



Report To: Corporate Governance Committee
Lead Officer: Executive Director (Corporate Services)

25 September 2015

Treasury Management Annual Report

Purpose

1. To report on the performance of the treasury management function for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.
2. This is not a key decision but reporting to the Corporate Governance Committee is a requirement of the Council's Investment and Borrowing Strategy.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Corporate Governance Committee note the creditable performance of the treasury management function.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The performance of the treasury management function should be reviewed to ensure reasonable returns are achieved commensurate with risk. This is achieved by being a member of a benchmarking group and the Council compares favourably with the members of that group.

Background

5. The Borrowing and Investment Strategy approved by Council on 26 February 2015 requires an annual report to be presented to Corporate Governance Committee after the end of the financial year.

Considerations

6. Investments of £43.49 million were held by the Council at 31 March 2015, and included £42.57 million in fixed rate investments. Investments included £4.07 million to South Cambs Limited due to mature in February 2016, at which time a loan to the Company will be provided for £7.0 million on a secured equity basis as agreed by Council (28 November 2013)

	31 March 2014 £'000	31 March 2013 £'000
Local Authorities	2,000	0
Ermine Street Housing	4,072	0
Clearing Banks	22,500	15,000
Banks, other	2,500	2,500
Money Market Funds	870	1,380
Building Societies with assets:		
greater than £10,000 million	11,500	9,500
between £1,500 million and £5,000 million	0	1,000
Equity Shares	50	0
Government Securities	0	0
	43,492	29,380

In July 2014, Cabinet agreed to the Council contributing an initial subscription to the Local Government Association's Municipal Bond Agency (Local Capital Finance Company), the first stage payment of £50,000 has been paid, representing a price of £1 per share.

7. Investments achieved an in-year return of £0.429 million, £0.040 million more than estimated due in part to the higher rate of interest charged on investments with South Cambs Limited.
8. The Council is a member of a benchmarking club on treasury management, which is organised by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The results of this benchmarking exercise for 2014-15 were issued in July and the key indicators are shown below.

	Money Market Funds	Investments up to 1 month	Investments for 1 to 3 months	Investments for 3 months to 1 year	Investments between 1 year and 5 years	Combined Investments
Average	0.43%	0.41%	0.46%	0.72%	1.52%	0.75%
Upper Quartile	0.45%	0.41%	0.48%	0.80%	1.41%	0.82%
SCDC	0.38%	0.41%	0.45%	0.80%	3.12%	0.87%
Lower Quartile	0.41%	0.36%	0.43%	0.60%	0.97%	0.59%

9. The results for 2014-15 show that South Cambridgeshire achieved a return of 0.87% on combined investments (less than and more than 365 days) compared to 0.78% for its comparator group and 0.75% for the overall group. South Cambridgeshire was fourth in the comparator group of 13 other organisations and eleventh highest in the overall group of 48 other organisations.
10. Money market funds fell into the lower quartile performance band during the financial period, this was addressed by the approval of an additional counterparty by the

Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder at the meeting held 21 October 2014, the change is expected to produce an improvement in returns during 2015-16. Sums held in money market funds are essentially overnight deposits to facilitate short term cash flow requirements.

11. The performance target is a greater return than average over a five-year rolling period. For 2014/15, a better than average return was achieved compared to the comparator group and to the overall group. Over the five-year period the target has been met.
12. In March 2012, following the introduction of the Housing Revenue Account Self Financing regime, the Council acquired debt of £205 million. The full sum was borrowed from the Public Works Loans Board at an average fixed rate of 3.5% as 41 individual loans with maturity dates between 2037 and 2057.
13. The Council's Borrowing and Investment Strategy states that the effective management and control of risk are the prime objectives of its treasury management activities. The specific risks in treasury management are:
 - (a) **credit and counterparty risk**
The risk of failure by a counterparty to meet its contractual obligations to pay interest and repay principal: the Council's range of counterparties is restricted to UK banks, financial institutions approved by the Council and large building societies (all of which must have a satisfactory credit rating) and to public sector bodies.
 - (b) **liquidity risk**
The risk that cash will not be available when it is needed: the Council has cash flow forecasts which are updated weekly, an overdraft facility with its bank and, as a last resort, can borrow on the open market or from the Public Works Loan Board.
 - (c) **interest rate risk**
The risk of loss through adverse movements in interest rates: the Council mainly invests in fixed interest rate deposits so it accepts the risk of an opportunity cost that money is invested at fixed rates and market rates subsequently rise.
 - (d) **exchange rate risk**
The risk of loss through adverse movements in exchange rates: the Council's Investment strategy restricts all treasury management transactions to £ sterling.
 - (e) **refinancing risk**
The risk that maturing investments cannot be reinvested at favourable rates: the Council's investments for less than a year are made to match liabilities and for more than one year have a spread of maturity dates.
 - (f) **legal and regulatory risk**
The risk of loss due to the Council or its counterparties failing to act in accordance with their legal powers and regulatory requirements: the Council only deals in simple investments and only deals with well recognised and perceived to be reliable counterparties.

