

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Council
2.	Date:	4th March, 2015
3.	Title:	Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18
4.	Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

In accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, the Secretary of State's Guidance on Local Government Investments, CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities and with Council policy, the Director of Financial Services is required, prior to the commencement of each financial year to seek the approval of the Council to the following:

- i. The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2015/16 to 2017/18 (Appendix A)
- ii. A Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement which sets out the Council's policy on MRP (Appendix A)
- iii. An Annual Treasury Management Strategy in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management including the Authorised Limit (Appendix B)
- iv. An Investment Strategy in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) investment guidance (Appendix B)

Albeit a technical and complex report the key messages for Audit Committee are:

- a. Investments – the primary governing principle will remain **security** over return and the criteria for selecting counterparties reflect this. Cash available for investment will remain low, resulting in low returns.
- b. Borrowing – overall, this will remain fairly constant over the period covered by this report and the Council will remain under-borrowed against its borrowing requirement due to the higher cost of carrying debt. New borrowing will only be taken up as debt matures.
- c. Governance – strategies are reviewed by the Audit Committee with continuous monitoring which includes Mid-Year and Year End reporting.

6. Recommendations

That Council:-

1. **Approve the prudential indicators and limits for 2015/16 to 2017/18 contained in Appendix A to the report**
2. **Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement contained in Appendix A which sets out the Council's policy on MRP**
3. **Approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 to 2017/18 and the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator (Appendix B)**
4. **Approve the Investment Strategy for 2015/16 to 2017/18 (Appendix B – Section (e) and Annex B1)**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals. These reports are prepared in order to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities, and CLG Investment Guidance.

Prior to the commencement of each financial year the Director of Financial Services, who has delegated authority to carry out treasury management activities on behalf of the Council, is required to seek the approval of the Council to the **Prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy**. This report, the first, and most important report covers:

- the capital expenditure plans (including prudential indicators);
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how capital expenditure funded by borrowing is charged to revenue over time);
- the treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).

The other reports submitted to Members are:

- **A mid year treasury management report** – This will update Members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether any policies require revision.
- **An annual treasury report** – This will provide details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Scrutiny

Reports on Treasury matters are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to the Council and this role is undertaken by Audit Committee.

The Council's 2014/15 Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management and Investment Strategy was approved by Council on 5 March 2014, whilst a Mid-Year report which updated the 2014/15 approved indicators was approved by Council on 28 January 2015. This report provides an update for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17 and introduces new indicators and forecasts for 2017/18.

Sections 7.2 to 7.4 of the report summarise the key elements of the Council's Capital Expenditure Plans & Prudential Indicators and the Treasury Strategy (including the Investment Strategy) which require Council approval. Supporting detail is provided in the Appendices.

Appendix A sets the background to the prudential indicators relating to the Council's capital expenditure plans, the capital financing requirement and affordability generally. In addition the proposed MRP Statement is also included in this Appendix.

Appendix B sets out the Treasury Management Strategy (including the Investment Strategy). Within the overall prudential framework there is a clear impact on the Council's treasury management activity, either through borrowing or investment activity. Some prudential indicators are therefore shown in the Treasury Management Strategy to aid understanding together with the limits on Treasury activity.

The Strategy has been drawn up in association with the Council's treasury management advisors, Capita Asset Services, part of The Capita Group plc.

This is a technical and complex report however the key messages are:

- a. Investments – the primary governing principle will remain **security** over return and the criteria for selecting counterparties reflect this. Cash available for investment will remain low, resulting in low returns.
- b. Borrowing – overall, this will remain fairly constant over the period covered by this report and the Council will remain under-borrowed against the borrowing requirement due to the higher cost of carrying debt. New borrowing will only be taken up as debt matures.
- c. Governance – strategies are reviewed by the Audit Committee with continuous monitoring which includes the Mid-Year and Year End reporting.

7.2 Prudential Indicators

7.2.1 Indicators for Capital Expenditure, the Capital Financing Requirement & Affordability

The Prudential Indicators included in the Prudential Code and submitted for approval are summarised as:

RMBC	2014/15 Revised	2015/16 Estimated	2016/17 Estimated	2017/18 Estimated
Capital Expenditure	£78.894m	£70.024m	£46.410m	£37.453m
Capital financing requirement	£747.671m	£769.543m	£762.782m	£752.041m
Authorised limit for external debt (RMBC)	£774.798m	£787.924m	£776.462m	£764.208m
Operational boundary for external debt (RMBC)	£601.489m	£620.923m	£619.258m	£629.892m
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – Non HRA	8.67%	8.24%	8.54%	8.14%
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – HRA	17.28%	16.07%	15.74%	15.51%
Incremental impact of capital expenditure plans on the Band D Council Tax	£7.10	£7.55	£12.54	£0.64
Incremental impact of capital expenditure plans on housing rents levels	£0.06	£0.04	£0.00	£0.00

It should be noted that only schemes in the Council's approved capital programme are included in the indicators as listed and that there may be further schemes pending approval. Any additional approvals will normally have to be funded from unsupported borrowing as all identified available resources have been allocated. This would impact on the prudential indicators above.

