



Dacorum Borough Council

Treasury Management Strategy Statement

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual
Investment Strategy

2013/14

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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 the 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 any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

CIPFA defines treasury management as: *“The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”*

1.2 The treasury management policy statement & Clauses to be formally adopted

Clauses to be formally adopted

1. This organisation will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management:

- a treasury management policy statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities
- suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the organisation will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities

The content of the policy statement and TMPs will follow the recommendations contained in Sections 6 and 7 of the Code, subject only to amendment where necessary to reflect the particular circumstances of this organisation. Such amendments will not result in the organisation materially deviating from the Code's key principles.

2. Full Council will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities, including, as a minimum, an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in its TMPs.

3. This organisation delegates responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Section 151 Officer, who will act in accordance with the organisation's policy statement and TMPs and, if he/she is a CIPFA member, CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

4. This organisation nominates Cabinet to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.

1.3 The treasury management policy statement

This organisation defines its treasury management activities as:

1. The management of the organisation'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. This organisation regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.
3. This organisation acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

1.4 Reporting requirements

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

Prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy (this report) - The first, and most important report 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 investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).

A mid year treasury management report – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether the treasury strategy is meeting the strategy or whether any policies require revision.

An annual treasury report – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Scrutiny

The above reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to the Council. This role is undertaken by Cabinet.

1.5 Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14

The strategy for 2013/14 covers two main areas:

Capital issues

- the capital plans and the prudential indicators;
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) strategy.

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
- policy on use of external service providers.

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

1.6 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. Training was undertaken by in February 2012 and further training will be arranged as required.

The training needs of treasury management officers are periodically reviewed

1.7 Treasury management consultants

The Council uses Sector 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 our external service providers.

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 2013/14 – 2015/16

The Council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the capital expenditure plans are reflected in 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 £m	2011/12 Actual (£m)	2012/13 Estimate (£m)	2013/14 Estimate (£m)	2014/15 Estimate (£m)	2015/16 Estimate (£m)
Non-HRA	3,755	11,175	15,072	17,277	13,412
HRA	362,405	20,684	23,659	22,366	20,546
Total	366,160	31,859	38,731	39,643	33,958
Financed by:					
Capital receipts	8,803	15,037	11,753	11,884	3,057
Capital grants	1,012	2,601	3,977	4,217	1,276
Capital reserves	9,234	13,491	9,429	9,768	10,162
Revenue	372	730	13,572	11,282	9,716
Net financing need for the year	346,739	0	0	2,492	9,747

Other long term liabilities. The above financing need excludes other long term liabilities, such as PFI and leasing arrangements which 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

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 underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure above, which has not immediately been paid for, 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 borrowing need in line with each assets life.

The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. PFI schemes, finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the Council's borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a borrowing facility and so the

Council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes. The Council currently has £188k of such schemes within the CFR.

The Council is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

£m	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate
Capital Financing Requirement					
CFR – non housing	(20,136)	(14,460)	(6,359)	2,492	12,239
CFR – housing	338,625	344,819	346,068	346,068	346,068
Total CFR	318,489	330,359	339,709	348,560	358,307
Movement in CFR	354,319	11,870	9,350	8,851	9,747

Movement in CFR represented by					
Net financing need for the year (above)	346,739	0	0	2,492	9,747
MRP/VRP and other financing movements	7,580	11,870	9,350	6,359	0
Movement in CFR	354,319	11,870	9,350	8,851	9,747

2.3 Minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy statement

Where the General Fund has a positive CFR, 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).

CLG 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 capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 or which in the future will be Supported Capital Expenditure, the MRP policy will be:

- **Based on CFR** – MRP will be based on the CFR;

This option provide for an approximate 4% reduction in the borrowing need (CFR) each year.

From 1 April 2008 for all unsupported borrowing (including PFI and 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 proposed regulations (this option must be applied for any expenditure capitalised under a Capitalisation Direction) (option 3); or
- **Depreciation method** – MRP will follow standard depreciation accounting procedures (option 4);

These options provide for a reduction in the borrowing need over approximately the asset's life, the appropriate method would be selected before borrowing or commencement of a project.

