

Council Report

Ward(s) affected: n/a

Report of the Director of Resources

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Capital and Investment outturn report 2020-21

Executive Summary

This annual outturn report includes capital expenditure, non-treasury investments and treasury management performance for 2020-21.

Capital programme

In total, expenditure on the General Fund capital programme was £29.4 million against the original budget of £171.5 million, and revised budget of £28.8 million. Details of the revised estimate and actual expenditure in the year for each scheme are given in **Appendix 3**.

The budget for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was £1.64 million and the outturn was £1.29 million. This was due to slippage in the capital programme in 2019-20.

Councillors will be aware that one of the strands of the Council's savings strategy is to review the projects in the capital programme. There are three schemes that officers had recommended were removed due to the length of time they have been in the programme, and as such the original proposal was no longer relevant and a new business case would need to be prepared if any of the schemes are to come forward in the future. These were:

- Guildford Gyrotory and Approaches - £10.967 million on the provisional capital programme in 2024-25
- Stoke Park Office Accommodation - £665,000 on the provisional programme in 2024-25
- Stoke Park – Home Farm redevelopment - £4 million on the provisional programme in 2024-25

Non-treasury investments

The Council's investment property portfolio stood at £155 million at the end of the year. Our rental income was £8.1 million, and our income return 5.8% against the benchmark of 4.6%.

Treasury management

The Council's cash balances have built up over several years, and reflect our strong balance sheet, with considerable revenue and capital reserves. Officers carry out the treasury function within the parameters set by the Council each year in the Capital and Investment Strategy. As at 31 March 2021, the Council held £159.1 million in investments, £310.5 million in long-term borrowing of which £118.5 million is short-term borrowing, and £192 million is long term borrowing (related to HRA) so net debt of £151.4 million.

We borrowed short-term from other local authorities for cash flow purposes and aim to minimise any cost of carry on this. We did not take out any additional long-term borrowing during the year.

This report (section 8) confirms that the Council complied with its prudential indicators, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices (TMPs) for 2020-21. The policy statement is included and approved annually as part of the Capital and Investment Strategy, and the TMPs are approved under delegated authority.

The treasury management performance over the last year, compared to estimate, is summarised in the table below. The report highlights the factors affecting this performance throughout the report, and in **Appendix 1**.

	Estimate %	Actual %	Estimate (£000)	Actual (£000)
General fund Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)			207,109	116,524
Housing Revenue Account CFR			217,024	199,204
Total CFR			424,133	315,728
Return on investments	2.18	1.05	1,685	2,435
Interest paid on external debt			5,650	5,274
Total net interest paid			3,965	2,839

There was slippage in the capital programme which resulted in a lower CFR than estimated (more information in **Appendix 1**, section 3).

Interest paid on debt was lower than budget, due to less long-term borrowing taken out on the general fund because of slippage in the capital programme.

The yield returned on investments was lower than estimated, but the interest received was higher due to more cash being available to invest in the year – a direct result of the capital programme slippage. Officers have been reporting higher interest receivable and payable and a lower charge for MRP during the year as part of the budget monitoring when reported to councillors during the year.

Detailed information on the return on investments, and interest paid on external debt can be found in section 7 of this report.

This report was considered by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee at its meeting on 29 July 2021. The Committee commended the report to the Executive. At its meeting on 24 August 2021, the Executive agreed to the removal of the following schemes from the General Fund Capital Programme:

- (1) Guildford Gyrotory and Approaches
- (2) Stoke Park office accommodation
- (3) Stoke Park – Home Farm redevelopment

The Executive also commended the recommendation to the Council below for adoption.

Recommendation to Council:

- (1) That the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2020-21 be noted.
- (2) That the actual prudential indicators reported for 2020-21, as detailed in **Appendix 1** to this report, be approved.

Reason for Recommendation:

To comply with the Council's treasury management policy statement, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on treasury management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2003 states that the Council has a legal obligation to have regard to both the CIPFA code of practice on treasury management and the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) investment guidance.
- 1.2 The CIPFA treasury management code of practice, and the MHCLG investment guidance requires public sector authorities to produce an annual capital strategy (incorporating capital expenditure, non-treasury investments and treasury management activity).
- 1.3 This report covers the outturn of the elements of the strategy and the requirement to report on the prudential and treasury indicators for the year. The position of the Council's investment property portfolio is also presented along with progress on the capital programme.
- 1.4 The Council borrows and invests substantial sums of money and is, therefore, exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. This report covers treasury activity and the associated monitoring and control of risks. The Council holds a substantial amount of investment property and has a large capital programme, all of which have risk.