It should further be noted that the impact on Band D Council Tax, as shown in the table above, indicates the impact of the Council's capital expenditure plans as already budgeted for within the proposed Revenue Budget for 2015/16 and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, **and does not indicate additional requirements of Rotherham council tax payers.**

For the Former South Yorkshire County Council the Prudential Indicators included in the Prudential Code and submitted for approval are summarised as:

Former SYCC	2014/15 Revised	2015/16 Estimated	2016/17 Estimated	2017/18 Estimated
Authorised limit for external debt (Former SYCC)	£96.121m	£96.121m	£86.709m	£76.709m
Operational boundary for external debt (Former SYCC)	£96.121m	£96.121m	£86.709m	£76.709m

7.2.2 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and Limits on Activity

There are four treasury prudential indicators, the purpose of which is to contain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of an adverse movement in interest rates. The indicators submitted for approval are shown below.

The limits for interest rate exposures are consistent with those approved within the Mid-Year report on the 2014/15 Strategy; in line with the requirements of the new Code the maturity profile has been updated and extended; and the investment limits beyond 364 days have been maintained to reflect the continued investment strategy.

RMBC	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Interest rate Exposures			
	Upper	Upper	Upper
Limits on fixed interest rate debt based on fixed net debt	100%	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rate debt based on variable net debt	30%	30%	30%

RMBC Maturity Structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2015/16		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	35%
12 months to 2 years	0%	35%
2 years to 5 years	0%	40%
5 years to 10 years	0%	40%
10 years to 20 years	0%	45%
20 years to 30 years	0%	50%
30 years to 40 years	0%	50%
40 years to 50 years	0%	55%
50 years and above	0%	60%

RMBC Maximum Funds invested > 364 days			
	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	3 to 5 years
Funds invested > 364 days	£m 10	£m 8	£m 6

Former SYCC	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Interest Rate Exposures			
	Upper	Upper	Upper
Limits on fixed interest rates based on net debt	100%	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rates based on net debt	30%	30%	30%

Maturity Structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2015/16		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	50%
12 months to 2 years	0%	70%
2 years to 5 years	0%	100%
5 years to 6 years	0%	100%

7.3 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

Communities & Local Government Regulations require Full Council to approve a Minimum Revenue Provision Statement in advance of each financial year. The policy put forward for approval is as follows:-

- (a) The MRP charge in relation to borrowing for capital expenditure incurred prior to 2007/08 will be unaffected by the regulations;
- (b) The MRP charge in relation to capital expenditure incurred since 2007/08 where the expenditure is funded by either supported or unsupported borrowing will be calculated using the expected useful life of the asset at the point the asset is brought into use. The calculation of the provision will be either the annuity method or the equal instalments method depending on which is most appropriate; and

- (c) The MRP charge in relation to capital expenditure incurred since 2007/08 where the expenditure is funded by a 'capitalisation directive' (e.g. equal pay) will be calculated on the basis of the specified period(s) set down within the regulations. The calculation of the provision will be either the annuity method or the equal instalments method depending on which is most appropriate.

7.4 Review of the Currently Approved Investment Strategy

The Council's investment policy's continuing primary governing principle is the **security** of its investments, although yield or return on investments is also a consideration.

Current operational guidelines have enhanced the weighting towards 'security' at the expense of yield or return. Although seeking to minimise investment default risk, it does not eliminate it. Eliminating risk altogether is only possible if the Council only invested any surplus funds with the Bank of England's Debt Management Office (DMO).

The above was also reinforced within the currently approved strategy by tightening the criteria for choosing counterparties. We continue to operate the treasury management guidelines well within the boundaries set by the approved selection criteria so as to minimise the risks inherent in operating a treasury management function during challenging global economic and financial conditions. To this end, the Council has continued to invest any surplus funds primarily with the Bank of England's Debt Management Office.

In addition, investment levels over the last 12 months have remained low as market conditions still dictate that it continues to be prudent to defer borrowing plans and to fund on-going capital expenditure commitments through the use of the Council's internal cash-backed resources.

Actual returns on investment opportunities remain subdued when compared to the years prior to 2008 but the revenue impact has been effectively and prudently managed by also significantly reducing expected capital financing costs by delaying borrowing plans. This has enabled the Council to stay within its capital financing budget cash limit and for budget savings to be put forward in support of both the Council's 2014/15 and 2015/16 revenue budget. This is a significant achievement given the prevailing economic and financial conditions.

Counterparty List – At the present time the Council’s counterparty list for investments uses the following criteria:

	Fitch	Moody’s	Standard & Poor’s	Money Limit	Time Limit
Upper Limit Category	F1+/AA-	P-1/Aa3	A-1+/AA-	£20m	5 years
Middle Limit Category	F1/A-	P-1/A3	A-1/A-	£10m	364 days
Lower Limit Category *	All Building Soc’s ranked 1 to 10 All Building Soc’s ranked 11 to 20			£5m £1m	6 months 3 months
Debt Management Office	-	-	-	Unlimited **	6 months
Money Market Funds ***	-	-	-	£20m	n/a
UK Single Tier & County Councils	-	-	-	£20m	5 years
The Council’s Bankers	-	-	-	£10m	364 days

The above money limits are exclusive of bank balances held by schools

* Based on maximum of 20% of the investment portfolio

** Provides maximum flexibility

*** Based on maximum of 20% of the investment portfolio

Taking into account the current market conditions and future economic and financial outlook, whilst retaining sufficient flexibility to react to changing market conditions, it is proposed to retain the currently approved criteria.

In essence, the counterparty list provides the Council with the opportunity to maximise security of any invested funds by allowing all funds to be placed with the DMO and UK Single Tier and County Councils and reducing the maximum level and time of investments that can be placed with financial institutions that do not meet all the upper limit credit rating criteria.

8. Finance

Treasury Management forms an integral part of the Council’s overall financial arrangements.