There is no requirement on the HRA to make a minimum revenue provision but there is a requirement for a charge for depreciation to be made (although there are transitional arrangements in place).

The Council participates in the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) using a cash backed option, for which mortgage lenders require a minimum of a five year deposit from the local authority to match the five year life of the indemnity. The deposit placed with the mortgage lender provides an integral part of the mortgage lending, and is treated as capital expenditure and a loan to a third party. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) will increase by the amount of the total indemnity. The deposit is due to be returned in full at maturity, with interest paid either annually. Once the deposit matures and funds are returned to the local authority, the returned funds are classed as a capital receipt, and the CFR will reduce accordingly. As this is a temporary arrangement and the funds will be returned in full, there is no need to set aside prudent provision to repay the debt liability in the interim period, so there is no MRP application.

Repayments included in annual PFI or finance leases are applied as MRP.

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 £m	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14E stimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate
Fund balances / reserves					
Capital receipts	28,246	16,380	7,030	671	670
Provisions	1,642	1,642	1,642	1,642	1,642
Other	23,924	28,000	26,000	21,000	18,000
Total core funds	53,812	46,022	34,672	23,313	20,312
Working capital*	8,147	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Under/over borrowing**					
Expected investments	61,959	54,022	42,672	31,313	28,312

*Working capital balances shown are estimated year end; these may be higher mid year

2.5 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:

2.6 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.

%	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate
Non-HRA	-0.73%	-0.90%	-0.41%	0.61%	0.67%
HRA	0.22%	22.7%	21.71%	20.93%	19.77%

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

2.7 Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on council tax.

This indicator identifies the revenue costs associated with proposed changes to the three year capital programme recommended in this budget report compared to the Council's existing approved commitments and current plans. The assumptions are based on the budget, but will invariably include some estimates, such as the level of Government support, which are not published over a three year period.

Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the band D council tax

£	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate
Council tax - band D	-£14.72	-£5.13	£1.96	£12.83	£11.22

2.8 Estimates of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on housing rent levels.

Similar to the council tax calculation, this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of proposed changes in the housing capital programme recommended in this budget report compared to the Council's existing commitments and current plans, expressed as a discrete impact on weekly rent levels. The reductions shown relate to the reduction in capital financing costs from the introduction of Self Financing between the February 2012 budget and this budget.

Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on housing rent levels

£	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate
Weekly housing rent levels	£8.60	-£1,451.56	-£626.41	-£768.38	-£510.65

This indicator shows the revenue impact on any newly proposed changes, although any discrete impact will be constrained by rent controls.

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 the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet this service activity. 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 Council's treasury portfolio position at 31 March 2012, with forward projections are summarised below. The table shows the actual external debt (the treasury management operations), against the underlying capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement - CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

£m	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate
External Debt					
Debt at 1 April	346,739	346,739	346,739	346,739	349,681
Expected change in Debt	0	0	0	2,942	9,747
Other long-term liabilities (OLTL)	188	188	188	188	188
Expected change in OLTL	0	0	0	0	0
Actual gross debt at 31 March	346,927	346,927	346,927	349,869	359,616
The Capital Financing Requirement	318,489	330,359	339,709	348,560	358,307
Under / (over) borrowing	(28,438)	(16,568)	(7,218)	1,309	1,309

Within the 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 2013/14 and the following two financial years. This ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.

The Council complies with this indicator from 2015/16. Before the introduction of self-financing, the Council had a negative CFR, meaning it had General Fund capital amounts available to Finance Capital spend. To protect these funds and make best use of the discounted rates offered for self-financing, the Council borrowed more than it required overall, rather than using General Fund receipts to finance the self-financing payment. This means the Council will show an over borrowing position until these General Fund receipts are utilised for capital expenditure.

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.

