

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet Council	Date:	11 March 2020 26 March 2020
Subject:	Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
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Appendices:	1. Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To formally recommend that Council approves the attached Treasury Management Strategy, the prudential indicators and note the Treasury activities.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that the Treasury Management Strategy be approved.
- 2.2 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that:
- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy at Appendix 1 be approved;
 - (2) the authorised borrowing limit be approved at:-
 - a) 2020/21 £150m
 - b) 2021/22 £150m
 - c) 2022/23 £150m
 - (3) the prudential indicators set out in section two of the strategy be approved.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council's Treasury position changed in 2019-20 as the Property Investment Board secured its first investments. In purchasing the Eastgate Centre and St Oswald's retail park the Council increased its borrowing requirements, but receives rental income which more than matches the charge on the debt. These long term investments will significantly change the

treasury position of the Council over the life of the investments, creating investable cashflow streams.

- 3.2 The Council has continued to support partners to further its strategic objectives. In 2019-20, the Council provided long term loans to Gloucester Wildlife Trust (GWT) and Cheltenham YMCA, these loans provide an income stream to the Council while in the case of the YMCA provide nomination rights to assist the Council housing objectives. The loan to GWT supports grant funding to realise the long term objective of a new visitor centre at Robinswood Hill. The Council will continue to look at these social investments as a delivery mechanism to support its wider strategic objectives.
- 3.3 The 2020/21 treasury management strategy recommends to continue operating within an under-borrowing position. This position reflects that the Council uses internal resources, such as reserves, to fund the borrowing need rather than invest those funds for a return. This strategy is sensible, at this point in time, for two reasons. Firstly, the lost interest on those funds is significantly less than the costs of borrowing money for the capital programme. In addition, using the resources to reduce debt the Council will reduce exposure to investment counterparty risk. If an opportunity arises for commercial investment the under borrowing position will allow the Council the headroom to borrow funds for a purchase up to the under borrowing level.
- 3.4 There will be cash flow balances that will be invested for short periods within the year. Section 4 of the strategy outlines the Annual Investment Strategy; in particular it outlines the creditworthiness policy through the use of credit ratings.
- 3.5 The borrowing strategy is to utilise investments to reduce short term borrowing. Once investments have been applied it is anticipated that the majority of new debt will be short term as the current market rates are attractive. Where the capital programme, or investment strategy, requires the creation of long-term investment need then some long term borrowing is likely to be undertaken to take advantage of low rates and mitigate the risk presented by having all borrowing on short-term deals.
- 3.6 The strategy allows flexibility for either debt rescheduling or new long term fixed rate borrowing while allowing the Council to benefit from lower interest rates on temporary borrowing at the current time.
- 3.7 The strategy also includes the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy statement. This policy continues with the practice approved last year. MRP is the revenue charge to reduce debt by placing a charge on the General Fund each year. The preferred option is to provide for the borrowing need created over the approximate life of the asset purchased. This is achieved with an annuity calculation which provides a consistent overall annual borrowing charge with the level of principal (MRP) increasing each year, much like a repayment mortgage.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 The following two options have been considered:

As a result of the PWLB adding 100bps to their rates in October 2019, the market has become more attractive to alternative long term lenders. This market is in its infancy and options will continue to develop as an alternative to the PWLB. The Council will continue to actively investigate such opportunities as part of any future long term investment appraisals as well as current options in the market for long term funding, including the municipal bonds agency, private bonds and other sources of funding deemed appropriate for the Council to utilise.

There remains the option to replace existing short term borrowing with longer term options, this is not as attractive due to the availability of short term funding which remains significantly below rates available for longer term funds.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 As outlined in the legal implications the recommendations require Council approval. The Treasury and Investment Strategies recommended provide the best platform for financing the long-term capital programme and managing daily cash flow whilst protecting Council funds.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

6.1 The Treasury Management Strategy provides a logical basis to fund the Council's capital financing requirement and long-term Capital Programme. The Council will continue to monitor the strategy and is prepared to adapt this strategy if there is changes within the markets.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The expenditure and income arising from treasury management activities are included within the Council Money Plan.

8.0 Social Value Considerations

8.1 This report notes the Treasury Strategy of the Council. There are no anticipated Social Value implications from this report.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 The Council is required to have a Treasury Management Strategy to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, MHCLG Minimum Revenue Provision Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and MHCLG Investment Guidance.

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 There is a risk that short term and long term interest rates could increase and this will be monitored both in-house and by the Council Treasury Management Advisor, Link Asset Services. In this event the risk will be managed through the opportunities either to reschedule debt or new long term fixed rate borrowing in place of short term borrowing.
- 10.2 The risk of deposits not being returned by the counterparty is minimised by only investing short term cash flow monies with counterparties on the approved lending list. All counterparties on this list meet minimum credit rating criteria, ensuring the risk is kept extremely low although not eliminated.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 11.1 A PIA screening assessment has been undertaken and the impact is neutral. A full PIA is not required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 12.1 None

Sustainability

- 12.2 None

Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 None

Background Documents: Local Government Act 2003
CIPFA Treasury Management Code
CIPFA Prudential Code
MHCLG MRP Guidance