

Treasury Management Report - December 2022

Report number:	FRS/WS/23/001	
Report to and date(s):	Financial Resilience Sub Committee	16 January 2023
	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	26 January 2023
	Cabinet	7 February 2023
	Council	21 February 2023
Cabinet member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Cabinet Member for Resources and Property 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 Cabinet Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All

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

1. **Notes the Treasury Management Report – December 2022; and**
2. **Makes recommendations as appropriate via the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.**

1. Treasury Management Report – December 2022

- 1.1 The report is part of the Councils' management and governance arrangements for Treasury Management activities under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. It provides a comprehensive assessment of activities from 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council held investments of £71,500,000 as at 31 December 2022. Interest achieved in the first nine months of the financial year amounted to £639,193.67 against a budget for the period of £33,750.
- 2.2 External borrowing as at 31 December 2022 was £13,750,000, a reduction of £250,000 from 1 April 2022 (relates to the repayment plan for the recent PWLB £10 million 40 year loan), with the Council's level of internal borrowing increasing slightly to £42,309,057 as at 31 December 2022. Overall borrowing (weighted towards internal) is expected to increase over the full financial year.
- 2.3 Borrowing costs (Interest Payable and MRP) for the year are forecast to be £1,069,488 against an approved budget of £2,268,350, although this could change if more external borrowing is undertaken than is currently forecast.

3. Interest Earned from Treasury Investments during the period

- 3.1 The 2022 to 2023 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements (report COU/WS/22/002 approved 22 February 2022) sets out the Council's projections for the current financial year. The budget for investment income of 2022 to 2023 is £45,000 which is based on a 0.25 percent target average rate of return on investments (set prior to the current economic situation).
- 3.2 At the end of December 2022 interest actually earned during the first nine months of the financial year amounted to £639,193.67 (average rate of return of 1.212 percent) against a profiled budget for the period of £33,750 (average rate of return 0.25 percent); a budgetary surplus of £605,443.67. The surplus is due to two main reasons, the council were holding considerable amounts of grant money pending distribution, so cash balances were higher than predicted and with the continuing volatility in the investment market, interest rates continue to change (overall increasing) almost daily.

3.3 The table below summaries the interest earned and the average rate of return achieved at 31 December 2022.

Interest Earned and Average Rate of Return Summary			
Investment Category	Total Average Investment	Average Rate of Return (%)	Interest Earned in period
Temporary Investments (Term Deposits)	nil		nil
Santander 365 Day Account	8,000,000	1.535%	92,517.26
Santander 95 Day Account	500,000	1.001%	3,770.68
Lloyds Treasury Account	7,555,000	0.081%	4,166.03
Barclays Deposit Account*	6,000,000	0.010%	300.82
CCLA MMF	4,000,000	1.044%	31,457.58
Local Authorities	5,000,000	0.220%	10,969.86
HM Debt Management Office	4,234,662	1.482%	496,011.44
Total Overall Average Return on Investments %			1.212%
Total Interest Earned - 1 April 2022 to 31 Dec 2022			639,193.67

* An annual interest bonus is paid at the end of the financial year if no withdrawals take place.

3.4 The table below summaries the investment activity during the period

Treasury Management – Investment Activity Summary	
	2022 to 2023 (£)
Opening Balance 01 April 2022	65,500,000
Investments made during the year (including transfers to business reserve accounts)	180,750,000
Sub Total	246,250,000
Less Investments realised during the year (including withdrawals from business reserve accounts)	174,750,000
Closing Balance 31 December 2022	71,500,000

Please note: The Councils cash balances are currently greater than forecast as a result of holding advanced business grant and support grant payments.

