

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	AUDIT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 RD JUNE 2021	REPORT NO:	CFO/024/21
PRESENTING OFFICER	IAN CUMMINS, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	IAN CUMMINS	REPORT AUTHOR:	IAN CUMMINS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	SLT		
TITLE OF REPORT:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT
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Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of the activities of the Treasury Management operation and actual performance against the agreed Prudential Indicators in 2020/21. This report meets the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Authority is required to comply with both Codes through Regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.

Recommendation

2. That Members note the Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21 (attached as Appendix A)

Introduction and Background

3. Treasury management is defined as:

“The management of the organisation’s 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.”

4. The CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities has been adopted by the Authority and a Treasury Policy Statement incorporated in Financial Regulations in accordance with the requirements of the Code. The arrangements for reporting Treasury management activities to Members are that a minimum of three reports are presented to members: -
 - An Annual Treasury Strategy Report before the start of a financial year.
 - An interim report during the second half of a financial year. Other interim reports will be prepared if necessary.

- An annual outturn report by 30th September following the financial year to which it relates.

Annual Treasury Management Strategy

5. The Authority determines before the start of each financial year an agreed treasury management strategy to set certain parameters and guidelines around which the treasury management function will operate. The 2020/2021 – 2024/2025 Budget and Financial Plan report, CFO/008/20, considered by Members at the Authority meeting on 27th February 2020, set the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2020/21:

The strategy sets limits for the next three years on:-

- overall Level of External Debt
- operational Boundary for Debt
- upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure
- upper limits on variable rate exposure
- limits on the maturity structure of debt
- limits on investments for more than 364 days

The strategy covers:

- prospects for interest rates;
- capital borrowing and the portfolio strategy;
- annual investment strategy;
- debt rescheduling;
- external debt prudential indicators;

6. As short term interest rates were expected to be lower than long term borrowing rates the Authority, as part of its approved treasury management strategy, agreed to reduce investments and borrow for short periods when necessary. The interest rate market was monitored throughout the year for any changing circumstances requiring a review of the current strategy.

Interim Treasury Management report

7. The interim treasury management report, CFO/065/20, was considered by Members at the Policy and Resources Committee on 10th December, 2020. The report confirmed that to date treasury management activity in 2020/21 had been carried out in compliance with the relevant Codes and Statutes and within the borrowing and treasury management limits set by the Authority under the prudential code.

Annual Outturn Treasury Management report

8. The Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21 is attached as Appendix A to this report and demonstrates that treasury management activity has been carried out in-line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and therefore within the borrowing and treasury management limits set by the Authority throughout the year. Treasury Management practices have maintained full compliance with the relevant Codes and Statutes.

9. The Authority's Treasury Management function is carried out by Liverpool City Council via a service level agreement.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. None arising from this report.

Staff Implications

11. None arising from this report.

Legal Implications

12. This report meets the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Authority is required to comply with both Codes through Regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

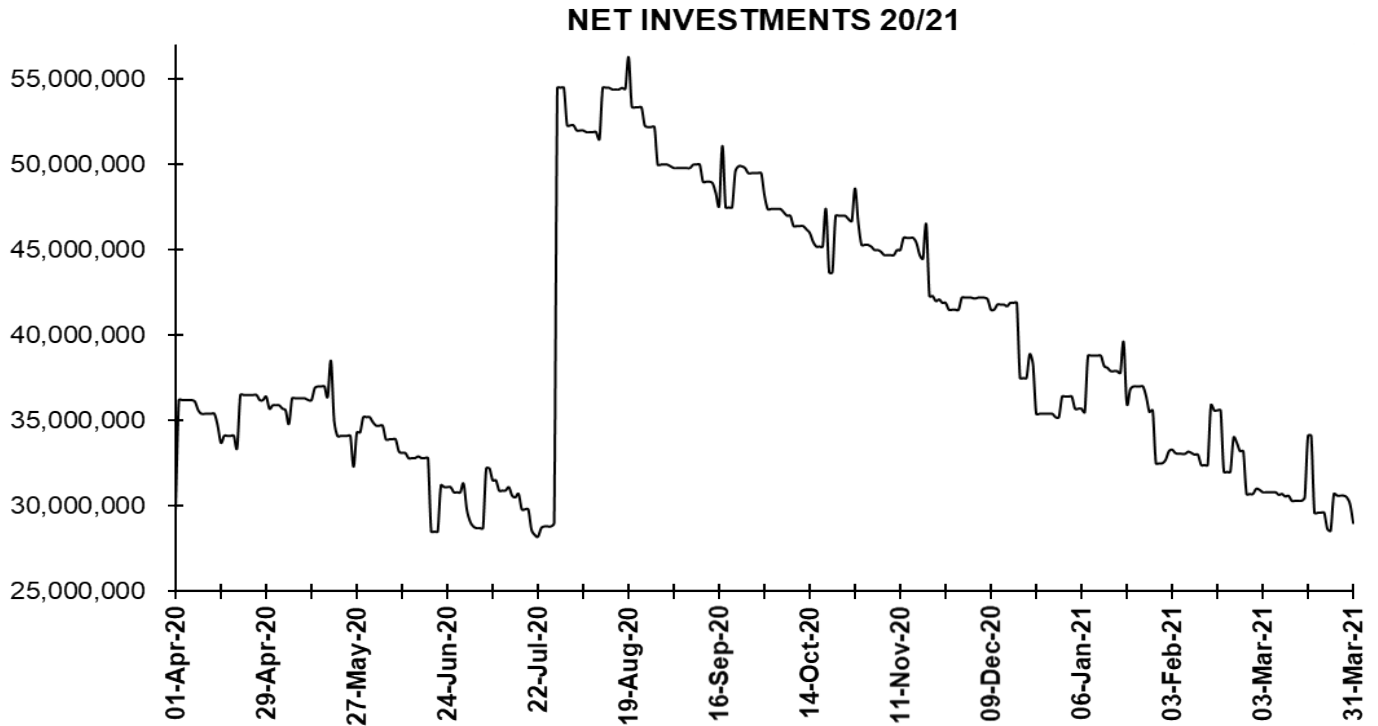
13. The cost of Treasury Management Services was £22,982 in 2020/21 and was provided by Liverpool City Council.
14. The Authority's overall debt outstanding during the year reduced from £37.335m to £36.885m:-

