



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020 / 2021

COUNCIL

25th November 2020

2020/21 MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP REPORT

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES : Barrie
Davies (01443) 424026**

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires a Mid Year Review to be presented to Council. This report provides Members with information on:-

- The Council's Treasury Management activity during the first six months of 2020/21; and
- Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the same period.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

2.1.1 Note the content of this report.

2.1.2 Note and approve the amended authorised limit and operational boundary indicators as a result of CIPFA delaying the implementation of changes in respect of accounting for leases.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- 3.2 The Treasury Management function operates within the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy, both approved by Council on the 18th March 2020.
- 3.3 Treasury Management is defined as:
“The management of the organisation’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.”
- 3.4 The Council sets a balanced budget to ensure that all planned expenditure is financed by various sources of income / reserves. Treasury Management is concerned with monitoring the cash flows of such income and expenditure and planning investments and borrowing prudently.
- 3.5 This report includes the following areas of treasury activity during the first six months of 2020/21:
- Economic background;
 - Borrowing activity and results;
 - Estimated and actual treasury position, treasury management and prudential indicators; and
 - Investment strategy, activity and results.

4.0 ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

4.1 General Economic Background

- 4.2 The Covid-19 pandemic dominated during the period as countries around the world tried to manage the delicate balancing act of containing transmission of the virus while easing lockdown measures and getting their populations and economies working again. Government initiatives continued to support the economy, with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme keeping almost 10 million workers in jobs, grants and loans to businesses and 100 million discounted meals being claimed during the ‘Eat Out to Help Out’ offer. Discussions on a post-Brexit trade deal continue amid much uncertainty.
- 4.3 The Council’s investment income is subject to changes in short term interest rates. The level of the Bank Base Rate or ‘Bank Rate’ is one of the main determinants of the rate of interest the Council receives on its short-term investments. The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee has maintained the Bank Rate at 0.1% throughout this financial year to date and, in its August 2020 Monetary Report, referred to its challenge to respond to the economic and financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The

Committee considers that the outlook for the UK and global economies remains uncertain, depending on various factors such as the evolution of the pandemic, measures taken to protect public health and how governments, households and businesses respond to these factors.

- 4.4 GDP growth contracted by 19.8% in Qr 2 2020 (April to June) according to the Office for National Statistics, pushing the annual growth rate down to -21.5%. GDP grew 15.5% in Qr 3 (July to September) and year on year growth was down 9.6%. In the 3 months June to August 2020, the unemployment rate had increased to 4.5% (4.1% March to May 2020) with the Bank of England forecasting the rate to be around 7.5% by the end of the year. Real wage growth (that is, after allowing for inflation), excluding bonuses was 0.1% in the three months to August 2020.
- 4.5 The Consumer Price Index (CPI) fell to 0.2% in August 2020, from 0.8% in April 2020, increasing to 0.5% for September 2020. In the Bank of England Monetary report in August 2020, the expectation is that this rate will average around 0.25% in the latter part of the year. This rate is below the Bank of England's target of 2%.
- 4.6 The majority of the Council's borrowing is from the PWLB (Public Works Loans Board). Long-term borrowing rates are influenced by gilt yields and these are expected to remain low in the medium term. Shorter term gilt yields are currently negative and will remain around zero or below until either the Bank of England expressly rules out a negative Bank Rate or growth/inflation prospects improve.
- 4.7 PWLB maturity rates (certainty rate) during the first half of the financial year were as follows:

	5 years	10 years	20 years	50 years
Average	1.81%	2.07%	2.50%	2.33%
Highest	2.00%	2.23%	2.75%	2.65%
Lowest	1.68%	1.94%	2.37%	2.13%

- 4.8 Estimates of future rates are as follows:

	Base Rate	PWLB Maturity Rates			
		5 years	10 years	20 years	50 years
2020/21 (Act 6 mth Average)	0.10%	1.81%	2.07%	2.50%	2.33%
31/03/21	0.10%	1.80%	2.10%	2.40%	2.30%
31/03/22	0.10%	1.95%	2.25%	2.45%	2.35%

