

Report to: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7 February 2022

Title: Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators 2022/23, Capital Strategy & Investment Strategy

Report of: Homira Javadi, Chief Finance Officer

Cabinet member: Councillor Stephen Holt, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Financial Services

Ward(s): All

Purpose of the report: To approve the Council's Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy & investment Strategy together with the Treasury and Prudential Indicators.

Decision type: Budget and policy framework

Recommendations to the Cabinet: The Cabinet is asked to recommend the following proposals to full Council - to:

- a. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A;
- b. Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2022/23 as set out at paragraph 8;
- c. Approve the Prudential and Treasury Indicators 2022/23 to 2024/25, as set out at paragraph 6;
- d. Approve the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix E.

Reasons for recommendations: It is a requirement within the budget setting process for the Council to review and approve the Prudential and Treasury indicators, Treasury Strategy, Capital Strategy and Investment Strategy.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Prudential and Treasury Indicators and Treasury Strategy covers:
- the capital prudential indicators;
 - the Minimum Revenue Provision 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 management);
 - Capital Strategy.

1.2 The Council has adopted CIPFA's Treasury Management code of Practice and this code is supported by treasury management practices (TMPs) that set out the manner in which the council seeks to achieve the treasury management strategy and prescribes how it manages and controls those activities.

1.3 CIPFA defines treasury management as:

"The management of the local authority's borrowing, 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."

1.4 The Council will continue to regularly review the position on its long-term borrowing requirement, its affordability and the capital financing costs impact on the Council's future financial planning. Borrowing will only be undertaken for temporary liquidity or to fund the capital programme and will be undertaken as necessary in accordance with the 2022/23 borrowing strategy. The Council will continue to assess all financing options when making long term borrowing decisions to achieve best financial value for the Council.

1.5 There are few imminent changes to the future Treasury Management Strategy as follows-

- CIPFA published an updated Treasury Management and Prudential Codes on 20th December 2021, and stated that there will be a soft introduction of the codes with local authorities not being expected to have to change their current draft TM Strategy reports for 2022/23: full implementation would be required for 23/24.
- The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is proposing to tighten up regulations around local authorities financing capital expenditure on investments in commercial projects for yield and has already closed access to all PWLB borrowing if such schemes are included in an authority's capital programme.

1.6 The DLUHC is also conducting a consultation on amending MRP rules for England and proposing additional text to be added to the 2003 Regulations to make explicit that:

- Capital receipts may not be used in place of the revenue charge. The intent is to prevent authorities avoiding, in whole or part, a prudent charge to revenue.
- Prudent MRP must be determined with respect to the authority's total capital financing requirement. The intent is to stop the intentional exclusion of debt from the MRP determination because it relates to an investment asset or capital loan.

These changes are not intended to have any impact on the Housing Revenue Account, or on treasury management activities that do not score as capital spend. The government wants authorities to still be able to exercise judgement in determining a prudent amount and does not want to move back to a prescriptive

method.

1.7 This report include the Capital Strategy (Appendix E), which provide a longer-term focus on the capital plans, and greater reporting requirements surrounding any commercial activity undertaken under the Localism Act 2011. The aim of the capital strategy is to ensure that all elected members on the full Council fully understand the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite. The Capital Strategy covers the following:

- a high-level long term overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services;
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed;
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment

1.8 Fund managers will be required to consider ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) factors in their investment process. All the fund managers would be expected to have signed up to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI). PRI argues that active participation in ESG and exercising shareholder rights on this basis can help to improve the performance of companies which may otherwise not address such concerns and so being an engaged corporate stakeholder is a more effective way to bring about change in corporate behaviour on ethical issues. Further requirements from those identified above are not practical given the limited ability to directly influence any immediate change in the financial markets.

1.9 The Council recognises the importance of supporting sustainability and ethical investments and as part of future investment strategy, consideration will be given to potential opportunities to invest in environmentally focussed instruments or organisations locally and/or countrywide. 'Ethical, Social and Governance' (ESG) investment criteria will be considered and, where viable in adherence to the policies laid out in this strategy, will only be entered into following satisfactory assessment of the instrument and/or organisation. This will ensure the Council complies with the CIPFA investment guidance that makes it clear that all investing must adopt SLY principles – security, liquidity and yield: ethical issues will play a subordinate role to those priorities.

1.10 Policy on the use of external service providers

The Council uses Link Market Services as its external treasury management advisors, and recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the Council at all times. It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to have 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. End of year investment report

- 2.1 At the end of the financial year, the Council will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Report.

3. Outcome expected and performance management

- 3.1 Loans, Investments and Prudential Indicators will be monitored regularly during 2022/23 and performance will be reported to members quarterly.

4. Financial appraisal

- 4.1 These are included in the main body of the report.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 This report covers the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CLG MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the CLG Investment Guidance.

6. Equality analysis

- 6.1 The equality implications of decisions relating to Treasury Management covered in this report are addressed within other relevant Council reports or as part of programmed equality analysis.

7. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

- 7.1 The Council has adopted an annuity method, under this methodology, MRP will be lower in the early years and increases over time. This is considered a prudent approach as it reflects the time value of money (i.e. the impact of inflation) as well as providing a charge that is better matched to how the benefits of the asset financed by borrowing are consumed over its useful life. That is, a method that reflects the fact that asset deterioration is slower in the early years of an asset and accelerates towards the latter years. The MRP Policy Statement (Section 8) reflects this policy.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Capital prudential indicators are set to demonstrate plans for borrowing are affordable. The movement in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) forecasts for 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 are set as £8.9m, £14.8m, £10.8m and £9.7m, respectively. This borrowing has been reflected in the Capital Financing Requirement, which sets out the Council's outlining requirement for borrowing, and includes both the use of internal resources and external borrowing.
- 8.2 The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy has been updated to ensure that prudent provision is made for the repayment of borrowing.
- 8.3 All Treasury indicators have been set to reflect the treasury strategy and funding

requirements of the capital programme.

Appendices

- A** Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision and Annual Investment Strategy.
- B** The Treasury Management Role of the Section 151 Officer.
- C** Counterparty List.
- D** Link Asset Services on the Economic Background and Forward View.
- E** Capital Strategy.

Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services code of Practice (the Code);
- Cross-sectorial Guidance Notes;
- CIPFA Prudential Code;
- Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices;
- Council Budget 9 February 2022;
- Finance Matters and Performance Monitoring Reports 2021;
- CIPFA Prudential Property Investment.

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.