Operational boundary £m	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate
Debt	346,739	346,739	349,681	359,428
Other long term liabilities	188	188	188	188
Total	346,927	346,927	349,869	359,616

The authorised limit for external debt. A further key prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a 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 £m	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate
Debt	355,000	359,000	361,000	363,000
Other long term liabilities	250	250	250	250
Total	355,250	359,250	361,250	363,250

Separately, the Council is also limited to a maximum HRA CFR through the HRA self-financing regime. This limit is currently:

HRA Debt Limit £m	2011/12 Estimate	2012/13 Estimate	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate
Total	354,015	354,015	354,015	354,015

3.3 Prospects for interest rates

The Council has appointed Sector as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The following table gives the Sector central view.

Annual Average %	Bank Rate	PWLB Borrowing Rates (including certainty rate adjustment)		
		5 year	25 year	50 year
Dec 2012	0.50	1.50	3.70	3.90
March 2013	0.50	1.50	3.80	4.00
June 2013	0.50	1.50	3.80	4.00
Sept 2013	0.50	1.60	3.80	4.00
Dec 2013	0.50	1.60	3.80	4.00
March 2014	0.50	1.70	3.90	4.10
June 2014	0.50	1.70	3.90	4.10
Sept 2014	0.50	1.80	4.00	4.20
Dec 2014	0.50	2.00	4.10	4.30
March 2015	0.75	2.20	4.30	4.50
June 2015	1.00	2.30	4.40	4.60
Sept 2015	1.25	2.50	4.60	4.80
Dec 2015	1.50	2.70	4.80	5.00
March 2016	1.75	2.90	5.00	5.20

The economic recovery in the UK since 2008 has been the worst and slowest recovery in recent history, although the economy returned to positive growth in the third quarter of 2012. Growth prospects are weak and consumer spending, the usual driving force of recovery, is likely to remain under pressure due to consumers focusing on repayment of personal debt, inflation eroding disposable income, general malaise about the economy and employment fears.

The primary drivers of the UK economy are likely to remain external. 40% of UK exports go to the Eurozone so the difficulties in this area are likely to continue to hinder UK growth. The US, the main world economy, faces similar debt problems to the UK, but urgently needs to resolve the fiscal cliff now that the Presidential elections are out of the way. The resulting US fiscal tightening and continuing Eurozone problems will depress UK growth and is likely to see the UK deficit reduction plans slip.

This challenging and uncertain economic outlook has several key treasury management implications:

- The Eurozone sovereign debt difficulties provide a clear indication of high counterparty risk. This continues to suggest the use of higher quality counterparties for shorter time periods;
- Investment returns are likely to remain relatively low during 2013/14 and beyond;
- Borrowing interest rates continue to be attractive and may remain relatively low for some time. The timing of any borrowing will need to be monitored carefully;
- There will remain a cost of carry – any borrowing undertaken that results in an increase in investments will incur a revenue loss between borrowing costs and investment returns.

3.4 Borrowing strategy

(The Council is currently in an over-borrowed position as described in section 3.1. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been over funded with loan debt to secure preferential self-financing borrowing rates and to protect the General Fund capital balances.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2013/14 treasury operations. The Corporate Director (Finance and Governance) 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 long and short term rates (e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long term borrowings will be postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing will be considered.*
- *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long and short term rates than that currently forecast, perhaps arising from a greater than expected increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised with the likely action that fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates were still relatively cheap.*

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

Treasury management limits on activity

There are three debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these are to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. The indicators are:

- Upper limits on variable interest rate exposure. This identifies a maximum limit for variable interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments
- Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure. This is similar to the previous indicator and covers a maximum limit on fixed interest rates;
- 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:

£m	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Interest rate exposures			
	Upper	Upper	Upper
Limits on fixed interest rates based on net debt	100%	100%	100%
Limits on fixed interest rates:			
• <i>Debt only</i>	100%	100%	100%
• <i>Investments only</i>	100%	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rates based on net debt	1%	2%	2%
Limits on variable interest rates			
• <i>Debt only</i>	5%	5%	5%
• <i>Investments only</i>	40%	40%	40%
Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2013/14			
		Lower	Upper
Under 12 months		0%	1%
12 months to 2 years		0%	2%
2 years to 5 years		0%	3%
5 years to 10 years		2%	6%
10 years and above		5%	98%
Maturity structure of variable interest rate borrowing 2013/14			
		Lower	Upper
Under 12 months		0%	1%
12 months to 2 years		0%	2%
2 years to 5 years		0%	2%
5 years to 10 years		0%	0%
10 years and above		0%	0%

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.

