TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICE NOTES

TMP 1 – RISK MANAGEMENT

General Statement

The Section 151 Officer will oversee the design, implementation and monitoring of all arrangements for the identification, management and control of treasury management risk. The Section 151 Officer will ensure that reports are presented at least annually, on the adequacy/suitability thereof and will report, as a matter of urgency, the circumstances of any actual or likely difficulty in achieving the Council's objectives.

In respect of each of the following risks, the arrangements that seek to ensure compliance with these objectives are set out in this document and take into account the risk appetite statement in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement, available via the following link:

http://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/24169/Treasury-Management-Strategy

This document is integral to the Council's treasury management practices and all staff involved in treasury management activities should familiarise themselves with its contents.

[1] Credit and Counter party risk management

This risk is the risk of a third party failing to meet its contractual obligations (for example, to pay any investment money or interest back in full, on time)

Statutory guidance restricts the types of investments that local authorities can use and forms the structure of the Council's policy, which is contained in the Council's treasury management strategy.

The Council's key objective is to invest prudently, giving priority to security, then liquidity before yield.

The Council also has regard to the CIPFA publications Treasury Management in Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes and the sector specific guidance; Guidance Notes for Local Authorities including Police Authorities and Fire Authorities.

The Council adopted the revised 2011 TM Code in February 2012 and ensures that its counter party lists and limits;

- reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations with whom funds may be deposited, and
- limit its investment activities to the instruments, methods and techniques referred to in TMP4 and in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, published at the link above.

The Council also maintains a formal counter party policy in respect of those organisations from which it may borrow, or with whom it may enter into other financing or derivative arrangements. This is contained within the Council's Treasury management policy statement and approved each year by the Council.

Monitoring Investment Counterparties

The assessment of credit worthiness or credit rating of investment counterparties will be monitored regularly.

The Council obtains credit rating information from its treasury advisers who monitor all 3 credit ratings (FITCH, Moody's and Standard and Poor's), and notify the Council of any changes in ratings as they occur. This includes and takes account of changes, ratings watches and rating outlooks as necessary.

The Council has established counterparty limits by sector and credit rating and compliance with these limits is reviewed before any investment decision is made.

In considering credit rating, the lowest rating issued by three main agencies (above) is used, unless an investment-specific rating is available when this will be used.

The Council considers other possible sources of information available to assess the credit worthiness of counterparties. This includes information direct from brokers, the Financial Times, news agencies and its treasury advisers monitoring the Credit Default Swaps (CDS) market.

On occasions ratings may be downgraded after an investment has been made, however, the criteria used are such that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest.

Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria or due to adverse information in the public domain, will be removed from the approved list immediately by the Section 151 Officer, and if required new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.

[2] Liquidity Risk Management

This risk is the risk that cash will not be available when needed

The Council ensures it has adequate though not excessive cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdraft facilities to enable it at all times to have a level of funds available to it which are necessary for the achievement of its business/service objectives.

The Council will only borrow in advance of need where there is a clear business case for doing so and will only do so for the current capital programme.

To maintain flexibility and liquidity the Council determines a maximum amount of principal that can be invested for periods longer than 364 days and closely monitors known future cash demands. The Council has also set an operational boundary for external debt that can be used on a short term basis for daily cash management purposes.

[3] Interest rate risk management

This risk is the risk of fluctuations in interest rates creating unexpected and unbudgeted burdens on Council finances

The Council will manage its exposure to fluctuations in interest rates with a view to containing its interest costs, or securing its interest revenues, in accordance with the amounts provided in its budgetary arrangements as amended in accordance with TMP6 (Reporting requirements and managing information arrangements).

The effects of varying levels of inflation, so far as they can be identified, will be controlled by the Council as an integral part of its strategy for managing its exposure to inflation.

It will achieve this by the prudent use of its approved financing and investment instruments, methods and techniques, to create stability and certainty of costs and revenues, whilst retaining a sufficient degree of flexibility to take advantage of unexpected, potentially advantageous changes in the level or structure of interest rates.

To achieve this objective the following specific policies are followed:

- maintaining the Council’s debt free position and undertake no new borrowing unless the business case is proven for ‘invest to save’ projects
- retaining an appropriate minimum level of reserves in order to maintain flexibility in the use of interest earned from deposits
- lending surplus funds only to approved counterparties as specified by the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy
- minimising short term borrowing by efficient cash flow management
- ensuring that the use of any hedging tools such as derivatives are only used for the management of risk and prudent management of the financial affairs of the council, as set out in the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy

[4] Exchange rate Risk Management

The Council does not invest in foreign denominations but does occasionally make payments to foreign suppliers. In so doing we will manage our exposure to fluctuations in exchange rates to minimise any detrimental impact on budgeted income expenditure levels.

Any large contracts let by the Council must be denominated in £Sterling and the Section 151 Officer consulted on any proposed departure from this policy.

[5] Refinancing risk management

The Council ensures that any borrowing, private financing and partnership arrangements are negotiated, structured and documented, and the maturity profile of the monies are managed, with a view to obtaining offer terms for renewal or refinancing, which are competitive and as favourable to the Council as can reasonably be achieved in the light of market conditions prevailing at the time.

The Council will actively manage its relationship with counter parties in these transactions in such a manner as to secure this objective, and will avoid over reliance on any one source of funding if this might jeopardise achievement of the above.