to time will amend, an annual budget for treasury management, which will bring together all of the costs involved in running the treasury management functions, 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 *Best value and performance measurement*, and TMP4 *Approved instruments, methods and techniques*. The responsible officer 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 arrangement*.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will account 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.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will ensure that its auditors, and those charged with regulatory review, have access to all information and papers supporting the activities of the treasury management function as are necessary for the proper fulfilment of their roles, and that such information and papers demonstrate compliance with external and internal policies and approved practices.

6.8 TMP8 Cash and cash flow management

Cash flow projections are prepared annually and updated daily. The annual cash flow projections are prepared from the previous years' cash flow records, adjusted for known changes in levels of income and expenditure and also changes in payments and receipts dates. These details are supplemented on an ongoing basis by information received of new or revised amounts to be paid or received as and when they are known.

Unless statutory or regulatory requirements demand otherwise, all monies in the hands of this organisation will be under the control of the Chief Finance Officer, 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 responsible officer will ensure that these are adequate for the purposes of monitoring.

6.9 TMP9 Money Laundering

Epsom & Ewell Borough 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.

6.10 TMP10 Staff training and qualifications

The Council recognises that relevant individuals will need appropriate levels of training in treasury management due to its increasing complexity. There are two categories of relevant individuals: -

- a) Treasury management staff employed by the Council
- b) Members charged with governance of the treasury management function

All treasury management staff should receive appropriate training relevant to the requirements of their duties at the appropriate time.

Additionally, training may also be provided on the job and it will be the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer to ensure that all staff under his authority receive the level of training appropriate to their duties. This will also apply to those staff who from time to time cover for absences from the treasury management team.

Details of Approved Training Courses

Treasury management staff and members will go on courses provided by our treasury management consultants, CIPFA, money brokers etc.

Statement of Professional Practice (SOPP)

1. Where the Chief Financial Officer is a member of CIPFA, there is a professional need for the CFO to be seen to be committed to professional responsibilities through both personal compliance and by ensuring that relevant staff are appropriately trained.
2. Other staff involved in treasury management activities who are members of CIPFA must also comply with the SOPP.

Members charged with governance

Members charged with diligence also have a personal responsibility to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and training for their role.

6.11 TMP11 Use of external service providers

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council recognises the potential value of employing external providers of treasury management services, in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. When it employs such service providers, it will ensure it does so for reasons which will 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 and documented and subjected to regular review. And it will ensure, where feasible and necessary, that a spread of service providers is used, to avoid overreliance on one or a small number of companies.

6.12 TMP12 Corporate governance

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is committed to the principle of openness and transparency in its treasury management function and in all of its functions.

It has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and implemented key recommendations on developing Treasury Management Practices, formulating a Treasury Management Policy Statement and implementing the other principles of the Code.

The following documents are available for public inspection: -

Treasury Management Strategy

Annual Investment Strategy

Minimum Revenue provision policy statement

Annual Treasury Review Report

Treasury Management monitoring reports (e.g. half yearly)

Annual accounts and financial instruments disclosure notes

Annual budget

Capital Strategy

Minutes of Council / committee meetings

7 Approved Countries for Investments

This list is based on those countries which have sovereign ratings of AA- or higher at 02/12/2022, (we show the lowest rating from Fitch, Moody's and S&P) and also, (except - at the time of writing - for Hong Kong, Norway and Luxembourg), have banks operating in sterling markets which have credit ratings of green or above in the Link credit worthiness service.

Based on lowest available rating

AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

AA+

- Canada
- Finland
- U.S.A.

AA

- France

AA-

- Belgium
- **U.K.**

8 The Treasury Management Role of the Section 151 Officer

The S151 (responsible) officer is responsible for:

- 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.
- preparation of a capital strategy to include capital expenditure, capital financing, non-financial investments and treasury management, with a long term timeframe
- ensuring that the capital strategy is prudent, sustainable, affordable and prudent in the long term and provides value for money
- ensuring that due diligence has been carried out on all treasury and non-financial investments and is in accordance with the risk appetite of the authority
- ensure that the authority has appropriate legal powers to undertake expenditure on non-financial assets and their financing
- ensuring the proportionality of all investments so that the authority does not undertake a level of investing which exposes the authority to an excessive level of risk compared to its financial resources
- ensuring that an adequate governance process is in place for the approval, monitoring and ongoing risk management of all non-financial investments and long term liabilities
- provision to members of a schedule of all non-treasury investments including material investments in subsidiaries, joint ventures, loans and financial guarantees
- ensuring that members are adequately informed and understand the risk exposures taken on by an authority
- ensuring that the authority has adequate expertise, either in house or externally provided, to carry out the above
- creation of Treasury Management Practices which specifically deal with how non treasury investments will be carried out and managed.

9 Summary of Changes to Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24

A large proportion of the Treasury Management Strategy remains the same as last year but this section highlights any significant changes made on the previous year's Strategy.

The Prudential Indicators in Section 2 of the Strategy have been updated to reflect the latest figures approved by Council, including the addition of a new Liability Benchmark indicator required by CIPFA from 2023/24.

The Annual Investment Strategy has been updated to reference the Link creditworthiness service, which employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies – Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's – to be used by officers when assessing potential investments.

Section 4 has been updated to reflect the cessation of LIBOR and the associated 7 day LIBID, which had previously been used to benchmark the Council's treasury investment performance. The new recommended benchmark is the 7 day SONIA rate, which is the risk-free rate for sterling markets administered by the Bank of England.

SONIA is based on actual transactions and reflects the average of the interest rates that banks pay to borrow sterling overnight from other financial institutions and other institutional investors. The now-defunct LIBOR had been based on estimated rates.

Section 5 provides a brief economic update from our independent financial advisors, Link Group.

Section 7 provides a list of approved countries for investment. Based on the recommendation of our treasury management advisers, Hong Kong and Luxembourg have been removed from the list for 2023/24. Qatar and Abu Dhabi have also been removed based on the recommendation by Financial Policy Panel (31 January 2023).