3.5 The table below lists the investments held as at 31 December 2022

Investments held as at 31 December 2022				
Counterparty	Principal Amount (£)	Interest Rate	Date Loaned	Date Returned
Lloyds 95 Day Account	Nil			
Santander 365 Day	8,000,000	2.21%	01/04/22	365-day Notice
Santander 95 Day	500,000	1.13%	01/04/22	95-day Notice
Lloyds Treasury Account	9,500,000	0.08%	01/04/22	On call availability
Barclays Deposit Account	6,000,000	0.01%	01/04/22	On call availability
CCLA Money Market Fund	4,000,000	Variable	01/04/22	On call availability
HM Debt Man. Office	2,500,000	1.800%	12/07/22	10/01/23
HM Debt Man. Office	5,000,000	1.960%	19/07/22	17/01/23
HM Debt Man. Office	5,000,000	1.935%	01/08/22	30/01/23
HM Debt Man. Office	3,000,000	2.110%	12/08/22	10/02/23
HM Debt Man. Office	4,000,000	2.535%	01/09/22	28/02/23
HM Debt Man. Office	4,000,000	3.080%	01/11/22	28/04/23
HM Debt Man. Office	6,000,000	2.970%	01/11/22	15/03/23
HM Debt Man. Office	3,000,000	2.990%	01/11/22	23/03/23
HM Debt Man. Office	3,000,000	3.160%	15/11/22	15/05/23
HM Debt Man. Office	6,000,000	3.010%	01/12/22	16/01/23
HM Debt Man. Office	2,000,000	3.570%	19/12/22	19/06/23
There were no other fixed term investments				
Total	71,500,00			

Please note: The interest rates above are the rates as at 31 December 2022. The current market volatility could cause the actual rates going forward to fluctuate.

3.6 The Council has an earmarked revenue reserve to mitigate against possible adverse fluctuations in the returns received from the council's investments and external borrowing costs, called the Capital Projects Financing Reserve. The balance in this reserve as at 31 December 2022 was £4,902,184.

4. Borrowing activity during the period

4.1 As with the 2021 to 2022 financial year, the Council continues to hold significant cash balances, see 3.4 above. A large amount of the funds currently being held are on behalf of others e.g., £14 million relates to HM Government for repayment of S31 grants, as well as council tax receipts held on behalf of Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner.

4.2 On 31 December 2022, West Suffolk had £13.75 million of external borrowing, which is £250,000 less than it held on 1 April 2022, this reduction relates to the repayment plan for the PWLB £10 million 40-year

loan taken out in December 2021. With interest rates having increased and cash balances remaining healthy, it is unlikely that any further external borrowing will need to be undertaken in the 2022 to 2023 financial year, although this is kept under constant review and may change if circumstances and advice changes. The use of internal funds is beneficial whilst we still have available cash, as we would be paying interest at a much higher rate (around 4.80 percent at the date of publishing this report) than we would get back from investing the extra surplus cash (current average return on our treasury investments of 1.212 percent). This means we would have a significant cost of carrying external loans that are not currently required from a cash management perspective.

4.3 The table below is a summary of the external borrowings and temporary loans as at 31 December 2022.

External Borrowings and Temporary Loans					
Lender	Balance – 1 April 2022 (£)	Movement (£)	Balance - 31 Dec 2022 (£)	Interest Rate	Maturity date
Barclays Bank	4,000,000	0	4,000,000	4.24%	31 March 2078
PWLB	10,000,000	(250,000)	9,750,000	1.84%	1 December 2061

4.4 Although the council has not undertaken any further external borrowing in the period, its underlying need to borrow (Capital Financing Requirement – CFR, the amount the Council has invested in its communities) is forecast to increase which will lead to an increase in the level of borrowing (either external or internal) the council will have.

4.5 The table below details the forecast for the councils Capital Financing Requirement (underlying need to borrow) over the next 3 years.