- 1.5 Treasury management is a highly complex, technical, and regulated aspect of local government finance. We have included a glossary of technical terms (**Appendix 10**), to aid the reading of this report.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 Treasury management and capital expenditure are key functions in enabling the Council to achieve financial excellence and value for money. It underpins the achievement of all the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 themes.
- 2.2 This report details the activities of the treasury management function and the effects of the decisions taken in the year in relation to the best use of its resources. It also presents the outturn position for the year of the capital programme, and the performance on non-treasury investments.

3. Background

- 3.1 Treasury management is defined by CIPFA as:

“the management of the council's investments, borrowing 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”

- 3.2 The Council has overall responsibility for treasury management. Treasury management contains a number of risks. The effective identification and management of those risks are integral to the council's treasury management objectives, as is ensuring that borrowing activity is prudent, affordable and sustainable.
- 3.3 The Council has a statutory requirement, under the Local Government Act 2003, to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code and produce prudential indicators.
- 3.4 The objectives of the prudential code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and the treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice.
- 3.5 The Council has a large capital programme and a large investment property portfolio on its balance sheet. These, together with treasury management, are the management of the Council's cash and assets.
- 3.6 The Council operates its treasury management function in compliance with this Code and the statutory requirements.
- 3.7 This annual report, and the appendices attached to it, set out:
- a summary of the economic factors affecting the approved strategy and counterparty updated (sections 4 and 5 with details in **Appendix 5**)
 - a summary of the approved strategy for 2020-21 (section 6)

- a summary of the treasury management activity for 2020-21 (section 7 with detail in **Appendix 1**)
- compliance with the treasury and prudential indicators (section 8 with detail in **Appendix 1**)
- non-treasury investments (section 9)
- capital programme (section 10)
- risks and performance (section 11)
- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (section 12)
- details of external service providers (section 13)
- details of training (section 14)

4. Economic Environment

4.1 This section includes the key points of the economic environment for 2020-21, to show the treasury management activity in context. **Appendix 5** contains more detail.

- Coronavirus dominated 2020-21, leading to vastly reduced economic activity across the world.
- Bank of England cut bank rate to 0.1%
- UK Government provided a range of fiscal stimulus measures
- A Brexit trade deal was agreed
- Quantitative easing extended by £150 billion in November 2020 to £895 billion
- Unemployment rose, despite furlough
- Inflation has remained low

4.2 The key points relevant to investment property are:

- Industrial sector remained resilient
- Office supply declining in Guildford, there has been a departure of key corporate occupiers, which has not helped the office market
- There has been a shift in the demand for High Street retail premises, leading to declining rents and increased vacancy levels.
- Retail was the weakest category going into lockdown and is anticipated to be the worst affected.

5. Regulatory Changes

5.1 A new accounting standard – IFRS16 – accounting for leases was due to be implemented on 1 April 2020. This means that the Council needs to account for its leases differently, as operating leases are no longer an applicable category for lessees. This will impact on the Council's CFR and asset base as all these assets will need to be included on the Council's balance sheet. The Government decided to delay the implementation until 1 April 2021.

6. Approved strategy and budgets for 2020-21 – a summary

- 6.1 Council approved the Capital and Investment strategy for 2020-21 in February 2020.
- 6.2 The strategy showed an underlying need to borrow in 2020-21 for the General Fund (GF) capital programme of £145.8 million.
- 6.3 The strategy set out how we would manage our cash. It allowed for internally managed investments for managing cash flow and externally managed and longer-term investments for our core cash (cash not required in the short or medium term). See **Appendix 9** for background.
- 6.4 It highlighted the need to continue to diversify our investment portfolio to reduce credit risk. The approved strategy set the minimum long-term credit rating of A- (or equivalent) for investments in counterparties to be determined as 'high credit' using the lowest denominator principal for the three main credit rating agencies.
- 6.5 Investment property risks were examined in the strategy.

7. Treasury management activity in 2020-21

- 7.1 The treasury position at 31 March 2021, compared to the previous year is:

		31 March 2020 (£'000)	Average Rate	31 March 2021 (£'000)	Average Rate
Fixed Rate Debt	PWLB	147,665	3.22%	147,435	3.22%
	Market	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Variable Rate Debt	PWLB	45,000	0.96%	45,000	0.48%
	Market	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Long-term	LAs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Temporary borrowing	LAs	44,000	0.83%	118,500	0.51%
Total Debt		236,665	2.43%	310,935	2.00%
Fixed Investments		(66,600)	1.40%	(94,100)	1.02%
Variable Investments		(28,023)	0.82%	(47,545)	0.23%
Externally managed		(12,988)	4.17%	(17,728)	3.94%
Total Investments		(107,611)	1.56%	(159,372)	1.05%
Net Debt / (Investments)		129,054		151,563	

- 7.2 PWLB is the Public Works Loans Board and is a statutory body operating as an executive of HM Treasury. Its function is to lend money from the National Loans Fund to local authorities and other prescribed bodies.
- 7.3 The above table shows investments have increased by £51.7 million and loans by £74 million. Therefore, net debt has increased by £22.5 million. Short-term borrowing has increased due to uncertain cash flows during the year, and to fund the capital programme. We were able to take advantage of some very low borrowing rates from other authorities in the year. We have a range of maturities in 2021-22 to keep cash flows smooth.