Borrowing in advance will be made within the constraints that:

- Would not look to borrow more than 60 months in advance of need.

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

As short term borrowing rates will be considerably cheaper than longer term fixed interest rates, there may be potential opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. However, these savings will need to be considered in the light of the current treasury position and the size of the cost of debt repayment (premiums incurred).

The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include:

- the generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings;
- helping to fulfil the treasury strategy;
- enhance the balance of the portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

Consideration will also be given to identify if there is any residual potential for making savings by running down investment balances to repay debt prematurely as short term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on current debt.

All rescheduling will be reported to the Cabinet , at the earliest meeting following its action

4 ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Investment policy

The Council's investment policy has regard to the CLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance") and the 2011 revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes ("the CIPFA TM Code"). The Council's investment priorities will be security first, liquidity second and then return.

In accordance with guidance from the CLG and CIPFA, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Council has below clearly stipulated the minimum acceptable credit quality of counterparties for inclusion on the lending list. The creditworthiness methodology used to create the counterparty list fully accounts for the ratings, watches and outlooks published by all three ratings agencies with a full understanding of what these reflect in the eyes of each agency. Using the Sector ratings service, potential counterparty ratings are monitored on a real time basis, with knowledge of any changes notified electronically as the agencies notify modifications.

The Council's officers recognise that ratings should not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution and that 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 this end the Council will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as "credit default swaps" (CDS) and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings. This is fully integrated into the credit methodology provided by the Sector in producing its colour codings which show the varying degrees of suggested creditworthiness.

Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.

The aim of the strategy is to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which will also enable diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk.

The intention of the strategy is to provide security of investment and minimisation of risk.

Investment instruments identified for use in the financial year are listed in appendix 5.3 under the 'specified' and 'non-specified' investments categories.

The accounting treatment may differ from the underlying cash transactions arising from investment decisions made by this Council. To ensure that the Council is protected from any adverse revenue impact, which may arise from these differences, we will review the accounting implications of new transactions before they are undertaken.

4.2 Creditworthiness policy

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

- credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies;
- CDS spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

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

- Yellow 5 years *
- Purple 2 years
- Blue 1 year (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)
- Orange 1 year
- Red 6 months
- Green 3 months
- No colour not to be used

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

Typically the minimum credit ratings criteria the Council use will be a short term rating (Fitch or equivalents) of short term rating F1, long term rating A-, viability rating of A-, and a support rating of 1. 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 weekly. The Council is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of the Sector creditworthiness service.

- if a downgrade results in the counterparty / investment scheme no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.
- in addition to the use of credit ratings the Council will be advised of information in movements in credit default swap spreads against the iTraxx benchmark and other market data on a weekly basis. Extreme market movements may result in downgrade of an institution or removal from the Council's lending list.

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

The Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) – The Council is currently participating in the cash backed mortgage schemes, which require the Council to place a matching five year deposit to the life of the indemnity. This investment is an integral part of the policy initiative and is outside the criteria above.

4.3 Country limits

As the Council seeks to safeguard its capital resources in the uncertain economic climate, it has implemented an additional measure over and above those recommended by Sector, that investments are not placed with overseas banks or financial institutions.

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).

