

Financial Resilience - December 2020

Report number:	FRS/WS/21/001	
Report to and date(s):	Financial Resilience Sub-Committee	18 January 2021
	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	28 January 2021
	Cabinet	9 February 2021
	Council	23 February 2021
Cabinet member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance Tel: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Gregory Stevenson Service Manager (Finance and Performance) Tel: 01284 757264 Email: gregory.stevenson@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: This item is included in the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards.

Recommendation: It is recommended that, the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee:

1. Notes the Financial Resilience Report – December 2020; and
2. Makes recommendations as appropriate via the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.

1. Treasury Management Report – December 2020

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to report on the Investment Activities of West Suffolk Council from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020.
- 1.2 The total amount invested at 1 April 2020 was £29,900,000 and at 31 December 2020 £38,900,000.
- 1.3 The 2020/21 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements (report CAB/WS/20/005 approved 25 February 2020) sets out the Council's projections for the current financial year. The budget for investment income of 2020/21 is £142,141 which is based on a 0.65% target average rate of return on investments.
- 1.4 As at the end of December 2020 interest actually earned during the nine months of the financial year amounted to £73,250.00 (average rate of return of 0.352%) against a profiled budget for the period of £106,605 (average rate of return 0.65%); a budgetary deficit of £33,355. The deficit relates to continued low interest rates as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which started in mid-March. Please also see section 7 Other Market Considerations for more details.
- 1.5 As at the end of December 2020 a total of £16.8m has been borrowed internally (to fund agreed business case investments) from available cash balances. This has meant West Suffolk Council has not had any additional external borrowing over the long-term £4m loan.

2. Treasury Activities 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020

- 2.1 The table below summaries the interest earned and the average rate of return achieved:

INTEREST EARNED & AVERAGE RATE OF RETURN SUMMARY			
Investment Category	Total Average Investment	Average Rate of Return (%)	Interest Earned in Q3
Temporary Investments (Term Deposits)			
Lloyds 95 Day Account	2,424,789	0.099%	5,137.09
Santander 365 Day Account	8,000,000	0.825%	49,720.54
Santander 180 Day Account	1,000,000	0.647%	4,872.61
Santander 95 Day Account	500,000	0.529%	1,993.83
Lloyds Treasury Account	5,078,000	0.054%	2,060.89
Barclays Deposit Account	6,000,000	0.010%	452.05
CCLA MMF	4,850,909	0.199%	7,272.03
Local Authorities			

HM Debt Management Office	4,419,520	0.025%	1,740.96
Total Overall Average Return on Investments %			0.352%
Total Interest Earned - 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020			73,250.00

2.2 The table below summaries the investment activity during the period:

TREASURY MANAGEMENT – INVESTMENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY	
	2020/21
Opening Balance 01 April 2020	29,900,000
Investments made during the year (including transfers to business reserve accounts)	119,000,000
Sub Total	148,900,000
Investments realised during the year (including withdrawals from business reserve accounts)	110,000,000
Closing Balance 31 December 2020	38,900,000

2.3 The table below lists the investments held as at 31 December 2020:

Investments held as at 31 December 2020				
Counterparty	Principal Amount	Interest Rate	Date Loaned	Date Returned
Lloyds 95 Day	2,400,000	0.20%	01/04/20	Notice
Santander 365 Day	8,000,000	0.75%	01/04/20	Notice
Santander 180 Day	1,000,000	0.55%	01/04/20	Notice
Santander 95 Day	500,000	0.45%	01/04/20	Notice
Lloyds Treasury Acc	5,500,000	0.05%	01/04/20	On call availability
Barclays Deposit Acc	6,000,000	0.01%	01/04/20	On call availability
CCLA MMF	4,000,000	Variable	01/04/20	On call availability
HM Debt Man. Office	1,500,000	0.01%	16/10/20	22/02/21
HM Debt Man. Office	1,000,000	0.01%	23/10/20	01/02/21
HM Debt Man. Office	2,000,000	0.01%	10/11/20	15/03/21
HM Debt Man. Office	7,000,000	0.005%	01/12/20	19/01/21
There were NO other Fixed Term Investments				
TOTAL	38,900,000			

- As at 31 December 2020, notice has been placed on the Santander 180 account, the Santander 95 Day account and the Lloyds 95 Day account to fund shortfall in cashflow from mid-March 2021.

Please note: The interest rates above are the achieved rates throughout the reporting period, actual rates going forward will be rates in force as at 1 January 2021.

3. Borrowing and Capital Costs - Affordability

3.1 The 2020/21 Budget had, assumptions on borrowing for capital projects included within it. This borrowing was based around four main projects:

- Western Way development
- Mildenhall Hub
- Barley Homes
- Investing in our Growth Fund

There is also the long-standing £4.0m loan relating to the Newmarket Leisure Centre.

