

**Public
Key Decision - No**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title: Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 17th June 2021

Executive Portfolio: Strategic Finance: Councillor J A Gray

Report by: Chief Finance Officer

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

Best practice and prescribed treasury management guidance requires Members to be kept up to date in respect of treasury management activity for the first half of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

The Council's 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy was approved by the Council on the 26th February 2020 and this report sets out the Treasury Performance for period between 1st October 2020 and 31st March 2021.

The main purpose of Treasury Management is to.

- Ensure the Council has sufficient cash to meet its day to day obligations.
- Borrow when necessary to fund capital expenditure, including borrowing in anticipation of need when rates are low.
- Invest surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest.

The key market Treasury Management issues through the second half of 2020/21 influencing the Council's decision-making were.

- After contracting sharply in Q2 (Apr-Jun) 2020 by 19.8% q/q, growth in Q3 and Q4 bounced back by 15.5% and 1.3% respectively. The easing of some lockdown measures in the last quarter of the calendar year enabled construction output to continue, albeit at a much slower pace than the 41.7% rise in the prior quarter. When released, figures for Q1

(Jan-Mar) 2021 are expected to show a decline given the national lockdown.

- The Bank of England Bank Rate at 0.01%.
- Market rates as a whole are very low, due to the Bank Rate remaining historically low, reducing the Council's ability to earn a return on investments without increasing the risk of the investments. The Council's average investing rate was 0.25% (average interest rates obtained from Bank Deposits and Money Market Funds).

The Council's responses to the key issues were.

- When the Council has surplus funds, these will primarily be invested on a short-term basis, in bank deposit accounts and money market funds.
- Where possible to take a higher return without sacrificing liquidity.
- When borrowing the Council has used the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), which offers low fixed rate borrowing, based on gilt yields over a long period.
- Where economic conditions are forecast to deteriorate it is vital to monitor financial institutions credit rating, and credit default swap rates (the cost to insure lending). This information is provided by the Council's treasury adviser - Arlingclose.

The Council's Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS)

The Commercial Investment Strategy commenced in 2015/16. Indicators relating to the investments are shown in **Appendix A section 3.4**.

These investments generated £1.3m of investment income for the Council in 2020/21 after taking account of direct costs. The breakdown of the property's portfolio is shown in **Table 6** and the proportion of the investment income in relation to gross service expenditure, in **Table 7** of **Appendix A**.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is recommended to

- Note the treasury management performance for the second 6 months of 2020/21 and to recommend the report to Council for consideration.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Council's treasury management activity for the second 6 months of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It is regarded as best practice and prescribed treasury management practice, that Members are kept up to date with treasury management activity.
- 2.2 The Council approved the 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy at its meeting on 26th February 2020.
- 2.3 All treasury management activity undertaken during the second half of 2020/21 complied with the CIPFA Code of Practice and relevant legislative provisions.
- 2.4 The investment strategy is to invest any surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest. The Council's borrowing strategy permits borrowing for cash flow purposes and funding current and future capital expenditure over whatever periods are in the Council's best interests.

3. ANALYSIS

Economic Review

- 3.1 An economic review of the year has been provided by our Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose and is attached with an analysis of the local context implications in **Appendix A section 2.0**.

Performance of Council Funds

- 3.2 The treasury management transactions undertaken during the second 6 months of 2020/21 financial year and the details of the investments and loans held as at 31st March 2021 are shown in detail in **Appendix A section 3.0 to 3.2**.

Risk Management

- 3.3 The Council's primary objectives for the management of its investment are to give priority to the security and liquidity (how quickly cash can be accessed) of its funds before seeking the best rate of return. For more details see **Appendix A section 3.3**.

Non-Treasury Investments

- 3.5 The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. The full details of these investments can be found on **Section 3.4 of Appendix A**.

Compliance

- 4.0 Compliance with specific investment and debt limits are indicated in **table 8 and 9 of Appendix A**.

Treasury Management Indicators

- 5.0 The Council measures and manages its exposure to treasury management risks using indicators which are details in the **Appendix A section 5.0**.

6.0 COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 6.1 The Panel discussed the Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21 at its meeting on 2nd June 2021.
- 6.2 The Panel welcomed the report, however, concern was expressed over the depreciation of the Council's commercial estate. Councillors were reassured that this followed the national trend as a result of the global pandemic. Further, it was reassured that this will be monitored and assessed in the long term.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A

- Economic review (source: Arlingclose)
- Borrowing and Investment as at 31st March 2021
- Risk Management
- Non-treasury Investments
- Treasury Management Indicators
- Outlook for the remainder of 2021

Appendix B


- Capital Prudential Indicators

Appendix C

- Glossary

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