Investment returns expectations. Bank Rate is forecast to remain unchanged at 0.5% before starting to rise from quarter 4 of 2014. Bank Rate forecasts for financial year ends (March) are:

- 2012/13 0.50%
- 2013/14 0.50%
- 2014/15 0.75%
- 2015/16 1.75%

There are downside risks to these forecasts (i.e. start of increases in Bank Rate is delayed even further) if economic growth remains weaker for longer than expected. However, should the pace of growth pick up more sharply than expected there could be upside risk, particularly if Bank of England inflation forecasts for two years ahead exceed the Bank of England's 2% target rate.

Investment treasury indicator and limit - total principal funds invested for greater than 364 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 treasury indicator and limit: -

Maximum principal sums invested > 364 days			
£m	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Principal sums invested > 364 days	20% of portfolio	20% of portfolio	20% of portfolio

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 (overnight to three months) in order to benefit from the compounding of interest.

4.5 Investment risk benchmarking

These benchmarks are simple guides to maximum risk, so they may be breached from time to time, depending on movements in interest rates and counterparty criteria. The purpose of the benchmark is that officers will monitor the current and trend position and amend the operational strategy to manage risk as conditions change. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported, with supporting reasons in the mid-year or Annual Report. Security - The Council's maximum security risk benchmark for the current portfolio, when compared to these historic default tables, is:

- **0.06% historic risk of default when compared to the whole portfolio.**

Note: This benchmark is an average risk of default measure, and would not constitute an expectation of loss against a particular investment.

Liquidity – in respect of this area the Council seeks to maintain:

- Bank overdraft - £0.5m
- Liquid short term deposits of at least £5m available with a week's notice.
- Weighted average life benchmark is expected to be 60 days, with a maximum of 2 years.

Yield - local measures of yield benchmark is:

- Investments – internal returns above the 7 day LIBID rate

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 Report.

4.7 External fund managers

The Council does not currently use fund managers. If deemed appropriate to use fund Managers in future, the decision will be passed through Cabinet for recommendation to Full Council.

5 Appendices

1. Interest rate forecasts
 2. Economic background
 3. Treasury management practice – credit and counterparty risk management
 4. Treasury management scheme of delegation
 5. The treasury management role of the section 151 officer
-

5.1 APPENDIX: Interest Rate Forecasts 2013 - 2016 - this is now in a separate downloadable file

Sector's Interest Rate View															
	Now	Dec-12	Mar-13	Jun-13	Sep-13	Dec-13	Mar-14	Jun-14	Sep-14	Dec-14	Mar-15	Jun-15	Sep-15	Dec-15	Mar-16
Sector's Bank Rate View	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	1.00%	1.25%	1.50%	1.75%
3 Month LIBID	0.40%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.60%	0.60%	0.70%	0.80%	1.10%	1.40%	1.70%	1.90%
6 Month LIBID	0.56%	0.70%	0.70%	0.70%	0.70%	0.70%	0.70%	0.80%	0.90%	1.00%	1.10%	1.30%	1.60%	1.90%	2.20%
12 Month LIBID	0.92%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.10%	1.20%	1.30%	1.30%	1.50%	1.80%	2.10%	2.40%
5yrPW IB Rate	1.66%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%	1.60%	1.60%	1.70%	1.70%	1.80%	2.00%	2.20%	2.30%	2.50%	2.70%	2.90%
10yrPW IB Rate	2.64%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	3.00%	3.20%	3.30%	3.50%	3.70%	3.90%
25yrPW IB Rate	3.88%	3.70%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.90%	3.90%	4.00%	4.10%	4.30%	4.40%	4.60%	4.80%	5.00%
50yrPW IB Rate	4.04%	3.90%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.10%	4.10%	4.20%	4.30%	4.50%	4.60%	4.80%	5.00%	5.20%
Bank Rate															
Sector's View	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	1.00%	1.25%	1.50%	1.75%
UBS	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Economics	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	-	-	-	-	-
5yrPW IB Rate															
Sector's View	1.66%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%	1.60%	1.60%	1.70%	1.70%	1.80%	2.00%	2.20%	2.30%	2.50%	2.70%	2.90%
UBS	1.66%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Economics	1.66%	1.30%	1.30%	1.30%	1.30%	1.30%	1.30%	1.30%	1.50%	1.60%	-	-	-	-	-
10yrPW IB Rate															
Sector's View	2.64%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	3.00%	3.20%	3.30%	3.50%	3.70%	3.90%
UBS	2.64%	2.80%	3.00%	3.10%	3.20%	3.40%	3.50%	3.60%	3.70%	3.80%	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Economics	2.64%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	-	-	-	-	-
25yrPW IB Rate															
Sector's View	3.88%	3.70%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.90%	3.90%	4.00%	4.10%	4.30%	4.40%	4.60%	4.80%	5.00%
UBS	3.88%	4.00%	4.20%	4.30%	4.40%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Economics	3.88%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	-	-	-	-	-
50yrPW IB Rate															
Sector's View	4.04%	3.90%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.10%	4.10%	4.20%	4.30%	4.50%	4.60%	4.80%	5.00%	5.20%
UBS	4.04%	4.10%	4.30%	4.40%	4.50%	4.60%	4.60%	4.60%	4.60%	4.60%	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Economics	4.04%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	-	-	-	-	-