3.2 The details of these Budgets is laid out below:

SUMMARY OF CAPITAL BORROWING BUDGET 2020/21			
Project	External Borrowing Requirement (Budget)	Servicing Costs	
		Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	Interest Payable
Investing in our Growth Fund	£16,307,872	£763,000	£406,700
Western Way Development	£21,560,577	£197,750	£0
Mildenhall Hub	£9,076,049	£57,000*	£62,000*
West Suffolk Operational Hub	£0	£289,000	£317,000
Newmarket Leisure Centre (FHDC)	£4,000,000	£113,000	£169,600
Toggam Solar Farm	£0**	£107,500	£202,000
20 High St Haverhill	£0**	£49,300	£54,200
113 High St Newmarket	£0**	£24,930	£19,944
Provincial House	£0**	£92,500	£101,000
Vicon House, Western Way	£0	£46,500	£105,000
33-35 High St Haverhill	£0	£5,000	£11,300
17/18 Cornhill	£1,720,530	£0	£0
Total borrowing and associated servicing costs	£52,665,028	£1,745,480	£1,448,744
% of Gross Revenue Income Budget ***		3.1%	2.6%

* Mildenhall Hub planned to be completed late 2020/21. Borrowing costs are not planned until the site is active.

** Business cases assessed on the basis of borrowing. These purchases were made in prior years using available cash reserves. A full year of MRP and borrowing are budgeted.

*** Referred to as Net Revenue Budget in previous reports and capital strategy – title amend to make relationship to West Suffolk gross revenue income budget (£56.1m) clearer.

3.3 The affordability of borrowing and capital costs is a key metric in our financial planning and resilience assessments. Current and future financial affordability and resilience to such costs is key when evaluating any new opportunities. As set out in the approved West Suffolk Capital Strategy we are using the % of the Gross Revenue Income Budget for both MRP and Interest Payable to assess the Councils affordability position. In other words, how much (in % terms) of our gross revenue income budget is committed to servicing our external debt.

3.4 The forecast position on each of these projects for the full year of 2020/21 is as below:

SUMMARY OF CAPITAL BORROWING FOR 2020/21				
Project	External Borrowing	Use of Available Revenue Reserves (in place of External Borrowing)	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	Interest Payable
Investing in our Growth Fund	£5,000,000	£0	£233,936	£0
Western Way Development	£0	£0	£0	£0
Mildenhall Hub	£0	£15,226,174	£0	£0
West Suffolk Operational Hub	£0	£0	£289,000	£0
Newmarket Leisure Centre (FHDC)	£4,000,000	£0	£113,000	£170,994
Toggam Solar Farm	£0	£0	£107,500	£0
20 High St Haverhill	£0	£0	£49,300	£0
113 High St Newmarket	£0	£0	£24,930	£0
Olding Road DHL Depot	£0	£0	£92,500	£0
Vicon House, Western Way	£0	£0	£46,500	£0
33-35 High Street, Haverhill	£0	£0	£5,000	£0

17/18 Cornhill	£0	£1,272,183	£0	£0
Sub total	£9,000,000	£16,498,357	£961,666	£170,994
Total Borrowing	£25,498,357		-	
% of Gross Revenue Income (excl COVID-19 Grants)			0.8%	0.1%

The original forecast position moved due to the following reasons:

- No requirement of external borrowing in 2020/21.
- Reviewing the Western Way development in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The impact of these changes is a reduction in forecast Interest Payable of £1,277,750 in 2020/21.

- 3.5 The improvement in the Forecast Interest Payable value is due to the use of internal cash balances as oppose to externally borrowing which attracts a higher borrowing cost. The saving in the interest payable budget will be transferred to the capital financing reserve to be utilised in future budget periods to accommodate any fluctuations/market movements in external borrowing costs
- 3.6 As at the end of December 2020 there had been no requirement to borrow externally over and above the £4.0m Barclays loan. Therefore, the only interest payable for the year was the £170,994 relating to this. As at the end of December 2020 a total of £29.7m is forecast to be borrowed internally from available cash balances which reflects the council’s underlying need to borrow.

4. Borrowing and Income - Proportionality

- 4.1 The concept of proportionality, alongside that of affordability, is a key consideration when considering funding projects through borrowing.
- 4.2 The costs and risks associated with that borrowing should be looked at as part of the whole financial position of the council in our financial planning and resilience assessments. Awareness of the scale and relationship with the asset base and revenue delivery is essential to informed decision making.

4.3 This relationship and trend between borrowing, asset base and yield (expressed as income as % of net revenue) from the investments that the council has made are laid out in the tables below. These are split by asset type. This table shows that the £52.7m budgeted borrowing would have represented 21.2% of our Long-Term Asset (£248.7m) base. The Council receives around £8.5m income (gross) from its previous asset investments (as set out below) which represents 15.2% of our total gross revenue income budget.