- 7.4 We budgeted a return of 2.18% for the year and achieved 1.08%.
- 7.5 The Council's budgeted investment income was £1.68 million, and actual interest was £2.17 million (£490,000 higher). This is mostly due to interest received as a result of paying 3-year pension contributions upfront and a reduction in the amount of interest on investments payable to the HRA due to the very low interest rate environment.
- 7.6 Our budgeted debt interest payable was £5.6 million. £5.05 million relates to the HRA. The outturn was £5.23 million (£4.9 million for the HRA).
- 7.7 All our external funds are distributing funds, and they achieved an overall weighted average return of 4.17%, split as follows:

Fund	Balance at 31 March £000	Average return	Type of fund
M&G	3,528,656	4.45%	Equity focussed
Schroders	697,631	7.04%	Equity focussed with at least 80% on FTSE all share companies
Funding Circle	504,603	6.51%	Investments in SMEs up to a max of £2,000
UBS	2,203,598	3.95%	Multi asset
RLAM	2,332,194	2.19%	Global bond fund
Fundamentum	1,970,000	0.85%	Supported housing
CCLA	6,491,179	4.81%	Property

- 7.8 The only movements in fund value in the year is the change in fair value
- 7.9 Our external fund portfolio is diverse, and we invest in a range of products and markets. The capital value of the funds can go up as well as down. Across all funds still held at the end of the year, there was a capital gain of £424,000 recovering part of the £1.4 million lost at the end of March 2020 due to the pandemic.
- 7.10 We are invested in bond, equity, multi-asset, and property funds. During the initial phase of the pandemic in March 2020, the sharp falls in corporate bond and equity markets had a negative impact on the value of the Council's pooled fund holdings and was reflected in the 31 March 2020 fund valuations with every fund / most funds registering negative capital returns over a 12-month period. Since March 2020 there has been improvement in market sentiment which is reflected in an increase in capital values of these short-dated, strategic bond, equity and multi-asset income funds in the Authority's portfolio. The recovery in UK equities has lagged those of US and European markets.
- 7.11 Similar to many other property funds, dealing (i.e. buying or selling units) in the CCLA Local Authorities' Property Fund was suspended by the fund in March 2020 and lifted in September. There was also a change to redemption terms for the CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund; from September 2020 investors are required to give at least 90 calendar days' notice for redemptions.
- 7.12 Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in

meeting the Authority's medium to long-term investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over a three to five-year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates.

- 7.13 Following the cut in Bank rate from 0.75% to 0.1% in March 2020, the Authority had expected to receive significantly lower income from its cash and short-dated money market investments, including money market funds in 2020-21, as rates on cash investments are close to zero percent. Income from most of the Authority's externally managed funds will also be lower than in 2019-20 and earlier years. Whilst the arrival and approval of vaccines against COVID-19 and the removal of Brexit uncertainty that had weighed on UK equities were encouraging developments, dividend and income distribution was dependent on company earnings in a very challenging and uncertain trading environment as well as enforced cuts or deferral required by regulatory authorities.
- 7.14 The Council also invested more in our subsidiaries and now holds £10.157 million of equity investment in Guildford Borough Council Holdings Ltd and £8.418 million of loans in North Downs Housing Ltd.
- 7.15 The Council agreed an interest rate of base rate plus 5% (currently 5.1%) on the investment in North Downs Housing Ltd. This is higher than the treasury investments held as it reflects the risk associated with holding such investments. The interest is currently rolled up in the loan of the company.
- 7.16 The equity investment in Guildford Borough Council Holdings Ltd will be subject to a dividend if a profit is achieved.
- 7.17 The Council has received various grants from Government related to Covid-19. Those not spent at the end of the financial year have been invested as part of our overall investment portfolio.

Capital programme

- 7.18 The actual underlying need to borrow for the year, and the amount of internal borrowing actually taken, for the GF capital programme was £13.05 million, which is lower than budgeted of £102.8 million because of slippage in the capital programme, and also unbudgeted for capital contributions received. We will continue to support service managers with the scheduling of schemes in the capital programme to ensure it is kept up to date when project timescales change.
- 7.19 The Council must charge a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) on its internal borrowing, which is setting aside cash from council tax to repay the internal borrowing. MRP charged to the revenue account for the year was £1.288 million, against an original budget of £1.639 million.
- 7.20 Our overall underlying need to borrow, as measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) was £315.7 million (£116.5 million relates to the GF).