	For Periods ending (2020/21)													Closing Position	
	Opening Position	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000
PWLB	37,335	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-250	0	-200	0	36,885

15. The reduction in debt of £0.450m was due to the repayment of two loans totalling £0.4m that matured in the year. Note that the closing debt figure of £36.885m excludes £0.2m of short-term borrowing provided by Liverpool City Council as this was just overnight funding made available to the Authority as part of the arrangement we have agreed with the Council.
16. The Authority paid total interest of £1.9m on all the debt during the year, which was consistent with the budget. The reason for no new loans being taken out in the year (and as a consequence lower interest payments) is due to the current strategy of using available cash to fund capital investment rather than seek new loans while investment interest rates are so low.
17. The movement on the level of opening and closing investments is summarised below:

	£'m
01/04/20	27.0
31/03/21	29.0

Total investment levels moved during the year as outlined in the graph below:



18. The reason why the level of investments increased in the year is that the Authority receives significant grant income in advance of actual expenditure. For example, the firefighter pension grant of £25.8m was paid in July but actual pension payments are spread throughout the year.
19. A combination of the grants received in advance of expenditure and the cash available as a consequence of the current reserve strategy meant the Authority had £29.0m of investments at the year-end.
20. The investments are held in institutions that reflect the approved investment strategy. The table overleaf outlines the £29.0m of investments held as at 31st March 2021;

ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENTS END OF QUARTER 4 2020/21

Institution	Credit Rating	MM Fund*	Bank / Other	Building Society	Local Authority	Average Interest	
		£	£	£	£	%	
Close Brothers	A		2,000,000			0.76	
Santander	A		2,000,000			0.58	
Cumberland B Soc				1,000,000		0.75	
Principality B Soc				1,000,000		0.68	
Aberdeen Council					2,000,000	0.58	
Blackburn Council					2,000,000	0.63	
Blackpool Council					2,000,000	0.61	
Broxbourne DC					2,000,000	0.53	
Broxtowe BC					2,000,000	0.86	
Eastleigh BC					1,000,000	0.43	
Guildford BC					2,000,000	0.55	
Myrthyr Tydfil CBC					2,000,000	0.43	
PCC Lancashire					2,000,000	0.80	
Slough BC					2,000,000	0.79	
Tameside MBC					2,000,000	0.71	
Thurrock Council					2,000,000	0.86	
	Totals		0	4,000,000	2,000,000	23,000,000	0.66
Total Current Investments					29,000,000		

*MM Fund - Money Market Funds -these are funds that spread the risk associated with investments over a wide range of credit worthy institutions.

21. Income earned on investments was £0.199m, which was £0.027m above the amount budgeted for, reflecting the increase in the value of investments held in the year.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

22. Robust management of the Authority's cash, investments and loans reduces the risk of poor security of investments, the lack of availability of funds when required, and a poor return on investments.

Contribution to Our Mission: Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters

23. A good Treasury Management Strategy ensures that funds are available to meet the approved financial plan and therefore the delivery of services required to achieve the Authority's mission.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/008/20 2020/2021-2024/2025 Budget and Financial Plan report, Authority 27th February, 2020

CFO/065/20 Interim Treasury Management report, Policy and Resources Committee
10th December, 2020.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CIPFA Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)