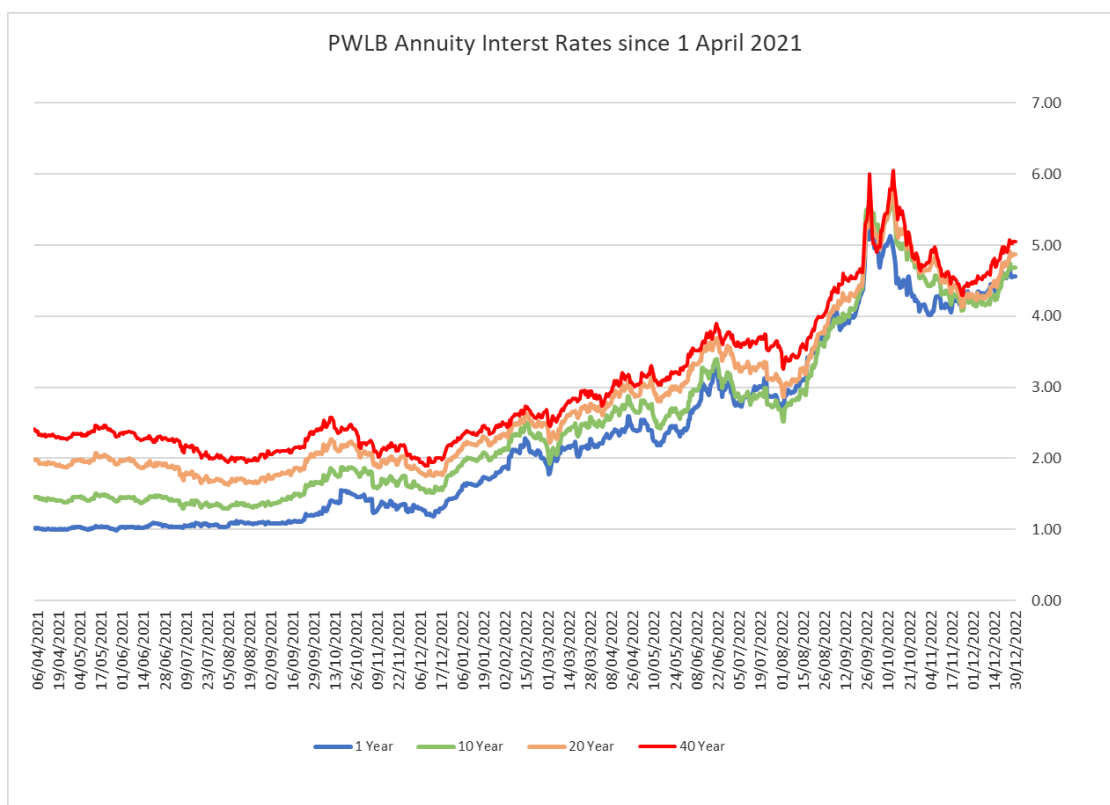
	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2023	31 March 2024	31 March 2025
	Actual £ millions	Approved Budget £ millions	Forecast £ millions	Forecast £ millions	Forecast £ millions
CFR	55.49	81.07	59.14	93.42	142.50

5. Borrowing Strategy and Sources of Borrowing

5.1 As detailed in the 2022 to 2023 Treasury Management Strategy Statement, the current borrowing strategy is still to make short-term use of internal funds (internal borrowing). This is being continually monitored by the Council, along with Arlingclose (treasury advisors), to determine whether this is still the most optimal strategy or whether to look at borrowing additional sums at long-term fixed rates.

5.2 There are various sources of borrowing that the Council is able to make use of for longer term borrowing, which are detailed in the strategy statement. The traditional method for local authorities, and the default method the Council uses in all of its business cases, is to borrow from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). In the medium term, if the Council were to look at fixing out some of its internal borrowing into a long term external loan then it could do so by borrowing through the PWLB.

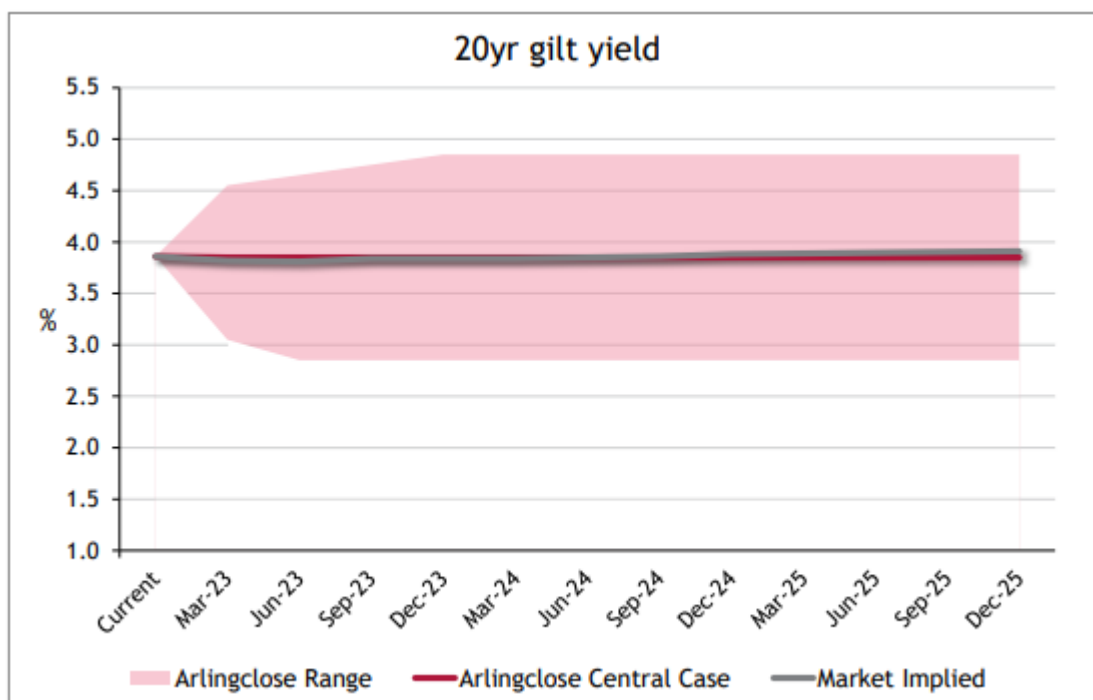
5.3 The graph below shows historic PWLB interest rates over the previous 2 years, for different durations based on borrowing using the annuity method.