5.0 BORROWING ACTIVITY AND RESULTS

- 5.1 The borrowing strategy for 2020/21, approved by Council in March 2020, reported that the Director of Finance and Digital Services, as Section 151 Officer (or in his absence the Deputy Section 151 Officer), under delegated powers, will take the most appropriate form of borrowing depending upon the prevailing interest rates at the time, and taking into account advice provided by our advisors.
- 5.2 In March, the borrowing requirement was estimated to be £29.0m based on the Capital Programme at that time. The borrowing requirement has slightly increased for 2020/21 due to revised delivery timescales, and is now £29.3m as at 30th September 2020.
- 5.3 It was also reported that the Council would monitor prevailing PWLB rates for any opportunities to reschedule debt to generate savings. I can report that to the 30th September this financial year, the Council has not had a viable option to reschedule debt. Affordability and the cost of carry remained important influences on the Council's borrowing strategy. No short-term or long-term borrowing was taken during the first half of 2020/21.
- 5.4 In line with the above strategy, this Council has not borrowed in advance of need during the first 6 months of the year and has no current intention to borrow in advance during the remainder of 2020/21.
- 5.5 There is currently a projected underspend of £250k for net capital charges, as at 30th September 2020, against a budget for 2020/21 of £19.7m.

6.0 CERTAINTY RATE

- 6.1 The "certainty rate", whereby local authorities are able to access borrowing at 0.2% below published PWLB rates was available from HM Treasury again for this year. Authorities were required to provide an indication of their potential borrowing requirements for the next 3 years. This Council provided such information to HM Treasury and will continue to be able to access the discounted rate up to 31st October 2021.

7.0 ESTIMATED AND ACTUAL TREASURY POSITION AND PRUDENTIAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

- 7.1 The accounting changes for leases has been delayed, in line with CIPFA guidance, from a planned 2020/21 implementation to 2021/22. The changes require local authorities to recognise previously unrecognised leased assets and corresponding liabilities on the Balance Sheet. As a result, the revised estimates in the indicators below do not include lease liabilities affected by the accounting changes for 2020/21.
- 7.2 Consequently, it is recommended that Members agree revised values for 2020/21 with regards to the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary as follows:

The Authorised Limit

	2020/21 Limit approved 18/03/20 £M	2020/21 Revised Limit £M
Gross Borrowing Limit	530.000	530.000
Other Long Term Liabilities	8.100	2.000
Authorised Limit	538.100	532.000

The Operational Boundary

	2020/21 Boundary approved 18/03/20 £M	2020/21 Revised Boundary £M
Gross Borrowing Limit	425.000	425.000
Other Long Term Liabilities	2.877	1.000
Operational Boundary	427.877	426.000

During the six months to 30th September 2020, the Council operated within its prudential limits set out in the Prudential Code report approved by Council in March 2020 and subsequently revised in 7.2 above. Details of limits and actual performance are as follows:

7.3 Capital Expenditure and the Capital Financing Requirement

7.3.1 The Capital Expenditure plans of the Council are primarily financed by capital receipts and capital grants. The remaining element which cannot be immediately financed from other resources will constitute our borrowing requirement. The estimated level of available capital resources is provided in summary as the Capital Expenditure Indicator below.

Indicator: Capital Expenditure

	2020/21 Original Estimate £M	2020/21 Projected Outturn £M	2021/22 Revised Estimate £M	2022/23 Revised Estimate £M
Supported spend	69.576	106.167	32.902	19.597
Unsupported spend	22.139	22.520	9.752	0.024
Total spend	91.715	128.687	42.654	19.621
Financed by:-				
Borrowing	28.968	29.349	16.581	6.853
Other Capital Resources (Grants, Capital Receipts)	62.747	99.338	26.073	12.768

7.3.2 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) represents the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. The CFR is capital expenditure that has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources.

