



# Christchurch Town Council

## Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

Policy name	Version	Owner	Date Adopted	Review Date
Treasury Management & Investment Strategy	V1.0	Clerk	October 2020	May 2023

## 1. Introduction & Scope

### Relevant Guidance

1.1 This Investment Policy & Strategy has been devised in line with:

- a) the Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (3rd Edition) issued under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003. Section 15(1)(a) of the 2003 Act requires local authorities to “have regard” to such guidance the Secretary of State may issue and in accordance with section 23 of the Act “local authority” applies to parish and town councils;
- b) The Treasury Management Code issued by CIPFA – “Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes, 2017 Edition”

1.2 This investment policy and strategy applies to all investment activities undertaken by the Council and for the avoidance of doubt the Statutory Guidance defines an ‘investment’ as:

*“..all of the financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit; for example investment property portfolios.” (para 4).*

1.3 Christchurch Town Council although relatively new regards its duty to act prudently with upmost importance when investing all funds held on behalf of the community by the Council.

1.4 An investment strategy is required for all investments expected to exceed £100,000 at any time during the financial year.

*“14. This guidance applies to parish councils and charter trustees, providing their total investments exceed or are expected to exceed £100,000 at any time during the financial year. Where a parish council or charter trustee expects its total investments to be between £10,000 and £100,000, it is encouraged to adopt the principles in this guidance.”*

*(para 14 Statutory Guidance)*

1.5 guidance states that local authorities who hold treasury management investments should apply the principles set out in the CIPFA Treasury Management Code. There are 3 key principles within section 4 of the Code which are:

*“1. The Council should put in place formal and comprehensive objectives, policies and practices, strategies and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of their treasury management activities.*

*2. Policies and practices should make clear that the effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of their treasury management activities and that responsibility for these lies clearly within their organisations. Their appetite for risk should form part of their annual strategy, including any use of financial instruments for the prudent management of those risks, and should ensure that priority is given to security and portfolio liquidity when investing treasury management funds.*

*3. The Council should acknowledge that the pursuit of value for money in treasury management, and the use of suitable performance measures, are valid and important tools for responsible organisations to employ in support of their business and service objectives; and that within the context of risk management, their treasury management policies and practices should reflect this.”*

## **2. Investment Objectives & Principles**

### **Transparency and democratic accountability**

2.1 The Town Council shall prepare one investment strategy (“the Strategy”) for each financial year.

2.2 The Strategy shall be approved by Full Council and where any changes are proposed to be made during the financial year those changes shall be presented to Full Council before any implementation occurs.

2.3 The Strategy shall be publicly available on the Town Council’s website or upon reasonable written request by email or letter.

### **Investment Objectives**

2.5 The Council defines its treasury management activities as the management of the Council’s investments, cash flows, its banking and money market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of security, liquidity and best value performance consistent with those risks.

2.6 The Council aims to invest its surplus reserves in order to maintain the value of these funds in real terms, to support future service delivery.

2.7 The Council is required to consider investments in line with the following principles:

- a) **Security** – protection of the investment sum from loss of value and to minimise risk;
- b) **Liquidity** – how quickly the invested funds can be encashed if required;
- c) **Yield** – once principles a) and b) have been determined, the Council can reasonably consider suitable investments to maximise the Council’s income.

The Council should consider the appropriate balance between security, liquidity and yield in relation to risk when making any investment decisions and in order to achieve the optimum return on investment.

2.8 All investments shall be made in the name of the Council and be deposited in sterling.

2.9 The decision to invest funds must be taken at a Full Council meeting.

2.10 The Council will consider spreading its investments across financial institutions to minimise risk and to protect its funds in line with the current level of financial protection offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (currently £85,000 at 01/04/20).

2.11 The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government maintains the borrowing of money purely to invest or to lend and make a return is unlawful. The Council will not engage in such activity.

2.12 Should the Council appoint an investment manager or financial advisor, this appointment shall be reviewed every five years. Advisors will be made aware of this policy as well as the regulatory and statutory framework applicable to Councils.

2.13 The Council will encourage participation in social, ethical and environmental factors when looking at the various investment options and will adhere to its Ethical Investing Policy where possible.

### **Ethical Investing Policy**

2.14 As a responsible investor, the Council shall consider environmental, social, and governance issues (“ESG”). This extends to pursuing investment activities that have a positive social impact.