Benchmarking and performance indicators

- 7.21 Arlingclose also provide benchmarking data across their clients (“client universe”). It highlights the effect of changes in our investment portfolio and compares the basis of size of investment, length of investment and the amount of credit risk taken.
- 7.22 The benchmarking shows a snapshot of our average running yield on all investments, also split between internally managed and externally managed. The latest benchmarking data (at 31 March 2021), shows our average rate of investments for our total portfolio as being 0.94% against the client universe of 0.90%. The table shows that we have outperformed our internally managed investments of the client universe by quite some margin.

Benchmark	Guildford	Client Universe
Internally managed return	0.54%	0.15%
Externally managed (return only)	3.37%	3.85%
Total Portfolio	0.94%	0.90%
% of investments subject to bail in	28%	63%
No. of counterparties/funds	42	13

- 7.23 The difference in our return as part of the benchmarking (0.94%) and our own return (1.08%) is due to a different calculation in the way Arlingclose put the benchmarking return together.
- 7.24 The table above shows how far the Council has come to mitigate bail in risk – closing the year at 28% of investments subject to bail in. This percentage will change during the course of the year depending on the level of cash we have and what we are invested in.
- 7.25 One of our key areas in our treasury strategy has been to increase diversification in the portfolio. The number of counterparties and funds we are investing in are far higher than the client universe and shows that we have achieved our aim. Again, this level of diversification will change at different points in the year.

8. Non-treasury investments

- 8.1 **Appendix 2** sets out the Council investment property fund portfolio report for 2020-21. The key points are summarised below.
- 8.2 The current portfolio is:

Sector	No. of assets	Sub-category	No. of assets
Office	9		
Industrial	134		
Retail	8	Shops	6
		Shopping centres	2

Sector	No. of assets	Sub-category	No. of assets
Leisure	6	Restaurants	5
		Nightclubs	1
Other Commercial	10	Educational	3
		Theatre	1
		Barn	2
		Petrol station	1
		Sui Generis	1
		Car Park	1
		Water treatment works	1
TOTAL	167		

8.3 Fund statistics are:

Fund Performance (total return) *					
Rental income					
	Industrial	Office	All Retail	Alternatives	All
2015/16	2,679,571	1,831,900	1,750,254	885,636	7,147,361
2016/17	3,057,302	1,858,638	1,447,672	1,062,137	7,425,749
2017/18	3,493,405	3,186,048	1,426,317	1,080,786	9,186,556
2018/19	3,619,808	3,038,548	1,459,048	1,129,361	9,246,765
2019/20	3,369,452	2,135,460	1,459,548	1,139,397	8,103,857
2020/21	3,565,449	2,112,620	1,284,638	1,139,397	8,102,104
Capital value**					
	Industrial	Office	All Retail	Alternatives	All
2015/16	39,077,755	19,227,500	34,270,000	11,233,500	103,808,755
2016/17	42,922,450	25,915,000	25,908,500	15,963,500	110,709,450
2017/18	51,509,000	49,574,000	26,065,000	17,471,500	144,619,500
2018/19	66,970,000	49,159,000	26,097,000	18,843,000	161,069,000
2019/20	72,295,790	35,609,000	26,097,000	18,143,000	152,144,790
2020/21	77,670,905	34,165,000	24,527,000	18,540,500	154,903,405
Income return					
	Industrial	Office	All Retail	Alternatives	All
2015/16	8.0%	7.5%	5.6%	7.5%	6.8%
2016/17	7.1%	7.2%	5.6%	6.7%	6.7%
2017/18	8.0%	7.4%	5.2%	5.8%	6.6%
2018/19	6.8%	6.6%	5.9%	5.8%	6.3%
2019/20	6.9%	5.3%	5.9%	5.9%	6.0%
2020/21	6.5%	5.4%	5.6%	5.8%	5.8%
Benchmark return					
	Industrial	Office	All Retail	Alternatives	All
2015/16	6.1%	4.7%	5.4%	4.7%	5.2%
2016/17	5.4%	4.1%	5.0%	5.5%	4.8%
2017/18	4.9%	4.1%	5.1%	5.3%	4.8%
2018/19	4.4%	4.0%	5.1%	5.0%	4.6%
2019/20	4.4%	4.0%	5.4%	5.1%	4.7%
2020/21	4.4%	4.0%	5.6%	4.8%	4.6%

* Excludes Finance leases
**Capital Values as at 31/01/2020

8.4 The performance shows that our portfolio has performed better than our benchmark.

8.5 In response to the PWLB's new rules we have amalgamated the asset investment fund into the strategic acquisition fund and will be assessing all potential acquisitions against the strategic property acquisition procedure approved by the Executive in January 2021. We are only looking to invest in the Borough as per our policy.