7.3.3 The Council's expectation for the CFR for the next three years is shown below.

Indicator: Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

	2020/21 31/03/21 Original Estimate £M	31/03/21 Projected Outturn £M	2021/22 31/03/22 Revised Estimate £M	2022/23 31/03/23 Revised Estimate £M
CFR	515.651	509.276	513.357	505.160
Net movement in CFR			4.081	(8.197)

7.3.4 The expected external debt for each year is as detailed below.

Indicator: External Debt

	30/09/20 Actuals £M	2020/21 31/03/21 Original Estimate £M	2020/21 31/03/21 Revised Estimate £M	2021/22 31/03/22 Revised Estimate £M	2022/23 31/03/23 Revised Estimate £M
Borrowing	320.436	417.226	430.226	499.807	497.842
Other long term liabilities	0.437	2.460	0.583	2.460	2.178
Total External Debt	320.873	419.686	430.809	502.267	500.020

7.3.5 Other Long Term Liabilities represents the Council's obligation under its finance leases.

8.0 LIMITS TO BORROWING ACTIVITY

8.1 The first key control over the Council's activity is to ensure that, over the medium term, borrowing will only be for a capital purpose. The Council needs to ensure that external borrowing does not exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimate of the additional capital financing requirement for the next three financial years. This allows some flexibility within a three-year period to deliver an effective Treasury Management strategy.

Borrowing Activity (Gross Borrowing)

	2020/21 30/09/20 Actuals £M	2020/21 31/03/21 Original Estimate £M	2020/21 31/03/21 Revised Estimate £M	2021/22 31/03/22 Revised Estimate £M	2022/23 31/03/23 Revised Estimate £M
Gross Borrowing (inc. Other Long Term Liabilities)	320.873	419.686	430.809	502.267	500.020
Capital Financing Requirement		515.651	509.276	513.357	505.160

- 8.2 The Authorised Limit represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited, and needs to be set, monitored and revised by Members. It reflects the maximum level of borrowing to fund existing capital commitments, which could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable. It is the expected maximum borrowing need, with some added headroom for unexpected movements. It is proposed that these limits be amended in line with increases to the underlying need to borrow, that is, the Capital Financing Requirement.

Indicator: The Authorised Limit

	2020/21 30/09/20 Actuals £M	2020/21 Limit (Revised) £M	2021/22 Limit £M	2022/23 Limit £M
Gross Borrowing	320.436	530.000	530.000	530.000
Other long term liabilities	0.437	2.000	9.300	10.000
Authorised Limit	320.873	532.000	539.300	540.000

- 8.3 The Operational Boundary is based on the probable external debt during the course of the year; actual borrowing could vary around this boundary, for short times, during the year. It should act as an indicator to ensure the Authorised Limit is not breached.

Indicator: The Operational Boundary

	2020/21 30/09/20 Actuals £M	2020/21 Estimate (Revised) £M	2021/22 Estimate £M	2022/23 Estimate £M
Gross Borrowing Limit	320.436	425.000	455.000	470.000

Other long term liabilities	0.437	1.000	2.595	2.281
Operational Boundary	320.873	426.000	457.595	472.281

9.0 **AFFORDABILITY PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

- 9.1 Previous sections have covered overall capital and control of borrowing indicators, but there is also a requirement to assess the affordability of capital investment plans. This provides an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the overall Council finances.
- 9.2 The Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing costs net of interest and investment income) against the "net revenue stream". The net revenue stream for the General Fund is the amount collectable from Council Tax payers added to the Council's Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non Domestic Rates (NDR). The key use of this indicator is to compare trends in the ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream, over time.