5.2 APPENDIX: Economic Background

Global economy –

The Eurozone debt crisis has continued to cast a shadow over the world economy and has depressed growth in most countries. This has impacted the UK economy which is unlikely to grow significantly in 2012. Quarter 2 of 2012 was the third quarter of contraction in the economy; this recession is now the worst and slowest recovery of any of the five recessions since 1930.

It has abated somewhat following the European Central Banks pledge to buy unlimited amounts of bonds of countries which ask for a bailout. The immediate target for this statement is Spain which continues to prevaricate on making such a request and so surrendering its national sovereignty to IMF supervision. However, the situation in Greece is heading towards a crunch point as it fails yet again to live up to its commitments to reduce its annual government deficits in line with the agreement under the second bailout. Many commentators view a Greek exit from the Euro as inevitable and question whether the current coalition government would disintegrate if even more severe austerity measures were to be attempted.

The US economy has only been able to manage disappointingly weak growth in 2012 despite huge efforts by the Federal Reserve to stimulate the economy by liberal amounts of quantitative easing (QE) combined with a commitment to a continuation of low interest rates into 2015.

UK economy –

The Government's austerity measures, aimed at getting the public sector deficit into order over the next four years, now look as if they will fail to achieve their objectives in the original planned timeframe. Achieving this target is dependent on the UK economy growing at a reasonable pace, but the recession in the Eurozone, our biggest trading partner, has depressed growth whilst tax receipts have not kept pace with additional welfare benefit payments. It will be important for the Government to retain investor confidence in UK gilts so there is little room for it to change course other than to move back the timeframe.

Currently, the UK is enjoying a major financial benefit from some of the lowest sovereign borrowing costs in the world as the UK is seen as a safe haven from Eurozone debt. There is, though, little evidence that consumer confidence levels are recovering nor that the manufacturing sector is picking up. On the positive side, growth in the services sector has rebounded in Q3 and banks have made huge progress since 2008 in shrinking their balance sheets to more manageable levels and also in reducing their dependency on wholesale funding. However, availability of credit remains tight in the economy and the Funding for Lending scheme, which started in August 2012, has not yet had the time to make a significant impact. Finally, the housing market remains tepid and the outlook is for house prices to be little changed for a prolonged period.

Inflation and Bank Rate - Inflation has fallen sharply during 2012 from a peak of 5.2% in September 2011 to 2.2% in September 2012. Inflation is expected to fall further to the 2% target level within the two year horizon.

AAA rating - The UK continues to enjoy an AAA sovereign rating. However, the credit rating agencies will be carefully monitoring the rate of growth in the economy as a disappointing performance in that area could lead to a major derailment of the plans to contain the growth in the total amount of Government debt over the next few years.

Sector's forward view

Economic forecasting remains difficult with so many external influences weighing on the UK. There does, however, appear to be consensus among analysts that the economy remains relatively fragile and whilst there is still a broad range of views as to potential performance, expectations have all been downgraded during 2012.

