



STAFFORDSHIRE
moorlands
DISTRICT COUNCIL
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

Treasury Management Update 31st May 2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Treasury Management is defined as “The management of the 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 Council has adopted CIPFA’s revised Code of Practice for Treasury Management which recommends that Members should be updated on Treasury Management activities at least twice a year.
- 1.3. The Audit & Accounts Committee has delegated responsibility for scrutinising the treasury function. The Committee’s role includes approval of the annual treasury management strategy and scrutiny of operational treasury management reports. Decisions taken by the Audit & Accounts Committee are reported to full Council.
- 1.4. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2021/22 was approved by Council on 12th February 2021. This report details treasury management performance up to the 31st May 2021 and projects forward for the remainder of the financial year.

2. Economic Forecast – Interest Rates

- 2.1. The Council’s treasury advisers, Link Asset Services (‘Link’), provide the latest bank rate and PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) forecast:

%	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
Bank Rate	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.25
5yr PWLB rate	1.20	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.50
10r PWLB rate	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
25yr PWLB rate	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.60
50yr PWLB rate	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40

- 2.2. Link’s interest rate forecast has brought the Bank of England base rate increase to 0.25% forward from to the quarter ending September 2023, but does not anticipate and rate rises during the current or next financial year. PWLB rates are also forecast to remain relatively constant, with a slow increase. The Council’s budgets were set anticipating this economic environment.

3. Covid-19 impact on Treasury Management

3.1. High volumes of income and expenditure are still flowing through the Council's instant access accounts while the Council continues to act as an agent of central government in the delivery of the various Business Grant schemes. The counterparty limits in the 2021-22 Treasury Management Strategy Statement were set to be flexible to respond to this situation specifically; the current account limit was extended to 115% of the limit set for a period of two days in May.

4. Investment Income

4.1. Interest earned on investment deposits up to 31st May totalled £4,190. The Council has budgeted to receive £20,710 in investment income in 2021/22. The budget was set with an expectation of very low interest rates of near zero. The outturn against the budget is forecast to be on target at this early point in the year.

4.2. The average interest rate achieved on the Council's investments is boosted by the better rates achieved in the Council's notice accounts, average 0.35%, compared to the instant access average of 0.01%.

Average interest rate period	Average Rate Apr-May
Overall	0.11%
Long-term fixed (>364 days)	n/a
Short-term fixed/ notice accounts (<364 days)	0.35%
Instant access	0.01%
<i>Bank of England Base Rate</i>	<i>0.10%</i>

Ascent Joint Venture

4.3. The Council continues to provide two facilities to the joint venture company Ascent Housing LLP: the Debenture of £5million earns interest at 2%, the associated £100,000 income is on target against the budget; interest on the Loan of £14million is earned at a forecast average rate of 3.02% across the two £7million rolling 1 year tranches, earning an annual interest income of £422,880.

4.4. Any changes to arrangements with Your Housing during the year (outlined in the Cabinet Report 18th June 2019) would impact this income. The existing £14million Loan is a priority debtor therefore would be repaid in full should the loan mature. The £5million Debenture owed to the Council and similarly the £5million Debenture owed to Your Housing are of equal priority and are expected to be subject to an impairment.

5. Investment Portfolio

5.1. The Council manages its investments in-house and invests with financial institutions meeting the Council's approved lending criteria. The Council's investment portfolio at 31st May totalled £16,057,000, as shown in the table below:

Financial Institution	Country of Domicile	Amount	Maximum recommended lending duration	Interest rate at end of period	Average Maturity
Aberdeen MMF	UK	£4,600,000	WHITE (12 months)	0.01%	Instant access
Santander	UK	£2,400,000	RED (6 months)	0.40%	95 day notice
Federated MMF	UK	£2,300,000	WHITE (12 months)	0.01%	Instant access
NatWest Bank	UK	£2,157,000	BLUE (12 months)	0.01%	Instant access
Santander	UK	£2,100,000	RED (6 months)	0.58%	180 day notice
Lloyds Bank	UK	£1,000,000	RED (6 months)	0.05%	95 day notice
Barclays 'Green'	UK	£1,000,000	RED (6 months)	0.10%	65 day notice
Barclays 'Green'	UK	£500,000	RED (6 months)	0.30%	95 day notice
TOTAL		£16,057,000			

NB: MMF = Money Market Fund

5.2. The average balance of funds available for investment for the year up to 31st May was £18.7million. Both average balances for the year and the total portfolio at the end of May 2020 are larger than usual due to Covid 19 grants being held whilst business grant schemes are administered. The net balance of funds held at the end of May was £4.3million.