9. General Fund Capital programme

9.1 **Appendix 3** sets out the actual expenditure on capital schemes, compared to the updated estimates, together with reasons for variances. Overall, we spent £142 million (83%) less on capital schemes than we originally estimated and £164 million (85%) less than the revised estimate, the schemes with more than £1 million variance to budget relate to:

- Vehicle replacement (they are on order and being delivered in 2021-22),
- Museum and Castle development (now cancelled),
- investment in NDH and Guildford Borough Council Holdings – (slightly fewer purchases in year),
- Midleton Industrial Estate (delays due to Covid),
- Strategic property purchases (delayed due to Covid),
- Westfield/Moorfield Road resurfacing (links in with WUV and new timescale to be arranged),
- Guildford West (feasibility study delayed due to resources being allocated to other projects) and
- Guildford Gyratory and Approaches (scheme now removed from the capital programme).

There are significant variations on other approved schemes under £1 million, as detailed in the appendix.

9.2 The table below summarises our capital expenditure and variances in the year:

	Original estimate (£m)	Revised estimate (£m)	Actual (£m)	Variance to revised (£m)
GF approved programme	84.2	102.3	27.7	(92.6)
GF provisional programme	83.3	64.3	0.0	(64.3)
GF Schemes financed from reserves	4.0	8.9	1.7	(7.2)
Total	171.5	193.5	29.4	(164.1)

9.3 Councillors will recall that the Executive, at its meeting held on 26 January 2021, approved the removal of the following schemes from the capital programme:

- Museum £18.26 million
- Public realm £1.6 million
- Bike Share £530,000

- Town centre gateway regeneration £3.473 million

9.4 As part of the Council's savings strategy, one of the strands is to review the schemes on the capital programme. The cost of capital schemes on the general fund revenue account includes borrowing costs – interest and debt repayment and potential ongoing maintenance costs (for example). Whilst reviewing the schemes on the capital programme is an ongoing exercise, there has been a lot of change with the new governance processes the Council has implemented, and a change in the Corporate Plan and strategic priorities. At its meeting on 24 August 2021, the Executive agreed to the removal of the following schemes from the GF capital programme because the original business case was either no longer relevant, was being included in a wider scheme, or was no longer coming forward. If the schemes are reinvigorated in future, a new mandate and business case will be produced and resubmitted for approval. These schemes are set out below. Please note that they were all re-profiled into 2024-25 because we were uncertain as to whether they were going to be delivered and we did not want to overinflate the impact of the capital programme in the short-term:

- P14(p) Guildford Gyrotory and Approaches (£10.967 million on the provisional programme) – in the programme since 2016-17. The aim was to remove the gyrotory and open up the riverside to the town centre. This project will now be part of the GER project with this business case no longer applicable in its own right.
- PL41(p) Stoke Park office accommodation (£665,000 on the provisional programme) – in programme since 2016-17 – review of storage facilities and office accommodation. As a result of Future Guildford, the structure of the service has changed, and the requirements covered in this bid are under review.
- PL51(p) Stoke Park – Home Farm redevelopment (£4 million on the provisional programme) – bid put in for 2013-14 financial year for a 2015-16 main start. Was for infrastructure improvements to maximise potential funding and opportunities to maximise the attractiveness of the Park. The Stoke Park Masterplan superseded this project but did not progress. The original business case is therefore no longer relevant. If a scheme is to progress in future, it will need to follow the new governance process and be re-submitted for approval.

10. Compliance with treasury and prudential indicators

10.1 The CIPFA prudential code and treasury management code of practices require local authorities to set treasury and prudential indicators.

10.2 The objectives of the Prudential Code, and the indicators calculated in accordance with it, provide a framework for local authority capital finance that will ensure

- capital expenditure plans are affordable
- all external borrowing and other long-term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable limits

- treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with professional good practice and
 - in taking the above decisions, the Council is accountable by providing a clear transparent framework
- 10.3 The Prudential Code requires the Council to set a number of prudential indicators for the following and two subsequent financial years, and to monitor against the approved indicators during the year. We can revise these indicators during the year but need full Council approval.
- 10.4 Officers can confirm that the Council has complied with its prudential indicators for 2020-21, (see **Appendix 1** for the outturn figures), its treasury management policy statement and its treasury management practices.
- 10.5 Section 6 outlines the approved treasury management strategy. We have adhered to the strategy by:
- financing of capital expenditure from government grants, usable capital resources, revenue contributions and cash flow balances rather than from external borrowing
 - taking a prudent approach in relation to the investment activity in the year, with priority given to security and liquidity over yield
 - maintaining adequate diversification between counterparties
 - forecasting and managing cash flow to preserve the necessary degree of liquidity