Indicator: Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

	2020/21 Original Estimate	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Revised Estimate	2022/23 Revised Estimate
General Fund	5.11%	4.98%	5.38%	5.48%

- 9.3 A LOBO is a financial instrument called a "Lender's Option Borrower's Option". It provides a lower rate of interest for the initial period and a higher rate for the rest of its term (reversionary period), albeit that the higher rate was comparable with interest rates prevailing at the time the loans were taken. At the end of the initial period and at six monthly intervals, the lender has the option to increase the interest rate payable. This provides the Council with the option to repay the loan if the terms are not acceptable. It is the view of our Treasury Management Advisors that it is unlikely the LOBO's will be called within this financial year.
- 9.4 The revised amount of LOBO debt held in 2020/21 is £31m, 10% of total debt as at 30th September. Although not a requirement of the Prudential Code, an internal limit of LOBO debt is set as follows:

	£M	% of Debt Portfolio
LOBO Limits	50	20

- 9.5 The maturity structure indicator sets gross limits to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing annually. The Code of Practice requires LOBO's to be represented in the maturity structure

at the next option date, hence the table below demonstrates a high maturity within 12 months.

Indicator: Maturity Structure

	2020/21 Actuals as at 30/09/20	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	13%	70%	0%
12 months to 2 years	4%	70%	0%
2 years to 5 years	10%	60%	0%
5 years to 10 years	16%	70%	0%
10 years to 20 years	6%	90%	0%
20 years to 30 years	0%	90%	0%
30 years to 40 years	51%	90%	0%
40 years to 50 years	0%	90%	0%

9.6 In order to maximise investment returns there could be opportunities for sums to be invested for longer than one year. This would only be undertaken with a prudent view of the primary considerations of security and liquidity.

10.0 FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS

10.1 The Investment Strategy enables lending to organisations upon which we undertake appropriate due diligence and put in place appropriate security arrangements. Such loans could result in the Council being able to achieve better investment returns at an acceptable level of risk and to secure base budget savings over the short to medium term to protect frontline services.

10.2 These investment decisions are classed as “Financial Investments” and are subject to S151 officer determination, following appropriate due diligence and subject to appropriate and acceptable security arrangements being in place as part of the commercial agreement.

10.3 The maximum exposure for this type of investment is set at £25m with a maximum maturity limit of 30 years.

10.4 During 2020/21, a 25 year loan agreement of up to £5m was entered into with Cynon Taf Community Housing Group. This is treated as a financial investment and is in line with the Council’s Investment Strategy. The record of delegated officer decision can be found [here](#).

10.5 The total amount of loan provided and outstanding as at 30th September is £2.5m.

10.6 Such transactions will be included in the indicators reported as part of the quarterly performance reports and statutory Treasury Management Reports.

Indicator: Total principal funds invested for periods longer than 1 year:

	Limit	30/09/20 Actual
Maximum principal sums invested over 1 year	£25m	£6.65m

10.7 The £6.65m represents a 10-year loan to Trivallis of £4.25m (£4.5m outstanding, £0.25m of which to be repaid within 12 months), and the Cynon Taf Housing Community Group loan of £2.4m (£2.5m outstanding, £0.1m of which to be repaid within 12 months).

10.8 For measuring the Council's exposure to interest rate risk, the following table shows the revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates (based on borrowing and investments as at 30th September 2020):

Interest Rate Risk	Impact £M
One year revenue impact of a 1% rise/fall in interest rates	0.263

11.0 INVESTMENT STRATEGY, ACTIVITY & RESULTS

11.1 The Council manages its investments in-house, investing in line with the Council's approved lender criteria as approved by Council on the 18th March 2020.

11.2 Members will recall that following the onset of the unprecedented national and international economic crisis in 2008, all of this Council's cash flows are currently being invested in the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility and other Government backed public sector bodies, in line with the aforementioned approved strategy. This strategy ensures we prioritise **Security** (protecting monies invested), then **Liquidity** (cashflow) and finally **Yield** (return on investment). The order of these "SLY" priorities are detailed in Investment Guidance produced by the Welsh Government.