2020/21 BUDGET	Asset Value £m	External Borrowing £m	Borrowing as % of Long Term Assets (£248.7m)	Annual Income £m	% Proportion of Total Gross Revenue Income Budget
Industrial Units	£24.2	£0.0	0%	£2.7	4.8%
Retail Units	£28.2	£0.0	0%	£1.8	3.2%
Land	£10.3	£0.0	0%	£1.0	1.8%
Solar Farm	£13.8	£0.0	0%	£1.5	2.7%
Growth Fund		£16.3	6.6%	£1.5	2.7%
Western Way Development		£21.6	8.7%	£0.0	0.0%
Mildenhall Hub		£9.1	3.7%	£0.0	0.0%
Other		£5.7	2.3%	£0.0	0.0%
TOTAL		£55.7	21.2%	£8.5	15.2%

4.4 The forecast position for the financial year 2020/21 for borrowing and income is laid out below:

2020/21	Asset Value £m	External Borrowing £m	Borrowing as % of Long Term Assets (£247.6m)	Annual Income £m	% Proportion of Total WSC Gross Revenue Income (excl. Grants)
Industrial Units	£24.2	£0.0	0%	£2.6	2.4%
Retail Units	£31.8	£0.0	0%	£1.7	3.4%
Land	£10.3	£0.0	0%	£0.9	1.8%
Solar Farm	£11.4	£0.0	0%	£1.3	2.6%
Growth Fund		£5.0	6.5%	£1.5	3.0%
Western Way Development		£0.0	0%	£0.0	0.0%
Mildenhall Hub		£0.0	0%	£0.0	0.0%
Other		£4.0	1.6%	£0.0	0.0%
TOTAL		£9.0	8.1%	£8.0	16.1%

- 4.5 The change in % of Gross Revenue Income (based on total gross revenue income budget of £56.1m exclusive of grants) is caused by reduced forecasts in other income areas (car parks and planning in particular).

5. Borrowing and Asset Yields

- 5.1 Borrowing, whether internally from available cash balances or externally from other institutions, bears a cost which will affect the yield of investments made with that money.
- 5.2 West Suffolk Council makes investment decisions to support its strategic priorities which are not solely focussed on financial return, in line with our agreed Investing in our Growth Agenda Strategy. There are therefore a range of yield returns delivered by these investments that varies from project to project dependant on the wider blended socio-economic returns that these projects give.
- 5.3 In order to aid comparison between projects and returns from 'normal' treasury management cash investment (section 2 above), the table below shows the income and net return from the current project portfolio.

2020/21 BUDGET	Asset Value £m	Borrowing £m	Annual Income £m	Net Return (Excl. Borrowing Costs ****)	Net Return (Incl. Borrowing Costs)	Yield % (E/A)
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Industrial Units	£24.2	£0.0	£2.7	£2.2	£2.2	9.1%
Retail Units	£28.2	£0.0	£1.8	£1.5	£1.5	5.3%
Land	£10.3	£0.0	£1.0	£1.0	£1.0	9.7%
Solar Farm	£14.4	£0.0	£1.5	£1.1	£0.5	3.3%
Growth Fund		£16.3	£1.5	£1.5	£0.2	1.0%
Western Way Development		£21.6	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	0.0%
Mildenhall Hub		£9.1	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	0.0%
Other		£5.7	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	0.0%
TOTAL	£77.1	£55.7	£8.5	£7.3	£5.4	4.1%

2020/21	Asset Value £m	Borrowing £m	Annual Income £m	Net Return (Excl. Borrowing Costs ****)	Net Return (Incl. Borrowing Costs)	Yield % (E/A)
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Industrial Units	£24.2	£0.0	£2.6	£2.1	£2.1	8.7%
Retail Units	£31.8	£0.0	£1.7	£1.4	£1.4	4.4%
Land	£10.3	£0.0	£0.9	£0.9	£0.9	8.7%
Solar Farm	£14.4	£0.0	£1.3	£0.9	£0.3	2.1%
Growth Fund		£5.0	£1.5	£1.5	£0.2	1.0%
West Suffolk Operational Hub		£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	0.0%
Mildenhall Hub		£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	0.0%
Other		£4.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	0.0%
TOTAL	£80.7	£9.0	£8.0	£6.8	£4.9	4.8%

**** Includes direct operating costs

6. Borrowing and Temporary Loans

- 6.1 Below is a summary of the borrowings and temporary loans as at 31 December 2020:

BORROWINGS AND TEMPORARY LOANS		
Lender / Loan number	Balance outstanding	Maturity date
Barclays Loan	£4,000,000	31 March 2078

7. Other Market Considerations

- 7.1 The COVID-19 pandemic continues to play havoc with the financial markets around the world. Combined with the UK's imminent exit from Europe, interest rates and investment returns remain at an all-time low.
- 7.2 Base rate has remained at 0.10%, with little prospect of any increase in the foreseeable future. Indeed, many analysts are predicting zero or negative rates before we see any increase in rates.

- 7.3 The major credit rating agencies continue to review financial institutions and based on their current ratings only major high street banks and one building society remain available to the Council for investment under the criteria laid out the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Treasury Management Code of Practice 2020-21.
- 7.4 In order to maintain a degree of security in these uncertain times, the majority of the Council's funds are being held in high street banks and the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility operated by HM Government.
- 7.5 Although the basis of a deal on Brexit has now been agreed, the full impact on the financial markets will not be known for some time.
- 7.6 The treasury team will continue to monitor the situation and provide updated information as it becomes available.

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 [COU/WS/20/002](#) - Capital Strategy 2020-21, Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020-2021 and Treasury Management Code of Practice.