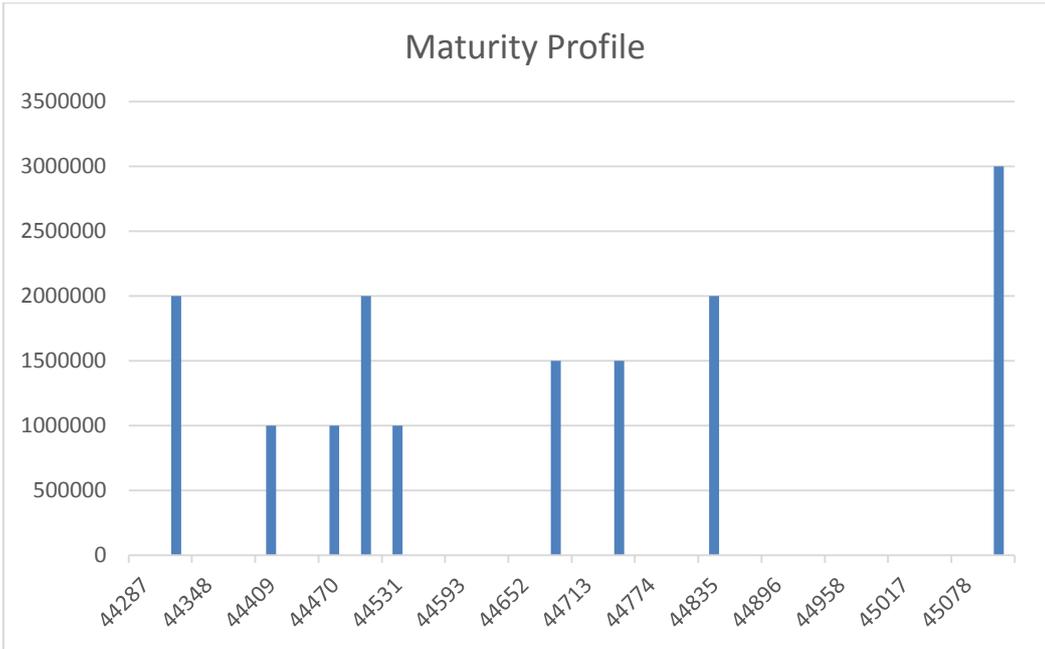
Ethical investing

5.3. The Council currently holds £1,500,000 in financial investments with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) links, sometimes known as Ethical Investing and encompassing the Climate Change agenda. These are included in the investment portfolio table above, but are also highlighted below:

Product	Amount	ESG merits
Barclays 'Green' (95 day notice account)	£500,000	Linked to Barclays' Green Bond Purchasing Programme which covers 'a variety of thematic projects including energy efficiency, renewable energy, green transport, sustainable food, agriculture and forestry, waste management and greenhouse gas emission reduction'.
Barclays 'Green' (65 day notice account)	£1,000,000	
TOTAL	£1,500,000	9.34% of total portfolio

6. Borrowing Position

- 6.1. In accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, it is a statutory duty of the Council to determine and keep under review how much it can afford to borrow. Therefore, the Council establishes 'affordable borrowing limits' as part of the prudential indicators within the approved TMSS.
- 6.2. The Council's external borrowing at the start of the year was £15million which fully funded the Ascent Loan balance plus £1million of the general fund capital financing requirement. £7million of local authority borrowing is due to mature during the year, including £2million which matured in May and has not yet been refinanced. Refinancing and new borrowing will be kept under review during the year as the capital programme is carried out, and if any changes to the Ascent loan relationship occur, alongside views about cash flow and opportunities to take borrowing at cheap levels vs internal borrowing in the low interest income environment. The borrowing cost budget of £224,580 is currently forecast on target.
- 6.3. The 'operational boundary' (£33,049,000) and 'authorised limit' (£34,549,000) indicators govern the maximum level of external borrowing to fund the capital programme, plus any short-term liquidity requirements. They were set through the Treasury Management Strategy Statement to account for the general fund borrowing requirement; an allowance for borrowing to cover short-term liquidity; and funding of the loan to the Joint Venture Company, Ascent. The current level of borrowing is well within prudential limits.
- 6.4. The maturity profile of the loans is considered when undertaking external borrowing to ensure maturity dates are evenly spread so that the Council is not exposed to a substantial re-financing requirement at any one time, when interest rates could be high. The graph below details the maturity profile of current loans.



6.5. The treasury team, along with Link, monitors opportunities to reschedule debt, i.e. reorganise existing debt in such a way as to amend the debt repayments, reduce the principal sum borrowed, alter the degree of volatility of debt or vary the interest payable, in order to manage risk and achieve overall financial benefit to the Council taking account of the premium the Council would expect to pay on early redemption compared to the potential interest savings. No debt rescheduling has taken place during the year.

7. Prudential Indicators

7.1. The Council complies with the Council's Treasury Management Practices and has operated within the treasury management and prudential indicators set in its Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22.