(g) **fraud, error and corruption**

The risk of loss through fraud, error and corruption; the Council has internal controls including segregation of duties, an internal audit function to evaluate those internal controls and fidelity guarantee insurance.

(h) **market risk**

The risk of adverse fluctuations in the value of investments: the Council only invests in non-negotiable investments which are held to maturity and realised at face value.

Prudential Indicators

14. The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities came into effect from 1 April 2004, the objective being to provide a framework for capital programmes to ensure that:

- Capital expenditure plans are affordable;
- All external borrowing and other long term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels; and
- Treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with professional good practice.

The indicators are primarily to show whether a local authority is entering into a long term commitment which it may not be able to afford in the future. The Council's main long term commitment is the £205 million debt resulting from the Government's Housing Revenue Account Self Financing Reforms and the affordability and sustainability of this debt are addressed in the Housing Revenue Account business plan.

15. A key prudential indicator is the capital financing requirement, which is capital expenditure which has not been fully financed from a local authority's own resources in the year but has been covered by raising external or internal debt, the position at 31 March 2015 is shown below:

	31/03/2015 Estimate £ million	31/03/2015 Actual £ million	31/03/2016 Estimate £ million
General Fund	11.737	4.567	12.023
Housing Revenue Account	205.123	204.429	204.429
Total	216.860	208.996	216.452

The General Fund capital financing requirement fluctuates due to financing internally refuse and street cleaning vehicles, part of the purchase of wheeled bins and cash overdrawn on equity share repurchases, but this financing is then partly repaid over a period.

16. The actual financing of General Fund expenditure in 2014-15 is lower than the estimate due to external borrowing for on-lend to South Cambs Limited being

deferred to 2015-16, initial funding requirements for the company in 2014-15 being covered from available Council cash balances.

17. One of the indicators of prudence is that net debt is not in excess of the capital financing requirement; this position is confirmed in the table below. External debt relates to the Housing Revenue Account Self Financing debt of £205 million, the Council set an external debt authorised limit for 2014/15 of £218.0 million.

	2014 -15 Estimate £ million	2014-15 Actual £ million	2015-16 Estimate £ million
Borrowing	216.9	208.9	216.5
Investments	-27	-43	-40
Net debt	189.9	165.9	176.5

Options

18. Options for the investment of surplus funds will be limited in the future as it may be more beneficial to use such funds to reduce marginally and temporarily the £205 million debt arising from Housing Revenue Account Reform. Other options for any surplus funds include:
- (a) Out-sourcing; however, external managers usually require a minimum of £10 million for a period of at least three years and, with the reduction in capital receipts and other reserves, these requirements cannot be met;
 - (b) The Investment Strategy restricts the range of counterparties and weekly monitoring of credit ratings and bank financial strength ratings restricts this range even further. The range of counterparties could be extended but any additions would need to be subject to an assessment of risk as the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk is the Council's prime criteria for measuring the effectiveness of treasury management; and
 - (c) External treasury management consultants are used by many local authorities but there is no budget for this.

Implications

19. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

20. The in-house treasury management function achieved an average rate of 0.87% on combined investments compared to an overall group average of 0.75%. The differential of 0.12% on the average amount invested of £49.4 million during the year amounts to higher interest of around £59,000.
21. The cost of the in-house investment function, excluding cash flow forecasting and planning and control, is estimated at £110 per million (£630 in 2013/14) invested

compared to an overall group average per million invested of £410 (£880 in 2013/14) for in-house costs and external fund managers. Accurate comparisons of costs on a true like for like basis can be complex and time-consuming and there may be questions raised over the validity of benchmarking data on costs.

22. The affordability of capital expenditure at 31 March 2015 has been affirmed by the prudential indicator for net debt which does not exceed the capital financing requirement.

Risk Management

23. As noted in this report.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

24. The Youth Council were not consulted.

Effect on Strategic Aims

25. This report has no direct implications for any of the Strategic Aims but any increase in interest received (commensurate with risk) may reduce the need for cuts in individual services and assist in the achievement of actions to support those aims.

Conclusion

26. The in-house treasury management has achieved a good performance in 2014/15 at a minimal cost.

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: - (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council; (b) on the Council's website; and (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

CIPFA Treasury Management Benchmarking Club 2014 reports (confidential)

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