11. Risk and performance

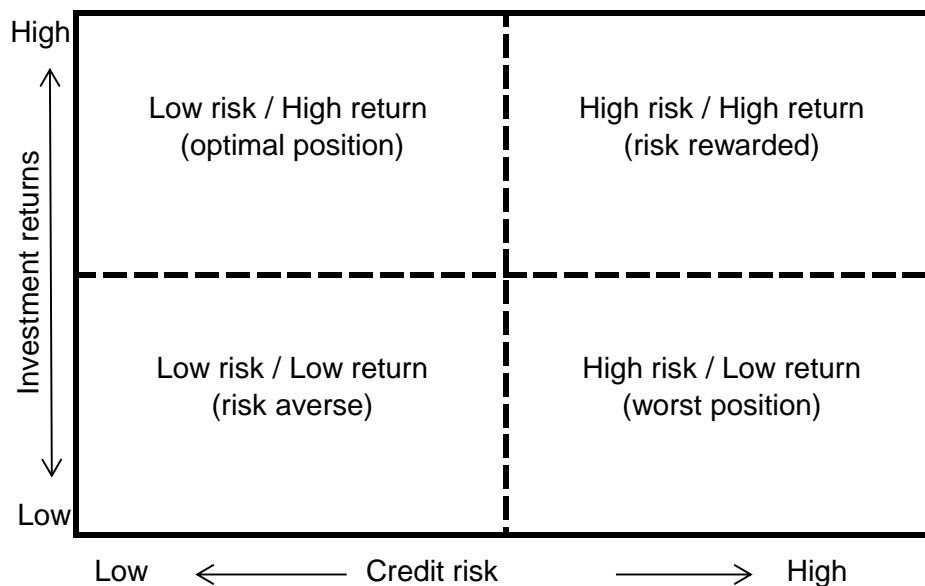
- 11.1 The Council considers security, liquidity, and yield, in that order, when making investment decisions.
- 11.2 The Council has complied with all the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, which limit the level of risk associated with its treasury management activities. In particular, its adoption and implementation of both the prudential code and treasury management code of practice means our capital expenditure is prudent, affordable, and sustainable, and our treasury practices demonstrate a low-risk approach.
- 11.3 Short-term interest rates and likely movements in these rates, along with our projected cash balances, determine our anticipated investment return. These returns can be volatile and whilst, loss of principal is minimised through the annual investment strategy, accurately forecasting future returns can be difficult.
- 11.4 If the Council were to lose any of its investments, the GF will carry the loss, even if the cash lost is HRA cash. Therefore, to compensate the GF for this, we apply a credit risk adjustment to the rate of interest we apply on the HRA balances and reserves and SPA reserves. Therefore, a lower interest rate is applied than the weighted average investment return for the year. For 2020-21 this is the DMO (Debt management office investment with the Government and is the base “risk-free” investment rate) which is 0.01%

11.5 The Council invests in externally managed funds. These are more volatile than cash investments but can come with a higher return. Officers continually review our funds to ensure they still have a place in the portfolio. We view most of our funds over a three to five-year time horizon to take account of their potential volatility – they are not designed to be short-term investments, despite being able to get the money from them quickly.

Credit developments and credit risk management during the year

11.6 Security of our investments is our key objective when making treasury decisions. We therefore manage credit risk through the limits and parameters we set in our annual treasury management strategy. One quantifiable measure of credit quality we use is to allocate a score to long-term credit ratings. **Appendix 8** explains the scoring in more detail.

11.7 This is a graphical representation used in the Arlingclose benchmarking.



11.8 Typically, we should aim to be in the top left corner of the chart where we get a higher return for lower risk. In the actual benchmarking, for average rate versus credit risk (value weighted) we were above the average of all clients and were in the top left box towards the middle vertical line. For time weighted we are well within the top left box (see **Appendix 6** for the two charts).

11.9 We set our definition of high credit quality as a minimum long-term credit rating of A-, which attracts a score of 7. The lower the score, the higher the credit quality of the investment portfolio.

11.10 The table below shows that at each quarter date, the weighted average score of our investment portfolio, on a value weighted and a time weighted basis is well within our definition of high credit quality, ending the year at 3.95 (AA-) and 2.04 (AA-).