The assumptions supporting the capital financing budget for 2015/16 and for the future years covered by the MTFS of the Council have been reviewed in light of the current economic and financial conditions and the revised future years’ capital programme.

The proposed Treasury Management and Investment Strategy is not forecasted to have any further revenue consequences other than those identified and planned for in both the Council’s 2015/16 Revenue Budget and approved MTFS.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The proposed Treasury Management and Investment Strategy seeks to minimise the risks inherent in operating a Treasury Management function during these difficult economic and financial conditions.

Operational Treasury Management guidelines will continue to be kept in place and reviewed to ensure they are appropriate given the circumstances faced, supported by regular monitoring to ensure that any risks and uncertainties are addressed at an early stage and hence kept to a minimum.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Effective Treasury Management will assist in delivering the Councils' policy and performance agenda.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Audit Committee – 5 February & 19 November 2014, 18 February 2015

Cabinet – 26 February & 17 December 2014

Council – 5 March 2013 & 28 January 2015

CIPFA – The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities

CIPFA – Treasury Management in the Public Services – Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes

CIPFA – Treasury Management in the Public Services – Guidance Notes for Local Authorities including Police Authorities and Fire Authorities

CLG Investment Guidance – March 2010

The Local Government Act 2003

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CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLANS & PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2015/16 TO 2017/18

Introduction

1. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code and prepare and publish prudential indicators. Each indicator either summarises the expected activity or introduces limits upon the activity, and reflects the underlying capital programme. This report updates currently approved indicators and introduces new indicators for 2017/18.
2. Within this overall prudential framework there is a clear impact on the Council's treasury management activity, either through borrowing or investment activity. As a consequence the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 to 2017/18 is included as Appendix B to complement these indicators. Some of the prudential indicators are shown in the Treasury Management Strategy to aid understanding.

The Capital Expenditure Plans

3. The Council's capital expenditure plans are summarised below and this forms the first of the prudential indicators. A certain level of capital expenditure is grant supported by the Government; any decisions by the Council to spend above this level will be considered unsupported capital expenditure. This unsupported capital expenditure needs to have regard to:
 - Service objectives (e.g. strategic planning);
 - Stewardship of assets (e.g. asset management planning);
 - Value for money (e.g. option appraisal)
 - Prudence and sustainability (e.g. implications for external borrowing and whole life costing);
 - Affordability (e.g. implications for the council tax and rents)
 - Practicality (e.g. the achievability of the forward plan).
4. The revenue consequences of capital expenditure, particularly the unsupported expenditure, will need to be paid for from the Council's own revenue resources.
5. This capital expenditure can be paid for immediately (by applying capital resources such as capital receipts, capital grants etc., or revenue resources), but if these resources are insufficient any residual expenditure will add to the Council's borrowing need.

6. The key risks to the plans are that the level of Government support has been estimated and is therefore subject to change. Similarly some of estimates for other sources of funding, such as capital receipts, may also be subject to change over this timescale. For example, anticipated asset sales resulting from the Council's on-going asset rationalisation programme may be deferred due to the on-going impact of the current economic & financial conditions on the property market.
7. The Council is asked to approve the summary capital expenditure projections below. This forms the first prudential indicator:

	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
Children & Young People's Services	11.419	9.736	2.694	0.000
Env & Dev Services	27.484	21.863	5.929	0.000
Neighbourhoods & Adult Services – Non HRA	5.230	4.908	3.650	2.820
Resources	2.753	0.671	1.283	0.706
Total Non-HRA	46.886	37.178	13.556	3.526
HRA	32.008	32.846	32.854	33.927
Total HRA	32.008	32.846	32.854	33.927
Total expenditure	78.894	70.024	46.410	37.453
Capital receipts	6.236	1.649	1.100	1.100
Capital grants, capital contributions & sources other capital funding	62.396	48.559	39.817	34.927
Total financing	68.632	50.208	40.917	36.027
Net financing need for the year	10.262	19.816	5.493	1.426

8. Other long term liabilities - the above financing need excludes other long-term liabilities, such as PFI and leasing arrangements which already include borrowing instruments.

The Capital Financing Requirement (the Council's Borrowing Need)

9. The second prudential indicator is the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is simply the total outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. The capital expenditure above which has not immediately been paid for will increase the CFR.

10. Following accounting changes the CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. PFI schemes) brought onto the balance sheet. Whilst this increases the CFR, and therefore the Council's borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a "borrowing facility" and so the Council is not required to separately borrow for this scheme. It is estimated the Council will have £137.602m within the CFR at 1 April 2015 in respect of such schemes.

11. The Council is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
CFR – General Fund	442.088	463.098	456.337	445.596
CFR – HRA	305.583	306.445	306.445	306.445
Total CFR	747.671	769.543	762.782	752.041
Movement in CFR	-1.779	21.872	-6.761	-10.741
Movement in CFR represented by:				
Net financing need for the year (above)	10.262	19.816	5.493	1.426
Net financing need for the year (OLTL - Waste PFI)	0.000	13.518	0.000	0.000
Less General Fund MRP/VRP and other financing movements	-12.041	-11.462	-12.254	-12.167
Movement in CFR	-1.779	21.872	-6.761	-10.741

MRP Policy Statement

12. The Council is required to pay off an element of the accumulated General Fund capital spend each year through a revenue charge (the Minimum Revenue Provision - MRP). In addition, it is also allowed to make additional voluntary payments (VRP) where it is prudent to do so.