While the focus of so many consumers, corporates and banks is on reducing their borrowings, rather than spending, a return to robust growth in western economies will continue to be slow.

Given the weak outlook for economic growth, Sector sees the prospects for any changes in Bank Rate before 2015 as very limited. There is potential for the start of Bank Rate increases to be even further delayed if growth disappoints.

Sector believes that the longer run trend is for gilt yields, and PWLB rates to rise due to the high volume of gilt issuance in the UK, and the high volume of debt issuance in other major western countries.

5.3 APPENDIX: Treasury Management Practice (TMP1) – Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS: All such investments will be sterling denominated, with **maturities up to maximum of 1 year**, meeting the minimum 'high' quality criteria where applicable.

NON-SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS: These are any investments which do not meet the specified investment criteria. A maximum of 30%** will be held in aggregate in non-specified investment

A variety of investment instruments will be used, subject to the credit quality of the institution, and depending on the type of investment made it will fall into one of the above categories.

The criteria, time limits and monetary limits applying to institutions or investment vehicles are as follows.

SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS:

(All such investments will be sterling denominated, with **maturities up to maximum of 1 year**, meeting the minimum 'high' rating criteria where applicable)

	Minimum 'High' Credit Criteria and Maturity Period	Use
Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility	--	In-house
Term deposits – UK Government (including other Local Authorities)	--	In-house
Term deposits – banks and building societies - Banks carrying a credit rating and the Cooperatiive Bank	See 4.2	In-house
UK Government Gilts	UK sovereign rating	In-house buy and hold and Fund Managers
Money Market Funds	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers
Cash Fund Management	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers
Government Liquidity Funds	See 4.2	In –house and Fund Managers
Local Authority Mortgage Scheme. Under this scheme the Council was required to place funds of £2m. £1 of which with Lloyds TSB and £1M Leeds Building Society for a period of 5 years. This is classified as being a service investment, rather than a treasury management investment, and is therefore outside of the specified / non specified categories.		

Term deposits with nationalised banks and banks and building societies

	* Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	*** Max % of total investments	Max. maturity period
UK part nationalised banks	See Sectors Creditworthy list	In-house	12.5M per institution	12 months

NON-SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS: A maximum of 30%** will be held in aggregate in non-specified investment

	* Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	** Max % of total investments	Max. maturity period
Term Deposits – UK Government	--	In-house	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Term deposits – other local authorities	--	In-house	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Term deposits – UK banks and building societies	See 4.2	In-house	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Certificates of deposit issued by banks and building societies covered by UK Government (explicit) guarantee	UK sovereign rating	In-house	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Certificates of deposit issued by banks and building societies covered by UK Government (explicit) guarantee	UK sovereign rating	Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Certificates of deposit issued by banks and building societies	See 4.2	In-house	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Fixed term deposits with variable rate and variable maturities: -Callable deposits -Callable range trade accruals	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio Lower of £10M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Short term funds	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Cash Fund Management	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Gilt Funds and Bond Funds	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
Government Liquidity Funds	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	Up to 5 years
UK Government Gilts	UK sovereign rating	In-house and Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	10 years including 10 year benchmark gilt
Bonds issued by multilateral development banks	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	10 years including 10 year benchmark gilt
Bonds Issued by a financial institution guaranteed by the UK Government	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	Lower of £20M or 30% of portfolio	10 years including 10 year benchmark gilt

5.4 APPENDIX: Treasury management scheme of delegation

(i) Full Council

- receiving and reviewing reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities;
- approval of annual strategy.
- approval of/amendments to the organisation's adopted clauses, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices;
- budget consideration and approval;
- approval of the division of responsibilities;
- receiving and reviewing regular monitoring reports and acting on recommendations;
- approving the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment if required by the Procurement Standing Orders.

(iii) Cabinet

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

5.5 APPENDIX: The treasury management role of the section 151 officer

The S151 (responsible) officer

- 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.