Date	Value Weighted Avg Credit Risk Score	Value Weighted Avg Credit Rating	Time Weighted Avg Credit Risk Score	Time Weighted Avg Credit Rating	Average Life (days)
31-03-20	3.95	AA-	2.04	AA+	261
30-06-20	4.04	AA-	2.46	AA+	292
30-09-20	4.20	AA-	2.82	AA	185
31-12-20	4.50	A+	2.90	AA	146
31-03-21	4.63	A+	4.06	AA-	199

11.11 We have maintained security throughout the year within the portfolio on a value weighted basis. We also have a lower risk score on the time weighted average than the Arlingclose client universe (4.63/AA- and 4.53/A+). We do, however, have a much longer duration (ours is 199 days compared to the universe of 14 days) and this is due to us having a large portion of investments of covered bonds in the portfolio, which can be sold on the secondary market if required. The longer duration is with AAA rated covered bonds, so this has enhanced the security of the portfolio.

12. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

12.1 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003 No 414) place a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Making an MRP reduces the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and leaves cash available to replenish reserves used for internal borrowing or making external debt repayments. There are three options for applying MRP available to us:

- asset life method
- depreciation method
- any other prudent method

12.2 Any other prudent method means we can decide on the most appropriate method depending on the capital expenditure.

12.3 The latest MRP policy was approved by Council in February 2020, and stated that:

- the Council will use the asset life method as its main method, but will use annuity for investment property
- in relation to expenditure on development, we may use the annuity method starting in the year after the asset becomes operational
- where we acquire assets ahead of a development scheme, we will charge MRP based on the income flow of the asset or as service benefit is obtained, and will not charge MRP during construction, refurbishment or redevelopment
- We will apply a life of 50 years for the purchase of land and schemes which are on land (for example transport schemes)
- Where loans are made to other bodies for their capital expenditure, no MRP will be charged, where the other body is making principal

repayments of that loan as well as interest. However, the capital receipts generated by the loan principal repayments on those loans will be put aside to reduce the CFR

- For investments in shares classed as capital expenditure, we will apply a life related to the underlying asset in which the share capital has been invested

12.4 The unfinanced capital expenditure in 2020-21 of £13.05 million related to Weyside Urban Village project and loan/equity to North Downs Housing Ltd.

13. External service providers

13.1 The Council reappointed Arlingclose as our treasury management advisers in March 2015. The contract is for a period of 7 years and will be re-tendered during 2021-22 for a new contract starting 1 April 2022. The Council is clear what services it expects and what services Arlingclose will provide under the contract.

13.2 The Council is clear that overall responsibility for treasury management remains with the Council.

14. Training

14.1 CIPFA's revised treasury management code of practice suggests that best practice is achieved by all councillors tasked with treasury management responsibilities, including scrutiny of the treasury management function, receiving appropriate training relevant to their needs and that they should fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

14.2 The MHCLG's revised investment guidance also recommends that a process is in place for reviewing and addressing the needs of the Council's treasury management staff for training in investment management.

14.3 Following the revised CIPFA code of practice and the stated requirement that a specified body be responsible for the implementation and regular monitoring of the treasury management policies, we use the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee to scrutinise the treasury management activity of the Council.

14.4 Training on treasury management will be given to new councillors and in particular the group leaders and members of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.

14.5 Officer training is undertaken on a regular basis, by attending workshops held by Arlingclose, and seminars or conferences held by other bodies, such as CIPFA. On the job training and knowledge sharing are undertaken when required. Those involved in treasury management are either a fully qualified accountant, or AAT qualified. The Lead Specialist for Finance, and Deputy s151 officer holds the 'Certificate in International Treasury Management for Public Finance'

qualification, which is a joint qualification between the ACT (Association of Corporate Treasurers) and CIPFA.

- 14.6 Certain officers of the Council are deemed professional by the financial industry and therefore demonstrate the level of skill and expertise in the treasury function to ensure the Council retains professional status under the MiFID II regulations.

15. Consultations

- 15.1 Officers have consulted with the Lead Councillor for Resources about the contents of this report.

Corporate Governance & Standards Committee – 29 July 2021

- 15.2 This report was considered by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee at its meeting on 29 July 2021. The Committee commended the report to the Executive, subject to the comments below and endorsed the recommendations set out in this report:
- (a) In response to a request for an explanation as to the reasons why the short-term debt at the end of the year had been substantially higher than the end of the previous year, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the Council had substantial internal borrowing for the capital programme, which had been externalised by way of short-term borrowing, which was why borrowing had increased. Officers were also aware that we were going to need to use our reserves for Covid expenditure. The Council had also been required to borrow from the PWLB in the current financial year through the local infrastructure rate funding subsidy which would start the long-term borrowing for capital programme in 2021-22.
 - (b) Officers clarified that the rental income referred to in the report, which had been the same as the previous year, was rental income due. It was expected that, as most tenants paid their rent promptly and there had been very few repayment plans, the Council would receive a substantial proportion of the rent due.
 - (c) In response to a question as to the impact of a possible increase in inflation on the capital and investment programme, it was not anticipated that any increase in inflation would have much impact on returns on the Council's investment portfolio.
 - (d) In response to a question as to the benefits of a strategy of holding £160 million of investments and increasing borrowing, which costs £1.5 million, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the fixed rate debt of £147 million and the variable rate debt of £45 million related to the Housing Revenue Account, the cost of which was charged directly charge to the Housing Revenue Account. For the remainder of the investment portfolio, the Council yielded 1.08% and the temporary borrowing was 0.51% so there was no cost of carry on that short-term borrowing overall.