13. CLG Regulations require Full Council to approve an MRP Statement in advance of each year. Detailed rules have been replaced by a single duty to charge an amount of MRP which the Council considers 'prudent'. The Director of Financial Services will, where it is prudent to do so, use discretion to review the overall financing of the capital programme and the opportunities afforded by the regulations to maximise the benefit to the Council whilst ensuring it meets its duty to charge a 'prudent' provision. To provide maximum flexibility into the future the recommended MRP policy has been amended to include the use of the annuity method in addition to the equal instalments method.

The Council is recommended to approve the following MRP policy in relation to the charge for the 2015/16 financial year:

- (a) The MRP charge in relation to borrowing for capital expenditure incurred prior to 2007/08 will be unaffected by the regulations;
- (b) The MRP charge in relation to capital expenditure incurred since 2007/08 where the expenditure is funded by either supported or unsupported borrowing will be calculated using the expected useful life of the asset at the point the asset is brought into use. The calculation of the provision will be either the annuity method or the equal instalments method depending on which is most appropriate; and
- (c) The MRP charge in relation to capital expenditure incurred since 2007/08 where the expenditure is funded by a 'capitalisation directive' (e.g. equal pay) will be calculated on the basis of the specified period(s) set down within the regulations. The calculation of the provision will be either the annuity method or the equal instalments method depending on which is most appropriate.

14. No MRP charge is currently required for the HRA. The HRA charges depreciation on its assets, which is a revenue charge. To alleviate the impact of this charge falling on the tenants, HRA regulations allow the Major Repairs Allowance to be used as a proxy for depreciation for the first five years under self-financing (up until 2017/18).

15. Repayments included in annual PFI or finance leases are applied as MRP.

Affordability Prudential Indicators

16. The previous sections cover those prudential indicators that are used to monitor the impact the capital expenditure plans has on the Council's borrowing position.

17. Within this framework prudential indicators are used to assess the affordability of the capital expenditure plans. Further indicators are used to provide an indication of the impact the capital expenditure plans has on the overall Council's finances. The Council is asked to approve the following indicators.

18. **Actual and Estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream** – This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream of the Council.

19. The estimates of financing costs include all current commitments, the proposals contained in the proposed 2015/16 Revenue Budget and updated future years' capital expenditure plans.

Ratio of financing costs to Net Revenue Stream				
	2014/15 Revised %	2015/16 Estimated %	2016/17 Estimated %	2017/18 Estimated %
Non-HRA	8.67	8.24	8.54	8.14
HRA	17.28	16.07	15.74	15.51

20. **Estimates of the incremental impact of capital expenditure plans on the Council Tax** – This indicator identifies the revenue costs associated with proposed changes to the capital programme compared to the Council's existing commitments and current plans.

Only schemes in the Council's approved capital programme are included in the indicators and there may be further schemes pending approval. Any additional approvals will normally have to be funded from unsupported borrowing as all identified available resources have been allocated. This would impact on the prudential indicators above.

The impact on Band D Council Tax, as shown in the table below, indicates the impact of the Council's capital expenditure plans as already budgeted for within the proposed Revenue Budget for 2015/16 and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, **and does not indicate additional requirements of Rotherham council tax payers.**

Incremental impact of capital expenditure plans on the Band D Council Tax				
	Revised 2014/15 £	Proposed Budget 2015/16 £	Projection 2016/17 £	Projection 2017/18 £
Council Tax – Band D	7.10	7.55	12.54	0.64

21. **Estimates of the incremental impact of capital expenditure plans on Housing Rent levels** – Similar to the Council tax calculation, this indicator identifies the revenue cost of proposed changes in the housing capital programme compared to the Council's existing approved commitments and current plans expressed in terms of the impact on weekly rent levels.

Incremental impact of capital expenditure plans on the Housing Rent levels				
	Revised 2014/15 £	Proposed Budget 2015/16 £	Projection 2016/17 £	Projection 2017/18 £
Weekly Housing Rent levels	£0.06	£0.04	£0.00	£0.00

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015/16 – 2017/18

1. Treasury Management is an important part of the overall financial management of the Council's affairs. The prudential indicators in Appendix A consider the affordability and impact of capital expenditure plans, and set out the Council's overall capital framework. The Treasury Management Strategy considers the effective funding of these decisions. Together they form part of the process which ensures the Council meets balanced budget requirement under the Local Government Finance Act 1992. There are specific treasury prudential indicators included in this Strategy which require Member approval.
2. The Council's treasury activities are strictly regulated by statutory requirements and a professional code of practice (the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management – revised November 2009). The Council adopted the Code of Practice on Treasury Management (Cabinet, March 2004) and adopted the revisions to the Code in March 2010.
3. The Council's constitution (via Financial Regulations) requires an annual strategy to be reported to Council outlining the expected treasury activity for the forthcoming 3 years. A key requirement of this report is to explain both the risks, and the management of the risks, associated with the treasury service. As a minimum a mid-year monitoring report is produced with a further report produced after the year-end to report on actual activity for the year.
4. This Strategy covers:
 - (a) The Council's debt and investment projections;
 - (b) The Council's estimates and limits to borrowing activity;
 - (c) The expected movement in interest rates;
 - (d) The Council's borrowing and debt strategy;
 - (e) The Council's investment strategy;
 - (f) Treasury Management prudential indicators and limits on activity;
 - (g) Treasury performance indicators; and
 - (h) Policy on the use of external service advisers.