5.4 The graph above shows how PWLB rates fluctuate on a daily basis, as they are linked to UK Gilt rates – current PWLB rates are 1.00 percent above the relevant UK Gilt rate. West Suffolk Council has access to PWLB Certainty Rates which are only 0.80 percent above the relevant UK Gilt rate.

5.5 As you can see from the graph above, PWLB rates have gone through a period of significant volatility over the past 9 months, although have been a

bit more settled during the past 3 months. This is largely as a result of global inflation being at high levels, with the market expectation that these high levels will last longer than originally anticipated. This has led to central banks in the UK, US and EU to raise central interest rates and follow policies of monetary tightening beyond original expectations. These higher rates are expected to remain in the short to medium term, but then drop back down slightly when inflationary pressures have subsided on the expectation of slowed growth with the major economies. See graph below.



- 5.6 PWLB interest rates for 40-year borrowing using the annuity method were 5.05 percent (4.85 percent for Certainty Rate) on 31 December 2022 – although in the past 3 months they had been as low as 4.29 per cent (4.09 per cent for Certainty Rate) on 24 November. Using the current value of internal borrowing of £42,309,057, if we were to transfer all of that internal borrowing to a 40-year PWLB loan using the 4.85 percent Certainty Rate, the Council would incur an initial annual interest payable cost of £2,402,302 (including our current external borrowing). This compares to our interest payable budget for 2022 to 2023 of £1,529,400.
- 5.7 As detailed in 4.1 and 4.2, the council is currently holding significant cash balances and as such does not need to transfer this level of internal borrowing to external. The Council also has an earmarked revenue reserve to mitigate against possible adverse fluctuations in interest and borrowing rates, called the Capital Projects Financing Reserve. The balance in this reserve as at 31 December 2022 was £4,902,184.
- 5.8 The Council, along with Arlingclose, will continue to explore alternative sources of borrowing to ensure the Council will be ready to externally borrow in the most advantageous way when it needs to.

6. Borrowing and Capital Costs - Affordability

6.1 The 2022 to 2023 Budget had assumptions on borrowing costs for capital projects included within it. These borrowing costs are a combination of interest payable on external borrowing, and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), which is an amount set aside each year to repay that borrowing requirement. The main projects which make up the majority of the Councils borrowing requirement are:

- Western Way development
- Mildenhall Hub
- West Suffolk Operational Hub
- Toggam Solar Farm
- Investing in our Growth Fund

6.2 The business cases for each of these projects considered affordability based on what each project would deliver in terms of income and savings against the borrowing requirement for the project.

6.3 Borrowing costs only form part of the Councils revenue budget once the project has been completed, so although there may be a borrowing requirement, until such time as the project is complete there will be no MRP or interest payable as part of the revenue budget.

6.4 The details of these Budgets are laid out below.

Summary of Capital Borrowing Budget 2022 to 2023			
Project – all supported by business cases	Borrowing Requirement (Budget)	Borrowing Costs	
		Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	Interest Payable
Investing in our Growth Fund	£4,319,027	£0	£0
Western Way Development	£5,600,000	£0	£0
Mildenhall Hub	£16,175,947	£145,600	£204,050
West Suffolk Operational Hub	£9,383,968	£173,000	£306,750
Newmarket Leisure Centre	£2,740,261	£12,800	£169,600
Toggam Solar Farm	£1,756,244	£188,050	£344,950
20 High St Haverhill	£1,784,905	£29,400	£55,900
113 High St Newmarket	£676,709	£11,700	£22,100