- (e) In response to an enquiry as to the impact on the Council and associated costs of the slippage in the capital programme over the last four or five years, the Committee noted that the main financial impact was the Minimum Revenue Provision, which was the repayment of internal borrowing which impacted on the General Fund and Council Tax. It was also noted that a review of the Council's balance sheet and capital programme had been undertaken approximately four years ago and we identified over the previous three years that although there had been a consistent 64% slippage in the capital programme, it had generally been the same schemes that had been delayed, for example, the Weyside Urban Village scheme. Part of the reason for this was that at the time, the Council did not have some of the delivery mechanisms in place that we have now. This was being addressed and new governance procedures and project management tools had been introduced. The Leader of the Council acknowledged that there had been issues in programme management and that a 64% slippage rate was not acceptable. Whilst a number of the schemes had been particularly complex, the Council was determined to improve performance.
- (f) It was confirmed that the rental income from investment property was £3.1 million and expenditure on repairs and maintenance of £600,000, and in relation to industrial estates we had expenditure of £210,000 against £4.7 million income.

Executive – 24 August 2021

- 15.3 The Executive considered this report at its meeting held on 24 August 2021. The Leader considered that investments for the period had been restrained demonstrating caution and prudence during a challenging period and commended officers for careful budgetary management. The Executive agreed to the removal of the following schemes from the General Fund Capital Programme:

- (1) Guildford Gyrotory and Approaches
- (2) Stoke Park office accommodation
- (3) Stoke Park – Home Farm redevelopment

16. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 16.1 There are no equality and diversity implications

17. Financial Implications

- 17.1 The detailed financial implications are summarised above and in **Appendix 1**.

18. Legal Implications

- 18.1 A variety of professional codes, statutes and guidance regulate the Council's treasury management activities. These are:

- the Local Government Act 2003 ("the Act") provides the powers to borrow and invest. It also imposes controls and limits on these activities

- the Act permits the Secretary of State to set limits on either the Council or nationally on all local authorities restricting the amount of borrowing which may be undertaken. There are no current restrictions
- statutory instrument 3146 (2003 (“The SI”), as amended, develops the controls and powers within the Act
- the SI requires the council to undertake any borrowing with regard to the prudential code. The prudential code requires indicators to be set – some of which are limits – for a minimum of three forthcoming years
- the SI also requires the council to operate the treasury management function with regard to the CIPFA treasury management code of practice
- under the terms of the Act, the Government issued “investment guidance” to structure and regulate the council’s investment activities. The emphasis of the guidance is on the security and liquidity of investments.

19. Human Resource Implications

- 19.1 There are no human resource implications arising from this report other than the training discussed in section 14, which is already in place.

20. Summary of Options

- 20.1 We could have invested in lower credit quality investments, but this would have increased our risk exposure.
- 20.2 We could have borrowed longer-term for our capital programme, but would have suffered a cost of carry due to the slippage in the programme.

21. Conclusion

- 21.1 The Council has complied with the objectives of the CIPFA treasury management code of practice by maintaining the security and liquidity of its investment portfolio.
- 21.2 We maintained the security of our investment portfolio, and did not borrow long-term in advance of need.
- 21.3 We have also complied with the requirements of the prudential code by setting, monitoring and staying within the prudential indicators set, except the variable limit on net investments due to higher investment balances than when the indicator was set.

22. Background Papers

- CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services – Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes (2018 edition)
- CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services – Guidance Notes for Local Authorities including Police Authorities and Fire Authorities (2018 edition)
- CIPFA the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2018 edition)

- CIPFA the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – Guidance Notes for Practitioners (2018 edition)
- Treasury management annual strategy report 2020-21

23. Appendices

Appendix 1: Treasury management activity, treasury and prudential indicators 2020-21

Appendix 2: Investment property fund portfolio report 2020-21

Appendix 3: capital programme

Appendix 4: schedule of investments at 31 March 2021

Appendix 5: economic background – a commentary from Arlingclose

Appendix 6: benchmarking graphs

Appendix 7: credit score analysis

Appendix 8: credit rating equivalents and definitions

Appendix 9: background to externally managed funds

Appendix 10: glossary