(a) Debt and Investment Projections 2015/16 – 2017/18

5. The borrowing requirement comprises the expected movement in the CFR and any maturing debt which will need to be re-financed. The table below shows this effect on the treasury position over the next three years for both the Council and the ex-SYCC debt that the Council administers on behalf of the other South Yorkshire local authorities. The table also highlights the expected level of investment balances.

RMBC	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
External Debt				
Borrowing at 1 April	476.164	473.922	481.656	474.761
Expected change in debt	-2.242	7.734	-6.895	19.688
Borrowing at 31 March	473.922	481.656	474.761	494.449
Other long-term liabilities (OLTL) at 1 April	127.567	125.749	137.602	135.443
Expected change in OLTL	-1.818	11.853	-2.159	-2.727
Other long-term liabilities (OLTL) at 31 March	125.749	137.602	135.443	132.716
Total Borrowing & OLTL at 31 March	599.671	619.258	610.204	627.165
CFR – the borrowing need	747.671	769.543	762.782	752.041
Under/(over) borrowing	148.000	150.285	152.578	124.876
Investments				
Total Investments at 1 April	19.749	25.000	25.000	25.000
Investment change	5.251	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Investments at 31 March	25.000	25.000	25.000	25.000
Net borrowing at 31 March	123.000	125.285	127.578	99.876

Ex SYCC	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
External Debt				
Borrowing at 1 April	96.121	96.121	86.709	76.709
Expected change in debt	0.000	9.412	-10.000	-39,709
Borrowing at 31 March	96.121	86.709	76.709	37.000
Investments				
Total Investments at 1 April	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Investment change	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Investments 31 March	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Net borrowing at 31 March	96.121	86.709	76.709	37.000

(b) Limits to Borrowing Activity

6. Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure the Council operates its activities within well-defined limits.
7. For the first of these, the Council needs to ensure that its total borrowing net of any investments, does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2015/16 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

RMBC	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
Borrowing	599.671	619.258	610.204	627.165
Investments	25.000	25.000	25.000	25.000
Net Borrowing	574.671	594.258	585.204	602.165
CFR	747.671	769.543	762.782	752.041
CFR less Net Borrowing	173.000	175.285	177.578	149.876

8. The Director of Financial Services reports that the Council has complied with this indicator in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes into account approved commitments and existing plans.
9. A further two prudential indicators control or anticipate the overall level of borrowing. These are:
10. **The Authorised Limit for External Debt** – This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all council's plans, or those of a specific council, although no control has yet been exercised.

The Council is asked to approve the following Authorised Limit for RMBC:

Authorised Limit for External Debt (RMBC)	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
Borrowing	647.231	648.657	638.860	628.765
Other long term liabilities	127.567	139.267	137.602	135.443
Total	774.798	787.924	776.462	764.208

Separately, the Council is also limited to a maximum HRA CFR through the HRA self-financing regime. This limit remains unchanged until there is any change in Government legislation. Interest calculated with reference to the HRA CFR is charged on a fair & equitable basis.

HRA Debt Limit	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
HRA Debt Cap	336.623	336.623	336.623	336.623
HRA CFR	305.583	306.445	306.445	306.445
HRA Headroom	31.040	30.178	30.178	30.178

The Council is also asked to approve the following Authorised Limit for the former SYCC:

Authorised Limit for External Debt (Former SYCC)	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
Borrowing	96.121	96.121	86.709	76.709
Other long term liabilities	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total	96.121	96.121	86.709	76.709

11. The Operational Boundary for External Debt – This is the limit beyond which external borrowing is not normally expected to exceed. In most cases this would be a similar figure to the CFR, but may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual borrowing.

The Council is asked to approve the following Operational Boundary for RMBC:

Operational Boundary for External Debt (RMBC)	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
Borrowing	473.922	481.656	481.656	494.449
Other long term liabilities	127.567	139.267	137.602	135.443
Total	601.489	620.923	619.258	629.892

The Council is also asked to approve the following Operational Boundary for the former SYCC:

Operational Boundary for External Debt (Former SYCC)	2014/15 Revised £m	2015/16 Estimated £m	2016/17 Estimated £m	2017/18 Estimated £m
Borrowing	96.121	96.121	86.709	76.709
Other long term liabilities	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total	96.121	96.121	86.709	76.709

12. Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need – The Council has some flexibility to borrow funds in advance for use in future years. The Director of Financial Services may do this under delegated powers where, for instance, a sharp rise in interest rates is expected, and so borrowing early at fixed interest rates will be economically beneficial or help meet budgetary constraints. Whilst the Director of Financial Services will adopt a prudent approach to any such borrowing, where there is a clear business case for doing so borrowing may be undertaken to fund the approved capital programme or to fund debt maturities.