11.3 I have kept this under constant review subsequently with a view to returning to market investment activity at an appropriate time. To date, the Council has not returned to market investments. Members will be kept informed of any changes as part of the Council's quarterly performance reports.

11.4 The following table shows the overall result of the investment activities undertaken by the Council:

	Interest Received £M	Average Cash Balance £M	Return on Investments %	Benchmark Return %
General Balances	0.021	37.77	0.06	-0.05

The benchmark for Local Authority internally managed funds is the average 7-day LIBID rate.

11.5 The Council also holds non-specified investments in Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Ltd, trading as Amgen Cymru Ltd and Amgen Rhondda Ltd. These are shown in the Council's 2019/20 balance sheet as £3.017m, under "Investments in Subsidiaries".

11.6 The Council also holds non-financial investments.

- Non-financial commercial investment in Ty Dysgu, Cefn Coed Business Park, Nantgarw.
- 2 investments in non-financial and "other investments relevant to Council functions". 50-53 Taff St Pontypridd and Unit 1 Cambrian Industrial Estate, Clydach Vale.

12.0 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ADVISORS

12.1 The Council appointed Arlingclose as its Treasury Management Advisors during March 2019 and they continue to support the Council's Treasury Management function.

13.0 TRAINING

13.1 Officers have attended webinars hosted by Arlingclose which provide an overview of the economic environment and investment advice. A virtual online strategy meeting has also been held between Arlingclose and officers in July. Officers continue to receive interest rate information, economic data, credit ratings and general market environment information on a regular basis. All Elected Members were invited to a virtual training event facilitated by Arlingclose on 19th October 2020.

14.0 MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP)

14.1 In accordance with legislative requirements applicable to local government (Local Government Act 2003), there is a requirement to charge an amount to revenue each year in respect of capital expenditure that is funded by borrowing. This charge is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and must be a prudent amount in accordance with Welsh Government Statutory Guidance.

14.2 The method of charging MRP for Supported Borrowing is a straight line policy over 40 years. With regard to finance leases MRP is equivalent to the principal value of repayments. With regard to the method of charging MRP to Council Fund Balances in respect of Unsupported Borrowing only, the method used is dependent upon the type of asset being created as set out in the approved MRP Policy statement approved by Council on the 18th March 2020.

15.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The report provides an overview of the Council's Treasury Management activities during the first six months of 2020/21 in line with the Treasury Management and Capital Strategies approved by Council in March 2020. As a result, no Equality Impact Assessment is required for the purposes of this report.

16.0 CONSULTATION

16.1 Following consideration by Council, this report will be presented to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee in line with the laid down code of practice "CIPFA Treasury management in the Public Services 2017" and also the Terms of Reference for this Committee.

17.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

17.1 The financial results / implications of the Council's Treasury Management arrangements during the first six months of 2020/21 have been incorporated into quarterly Performance Reports during the year.

18.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

18.1 The report ensures the Council complies with its legal duty under the Local Government Act 2003 and in doing so is in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

19.0 LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

19.1 This report evidences the progress made in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24 – 'Making a Difference' in particular through supporting the 'Living Within Our Means' theme by pursuing optimum treasury management performance or return at the same time as managing associated risk.

19.2 The report also supports the Well-being of Future Generations Act in particular 'a globally responsible Wales' through responsible management and investment of the Council's resources.

20.0 CONCLUSION

20.1 The 2020/21 financial year continues to be a challenging year for Treasury Management and this report highlights for Members the Treasury Management activities that have been undertaken between April and September 2020.

Other information:

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL 25TH NOVEMBER 2020

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES

**Item: 2020/21 MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP
REPORT**

Background Papers

- 18th March 2020 Council meeting – Reports:
 - Treasury Management Strategy Incorporating Investment Strategy, Treasury Management Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2020/21.
 - 2020/21 Capital Strategy Report Incorporating Prudential Indicators.

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