Olding Road DHL Depot	£3,549,684	£0	£0
Provincial House	£3,434,468	£55,450	£98,200
Vicon House, Western Way	£3,288,232	£50,800	£100,700
33-35 High St, Haverhill	£364,930	£5,450	£10,850
17/18 Cornhill	£2,655,845	£39,550	£84,550
Elsey's Yard	£240,124	£5,300	£11,100
St Edmunds Guest House	£982,579	£11,050	£34,700
Incubation Units, Suffolk Business Park	£12,100,000	£0	£0
Net Zero / Community Energy Plan	£2,590,000	£0	£0
Loans and other	£9,425,800	£10,800	£85,950
Total borrowing and associated servicing costs	£81,068,723	£738,950	£1,529,400*
% of Gross Revenue Income Budget		1.3%	2.6%

* This represents an average interest rate of 2.75 percent.

- 6.5 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 per cent of the Gross Revenue Income Budget for both MRP and Interest Payable to assess the Councils affordability position. In other words, how much (in percentage terms) of our gross revenue income budget is committed to servicing our external debt.
- 6.6 Whilst the budget for interest payable are derived from the business cases of each individual project, when borrowing actually occurs is a treasury management decision and is generally not directly linked to any specific project. It is therefore not easy to match the interest payable the Council will actually incur to specific projects. The table below therefore gives an overall summary of forecast capital borrowing for 2022 to 2023 but does not split it out by project.

6.7

Summary of Forecast Capital Borrowing for 2022 to 2023			
External Borrowing	Internal Borrowing	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	Interest Payable
£13,750,000	£45,385,579	£719,175	£350,313
Total Borrowing	£59,135,579	£1,069,488	
% of Gross Revenue Income (excl COVID-19 Grants)		1.4%	0.7%

The original budget position, as set out in paragraph 6.4, has moved due to the following reasons:

- Forecast use of internal borrowing instead of external borrowing during 2022 to 2023.
- Reviewing the Western Way development in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, which led to a timing delay in the project programme against what was originally forecast.
- Forecast underspend against the Investing in our Growth Fund.

7. Borrowing and Income - Proportionality

- 7.1 The concept of proportionality, alongside that of affordability, is a key consideration when considering funding projects through borrowing.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 As at 31 March 2022, the Councils asset base was valued at £261.9 million. As such the budgeted borrowing requirement of £81.07 million would have represented 30.95 per cent of our long-term asset base. The forecast borrowing requirement at the end of the financial year is £59.14 million, which represents 22.58 per cent of our long-term asset base. It is worth noting that the capital projects being undertaken would increase the overall asset base of the council, leading to the borrowing requirement being a smaller percentage of the asset base than detailed above.

8. Borrowing and Asset Yields

- 8.1 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. The yield is the return on the investment, whether through additional income of savings, less the borrowing costs associated with the investment, against the value of the investment.

8.2 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.

8.3 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.

2022/23 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	£28.1	£13.4	£2.6	£2.1	£1.7	6.0%
Retail Units	£20.0	£2.6	£2.0	£1.6	£1.5	7.5%
Land	£11.8	£0.0	£1.0	£1.0	£1.0	8.4%
Solar Farm	£15.0	£1.8	£1.8	£1.3	£0.7	4.7%
Growth Fund		£4.3	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	0.0%
Other		£33.4	£0.5	£0.4	£0.1	0.0%
TOTAL	£74.9	£81.1	£7.9	£6.4	£5.0	6.7%

2022/23 FORECAST	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	£28.1	£0.0	£2.7	£2.1	£1.9	6.7%
Retail Units	£20.0	£0.0	£1.9	£1.5	£1.5	7.5%
Land	£11.8	£0.0	£1.0	£1.0	£1.0	8.4%
Solar Farm	£15.0	£0.0	£1.9	£1.4	£0.8	5.3%
Growth Fund		£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	0.0%
Other		£14.0	£0.8	£0.7	£0.4	0.0%
TOTAL	£74.9	£14.0	£8.3	£6.7	£5.6	7.5%

* Includes direct operating costs

9. Market Information

- 9.1 The Council’s treasury management advisors provide economic and interest rate forecasts on a monthly basis. Appendix 1 has details from this forecast from December 2022.

10. Background documents associated with this report

- 10.1 Capital Strategy 2022 to 2023, Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022 to 2023 and Treasury Management Code of Practice.