13. Risks associated with any advance borrowing activity will be subject to appraisal in advance and subsequent reporting through the mid-year and annual reporting mechanism.
14. **Debt Rescheduling** - As short term borrowing rates will be considerably cheaper than longer term fixed interest rates, there may be potential opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. These savings will need to be considered in the light of the current treasury position and the value of the cost of debt repayment (premiums incurred).
15. The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include:
- The generation of cash savings and/or discounted cash flow savings;
 - Helping to fulfill the treasury strategy; and,
 - Enhancing the balance of the portfolio (amending the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

(c) **Expected Movement in Interest Rates**

16. The Bank Rate, currently 0.50%, underpins investment returns and is not expected to start increasing until the fourth quarter of 2015. This is despite inflation being below the Monetary Policy Committee inflation target of 2% and unemployment falling below the 7% at which point the Bank of England had indicated it may consider increasing the rate. Due to on-going issues in areas of the world economy, most notably the Eurozone, there is continuing uncertainty in the financial markets. As a result, the outlook for borrowing rates also continues to be uncertain and difficult to predict. Short-term rates to one-year are expected to remain at current levels. The outlook for long-term interest rates continues to be favourable in the near future, but is expected to become less so towards the end of the next financial year.
17. This challenging outlook has several key treasury management implications:
- Investment returns are likely to remain relatively low during 2015/16;
 - Borrowing interest rates are currently attractive but are less likely to remain so going forward. The Council has adopted a policy of delaying new borrowing by utilising spare cash balances over the last few years. This approach needs to be carefully reviewed to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in future, when the Council will not be able to delay new borrowing to finance new capital expenditure and/or to refinance maturing debt. The timing of any borrowing will therefore be monitored carefully; and
 - There will remain a cost of carrying capital – any borrowing undertaken that results in an increase in investments will incur an incremental cost as the cost of borrowing is greater than the likely investment return.

(d) Borrowing and Debt Strategy 2015/16 – 2017/18

18. The Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the CFR has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and counterparty risk remains relatively high.
19. The uncertainty over future interest rates increases the inherent risks associated with treasury activity. As a result the Council will continue to take a prudent approach to its treasury strategy.
20. The Director of Financial Services, under delegated powers, will take the most appropriate form of borrowing depending on the prevailing interest rates at the time, taking into account the risks shown in the forecast above. It is likely shorter term fixed rates may provide lower cost opportunities in the short to medium term.

(e) Investment Strategy 2015/16 – 2017/18

21. The primary objectives of the Council's investment strategy are:
 - Firstly to safeguard the timely repayment of principal and interest (security);
 - Secondly to ensure adequate liquidity; and
 - Thirdly to produce an investment return (yield).
22. As part of this Strategy, Members need to consider and approve security and liquidity benchmarks in addition to yield benchmarks which are currently widely used to assess investment performance and have previously been reported to Members. The proposed benchmarks are set down in Annex B2.
23. The primary principle governing the Council's investment criteria is the security of its investments, although the yield or return on the investment is also a key consideration. After this main principle the Council will ensure:
 - It maintains a policy covering both the categories of investment types it will invest in, criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security. This is set out in the Specified and Non-Specified investment sections of Annex B1.
 - It has sufficient liquidity in its investments. For this purpose it will set out procedures for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These procedures also apply to the Council's prudential indicators covering the maximum principal sums invested as set out in Annex B1.

24. The Director of Financial Services will maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the following criteria and will revise the criteria and submit them to Council for approval as necessary. These criteria are different to those which are used to select Specified and Non-Specified investments.
25. The rating criteria use the lowest common denominator method of selecting counterparties and applying limits. This means that the application of the Council's minimum criteria will apply to the lowest available rating for any institution. For instance if an institution is rated by two agencies, one meets the Council's criteria, the other does not, the institution will fall outside the lending criteria. This is in compliance with a CIPFA Treasury Management Panel recommendation in March 2009 and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.
26. Credit rating information is supplied by our treasury advisors on all active counterparties that comply with the criteria below. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria would be omitted from the counterparty list. Any rating changes, rating watches (notification of a likely change) and rating outlooks (notification of a possible long term change) are provided to officers almost immediately after they occur and this information is considered before any investment decision is taken.

27. Changes to Credit Rating Methodology

The main rating agencies have, through much of the financial crisis, provided some institutions with a ratings "uplift" due to implied levels of sovereign support. More recently, in response to the evolving regulatory regime, the agencies have indicated they may remove these "uplifts" but the actual timing of the changes is still subject to discussion.

Immediate changes to the credit methodology are being introduced by our advisors and as a result, the credit element of their future methodology will focus solely on the Short and Long Term ratings of an institution.

28. The criteria for providing a portfolio of high quality investment counterparties (both Specified and Non-Specified investments) is:

- **Banks** – The Council will use banks which are rated by at least two rating agencies and have at least the following Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poors' ratings (where rated):

	Fitch	Moody's	Standards & Poor's
Short-term	F1	P-1	A-1
Long-term	A-	A3	A-

To allow for the day to day management of the Council's cash flow the Council's bankers will also be retained on the list of counterparties if ratings fall below the above minimum criteria.

- **Building Societies** – the Council will use the top 20 Building Societies ranked by asset size but restricted to a maximum of 20% of the investment portfolio
- **Money Market Funds** – AAA – restricted to a maximum of 20% of the investment portfolio
- **UK Government** – Debt Management Office
- **UK Single Tier & County Councils** – (i.e. Metropolitan Districts, London Boroughs, County Councils, Unitary Authorities)

A limit of 35% will be applied to the use of Non-Specified investments within the investment portfolio, excluding day to day cash management through the Council's own bank.

29. Whilst the above criteria relies primarily on the application of credit ratings to provide a pool of appropriate counterparties for officers to use, additional operational market and sovereign information will continue to be applied before making any specific investment decision from the agreed portfolio of counterparties.