2.15 Principally the treasury management function is controlled by statute and guidelines. The first priorities of management shall and must remain security, liquidity, and yield. With those priorities in mind, the following activity will be undertaken in respect of responsible investing. Steps will be taken to:

- Provide an understanding of the degree to which investments may contribute towards climate change. This may take the form of measuring the carbon footprint or some similar measure.
- Consider whether investments are exposed to risks driven by climate change, for example investments in assets at risk of weather change (e.g. property or infrastructure at risk of flooding), assets at risk of becoming stranded (e.g. fossil fuel investments), or assets at risk from geopolitical risks driven by climate change (e.g. water access, the capacity for food production, or economic conflict)..
- Appraise itself investment opportunities that have regard to ethical investing and climate change as this is a quickly developing arena.
- Understand the ESG policies of funds when considering new investment opportunities.
- Consider whether any funds or opportunities have achieved ESG benchmarks such as ISO 14001 and B Corps certification and so on.

2.16 All investments will be with financial institutions, banks and building societies registered in the UK.

2.17 The Council does not currently plan on investing in non-financial assets.

### **3. Short Term Specified Investments**

3.1 Short term specified investments are defined as those offering high security and high liquidity, made in sterling and with a maturity of no more than 12 months and not defined as capital expenditure by virtue of Regulation 25(1)(d) of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 [as amended]. Short term investments made with the UK Government or to a local authority or Town/Parish Council will automatically be defined as a specified investment.

3.2 For the prudent management of the Council’s treasury balances and in order to maintain adequate levels of security and liquidity the Council may choose to invest short term funds with:

- Banks, building societies, local authorities or other public authorities who are all based in the UK;
- Other approved public sector investment funds.

3.3 The Council defines ‘high credit quality’ organisations and securities as those having a credit rating of A- or higher that are domiciled in the UK, or a foreign country with a sovereign rating of AA+ or higher. For money market funds and other pooled funds ‘high credit quality’ is defined as having credit rating of A- or higher

4.6 Christchurch Town Council’s current investment is with Unity Trust Bank. However, as part of the new strategy investments will be spread across different counterparties with higher credit ratings in order to reduce counterparty risk.

4.7 The Council will give initial consideration to investments with:

- Unity Trust Bank – Current Account
- Lloyds Bank PLC – Fixed Term Deposits and Call Account
- CCLA – The Public Sector Deposit Fund (pooled)

Any additional counterparties will be recommended to Full Council via Resources Committee.

#### **4. Long Term Non-Specified Investments**

4.1 Non-specified investments are defined as any investments that do not meet the criteria of short term specified investments detailed in section 3. In general, non-specified investments have greater risk potential and include investment in money markets, stocks and shares.

4.2 Funds may be invested for periods of more than 12 months. In specifying the length of the investment, the Council's anticipated expenditure requirement over the proposed investment period will be assessed to ensure sufficient funds remain available.

4.3 The Council may place investments not required for current expenditure with long term non-specified investments with a maturity period of up to 5 years, at which point the investment objectives should be fully reviewed to determine whether the investment should continue.

4.4 The Council will determine the upper limits for the maximum amounts that can be held individually or accumulatively in non-specified investments and will confirm annually that the investments have remained within these limits.

4.5 The Council will seek the advice of an independent financial advisor prior to making any long term investments, as part of the risk management process.

#### **5. Risk Management & Monitoring**

5.1 A risk assessment is to be maintained for each investment, as recorded in the Council's Financial Risk Assessment document. The assessment should include details of the market appraisals appropriate to the investment type, investment monitoring reports and how the Council will monitor the quality of advice provided by the financial advisor.

5.2 Investment performance reports will be provided by the investment institutions and reported to the Full Council in November to allow current / new investments to be reviewed as part of the budgeting process.

5.3 The Council will monitor the risk of loss on investments by reviewing credit ratings for the investment institutions at least annually. This will be achieved by asking the institutions to confirm their current credit rating.

5.4 The Council will arrange for its members and officers to undertake appropriate training to enable robust monitoring and decision making in regard of its investments and require that clear, understandable monitoring reports are issued as part of the risk management process.

5.5 The Town Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, shall be the contact for the financial advisor and any appointed counterparties and is authorised to deal with administrative matters and give instructions on behalf of the Council as necessary to protect the Council's investments.

5.6 The Council's investments will be recorded on the Asset Register at their purchase price, noting the notional value each year until the investment is encashed.

## **6. End of Year Investment Report & Governance**

6.1 At the end of the financial year, the Town Clerk will supply an annual report for each investment to the Full Council.

6.2 The Town Clerk is responsible for bringing to the Council's attention any matters which may affect the security of the Council's investments. The Full Council is responsible for agreeing any course of action required to safeguard its investments.

## **7. Review Process**

7.1 The Annual Investment Strategy must be reviewed annually by the Full Council, ideally before the start of that financial year, prior to being ratified by Full Council.

7.2 Any amendments required to the Investment Strategy must be approved by Full Council prior to implementation. Amendments can be proposed at any time during the year, as required.