

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUDIT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	26 JUNE 2025	REPORT NO:	DFP/03/2526
PRESENTING OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT, MIKE REA		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT, MIKE REA	REPORT AUTHOR:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT, MIKE REA
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2024/25 ANNUAL REPORT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2024/25 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 2024/25. 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. It is recommended that Members note the Treasury Management Annual Report 2024/25 (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
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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 2024/25 – 2028/29 Budget and Financial Plan report, CFO/13/24, considered by Members at the Authority meeting on 29th February 2024, set the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2024/25:

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

- overall Level of External Debt
- operational Boundary for External 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 365 days

The strategy covers:

- prospects for interest rates;
 - capital borrowing and debt rescheduling;
 - annual investment strategy;
 - external debt prudential indicators;
 - treasury management prudential indicators;
 - performance indicators;
 - treasury management advisors
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 and possibly at variable rates 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
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7. The interim treasury management report, CFO/68/24, was considered by Members at the Policy and Resources Committee on 12th December 2024. The report confirmed that to date treasury management activity in 2024/25 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.

Interim Treasury Management Report

8. The Treasury Management Annual Report 2024/25 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. There are no equality and diversity implications contained within this report.

Staff Implications

11. There are no staff implications contained within this report.

Legal Implications

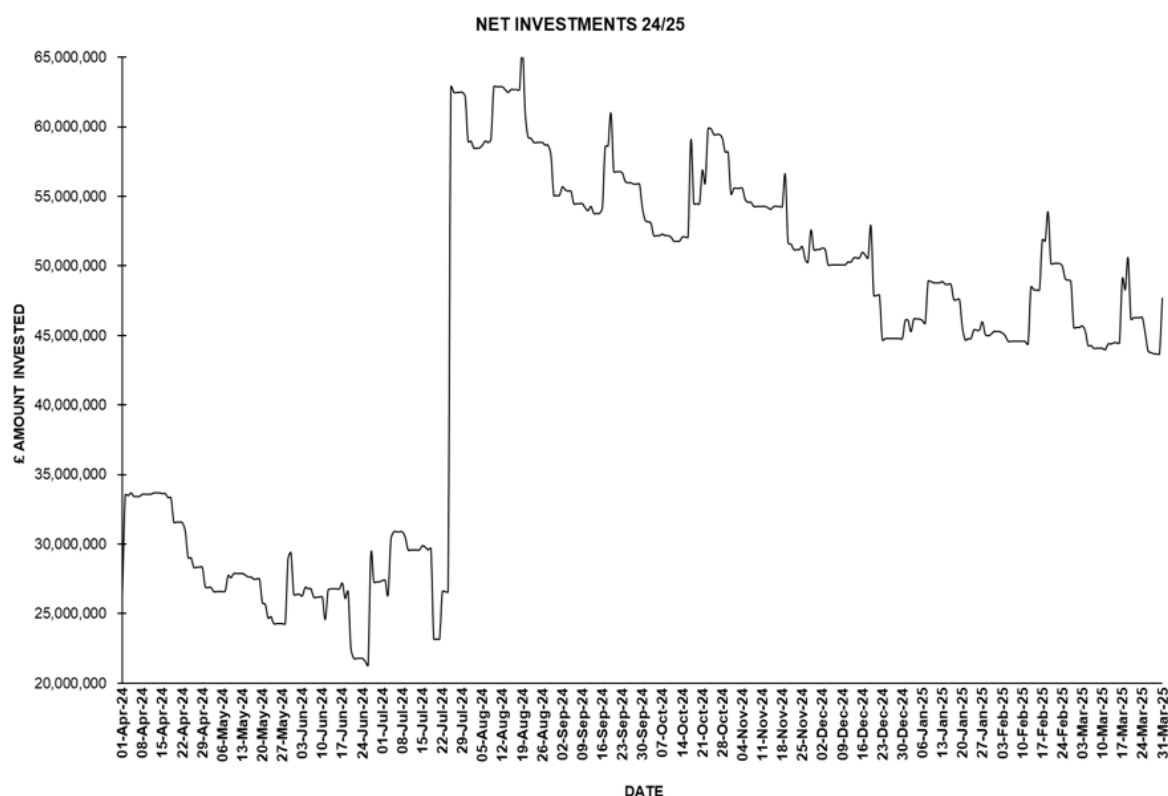
12. This report meets the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Authority is required to comply with both Codes through Regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 are no legal implications directly related to this report.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

13. The cost of Treasury Management Services was £27,914 in 2024/25 and was provided by Liverpool City Council.
14. The Authority's overall debt outstanding at the end of the financial year remained the same as at the start at £33.720m.
15. The Authority paid total interest of £1.715m 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.

16. The movement on the level of opening and closing investments is summarised below:

	£'m
01/04/2024	26.350
31/03/2025	47.700



17. 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 £36.3m was paid in July but actual pension payments are spread throughout the year.
18. A combination of the Authority grants received in advance of expenditure, Home Office grants for National Resilience received in advance and the cash available as a consequence of the current reserve strategy meant the Authority had £47.700m of investments at the year-end.
19. The investments are held in institutions that reflect the approved investment strategy. The table overleaf outlines the £47.700m of investments held as at 31st March 2025.

ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENTS END OF QUARTER 4 2024/25							
Institution	Credit Rating	MM Fund*	DMADF	Bank / Other	Building Society	Local Authority	Average Interest
		£		£	£	£	%
Aberdeen Liquidity	AAA	3,000,000					4.95
Blackrock Heritage	AAA	1,000,000					4.94
CCLA	AAA	3,000,000					4.95
Federated Investors	AAA	2,200,000					4.95
Legal & General	A+	3,000,000					4.95
HSBC (MFRS Deposit Account)	A			100,000			1.90
Lloyds Call Account	A			400,000			4.79
Basildon Borough Council						3,000,000	5.65
Blackpool Council						3,000,000	5.05
Bradford Metropolitan District Council						3,000,000	5.13
Dundee City Council						3,000,000	5.80
Eastleigh Borough Council						3,000,000	5.50
Gloucester City Council						3,000,000	5.60
Great Yarmouth Borough Council						3,000,000	5.60
Leeds City Council						3,000,000	5.33
Mid Suffolk DC						3,000,000	5.00
Peterborough City Council						3,000,000	4.75
Reading Borough Council						2,000,000	4.75
Uttlesford District Council						3,000,000	4.95
Totals		12,200,000	0	500,000	0	35,000,000	4.98
Total Current Investments						47,700,000	

20. Income earned on investments was £1.640m, which was £1.190m above the amount budgeted for, reflecting the increase in interest rates during the year.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

21. 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 Vision: To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.

Our Purpose: Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.

22. 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 vision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- CFO/13/24** MFRA Budget and Financial Plan 2024/2025 - 2028/2029, Authority 29th February 2024.
- CFO/68/24** Interim Treasury Management Report, Policy & Resources Committee 12th December 2024.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CFR Capital Financing Requirement

CIPFA Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

MPC	Monetary Policy Committee
PWLB	Public Works Loans Board
SONIA	Sterling Overnight Index Average