30. The time and monetary limits for institutions on the Council's Counterparty List are as follows and represent no change from those currently approved (these will cover both Specified and Non-Specified Investments):

	Fitch	Moody's	Standard & Poor's	Money Limit	Time Limit
Upper Limit Category	F1+/AA-	P-1/Aa3	A-1+/AA-	£20m	5 years
Middle Limit Category	F1/A-	P-1/A3	A-1/A-	£10m	364 days
Lower Limit Category *	All Building Soc's ranked 1 to 10			£5m	6 mths
	All Building Soc's ranked 11 to 20			£1m	3 mths
Debt Management Office	-	-	-	Unlimited **	6 months
Money Market Funds ***	-	-	-	£20m	n/a
UK Single Tier & County Councils	-	-	-	£20m	5 years
Council's Bankers	-	-	-	£10m	364 days

The above money limits are exclusive of bank balances held by schools

* Based on maximum of 20% of the investment portfolio

** Provides maximum flexibility

*** Based on maximum of 20% of the investment portfolio

31. The proposed criteria for Specified and Non-Specified investments and monitoring of counterparties are shown in Annex B1 for Member approval.

32. In the normal course of the Council's cash flow operations it is expected that both Specified and Non-specified investments will be utilised for the control of liquidity as both categories allow for short term investments.

33. The use of longer term instruments (greater than one year from inception to repayment) will fall in the Non-specified investment category. These instruments will only be used where the Council's liquidity requirements are safeguarded. This will also be limited by the long term investment limits.

(f) Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and Limits on Activity

34. There are four further treasury activity limits the purpose of which are to contain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of an adverse movement in interest rates. However if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs. The limits are:

- Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure – This identifies a maximum limit for fixed interest rates based upon the fixed debt position net of fixed interest rate investments.
- Upper limits on variable interest rate exposure – as above this limit covers a maximum limit on variable interest rates based upon the variable debt position net of variable interest rate investments.
- Maturity structures of borrowing – These gross limits are set to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits.
- Total funds invested for greater than 364 days – These limits are set to reduce the need for early sale of an investment, and are based on the availability of funds after each year-end.

For the purposes of these indicators the Council's market debt is treated as fixed. Whilst a percentage of the debt may be subject to variation on specific call dates each year, over this Strategy period any such variations are thought unlikely and the debt can be regarded as fixed.

35. The activity limits (prudential indicators) for Member approval are as follows:

RMBC	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Interest rate Exposures			
	Upper	Upper	Upper
Limits on fixed interest rate debt based on fixed net debt	100%	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rate debt based on variable net debt	30%	30%	30%

RMBC Maturity Structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2015/16		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	35%
12 months to 2 years	0%	35%
2 years to 5 years	0%	40%
5 years to 10 years	0%	40%
10 years to 20 years	0%	45%
20 years to 30 years	0%	50%
30 years to 40 years	0%	50%
40 years to 50 years	0%	55%
50 years and above	0%	60%

RMBC Maximum Funds invested > 364 days			
	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	3 to 5 years
Funds invested > 364 days	£m 10	£m 8	£m 6

Former SYCC	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Interest Rate Exposures			
	Upper	Upper	Upper
Limits on fixed interest rates based on total debt	100%	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rates based on total debt	30%	30%	30%

Former SYCC Maturity Structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2015/16		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	50%
12 months to 2 years	0%	70%
2 years to 5 years	0%	100%
5 years to 6 years	0%	100%

(g) Treasury Performance Indicators

36. The Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the Council to set performance indicators to assess the adequacy of the treasury function over the year. These are distinct historic indicators, as opposed to the prudential indicators, which are predominantly forward looking. The results of the following two indicators will be reported in the Treasury Annual Report for 2015/16:

- Debt – Borrowing - Average rate of borrowing for the year compared to average available
- Investments – Internal returns above the 7 day London Interbank Bid rate (LIBID) which is the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks

(h) Training

37. The CIPFA Code requires the responsible officer to ensure that members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management. This especially applies to members responsible for scrutiny. Training has recently been undertaken by Members of the Audit Committee and further training will be arranged as required. The training needs of treasury management officers are periodically reviewed.

(i) Policy on the use of external service advisors

38. The Council uses Capita Asset Services a subsidiary of The Capita Group plc as its treasury management advisors.

39. The company provides a range of services which include:

- Technical support on treasury matters, capital finance issues and the drafting of Member reports;
- Economic and interest rate analysis;
- Debt services which includes advice on the timing of borrowing;
- Debt rescheduling advice surrounding the existing portfolio;
- Generic investment advice on interest rates, timing and investment instruments; and,
- Credit rating/market information service comprising the three main credit rating agencies.

40. Whilst the advisers provide support to the internal treasury function, under current market rules and the CIPFA Code of Practice the Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the Council at all times. The service is provided to the Council under a contractual agreement which is subject to regular review.

Treasury Management Practice (TMP) 1 (5) – Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

1. Overview

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now CLG) issued Revised Investment Guidance in March 2010, and this forms the structure of the Council's policy below.

The key intention of the Guidance is to maintain the current requirement for councils to invest prudently, and that priority is given to security and liquidity before yield.

In order to facilitate this objective the guidance requires this Council to have regard to the CIPFA publication Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes. This Council has adopted the Code will apply its principles to all investment activity.

In accordance with the Code, the Director of Financial Services has reviewed and prepared its treasury management practices. This part, TMP 1(5), covering investment counterparty policy requires approval each year.

2. Annual Investment Strategy

The key requirements of both the Code and the investment guidance are to set an annual investment strategy, as part of its annual treasury strategy for the following year, covering the identification and approval of the following:

- The guidelines for investment decision making, particularly non-specified investments.
- The principles to be used to determine the maximum periods for which investments can be made.
- The specified investments the Council may use.
- The non-specified investments the Council may use.

This strategy is to be approved by full Council.

The investment policy proposed for the Council is detailed in the paragraphs below.

2.1 Strategy Guidelines

The main strategy guidelines are contained in the body of the treasury strategy statement.

2.2 Specified Investments

These investments are sterling investments of not more than one-year maturity. If they are for a longer period then the Council must have the right to be repaid within 12 months if it wishes.

These are low risk assets where the possibility of loss of principal or investment income is small.

These would include the following investment categories:

1. The UK Government Debt Management Office.
2. UK Single Tier & County Councils – (i.e. Metropolitans District, London Boroughs, County Councils, Unitary Authorities)
3. Money Market Funds that have been awarded AAA credit ratings by Standard and Poor's, Moody's or Fitch rating agencies and restricted to 20% of the overall investment portfolio
4. A bank or a building society that has been awarded a minimum short-term rating of F1 by Fitch, P-1 by Moody's and A-1 by Standard and Poor's rating agencies. For Building Societies investments will be restricted to 20% of the overall investment portfolio and:
 - a maximum of £5m for a period not exceeding 6 months if the society is ranked in the top 10 by asset size; or
 - a maximum of £1m and a period not exceeding 3 months if the society is ranked 11 to 20 by asset size.

2.3 Non-Specified Investments

Non-specified investments are any other type of investment not defined as specified above.

The criteria supporting the selection of these investments and the maximum limits to be applied are set out below.

Non specified investments would include any sterling investments with:

1. A bank that has been awarded a minimum long term credit rating of AA- by Fitch, Aa3 by Moody's and AA- by Standard & Poor's for deposits with a maturity of greater than 1 year.
2. The Council's own bank if ratings fall below the above minimum criteria.

3. A Building Society which is ranked in the top 20 by asset size. Investments will be restricted to 20% of the overall investment portfolio and:
 - a maximum of £5m for a period not exceeding 6 months if the Society is ranked in the top 10 by asset size; or
 - a maximum of £1m and a period not exceeding 3 months if the Society is ranked 11 to 20 by asset size.

3 The Monitoring of Investment Counterparties

The credit rating of counterparties will be monitored regularly. The Council receives credit rating information from the Council Treasury Management advisors on a daily basis, as and when ratings change, and counterparties are checked promptly.

On occasions ratings may be downgraded after the date on which an investment has been made. It would be expected that a minor downgrading would not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest.

Any counterparty failing to meet the minimum criteria will be removed from the list immediately by the Director of Financial Services, and new counterparties will be added to the list if and when they meet the minimum criteria.

Security, Liquidity and Yield Benchmarking

These benchmarks are targets and so may be exceeded from time to time with any variation reported, with supporting reasons in Mid-Year & Annual Treasury Reports.

1. **Security and liquidity** – these benchmarks are already intrinsic to the approved treasury strategy through the counterparty selection criteria and some of the prudential indicators, e.g. the maximum funds which may be invested for more than 364 days, the limit on the use of Non-specified investments, etc.
 - 1.1 Security – Security is currently evidenced by the application of minimum criteria to investment counterparties, primarily through the use of credit ratings supplied by the three main credit rating agencies. Whilst this approach embodies security considerations, benchmarking the levels of risk is more subjective and therefore problematic.

One method to benchmark security risk is to assess the historic level of default against the minimum criteria used in the Council's investment strategy.

Credit Rating	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
AAA	0.00%	0.02%	0.06%	0.09%	0.13%
AA	0.02%	0.04%	0.14%	0.27%	0.38%
A	0.09%	0.24%	0.43%	0.61%	0.86%
BBB	0.20%	0.59%	1.02%	1.52%	2.00%

The Council's minimum long term rating criteria (over one year) is "AAA" meaning the average expectation of default for a three year investment in a counterparty with a "AAA" long term rating would be 0.06% of the total investment (e.g. for a £1m investment the average potential loss would be £600).

The Council's minimum long term rating criteria (up to one year) is "BBB" and the average expectation of default for such an investment would be 0.20% (e.g. for a £1m investment the average loss would be £2,000).

These are only averages but do act as a benchmark for risk across the investment portfolio.

The Council's maximum security risk benchmark for the estimated maximum portfolio during 2015/16 is 0.09% which means that for every £1m invested the average potential loss would be £900. This position remains unchanged from 2014/15.

The Council's Treasury advisers maintain a continuous review of the risk position by the inclusion the Council's daily investment position within their online model.

1.2 Liquidity – This is defined as “having adequate, though not excessive cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdrafts or standby facilities to enable the Council at all times to have the level of funds available to it which are necessary for the achievement of its business/service objectives” (CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice). The Council seeks to maintain:

- Bank overdraft – on a day-to-day basis the Council works to an agreed overdraft limit of £100,000 with the Council's bankers. Whilst a short-term increase could be negotiated less expensive short-term borrowing is accessed through the financial markets to remain within the agreed overdraft.
- Liquid, short term deposits of at least £3m available with a week's notice.

The availability of liquidity and the inherent risks arising from the investment periods within the portfolio is monitored using the Weighted Average Life (WAL) of the portfolio. This measures the time period over which half the investment portfolio would have matured and become liquid

A shorter WAL generally represents less risk and in this respect the benchmark to be used for 2015/16 is:

- 0.08 years which means that at any point in time half the investment portfolio would be available within 28 days.

2. **Yield** – These benchmarks are currently widely used to assess investment performance and the Council's local measure of yield is:

- Internal returns above the 7 day London Interbank Bid rate (LIBID) which is the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks