

# Agenda



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Date: 20 January 2014

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## A MEETING OF THE

# Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY 28 JANUARY 2014 AT 6.00 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CROWMARSH GIFFORD

### Members of the Committee:

Mr Michael Welply (Chairman)

Mr Philip Cross (Vice-  
Chairman)

Mr David Bretherton  
Mr John Cotton

Ms Kristina Crabbe  
Mrs Margaret Davies  
Mr Neville F Harris

Mr Paul Harrison

### Substitutes

*Mr Roger Bell  
Mr Bernard Cooper  
Mrs Pat Dawe  
Mr Leo Docherty*

*Mrs Eleanor Hards  
Mr Stephen Harrod  
Dr Christopher Hood  
Mrs Denise Macdonald*

*Ms Anne Purse  
Mr Robert Simister  
Mr David Turner*

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**1 Apologies**

**2 Minutes of the previous meeting**

Minutes of the meeting on 26 September 2013 (previously distributed).

**3 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest**

**4 Treasury management 2013/14 mid-year monitoring report**  
(Pages 3 - 14)

Purpose: to consider the report that fulfils the legislative requirements to ensure the adequate monitoring of the treasury management activities and that the council's prudential indicators are reported to council mid year. The report provides details of the treasury activities for the first six months of 2013/14 and an update on the current economic conditions with a view to the remainder of the year.

**5 Treasury management strategy 2014/15** (Pages 15 - 50)

Purpose: to scrutinise the treasury management strategy and policy and if required make recommendations for amendment to Cabinet

**6 Internal audit activity report** (Pages 51 - 56)

**Purpose:** to summarise the outcomes of recent internal audit activity for the committee to consider. The committee is asked to review the report and the main issues arising, and seek assurance that action has been or will be taken where necessary

**7 Internal audit management report** (Pages 57 - 68)

**Purpose:** to report on management issues, summarise the progress of the internal audit team against the 2013/14 audit plan up to 31 December 2013 and to summarise the priorities and planned audit work for the remainder of quarter 4 2013/14

**8 External auditor's annual audit letter 2012/13** (Pages 69 - 76)

To consider the external auditor's annual audit letter 2012/13.

**9 External auditor's report on the certification of claims and returns 2012/13** (Pages 77 - 84)

To consider the external auditor's report on the certification of claims and returns 2012/13.

MARGARET REED

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

# Report to:



## Cabinet

## Council

### Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

Report of Head of Finance

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Cabinet Member responsible: David Dodds

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To: Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on: 28 January 2014

To: Cabinet on: 13 February 2014

To: Council on: 20 February 2014



## Treasury management mid year monitoring report 2013/14

### Recommendations

That Audit and Corporate Governance committee:

1. notes the treasury management mid year monitoring report 2013/14, and
2. is satisfied that the treasury activities are carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

That Cabinet:

3. considers any comments from Audit and Corporate Governance committee and recommends council to approve the report.

### Purpose of report

1. The report fulfils the legislative requirements to ensure the adequate monitoring of the treasury management activities and that the council's prudential

indicators are reported to council mid year. The report provides details of the treasury activities for the first six months of 2013/14 and an update on the current economic conditions with a view to the remainder of the year.

### **Strategic objectives**

2. An effective treasury management strategy is required in order to meet our strategic objective of managing our business effectively. Managing the finances of the authority in accordance with the treasury management strategy will help to ensure that resources are available to deliver its services and meet the council's other strategic objectives.

### **Background**

3. The council's treasury activities are strictly regulated by legislation. The CIPFA Prudential Code and CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice requires a monitoring report to be provided mid year to council. The report covers the treasury activity for the period 1 April to 30 September.
4. The 2013/14 treasury management strategy was approved by council on 22 February 2013. This report provides details on the treasury activity and performance for the first six months of 2013/14 against prudential indicators and benchmarks set for the year. It is also an opportunity to review and revise the limits if required. Full council is required to approve this report.

### **The economy and interest rates**

5. An update on the economic conditions and interest rate forecasts is in appendix A.

### **Icelandic banks – Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander**

6. The council has now received £2,078,706 in respect of the claim for £2.6 million (£2.5 million investment plus interest) from the investment made with the failed Icelandic bank Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander (KSF).
7. The administrators intend to make further payments at regular intervals. The latest information states that it is the administrators' current intention to pay the eleventh dividend by the end of December 2013. The estimated total amount to be recovered is forecast to be in the range of 84p to 86.5p in the pound. This equates to between £2,209,901 and £2,275,671.

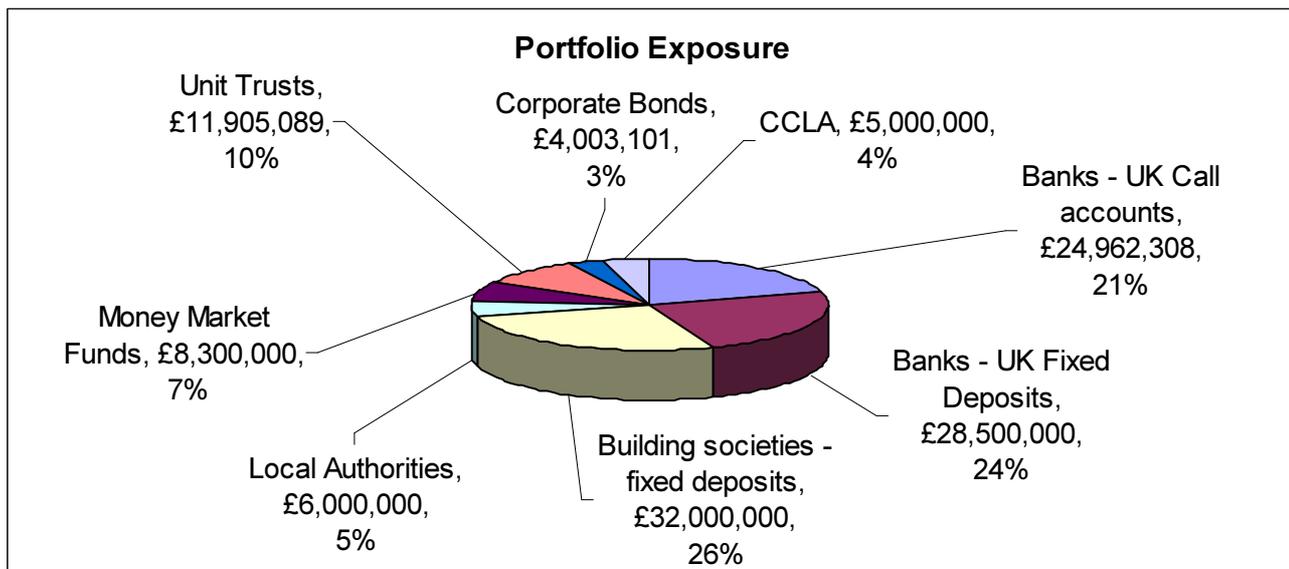
### **Investments**

8. In accordance with the Code the council's investment position as at 30 September 2013 is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: maturity structure of investments at 30 September 2013:	Total £000's	% holding
<b>Cash deposits:</b>		
Call accounts	24,962	21%
Up to 1 month	4,000	3%
2 Month	8,000	7%
3 Month	9,000	7%
4 Month	6,500	5%
5-6 Month	5,500	5%
7-12 Month	23,500	19%
1 -2 Year	3,000	2%
3-4 Year	2,000	2%
7 year	5,000	4%
Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander	222	1%
<b>Total cash deposits</b>	<b>91,685</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>CCLA Property Fund</b>	5,000	4%
<b>Equities</b>	11,905	10%
<b>Corporate bonds</b>	4,003	2%
<b>Money market funds</b>	8,300	7%
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>120,893</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: £121 million does not represent uncommitted resource the council has at its disposal. This amount includes council tax receipts held prior to forwarding to Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, business rate receipts prior to payment to the government and committed capital and revenue balances. Details of the council's uncommitted balances are provided in the annual budget and council tax setting report.

9. The council currently holds a significant proportion of its investments in the form of cash deposits, the majority of which have been placed for fixed terms with a fixed investment return. 21 per cent of the entire investment portfolio is held on call or in notice accounts, with 77 per cent of the total investment portfolio held in cash deposits.
10. The chart below shows in percentage terms how the portfolio is spread across the types of investments.



11. Total investment income is forecast to be around £2.1 million in 2013/14 against a budget of £1.9 million. Table 2 shows the interest earned for the first six months.

Table 2: Investment interest earned by investment type				
Interest Earned April - September 2013				
Investment type	Annual Budget £000's	Actual To date £000's	Profiled Budget £000's	Variation £000's
Call accounts	223	119	112	7
Cash deposits < 1 yr	770	193	385	(192)
Cash deposits > 1 yr	80	456	40	416
MMF	15	14	8	6
Corporate bonds	259	198	130	68
CCLA	300	150	150	-
Equities*	300	205	150	55
	<b>1,947</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>360</b>

\* Interest on equities not included in annual budget as non-distributable

### Treasury activity

12. Market rates are significantly lower than they were a year ago. The government's Funding for Lending Scheme (FLS) has lowered the rates at which banks can access funding and has now been extended to building societies. This access to cheaper borrowing is a key factor in the fall in market rates now available to the council.
13. Re-investment opportunities are not nearly as attractive as a year ago, one year rates have dropped by nearly two per cent. There is currently little incentive to reinvest longer term periods. However, in order to widen the

investment portfolio and spread the balance of risk, officers have been seeking longer dated investments with other local authorities.

14. The weighted average maturity period has increased to 264 days from 231 days in 2012/13. As a result of the many banking downgrades there are now fewer financial institutions meeting the council's investment criteria. When it is possible investments will be placed with highly rated institutions with a view to increase the weighted average maturity of the portfolio.
15. The value of the unit trusts has moved from £13.4 million at the start of April down to £11.9 million at the end of September. This movement is due to a sale of £2 million made in May 2013, when the value of the unit trusts reached £14 million. This is the trigger point value at which it was agreed to sell some of the council's holdings and officers continue to monitor the valuations for further possible disposals.

### Performance measurement

16. A list of investments as at 30 September is shown in appendix B. All investments were with approved counterparties. The average level of investments held was £110 million and the average return on these investments is shown below in table 3. This shows in summary the performance of the council's investments against the benchmarks set out in the Treasury Management Strategy. These benchmarks are used to assess and monitor the council's investment performance for each type of investment.

<b>Table 3: investment returns achieved against benchmark</b>				
	Benchmark return	Actual return	Growth (below)/above benchmark	Benchmarks
	%	%	%	
Bank & building society deposits - non-managed	0.38%	1.50%	1.12%	3 Month LIBID
Equities	1.89%	1.70%	-0.19%	FTSE all shares index
Corporate bonds	0.50%	5.68%	5.18%	BoE base rate

Note: the benchmark return for equities reflects the movement in capital value. All other benchmarks reflect earnings of investment income.

### Treasury management limits on activity

17. The council is required by the Prudential Code to report on the limits set each year in the Treasury Management Strategy. The purpose of these limits is to ensure that the activity of the treasury function remains within certain parameters, thereby mitigating risk and reducing the impact of an adverse

movement in interest rates. However, if these limits are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs/improve performance. The limits are shown in appendix C.

### **Debt activity during 2013/14**

18. During the first six months of 2013/14 there has been no need for the council to borrow. The council will continue to take a prudent approach to its debt strategy. The prudential indicators and limits set out in appendix C provide the scope and flexibility for the council to borrow in the short-term up to the maximum limits, if such a need arose within the cash flow management activities of the authority, for the achievement of its service objectives.

### **Recommended changes to the treasury management strategy**

19. Council approved the 2013/14 treasury management strategy on 21 February 2013. There are no proposed changes to the strategy for 2013/14 at this time.

### **Investments made outside the treasury management strategy**

20. During the first six months of 2013/14, officers made a seven-year deal with another local authority. This increases the spread of the portfolio and balances the risk. The treasury management strategy allows lending to local authorities for a maximum five year period. The decision to lend outside the treasury management strategy was taken in consultation with the section 151 officer/Head of Finance as per the council's constitution.

### **Financial implications**

21. This time last year forecasts were that inflationary pressures would mean that interest rates would probably have to start rising towards the end of 2013. This hasn't happened and the current outlook for growth for the UK economy means interest rates are very low and likely to remain so. Investments made early in 2013 should ensure that the interest earned on investments for 2013-14 is around £2.1 million. However from 2014, income may reduce for a year or so until market rates rise. This will be reflected in the council's medium term financial plan.
22. As a result of the agreed expenditure priorities of the council, investments, including working capital, are projected to fall to approximately £90 million by 2015/16. Should investment rates recover to three percent then annual returns will be around £3 million.

### **Legal implications**

23. There are no significant legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services, the ODPM Local Government Investment Guidance provides assurance that the council's investments are, and will continue to be, within its legal powers.

## **Conclusion**

24. This report provides details of the treasury management activities for the period 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013 and the mid year prudential indicators to council.
25. These details confirm that treasury activities have operated within the agreed parameters set out in the approved treasury management strategy, and provides the monitoring information for audit and corporate governance committee to fulfil the role of scrutinising treasury management activity.

## **Background papers**

- CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes
- CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities
- Various committee reports, principally:-
  - I. Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Practices (cabinet 7 March 2002)
  - II. Recommendation of amendment to delegated authority (council 28 October 2004)
  - III. Treasury Management Investment Strategy 2013/14(cabinet 14 February 2013, council 21 February 2013)

## **Appendices**

- A – Economic update and interest rates
- B – List of investments as at 30 September 2013
- C – Prudential Indicators

## Appendix A

### Economic Update and interest rates

- A1. UK is in a period of sustained growth in 2013 as the economic recovery since 2008 had been the worst and slowest in recent history. All three main sectors, construction, services and manufacturing contributed to this upturn.
- A2. Growth is expected to be strong in the immediate future. One downside is that wage increases continue to remain significantly below CPI inflation so disposable income and living standards are under pressure.
- A3. The Euro region returned to growth in 2013, ending seven quarters of recession. However, growth is still weak but the ECB has declared it would do whatever it takes to stabilise the Eurozone including buying unlimited amounts of bonds of countries asking for a bailout.
- A4. The government's 'Funding for Lending Scheme' (FLS) has been introduced to improve access to mortgages at lower rates. The FLS certainly seems to be having a positive effect in terms of encouraging house purchases. While there have been concerns that these schemes are creating a bubble in the housing market, the house price increases outside of London and the south-east have been minimal. However bank lending to small and medium enterprises still remains weak as banks continue to repair their balance sheets and anticipating tightening of regulatory requirements.
- A5. Investor demand in UK gilts as a 'safe haven' continues to keep yield increases down. Long term rates will eventually rise, mainly due to the fact that high volumes of gilts have been issued already in the UK and also in other major western countries. Increasing investor confidence is also likely to compound the effect.
- A6. The Bank of England issued forward guidance in August which said that the Bank will not start to consider raising interest rates until the jobless rate has fallen to 7% or below. This would require the creation of about 750,000 jobs and was forecast to take three years in August, but revised to possibly quarter 4 2014 in November.
- A7. Concerns over investment counterparty risk remain because of the volatile economic conditions. However the council's current treasury management policy manages this risk down to a low level.

### Interest rates

- A8. The Bank of England changed its forecast in the August Inflation report and upgraded growth from 1.2% to 1.6% in 2013 and from 1.7% to 2.8% in 2014.
- A9. Bank rate remained unchanged at 0.5% throughout the first half of 2013/14. The earlier forecast of a rate rise in Q4 of 2014 has been postponed until Q2 in 2016
- A10. Deposits rates have fluctuated in a very narrow range during the first six months of the financial year. Investment rates have remained flat with a range between 0.5 per cent to around 1.0 per cent for up to a year's maturity. This has dropped significantly as banks and building societies were offered further cheap cash supply via the FLS. The short term rates from one month to six months offer very little differential with six month rates ranging between 0.37 per cent and 0.55 per cent.

Appendix A

A11. Sector's forecast of the expected movement in medium term interest rates:

	NOW	Sep-13	Dec-13	Mar-14	Jun-14	Sep-14	Dec-14	Mar-15
BANK RATE	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
3 month LIBID	0.39	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
6 month LIBID	0.47	0.50	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
12 month LIBID	0.74	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80
5 yr PWLB	2.20	2.20	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.70	2.70	2.80
10 yr PWLB	3.40	3.30	3.60	3.60	3.70	3.80	3.80	3.90
25 yr PWLB	4.30	4.20	4.40	4.40	4.50	4.50	4.60	4.60
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.30	4.40	4.40	4.50	4.50	4.60	4.70
	Jun-15	Sep-15	Dec-15	Mar-16	Jun-16	Sep-16	Dec-16	Mar-17
BANK RATE	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.25
3 month LIBID	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.90	1.30
6 month LIBID	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.70	0.80	1.00	1.20	1.40
12 month LIBID	0.80	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.60	1.80	2.00	2.30
5 yr PWLB	2.80	2.90	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.40
10 yr PWLB	3.90	4.00	4.10	4.20	4.30	4.30	4.40	4.50
25 yr PWLB	4.70	4.80	4.90	5.00	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.10
50 yr PWLB	4.80	4.90	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.20

## Appendix B

<b>Investments as at 30 September 2013</b>			
<b>Counterparty</b>	<b>Deposit Type</b>	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Kaupthing Singer and Friedlander TUK		222,229	6.41%
Barclays Bank plc	Fixed	2,000,000	2.60%
West Bromwich Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	0.95%
Bank of Scotland	Fixed	3,000,000	2.80%
Barclays Bank plc	Fixed	3,000,000	2.75%
Royal Bank of Scotland	Fixed	2,000,000	1.55%
Royal Bank of Scotland	Fixed	5,000,000	2.82%
Royal Bank of Scotland	Fixed	1,500,000	3.25%
Royal Bank of Scotland	Fixed	1,500,000	3.10%
Marsden Building Society	Fixed	1,000,000	0.60%
National Counties Building Society	Fixed	2,500,000	0.65%
Manchester Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	0.86%
Manchester Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	0.90%
Newcastle Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	0.88%
Newcastle Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	0.88%
Barclays Bank plc	Fixed	1,500,000	2.60%
Nottingham Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	0.85%
West Bromwich Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	1.05%
Skipton Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	0.86%
West Bromwich Building Society	Fixed	3,000,000	0.95%
National Counties Building Society	Fixed	1,500,000	1.00%
National Counties Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	1.00%
Bank of Scotland	Fixed	5,000,000	1.01%
National Counties Building Society	Fixed	2,000,000	1.00%
West Bromwich Building Society	Fixed	1,000,000	0.93%
West Bromwich Building Society	Fixed	3,000,000	1.05%
Barclays Bank plc	Fixed	2,000,000	3.75%
Kingston upon Hull City Council	Fixed	1,000,000	1.90%
HSBC	Fixed	2,000,000	1.90%
Kingston upon Hull City Council	Fixed	3,500,000	2.70%
Kingston upon Hull City Council	Fixed	1,500,000	2.70%
Santander	Call	14,960,000	0.90%
Royal Bank of Scotland	Call	10,000,000	1.05%
Royal Bank of Scotland	Call	2,308	0.85%
Goldman Sachs	MMF	3,910,000	Variable
Deutsche Bank	MMF	1,030,000	Variable
Blackrock	MMF	3,360,000	Variable
L&G Equities	Unit Trust	11,905,089	Variable
CCLA	Property Fund	5,000,000	Variable
Royal Bank of Scotland	Corporate Bond	1,642,500.00	9.63%
Halifax	Corporate Bond	2,048,400.00	11.50%
Santander	Corporate Bond	312,201.00	11.50%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>120,892,727</b>	

## Appendix C

**Prudential indicators as at 30th September 2013**

	2013/14 Original Estimate £m	Actual as at 30-Sep £m
<b>Debt</b>		
<b>Authorised limit for external debt</b>		
Borrowing	5	0
Other long term liabilities	5	0
	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Operational boundary for external debt</b>		
Borrowing	2	0
Other long term liabilities	3	0
	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Interest rate exposures</b>		
Maximum fixed rate borrowing	100%	0
Maximum variable rate borrowing	100%	0
<b>Investments</b>		
<b>Interest rate exposures</b>		
Limits on fixed interest rates	100	100
Limits on variable interest rates	30	21
<b>Principal sums invested &gt; 364 days</b>		
Upper limit for principal sums invested >364 days	70	10
Limit to be placed on investments to maturity:		
1 - 2 years	70	3
2-5 years	50	2
5 years+	50	5
<b>Investment portfolio spread</b>		
Supranational bonds	15	0
Gilts	15	0
Equities*	10	12
Corporate bonds	10	4
Money market funds	20	8
Pooled bond fund	5	0
Property - direct investments	30	16
Property related pooled funds	10	5
External fund manager	20	0
Cash and certificates of deposit	85%	77%
Debt management account deposit facility	100%	0%

\*Limit at time of purchase - Equities include accumulated dividends

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**Report to:  
Audit and corporate governance  
committee  
Cabinet  
Council**



Report of Head of Finance

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To: Audit & Corporate Governance Committee

28 January 2014

To: Cabinet

13 February 2014

To: Council

20 February 2014

**Treasury management strategy  
2014/15 to 2016/17**

**Recommendations:**

That audit and corporate governance committee:

1. Scrutinise the treasury management strategy and policy and if required make recommendations for amendment to cabinet.

That cabinet recommends council to approve:

2. The treasury management strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17, incorporating the annual investment strategy, which is contained within appendix A of the report of the head of finance to cabinet on 13 February 2014,
3. The prudential indicators and limits for 2014/15 to 2016/17, which are contained within appendix A of the report of the head of finance to cabinet on 13 February 2014.

## Purpose of report

1. This report presents the council's Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) for 2014/15 to 2016/17 and sets out the expected treasury operations for this period. It comprises of four elements required by legislation as follows:
  - The prudential indicators required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (paragraph 8, table 2);
  - The treasury management strategy in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. This sets out how the council's treasury service will support capital investment decisions, and how the treasury management operates day to day. Its sets out the limitations on treasury management activity through prudential indicators, within which the council's treasury function must operate. The strategy is included as appendix A to the report (paragraphs 1-47);
  - The annual investment strategy. This sets out the council's criteria for selecting counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss on its investments. This strategy is in accordance with the DCLG investment guidance and forms part of the treasury management strategy. (appendix A, paragraphs 20 – 47);
  - A statutory duty to approve a minimum revenue provision policy for 2014/15 (paragraphs 43-44).

It is a requirement of the CIPFA 2011 Treasury Management Code that this report is approved by full Council on an annual basis.

## Strategic objectives

2. Effective treasury management is required in order to meet our strategic objective of managing our business effectively. Managing the finances of the authority in accordance with the treasury management strategy will help to ensure that resources are available to deliver its services and meet the council's other strategic objectives.

## Background

3. Treasury management is the management of the council's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.
4. The funding of the council's capital expenditure is also a function of treasury management. The capital programme provides a guide to the funding needs of the council and the long term cash flow plans to ensure that the council can meet its capital spending obligations.
5. The treasury management and annual investment strategy set out the council's policies for managing investments and confirms the council gives priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. It also includes the prudential

indicators for the next three years; these demonstrate that the council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

6. The council could choose to adopt a totally risk adverse strategy and place all its investments in the government's debt management account. Although this would all but eliminate the possibility of repayment default, it would also result in a poor return on investment. The council therefore sets a strategy that takes marginal risk in return for greater reward.
7. The council's treasury management strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17 is attached in appendix A. Whilst every attempt has been made to minimise the technical content of this report, by its very nature and the need for compliance with associated guidance the report is technical in parts. A glossary of terms in annexe 6 should aid members understanding of some technical terms used in the report.
8. The biggest operational challenge for officers is to find suitable counter-parties to lend to. As credit ratings fall across the board so the options available to officers reduce. The larger institutions will not deal in the (relatively) small sums our lending limits impose.

### Financial implications and risk assessment

9. This report and all associated policies and strategies set out the parameters the council must work within. It is important that the council follows the approved treasury management strategy which is designed to protect the council's finances by managing its risk exposure.
10. In the last few years investment income has fallen due to falling interest rates. In the medium term interest rates are expected to rise. The table below gives an estimate of the amounts available for investment, and the investment income achievable for the next four years.

Table 1: Medium term investment forecast					
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimate of average investments	112,979	106,416	98,884	88,141	78,430
Forecast average interest rate	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.25%	2.50%
December 2013 forecast investment income	2,087	2,090	1,980	1,980	1,960

The 2014/15 budget setting report takes into account the latest projections of anticipated investment income.

### Legal implications

11. There are no significant legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services, the ODPM Local Government Investment

Guidance provides assurance that the council's investments are, and will continue to be, within its legal powers.

12. The council must approve any amendment to the treasury management strategy and annual investment strategy in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 ( the Act), the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services and the ODPM Local Government Investment Guidance under Section 15(1) (a) Local Government Act 2003 and CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance.

### **Conclusion**

13. This report provides details of the treasury management strategy and the annual investment strategy for 2014/15 which are appended to this report, together with the prudential indicators for approval to council. These documents provide the parameters within which officers will operate the council's treasury management function.

### **Background papers**

- CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes (revised 2011)
- ODPM Local Government Investment Guidance under Section 15(1)(a) Local Government Act 2003 and CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance.
- Treasury Management Investment Strategy 2013/14 (cabinet 14 February 2013, council 21 February 2013)

### **Appendices**

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Annex 1	Economic conditions and prospects for interest rates
Annex 2	Risk and performance benchmarking
Annex 3	Property investment policy
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**Treasury Management Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17****Introduction**

1. The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations require the council to 'have regard to' the CIPFA Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
2. The Act requires the council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (as required by Investment Guidance issued subsequent to the Act). This sets out the council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.
3. The strategy in respect of the following aspects of the treasury management function is based on treasury officers' views on interest rates, supplemented with market forecasts provided by the council's treasury advisor, Capita Asset Services (formerly Sector Treasury Services). The strategy covers:
  - Prudential and treasury indicators in force that will limit the treasury risk and activities of the council;
  - Current treasury position
  - Borrowing strategy
  - Policy on borrowing in advance of need;
  - Investment strategy;
  - Counterparty selection and limits;
  - Policy on use of external service providers;
  - Minimum revenue Provision (MRP) statement;
  - Treasury management scheme of delegation and Section 151 role.
4. It is a statutory requirement under Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for the council to produce a balanced budget. In particular, Section 32 requires a local authority to calculate its budget requirement for each year to include the revenue costs that flow from capital financing decisions. This means that increases in capital expenditure must be limited to a level where any increases in charges to revenue from:
  - increases in interest charges caused by increased borrowing to finance additional capital expenditure, and
  - any increases in running costs from new capital projects
 are identified and limited to a level which is affordable.

A key requirement of the strategy is to explain the risks, and the management of those risks, associated with providing the treasury service. Legislation requires that as a minimum two further treasury reports are provided: a mid-year monitoring report and an outturn report after the year-end that reports on actual activity for the year.

**Treasury Limits for 2014/15 to 2016/17**

5. It is a statutory duty, under Section 3 of the Act and supporting regulations for the council to determine and keep under review how much it can afford to borrow.

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The amount so determined is called the “Affordable Borrowing Limit”. The Authorised Limit is the legislative limit specified in the Act.

6. The council must have regard to the Prudential Code when setting the Authorised Limit, which essentially requires it to ensure that total capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and in particular, that the impact upon its future council tax is ‘acceptable’.
7. The Authorised Limit is set on a rolling basis, for the forthcoming financial year and two successive financial years.

**Cabinet is asked to recommend council to approve the limits set out in table 2:**

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<b>Table 2: Prudential Indicators</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
<b>Debt</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Authorised limit for external debt</b>				
Borrowing	5	5	5	5
Other long term liabilities	5	5	5	5
	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Operational boundary for external debt</b>				
Borrowing	2	2	2	2
Other long term liabilities	3	3	3	3
	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Interest rate exposures</b>				
Maximum fixed rate borrowing	100%	100%	100%	100%
Maximum variable rate borrowing	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Investments</b>				
<b>Interest rate exposures</b>				
Limits on fixed interest rates	100	100	100	100
Limits on variable interest rates	30	30	30	30
<b>Principal sums invested &gt; 364 days</b>				
Upper limit for principal sums invested > 364 days	70	70	70	70
Limit to be placed on investments to maturity:				
1-2 years	70	70	70	70
2-5 years	50	50	50	50
5 years+	50	50	50	50
<b>Investment portfolio spread - (upper limits)</b>				
Supranational bonds	15	15	15	15
Gilts	15	15	15	15
Equities*	10	10	10	10
Corporate bonds	10	10	10	10
Money market funds	20	20	20	20
Pooled bond fund	5	5	5	5
Property - direct investments	30	30	30	30
Property related pooled funds	20	20	20	20
External fund manager				
Cash and certificates of deposit	85%	85%	85%	85%
Debt management account deposit facility	100%	100%	100%	100%
* Limit at time of purchase - Equities include accumulated dividends				

8. The indicators set the parameters within which we manage the overall capital investment and treasury management functions. The specific treasury activity limits aim to contain the activity of the treasury function in order to manage risk and reduce 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/improve performance. Explanations for the indicators can be found in Annex 4 of the report.

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## Current position

9. The council's investments at 31 December 2013 were as follows:

<b>Table 3 maturity structure of investments at 31 December 2013:</b>	<b>Total £000's</b>	<b>% holding</b>
<b>Cash deposits:</b>		
Call accounts	25,042	19.75%
Notice account	0	0.00%
Up to 1 month	4,000	3.16%
2 month	5,500	4.34%
3 month	2,000	1.58%
4 month	0	0.00%
5-6 month	10,500	8.28%
7-12 month	39,000	30.76%
1-2 year	0	0.00%
2-7 year	11,000	8.68%
Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander	222	0.18%
<b>Total Cash Deposits</b>	<b>97,264</b>	<b>76.73%</b>
<b>Equities</b>	<b>12,566</b>	<b>9.91%</b>
<b>CCLA</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>3.94%</b>
<b>Corporate Bonds</b>	<b>3,991</b>	<b>3.15%</b>
<b>Money Market Funds</b>	<b>7,950</b>	<b>6.27%</b>
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>126,771</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Note: £126.771 million does not represent uncommitted resource the council has at its disposal. This amount includes council tax receipts held prior to forwarding to Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police, business rate receipts prior to payment to the government and committed capital and revenue balances. Details of the council's uncommitted balances are provided in the annual budget and council tax setting report.

10. The council currently holds 77 per cent of its investments in the form of cash deposits, 57 per cent is invested for fixed terms with a fixed investment return and 20 per cent is currently held on call accounts, with the remainder held in non cash deposits. Typically the council restricts lending activity to UK institutions and the highest rated counterparties.

#### **Icelandic banks – Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander**

11. The council has now received £2,144,487 in respect of the claim for £2.6 million (£2.5 million investment plus interest) from the investment made with the failed Icelandic bank Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander (KSF).

12. The administrators intend to make further payments at regular intervals. The latest information states that it is the administrators' current intention to pay the

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twelfth dividend in approximately six months' time. The estimated total amount to be recovered is forecast to be in the range of 81p to 86p in the pound. This equates to between £2,130,975 and £2,262,517, so in fact we have already exceeded the lower estimate.

### Investment performance for the year to 31 December 2013.

13. The council's budgeted investment return for 2013/14 is £1.9 million, and the actual interest earned to date is shown as follows:

<b>Table 4: Investment interest earned by investment type</b>				
<b>Investment type</b>	<b>Interest Earned 2013/14</b>			<b>Variation £000's</b>
	<b>Annual Budget £000's</b>	<b>Actual to date £000's</b>	<b>Annual Forecast £000's</b>	
Call accounts	223	119	227	4
Cash deposits < 1yr	770	193	311	-459
Cash deposits > 1yr	80	456	693	613
MMF	15	14	28	13
Corporate bonds	259	198	228	-31
CCLA	300	150	300	0
Equities	300	205	300	0
<b>Total Interest</b>	<b>1,947</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>2,087</b>	<b>140</b>

### Borrowing Strategy 2014/15 – 2016/17

14. The council has to provide details of its borrowing requirement, any maturing debt which will need to be re-financed, and the effect this will have on the treasury position over the next three years. This council has no external debt and does not expect to borrow long term to finance the current capital programme. The council will continue to take a prudent approach to its debt strategy. In general, the council will borrow for one of two purposes:

- To finance cash flow in the short-term;
- To fund capital investment over the medium to long term.

15. The prudential indicators and limits for debt are set out in table 2 and provide the scope and flexibility for the council to borrow in the short-term up to a maximum of £10 million, if such a need arose within the cash flow management activities of the authority, for the achievement of its service objectives. The council's capital investment plans do not currently demonstrate a need to borrow, as all projects are fully funded.

16. The bank rate is expected to remain at a historically low level for another year. This does provide a window of opportunity to review the strategy of undertaking external borrowing for new projects.

17. The treasury management strategy for the forthcoming year aims to efficiently manage the investment portfolio by reducing the amount of funds held extremely short-term for cash flow purposes and operating with an adequate but not

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excessive level of working capital. This optimum level is dictated by the accuracy of cash flow forecasts and, although unlikely, it is prudent to set a minimum level for the use of short-term borrowing arrangements or overdraft facilities if the cash flow forecasts prove inaccurate at any point in the year.

18. The head of finance would in such instances 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.

### **Policy on borrowing in advance of need**

19. The council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement estimates, and will be considered carefully to ensure value for money can be demonstrated and that the council can ensure the security of such funds. In determining if any borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need, the council will:

- Consider the impact of borrowing in advance on investment cash balances and the exposure to counterparty risk. Any risk associated with any borrowing in advance of activity will be subject to prior appraisal and subsequent reporting through the mid year or annual reporting process.

### **Annual investment strategy**

20. The main aim of the council's investment strategy is to maintain the security and liquidity of its investments, although the yield or return on the investment will be a consideration, subject to adequate security and liquidity. The council will ensure:

- It has sufficient liquidity in its investments to cover cash flow. For this purpose it has set out parameters for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed.
- It maintains a policy covering the categories of investment types it will invest in, criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security.

21. The strategy aims to provide a high degree of flexibility to take appropriate lending decisions, with a view to producing a portfolio with an even spread of maturity periods as and when institutional security and market confidence returns. This aim is to provide a more even and predictable investment return in the medium term.

22. The head of finance will ensure a counterparty list (a list of named institutions) is maintained in compliance with the recommended credit rating criteria (table 5) and will revise the criteria and submit any changes to the credit rating criteria to council for approval as necessary.

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### Investment types

23. The types of investment that the council can use are summarised below. These are split under the headings of specified and non-specified in accordance with the statutory guidance.

#### **Specified investment instruments (maximum period 1 year)**

- Deposits with banks and building societies
- Deposits with UK local authorities
- UK Government – treasury stock (Gilts) with less than one year to maturity
- Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility (DMADF)
- Money Market Funds (MMF) (AAA rated)
- Pooled Bond funds (AAAf rated)
- Certificates of deposits issued by banks and building societies

#### **Non-specified investment instruments (maturities over one year)**

- Bank and building society cash deposits up to 5 years
- Deposits with UK local authorities up to 5 years
- Corporate bonds
- Pooled property, bond funds and UK pooled equity funds
- UK treasury stock (Gilts) up to 10 years
- Supranational bonds up to 10 years
- Direct property investment

#### **Other Non-specified investment instruments**

- Fixed term deposits with variable rate and variable maturities
- Investment in Housing Associations

### Approach to investing

24. The council currently holds approximately £85 million core cash balances which are available to invest for more than one year. This is expected to reduce over the medium term as the approved capital expenditure is carried out. In addition the council has funds which are available on a temporary basis to invest. These are held pending payment over to another body such as precept payments and council tax. The amount can vary between £15 million and £30 million throughout the year and should only be invested short term (under one year). Investments will be made primarily with reference to known cash flow requirements.

25. Whilst the economic and market uncertainties remain, the council will keep investments relatively short term, but where possible will continue to look for opportunities to fix lending in the medium term with highly rated institutions when possible for core cash balances. The aim is to increase the weighted average maturity of the portfolio in order to reduce maturity risk, and provide certainty of return and smoothing of the investment profile.

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26. The financial stability of banks is improving, with substantial intervention by the government. Officers will continue to implement an operational strategy which provides tight controls on the investments placed. As a result of a sharp decline in the number of acceptable counterparties, the limits incorporate changes to the council's exposure for both types of investment and time limits. These changes aim to give greater flexibility to improve the spread the investment risk over different types of instruments and sectors, subject to a full assessment of risk and security.
27. Should market conditions deteriorate suddenly to the extent that the council is unable to place money with institutions with the necessary credit rating, it will make use of the UK Government deposit account (DMADF).
28. The council has the authority to lend to other local authorities at market rates. Whilst these are considered to be supported by central government, officers will consider the financial viability and sustainability of the individual local authority before any funds are advanced.
29. The property investment holdings will also be looked at in more detail for consideration. Further details on the property investment policy are contained in annex 3.
30. There will be no further investment using a fund manager at this time. However, this will be kept under review.
31. Bond funds can be used to diversify the portfolio, whilst maintaining liquidity and security. These will be considered and reviewed as an investment possibility to spread portfolio risk.

### Counterparty selection

32. Treasury management risk is the risk of loss of capital to the council. To minimise this risk, the council uses credit rating information when considering who to lend to. Capita Asset Services provides the council with credit rating updates from all three ratings agencies – Standard & Poor's, Fitch and Moody's.
33. The council is also required to supplement the credit rating data with operational market information such as credit default swaps (CDS), negative watches and outlooks, which are considered when assessing the security of counterparties. This additional information is used so that the council does not rely solely on the current credit ratings of counterparties.
34. The council will not use the approach suggested by CIPFA of using the lowest rating from all three rating agencies to determine the creditworthy counterparties. This is because Moody's have become far more aggressive in allocating low ratings than the other two agencies. If followed, this approach would leave the council with so few institutions on its approved lending list it would be unworkable. The information provided by Capita Asset Services uses a wider array of information than just primary ratings and does not give undue weight to

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any one agency's ratings. Credit information is updated and monitored weekly, supplemented by daily emails, which are consulted prior to making an investment decision. The council is alerted to any changes from all three agencies through the use of data provided by Capita Asset Services. If a downgrade results in the counterparty no longer meeting the council's minimum criteria, it will not be used for future investments. Movements in CDS and other market data is also reviewed on a weekly basis. Extreme market movements may result in a downgrade of an institution or removal from the council's lending list.

35. Where it is felt the council would benefit from utilising government guarantees provided by countries with an AAA rating, the council may lend to institutions covered by such guarantees. Any decision to lend in this way will be subject to consultation with and the agreement of the cabinet member responsible for finance.

### **Country and sector considerations**

36. The council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties outside the UK from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AAA from Fitch Ratings.

### **Counterparty limits**

37. In the normal course of the council's cash flow operations it is expected that both specified and non-specified investments will be used for the control of liquidity as both categories allow for short term investments. 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 be used where the council's liquidity requirements are safeguarded. The council will lend to institutions that meet the following criteria:

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Table 5: Counterparty limits

Counterparty	FITCH or equivalent		Govt guarantee	Max limit per counterparty £m	Max. Maturity period	Max % of total investments
	S/term	L/term				
<b>Specified instrument:</b>						
Institutions with a minimum rating	F1	A-		£15m	1 year	50%
Bank / BS cash deposits(2)			UK Sovereign	£15m	Term of guarantee	Term of guarantee
Bank - part nationalised UK			UK Sovereign	£20m	1 year	1 year
Money Market Fund	AAA			£5m	liquid	£20m
UK Govt & DMADF	n/a		UK Sovereign	no limit	n/a	100%
<b>Non-specified instrument:</b>						
Building societies - assets > £5,000m	n/a			£15m	12 months	20%
Building societies - assets > £1,000m				£10m	10 months	20%
Building societies - assets > £500m	n/a			£6m	9 months	10%
Building societies - assets > £250m				£4m	6 months	10%
Bond fund		AAA		£15m	variable	40%
Institutions with a minimum rating	F1+	AA-		£15m	4 years	25%
Institutions with a minimum rating	F1+	A+		£15m	3 years	25%
Institutions with a minimum rating	F1	A		£15m	2 years	30%
Bank subsidiary	unconditional guarantee			£15m		as parent
Bank - part nationalised UK			UK Sovereign	£20m	4 years	80%
Pooled property fund				£10m	variable	15%
Housing associations	F1+	A+		£15m	variable	15%
UK equities				£10m	variable	20%
Corporate bonds	F1+	A+		£5m	variable	10%
Property related investments				£30m	variable	80%
Local Authorities / parish councils				£15m	5 years	50%
Supranationals	AAA			£10m	10 years	40%
UK government - gilts			UK Sovereign	£15m	15 years	10%

\* Bank subsidiary limits will depend on the relationship between themselves and their parent bank. A subsidiary will only be included on the counterparty list if some form of guarantee exists between it and the parent entity.

38. The criteria for choosing counterparties provides a sound approach to investment in “normal” market circumstances. The head of finance may temporarily restrict further investment activity to those counterparties considered of higher credit quality than the minimum criteria set out for approval. These restrictions will remain in place until the banking system returns to “normal” conditions.

**Fund managers**

39. The treasury management strategy allows for a total of up to £15 million portfolio to be invested with a fund manager. Fund managers can invest in a variety of investment types such as cash deposits, gilts and certificates of deposits. These types of funds can extend the spread of investment portfolio, access highly rated institutions and capitalise upon opportunities to improve returns, whilst maintaining liquidity. This is reviewed regularly, and at present it is not evident that the council can currently benefit from the service of a fund manager due to the market conditions. However, the situation will continue to be reviewed.

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**Risk and performance benchmarks**

40. A requirement of the code is that security and liquidity benchmarks are considered and approved. This is in addition to yield benchmarks which are used to assess performance. The benchmarks are guidelines (not limits) so may be breached depending on the movement in interest rates and counterparty criteria. Their purpose is to allow officers to monitor the current trend position and amend the operational strategy depending on any changes. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported, with an explanation in the mid year or annual report to audit and corporate governance committee. Detailed information for the assessment of risk is shown in annexe 2.

41. Performance indicators are set to assess the adequacy of the treasury function over the year. These are distinct historic performance indicators, as opposed to the predominantly forward looking prudential indicators. The indicators used to assess the performance of the treasury function are:

Table 6: investment benchmarks	
Investment category	Benchmark
Bank & building society deposits - non-managed	3 Month LIBID
Equities	FTSE all shares index
Property related investments	IPD balanced Property Unit Trust Index
Corporate bonds	BoE base rate

Performance against these indicators will be reported in both the annual mid-year and year-end treasury reports.

**Policy on the use of treasury management advisers**

42. The council has a joint contract for treasury management advisors with Vale of White Horse District Council. A three year contract was awarded to Capita Asset Services Limited, a subsidiary of the Capita Group Plc in October 2011. The company provides a range of services which include:

- technical support on treasury matters, capital finance issues and member reports;
- economic forecasts and interest rate analysis;
- credit ratings / market information service involving the three main credit rating agencies;
- provision of credit rating information, strategic advice including a review of the investment and borrowing strategies and policy documents.

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43. Following the collapse of the Icelandic banks, and the subsequent local authority exposure to these defaults, the revised CLG investment guidance notes and the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice requires the council to recognise that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the council at all times and to ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon external service providers. It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources.

### **Minimum revenue provision (MRP) statement 2014/15**

44. The council is required to assess its MRP requirement for the year in accordance with the guidance of section 21 of the Act. MRP is a charge made to the revenue account as a proportion of outstanding capital liabilities. The council has no outstanding capital liability and therefore the MRP for 2014/15 is nil.

45. This will remain the case unless new capital expenditure is financed by borrowing.

### **Councillor and officer training**

46. The requirement for increased councillor consideration of treasury management matters and the need to ensure officers dealing with treasury management are trained and kept up to date requires a suitable training process for councillors and officers. In compliance with the revised code, the council has provided treasury management training to councillors in July 2013. Further training can be provided if required.

### **Treasury management scheme of delegation and the role of the section 151 officer**

47. The treasury management scheme of delegation and the role of the section 151 officer is as follows:

#### **I. Council**

- Receiving and approval of reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities;
- Approval of annual treasury management strategy and annual investment strategy

#### **II. Audit and governance Committee / Cabinet**

- Approval of /amendments to the organisations adopted clauses, treasury management policy statements and treasury management practices;
- Receiving and reviewing monitoring reports and acting on recommendations;

#### **III. Section 151 Officer / Head of Finance**

- Recommending clauses, treasury management policies/practices for approval, review and monitoring compliance;
- Submitting regular treasury management information reports;
- Submitting budgets and budget variations;

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- Reviewing the performance of the treasury management function;
- Ensuring adequacy of treasury management resources and skills and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function;
- Ensuring the adequacy of internal audit and liaising with external audit;
- Approving the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment.

**Summary**

48. Prior to the beginning of each financial year the council must approve the treasury management strategy. The strategy sets the parameters within which officers can invest the council's surplus fund.
49. This strategy provides a commentary on the current financial climate and sets out the council's lending strategy in response to this.

# Economic conditions and interest rate forecasts

In order to put the investment strategy into context it is necessary to consider the external factors in the financial markets and their impact on interest rate forecasts.

**Global economy** – the sovereign debt crisis has eased in Europe after the Cyprus bailout in spring 2013. Growth is likely to remain weak and so dampen UK growth. There is still the possibility of a Greece or Cyprus bailout. The US has managed to return to growth. The Federal Reserve has continued to provide huge stimulus but the level of support is likely to be tapered down in 2014. Consumer, investor and business confidence levels have improved markedly in 2013.

## UK economy:

**Economic growth** – Until 2013, the economic recovery in the UK since 2008 had been the slowest recovery in recent history. The Bank of England has upgraded growth forecasts in the August and November quarterly Inflation Reports for 2013 from 1.2 per cent to 1.6 per cent and for 2014 from 1.7 per cent to 2.8 per cent, (2015 unchanged at 2.3 per cent). Growth is expected to be strong although the downside is that wage inflation is considerably lower than CPI putting pressure on disposable income. The Bank will not consider raising interest rates until unemployment is at 7 per cent which means that 750,000 jobs needs to be created, this was forecast to take three years in August but has been revised to Q4 2014.

**Unemployment** – The unemployment rate currently stands at 2.5 million i.e. 7.6 per cent on the LFS / ILO measure. Unemployment has not risen to the levels that would normally be expected in a major recession and that productivity had sunk to 2005 levels. There has, therefore, been a significant level of retention of labour, which will mean that a significant amount of GDP growth can be accommodated without a major reduction in unemployment.

**Inflation and Bank rate** – CPI Inflation has fallen from a peak of 3.1 per cent in June 2013 to 2.0 per cent in December. It is expected to fall back to reach the 2.0 per cent target level within the MPC's two year time horizon.

**AAA rating** – the UK recently lost its AAA rating from Fitch and Moody's but this caused little reaction in the markets.

## Capita Asset Services forward view

Economic forecasting remains difficult with so many external influences affecting the UK. The interest rate forecasts assumes that there will not be a major resurgence of the Eurozone debt crisis or a breakup of the Eurozone. Key areas of risk include:

- UK strong economic growth is dependent on consumer spending and recovery in the housing market which will not continue beyond 2014 if wage inflation does not overtake CPI inflation as disposable incomes are eroded;
- Prolonged political disagreement over the US Federal budget and a raising of the debt ceiling;
- A resurgence of the Eurozone debt crisis caused by ongoing deterioration in government debt to GDP ratios to the point where financial markets lose confidence in the financial

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viability of one or more countries and in the ability of the European Central Bank and Eurozone governments to deal with the potential size of the crisis;

- Monetary policy action failing to stimulate sustainable growth in western economies especially the Eurozone and Japan;

The overall balance of risks remains weighted to the downside. However the overall balance of risks to economic recovery in the UK is currently evenly weighted.

**Prospects for interest rates**

The bank base rate is forecast to remain unchanged at 0.5 per cent, rising in Q2 in 2016. Capita’s central view for bank rate forecasts is shown below:

	Bank of England base rate	PWLB borrowing rates (adjusted for certainty rate)		
		5 yr	25 yr	50 yr
Dec 2013	0.50%	2.50%	4.40%	4.40%
Dec 2014	0.50%	2.70%	4.60%	4.60%
Dec 2015	0.50%	3.00%	4.90%	5.00%

There are downside risks to these forecasts for example if economic growth becomes weaker. However, there is also a risk that the pace of growth could pick up more quickly than expected if inflation exceeds the Bank of England’s target rate of two per cent.

Forecast of long term PWLB rates to September 2016 as provided by Capita Asset Services Ltd at 25 November 2013 are:

	Dec-13	Mar-14	Jun-14	Sep-14	Dec-14	Mar-15	Jun-15	Sep-15	Dec-15	Mar-16	Jun-16	Sep-16
Bank base rate	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	1.00%
3m LIBID	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.60%	0.70%
6m LIBID	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.70%	0.80%	1.00%
12m LIBID	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	1.00%	1.20%	1.40%	1.60%	1.80%
5 yr PWLB rate	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%
10 yr PWLB rate	3.60%	3.60%	3.70%	3.80%	3.80%	3.90%	3.90%	4.00%	4.10%	4.20%	4.30%	4.30%
25 yr PWLB rate	4.40%	4.40%	4.50%	4.50%	4.60%	4.60%	4.70%	4.80%	4.90%	5.00%	5.10%	5.10%
50yr PWLB rate	4.40%	4.40%	4.50%	4.50%	4.60%	4.70%	4.80%	4.90%	5.00%	5.10%	5.20%	5.20%

# Benchmarking and Monitoring Security, Liquidity and Yield in the Investment Service

These benchmarks are targets and so could be exceeded from time to time. Any variation will be reported, along with supporting reasons, in the Annual Treasury Outturn Report.

**Yield.** Benchmarks are used to assess the performance of investments. The local measures of yield are:

Table 6: investment benchmarks	
Investment category	Benchmark
Bank & building society deposits - non-managed	3 Month LIBID
Equities	FTSE all shares index
Property related investments	IPD balanced Property Unit Trust Index
Corporate bonds	BoE base rate

Security and liquidity benchmarks are intrinsic to the approved treasury strategy through the counterparty selection criteria and some of the prudential indicators.

**Liquidity** is defined as the council “having adequate, though not excessive, cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdrafts or standby facilities to enable it 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). In respect of this area the Council seeks to maintain:

- Bank overdraft – there is an agreed overdraft facility of up to £700,000.
- Liquid short term deposits of at least £10,000,000 available within one weeks notice.

The availability of liquidity and the term risk in the portfolio can be benchmarked by the monitoring of the weighted average life (WAL) of the portfolio – a shorter WAL would generally embody less risk. In this respect the proposed benchmark is to be used:

- WAL benchmark is expected to be 0.5 years, with a maximum of 3 years.

**Security of the investments.** In the context of benchmarking, assessing security is very much more a subjective area to assess. Security is currently evidenced by the application of minimum credit quality criteria to investment counterparties, primarily through the use of credit ratings supplied by the three main credit rating agencies (Fitch, Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s). Whilst this approach embodies security considerations, benchmarking levels of risk is more 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. The table beneath shows average defaults for differing periods of investment grade products for each Fitch long term rating category over the last 20-30 years.

## Annex 2

**Average defaults for differing periods of investment**

<b>Long term rating</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>3 years</b>	<b>4 years</b>	<b>5 years</b>
AAA	0.00%	0.02%	0.06%	0.09%	0.13%
AA	0.02%	0.04%	0.14%	0.28%	0.36%
A	0.09%	0.25%	0.43%	0.60%	0.79%
BBB	0.23%	0.65%	1.13%	1.70%	2.22%
BB	0.93%	2.47%	4.21%	5.81%	7.05%
B	3.31%	7.89%	12.14%	15.50%	17.73%
CCC	23.15%	32.88%	39.50%	42.58%	45.48%

The council's minimum long term rating criteria is currently "A" meaning the average expectation of default for a one year investment in a counterparty with an "A" long term rating would be 0.09 per cent of the total investment (e.g. for a £1m investment the average loss would be £900). This is only an average - any specific counterparty loss could potentially be higher or lower. These figures act as a proxy benchmark for risk across the portfolio.

The Council's maximum security risk benchmark for the whole portfolio, when compared to these historic default tables, is:

	<b>1 year</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>3 years</b>	<b>4 years</b>	<b>5 years</b>
Maximum	0.09%	0.25%	0.43%	0.60%	0.79%

These benchmarks are embodied in the criteria for selecting cash investment counterparties and these will be monitored and reported to members in the both the Investment Mid-Year report and the Investment Annual report. As this data is collated, trends and analysis will be collected and reported. Where a counter party is not credit rated a proxy rating will be applied.

# Property Investment Policy

## 1.0 Direct investment in property

1.1 The council is restricted in the different investment vehicles it is legally allowed to invest in notwithstanding the over-riding need for prudence mentioned earlier. Of the options open one is property and the returns from investing in property can be greater than the opportunities in the money markets.

1.2 In broad terms the returns can be higher because the risks are greater. Factors to be taken into account when deciding the principle of investing in property include:

- investment will be for the long term since it may not be possible, or wise, to sell quickly,
- the costs of acquisition and disposal are higher,
- there are management costs, risk of rent default and failure to honour maintenance agreements,
- different types of property and different areas carry different risks,
- generally property tends to appreciate in value, although this will vary by type and area; however, in some cases the value may go down,
- property can become functionally obsolete necessitating major refurbishment,
- without regular repair and maintenance the condition will deteriorate and the responsibility for repairs/maintenance may not always rest with the tenant,
- certain types of property may become less desirable as time goes by; this can make re-letting difficult or attract a lower calibre of tenant.

## 2.0 How much is invested?

2.1 £16 million is currently held in property and £127 million is invested in treasury investments. The investment in property represents 13 per cent of the overall total.

## 3.0 What type of property?

3.1 There are different types of property investment with assessment of prospects as follows:

i)	shops and offices	good - although may be subject to changing fashions and working practices
ii)	industrial	good but condition can be variable
iii)	leisure	good but may be best avoided since too close to our "core" business
iv)	agricultural	moderate but too risky now
v)	woodland	poor – some is owned for environmental/leisure purposes

**Annex 3**

3.2 Average Yield Levels (%). In general, property can be categorised as prime, secondary or tertiary in terms of its desirability. 'Rack-rented' means that the maximum market rental achievable is being received. Yield derives from both capital and rent. Lower yields can indicate that the investment attracts a lower degree of risk due to the ratio of rent to capital and other factors such as location, security and regularity of income.

**4.0 Where should it be located?**

4.1 There are compelling legal, cultural and financial reasons for not investing in the European mainland at the moment. Within the UK the location will influence the return and the type of property and may make management more or less difficult depending on distance from the Council offices.

**Only property located in the UK will be considered.**

**5.0 What level of financial return?**

5.1 As mentioned above, generally the greater the return, the greater the risk inherent in the investment. There are so many variables involving area, management, condition, leases and the varying return on other investments that it is difficult to draw up hard and fast rules about them and their relationship with the rate of return. Each proposal will be considered on its merits

**6.0 Review**

6.1 The policy is to be reviewed annually (along with the Treasury Management Strategy).

## Annex 4

**Explanation of Prudential Indicators**

Central government control of borrowing was ended and replaced with Prudential borrowing by the Local Government Act 2003. Prudential borrowing permitted local government organisations to borrow to fund capital spending plans provided they could demonstrate their affordability. Prudential indicators are the means to demonstrate affordability.

**Capital expenditure** – shows last year's spending, this year's projected spending and the approved programme until 2015/16.

**Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream** – because the council has no net debt investment interest on reserves and balances makes a positive contribution to the council's finances.

**Net borrowing requirement** – this demonstrates that no borrowing is planned to fund the capital programme.

**In year capital financing requirement** – this shows the council has no borrowing.

**Capital financing requirement (CFR) as at 31 March** – the CFR shows the underlying need of the council to borrow for capital purposes as determined from the balance sheet. The overall CFR is nil, there is no need to borrow.

**Incremental impact of capital investment decisions – increase in Council Tax (band D) per annum** – this indicator shows the affect of the latest capital programme report on annual council tax. This indicator is based on the estimated decrease or increase in interest payable to the General Fund each year due to the changed funding of the capital programme in the latest capital report to December 2013 cabinet.

**Incremental impact of capital investment decisions** – This indicator shows the affect of the latest capital programme report on revenue. This indicator is based on the estimated decrease or increase in interest payable to the funding of the capital programme. As the council has no debt this indicator is not relevant.

**Authorised limit for external debt** – this is the maximum limit for external borrowing. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003. This limit is set to allow sufficient headroom for day to day operational management of cash flows.

**Operational boundary for external debt** – this is set as the more likely amount that may be required for day to day cash flow. This has an amount included to allow for cash flow borrowing associated with the canal project.

**Upper limit for fixed and variable interest rate exposure** – these limits allow the council flexibility in its investment and borrowing options.

**Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 364 days** – the amount it is considered can be prudently invested for periods in excess of a year.

**Annex 4**

**Adoption of the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management**

The council adopted this code on 25 April 2002 and the strategic director for finance confirms that the authority continues to comply with this.

This indicator in respect of treasury management confirms that the council has adopted the CIPFA code of practice for treasury management in public services. This is to provide assurance that treasury management activities are being carried out in line with best practice.

## Annex 5

### Treasury Management Practice (TMP) 1 – credit and counterparty risk management

The CLG issued Investment Guidance in 2010, and this forms the structure of the council's policy below.

The key aim 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 adopted the code on 25 March 2002 and will apply its principles to all investment activity. In accordance with the code, the head of finance has produced its treasury management practices (TMPs). This part, TMP1(5), covering investment counterparty policy requires approval each year.

The key requirements of both the code and the 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 strategy guidelines for decision making on investments, particularly non-specified investments.
- the principles to be used to determine the maximum periods for which funds can be committed.

In compliance with the above guidance the Annual investment Strategy is now incorporated within the council's treasury management strategy and includes the following:

- specified investments: these are high security, i.e. having a high credit rating, (although this is defined by the council, and no guidelines are given), and high liquidity investments, in sterling with a maturity of no more than one year.
- non-specified investments: covers all other investments, which may have a maturity of greater than one year or lower security rating or both.

The Annual Investment Strategy within the treasury management strategy is approved by full council.

All limits in the investment strategy apply to both in-house and externally managed funds.

#### **Specified Investments**

These investments are sterling investments of not more than one-year maturity, or those which could be for a longer period but where the council has 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 negligible. These investments are categorised as:

- a) UK Government (such as the Debt Management Office, UK Treasury Bills or gilts with less than one year to maturity)
- b) Supranational bonds of less than one year's duration
- c) A local authority, parish council or community council
- d) An investment scheme that has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency

## Annex 5

- e) A body that has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency (such as a bank or building society)

### Non-specified Investments

Non-specified investments are any other type of investment (i.e. not defined as specified). These investments are categorized as:

- f) Supranational bonds greater than 1 year to maturity.
- g) Gilt edged securities.
- h) Building societies not meeting the basic security requirements under the specified investments.
- i) Any bank or building society that has a minimum long term credit rating as shown in table 5, for deposits with a maturity of greater than one year.
- j) Any non-rated subsidiary of a credit rated institution included in the specified investment category.
- k) Share capital in a body corporate.
- l) Corporate bonds
- m) Housing Association investment
- n) Property direct property investment
- o) Pooled property fund investment

These categories of investment will vary in their levels of risk, and the return that may be expected from them. The identification and rationale supporting the selection investments and the maximum limits to be applied are set out in table 5.

Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS). This type of investment is classified as a service investment rather than a treasury management investment, it therefore fall outside of the scope of the investment categories above.

### Cash deposits

- 1 The majority of the council's investments are held in cash deposits. These can be made with banks or building societies that meet the credit rating criteria detailed in annexe 1. Any non-rated subsidiary of a credit rated institution can be included as an investment category subject to individual assessment of the relationship between themselves and the parent bank. Where institutions are part of a banking group then the maximum lending criteria will be shared between the group companies. Limits on amounts for each counterparty are determined by credit rating and maturity period.
2. The operation of some building societies does not require a credit rating, although in every other respect the security of the society would match similarly sized societies that are credit rated. The council may use such building societies which have a minimum asset size of £250 million, but will restrict these types of investments to six months.
3. Cash deposits can be made with UK local authorities up to a period of five years and a maximum of £15 million per authority. Local authorities do not require a credit rating, and are classed as a low risk counterparty due to their funding and income streams.

## Annex 5

### Gilts

1. Gilts (or 'gilt-edged stocks') are bonds issued by the UK government which pay a fixed rate of interest usually twice a year. They are considered safe investments as the government is unlikely to default on the interest payments. If held to maturity they will return their issue value; if sold before their redemption date the price realised will fluctuate with market conditions. Gilts are bought and sold on the stock market where their price can go up or down. The strategy permits investments of up to £15 million in gilts. The council does not currently hold any gilts, as market conditions have not presented an opportune time to enter the gilt market. This is reviewed frequently.

### Government's debt management account deposit facility (DMADF)

1. The DMADF is a deposit account with the Government. The rates are very low, however this is offset by the increased security and facility to improve the portfolio's spread of investments. A maximum limit of 100 per cent of the portfolio is set in the strategy for this facility. The account is only used when it is not possible, or it is outside the council's risk tolerance to place monies elsewhere.

### Money market funds (MMFs)

1. MMFs are commercially run, pooled investments. They work rather like unit trusts, but whereas the latter are based upon shares in companies, MMFs rely on loans to companies. As their pooled funds have a high total value better rates of returns can be obtained. Legislation allows authorities to access only those MMFs with the highest possible credit rating (AAA).
2. The maximum limit to be invested in this type of instrument is £20 million. Access and liquidity of these instruments are extremely flexible, as they operate on a similar basis to call deposit accounts in that the funds can be placed or withdrawn with a minimum amount of notice, but tend to achieve better rates than short-term cash deposits placed in the market over similar periods, particularly in a declining or flat interest rate environment.

### Certificates of deposit

1. Certificates of deposit are a type of bonds issued by banks. They are classified as non-specified investments. Certificates of deposit are bought and sold on the stock market where their price can go up or down. If held to maturity they will return their issue value; if sold before their redemption date the price realised will fluctuate with market conditions. The council would only consider purchase of these investments to be held until maturity.

### Corporate bonds

1. Corporate bonds are issued by companies as a way of raising money to invest in their business. They have 'par' or nominal value' (usually £100), which is the amount that will be returned to the investor on a stated future date (the 'redemption date'). They also pay a stated interest rate each year, usually fixed. Corporate bonds are bought and sold on the stock market and their price can go up or down.
2. The council continues to maintain holdings of corporate bonds previously acquired, on the basis that returns on these securities over their remaining lives should outperform the current bond markets and returns from fund management, given the view that

## Annex 5

interest rates and yields are forecast to remain low in the near term. The strategy permits investments of up to £10 million in corporate bonds (measured at the time of purchase). The current value of corporate bonds held is £4.0 million as at 31 December 2013.

3. The remaining bonds are providing an excellent rate of return. As bond prices tend toward par as they approach maturity, there will be an optimum point at which each bond provides the best return versus the deterioration in capital value. Capita Asset Services reviewed the council's current holdings and the analysis shows that in the current interest rate environment they should be held until maturity.

### **Property – direct investment**

1. The council is able to purchase property as an investment, however this is a specialist area and it is necessary to seek external advice on how the council could best diversify its investments by the inclusion of property.
2. The council is reviewing further investment in property in conjunction with the council's property advisors. The treasury management strategy allows for a further investment of up to £20 million in either direct property holdings (as measured at the time of purchase) or indirect property investments.
3. The council currently retain properties for investment purposes. As at the end of March 2013, the latest period for which audited figures are available, these had an aggregate book value of £15.9 million.

### **Property – indirect investment**

1. The council is able to invest in pooled property investment funds. These are pooled investments where units are purchased. The fund invests in a cross section of property ie: commercial, industrial, retail and residential. This type of investment is highly liquid as units can be sold quickly if required. They are also exempt from capital accounting as disposal income does not have to be treated as a capital receipt. This can give greater flexibility in the use of future income. The disadvantage of this type of fund is that they have a high entry fee and annual management charges. The council continues to review investment in this type of product with the assistance of the council's treasury advisors (Capita Asset Services) to assess which products may be suitable. The strategy provides for investment up to £10 million in a property related investment fund.

### **Bond funds**

1. These are pooled investment funds which have been developed to provide investors with access to the bond market, spreading the risk of direct bond holdings by giving access to a portfolio of mixed bonds ranging from UK Gilts, supranational bonds, other government guaranteed issues and corporate bonds of both banks and corporate organisations. Very much like MMFs they are strictly regulated and those that achieve AAAs credit rating must maintain liquidity. Funds can be accessed quickly if required. The maximum limit to be invested in this type of instrument is £5 million.

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**Equities**

1. 'Equity' is an investment in the share capital of a publicly quoted company. Equity is the risk-bearing part of the company's capital and contrasts with debt capital which is usually secured in some way, and which has priority over shareholders if the company becomes insolvent and its assets are distributed.
2. For most companies there are two types of equity: ordinary shares, which have voting rights, and preference shares, which do not. Owners of preference shares rank ahead of ordinary shareholders in a liquidation.
3. The council's investments in equities are liquid investments, which mean they could be sold at any time, from which an investment gain (or loss) could accrue to the council.
4. The council continues to maintain its current equity holdings, on the basis that although the returns have fluctuated these are intended to be held long-term and they also provide diversity to the portfolio. The strategy permits investments of up to £10 million in equities (measured at the time of purchase). As these investments fluctuate significantly over short periods of time, they are kept under constant review.

**Supranational bonds**

1. Supranational bonds fall into two main categories – multilateral development bank bonds, or those offered by a financial institution that is guaranteed by the UK Government. The security of interest and principal on maturity is on a par with UK Government bonds and these bonds usually provide returns above equivalent gilt edged securities. However the value of the bond may rise or fall before maturity and losses may accrue if the bond is sold before maturity. The treasury management strategy permits investment of up to £15 million in supranational bonds (measured at the time of purchase). The council currently does not hold these investments, although they offer excellent security and liquidity. This is reviewed periodically. Given the current low yields it would not be the best time to purchase these to hold for the long term.

**Credit and counterparty risk management**

The council regards the prime objective of its treasury management activities to secure the principle sums invested, whilst maximising of investment returns, within a level of risk that is acceptable to the council. It will ensure that its counterparties and limits, reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations where funds may be deposited, and will limit its investment activities to the instruments listed below. It also recognises the need to have, and will therefore maintain, a formal counterparty policy in respect of those organisations from which it may borrow, or with whom it may enter into other financing arrangements.

The following counterparties and limits will apply in aggregate to both internally and externally managed funds, as measured at the time of investment:

- *Banks and building society deposits – cash and certificates of deposits.*  
A maximum sum of £15 million can be lent to any one individual bank or building society providing it meets the minimum credit rating criteria set out in the investment strategy.

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- *Banks – part nationalised*  
A maximum sum of £20 million can be lent to any one individual bank that is part nationalised.
- *UK government or local authorities*  
A maximum sum of £15 million could be lent to a local authority or UK Government.
- *Supranational bonds*  
The maximum sum that can be invested in supranational bonds is £10 million.
- *Gilt edged securities*  
The maximum investment, excluding investment returns, to be invested in Gilt Edged Securities is £15 million.
- *Corporate bonds*  
The maximum sum that can be invested in United Kingdom Corporate Bonds is £10 million.
- *Equities*  
The maximum sum, excluding investment returns that can be invested in United Kingdom equities is £10 million, but only through the purchase of units of Index Tracking Trusts. As approved by council, the investment returns from the equities are re-invested in this investment instrument.
- *Money Market Funds (MMF)*  
The maximum sum to be invested in MMFs is £20 million. Government legislation restricts authority's access only to those MMFs with the highest possible credit rating (AAA).
- *Bond Funds*  
The maximum to be invested in a pooled bond fund is £5 million and only those that have a AAAf rating should be considered.
- *The government's debt management account deposit facility (DMCDF)*  
The maximum sum to be invested in the government's DMA Deposit Facility is 100 per cent of the total investment portfolio.
- *Pooled Property funds*  
The maximum amount to be invested in property related funds is £10 million. This would be subject to receipt of specialist advice from the council's strategic property advisors and treasury advisors and would be the subject of a separate report to cabinet/council.
- *Property- direct investment*  
The maximum amount to be invested directly in property is £30 million. This would be subject to receipt of specialist advice from the council's strategic property advisors and would be the subject of a separate report to cabinet/council.

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**Investment spread**

As a guideline, it is recommended that the council's investment in any one of the council's approved investment instruments should not exceed the maximum percentage / monetary limits listed below:

Cash and certificates of deposit	85%
Local authorities	50%
Debt management account deposit facility	100%
Supranational bonds	£10m
Gilts	£15m
Equities	£10m
Corporate bonds	£10m
Money market funds	£20m
Pooled Bond Fund	£ 5m
Property - direct investments	£30m
Housing association	£15m
Property pooled fund	£10m
External fund manager	£15m

## Annex 6

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Basis Point (BP)</b>	1/100th of 1%, i.e. 0.01%
<b>Base Rate</b>	Minimum lending rate of a bank or financial institution in the UK.
<b>Benchmark</b>	A measure against which the investment policy or performance of a fund manager can be compared.
<b>Bill of Exchange</b>	A financial instrument financing trade.
<b>Callable Deposit</b>	A deposit placed with a bank or building society at a set rate for a set amount of time. However, the borrower has the right to repay the funds on pre agreed dates, before maturity. This decision is based on how market rates have moved since the deal was agreed. If rates have fallen the likelihood of the deposit being repaid rises, as cheaper money can be found by the borrower.
<b>Cash Fund Management</b>	Fund management is the management of an investment portfolio of cash on behalf of a private client or an institution, the receipts and distribution of dividends and interest, and all other administrative work in connection with the portfolio.
<b>Certificate of Deposit (CD)</b>	Evidence of a deposit with a specified bank or building society repayable on a fixed date. They are negotiable instruments and have a secondary market; therefore the holder of a CD is able to sell it to a third party before the maturity of the CD.
<b>Commercial Paper</b>	Short-term obligations with maturities ranging from 2 to 270 days issued by banks, corporations and other borrowers. Such instruments are unsecured and usually discounted, although some may be interest bearing.
<b>Corporate Bond</b>	Strictly speaking, corporate bonds are those issued by companies. However, the term is used to cover all bonds other than those issued by governments in their own currencies and includes issues by companies, supranational organisations and government agencies.
<b>Counterparty</b>	Another (or the other) party to an agreement or other market contract (e.g. lender/borrower/writer of a swap/etc.)
<b>CDS</b>	Credit Default Swap – a swap designed to transfer the credit exposure of fixed income products between parties. The buyer of a credit swap receives credit protection, whereas the seller of the swap guarantees the credit worthiness of the product. By doing this, the risk of default is transferred from the holder of the fixed income security to the seller of the swap.
<b>CFR</b>	Capital Financing Requirement.
<b>CIPFA</b>	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.
<b>CLG</b>	Department for Communities and Local Government.

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<b>Derivative</b>	A contract whose value is based on the performance of an underlying financial asset, index or other investment, e.g. an option is a derivative because its value changes in relation to the performance of an underlying stock.
<b>DMADF</b>	Deposit Account offered by the Debt Management Office, guaranteed by the UK government.
<b>ECB</b>	European Central Bank – sets the central interest rates in the EMU area. The ECB determines the targets itself for its interest rate setting policy; this is to keep inflation within a band of 0 to 2 per cent. It does not accept that monetary policy is to be used to manage fluctuations in unemployment and growth caused by the business cycle.
<b>Equity</b>	A share in a company with limited liability. It generally enables the holder to share in the profitability of the company through dividend payments and capital gain.
<b>Forward Deal</b>	The act of agreeing today to deposit funds with an institution for an agreed time limit, on an agreed future date, at an agreed rate.
<b>Forward Deposits</b>	Same as forward dealing (above).
<b>Fiscal Policy</b>	The government policy on taxation and welfare payments.
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product.
<b>Gilt</b>	Registered British government securities giving the investor an absolute commitment from the government to honour the debt that those securities represent.
<b>Money Market Fund</b>	A well rated, highly diversified pooled investment vehicle whose assets mainly comprise of short-term instruments. It is very similar to a unit trust, however in a MMF.
<b>Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)</b>	Government body that sets the bank rate (commonly referred to as being base rate). Their primary target is to keep inflation within plus or minus 1 per cent of a central target of 2.5 per cent in two years time from the date of the monthly meeting of the committee. Their secondary target is to support the government in maintaining high and stable levels of growth and employment.
<b>Other Bond Funds</b>	Pooled funds investing in a wide range of bonds.
<b>PWLB</b>	Public Works Loan Board.
<b>QE</b>	Quantitative Easing.
<b>Retail Price Index</b>	Measurement of the monthly change in the average level of prices at the retail level weighted by the average expenditure

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	pattern of the average person.
<b>Sovereign Issues (Ex UK Gilts)</b>	Bonds issued or guaranteed by nation states, but excluding UK government bonds.
<b>Supranational Bonds</b>	Bonds issued by supranational bodies, e.g. European Investment Bank. The bonds – also known as Multilateral Development Bank bonds – are generally AAA rated and behave similarly to gilts, but pay a higher yield (“spread”) given their relative illiquidity when compared with gilts.
<b>Treasury Bill</b>	Treasury bills are short-term debt instruments issued by the UK or other governments. They provide a return to the investor by virtue of being issued at a discount to their final redemption value.

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# Audit and Corporate Governance Committee



Report of Interim Audit Manager

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To: Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

DATE: 28 January 2014

## Internal audit activity report quarter three 2013/2014

### Recommendation

(a) That members note the content of the report.

### Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to summarise the outcomes of recent internal audit activity for the committee to consider. The committee is asked to review the report and the main issues arising, and seek assurance that action has been or will be taken where necessary.

### Background

2. Internal audit is an independent assurance function that primarily provides an objective opinion on the degree to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievements of the councils' objectives. It assists the councils by evaluating the adequacy of governance, risk management, controls and use of resources through its planned audit work, and recommending improvements where necessary.
3. After each audit assignment, internal audit has a duty to report to management its findings on the control environment and risk exposure, and recommend changes for improvements where applicable. Managers are responsible for

considering audit reports and taking the appropriate action to address control weaknesses.

4. Assurance ratings given by internal audit indicate the following:

**Full Assurance:** There is a sound system of internal control designed to meet the system objectives and the controls are being consistently applied.

**Satisfactory Assurance:** There is basically a sound system of internal control although there are some minor weaknesses and/or there is evidence that the level of non-compliance may put some minor system objectives at risk.

**Limited Assurance:** There are some weaknesses in the adequacy of the internal control system which put the system objectives at risk and/or the level of non-compliance puts some of the system objectives at risk.

**Nil Assurance:** Control is weak leaving the system open to significant error or abuse and/or there is significant non-compliance with basic controls.

5. Each recommendation is given one of the following risk ratings:

**High Risk:** Fundamental control weakness for senior management action

**Medium Risk:** Other control weakness for local management action

**Low Risk:** Recommended best practice to improve overall control

### Internal Audit Activity

6. Since the last audit and corporate governance committee meeting, the following audits have been completed:

#### Planned Audits

Full Assurance: 5

Satisfactory Assurance: 4

Limited Assurance: 0

Nil Assurance: 0

	Assurance Rating	No. of Recs	High Risk Recs.	No. Agreed	Medium Risk Recs.	No. Agreed	Low Risk Recs.	No. Agreed
Health & Safety 13/14	Satisfactory	4	1	1	3	3	0	0
Disaster Recovery 13/14	Satisfactory	8	5	4	3	3	0	0
RIPA 13/14	Full	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
LEADER Project	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Assurance Rating	No. of Recs	High Risk Recs.	No. Agreed	Medium Risk Recs.	No. Agreed	Low Risk Recs.	No. Agreed
<b>Grant Verification 13/14</b>								
<b>Brown Bins 13/14</b>	Full	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>National Non-Domestic Rates 13/14</b>	Full	2	0	0	1	1	1	1
<b>Creditor Payments 13/14</b>	Full	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
<b>Business Continuity 13/14</b>	Satisfactory	8	0	0	6	6	2	2
<b>Council Tax 13/14</b>	Full	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Payroll 13/14</b>	Satisfactory	6	0	0	3	3	3	3

**Follow Up Reviews**

	Initial Assurance Given	No. of Recs	Implemented	Partly Implemented	Not Implemented	Ongoing
<b>Budgetary Control 12/13</b>	Full	4	3	0	0	1
<b>Development Management 12/13</b>	Full	2	1	0	1	0
<b>Receipt of Income 12/13</b>	Satisfactory	2	1	0	0	1
<b>Community Loans Scheme 13/14</b>	Full	3	2	0	0	1
<b>Lone Working &amp; Officer Security 13/14</b>	Satisfactory	5	1	0	4	0

7. Members of the committee are asked to seek assurance from the internal audit report and/or respective managers that the agreed actions have been or will be undertaken where necessary.
8. A copy of each report has been sent to the appropriate head of service, the relevant strategic director, the section 151 officer and the relevant member portfolio holder. In addition to the above arrangements, reports are now published on the council intranet and committee members are alerted by e-mail when reports are published.

9. Internal audit continues to carry out a six month follow up on all non-financial audits to establish the implementation status of agreed recommendations. All key financial system recommendations are followed up as part of the annual assurance cycle.

### **Systemic Control Weaknesses**

10. **Appendix 1** of this report sets out weaknesses which have been identified within planned audits which internal audit consider to be systemic within the council. Every recommendation made by internal audit since April 2010 has been logged within a recommendation register according to an Institute of Internal Auditors control type definition, and a point system has been used - 1 point for a low risk recommendation, 2 points for a medium risk recommendation and 3 points for a high risk recommendation. The points have been totalled against each control type, and the top 10% control weaknesses which occur across a number of operational areas have been listed as a systemic control weakness. The table will be reviewed and updated by the audit manager, head of finance and the strategic director on an ongoing basis, and will be used to inform the annual audit plan and the scope of individual reviews

### **Financial Implications**

11. There are no financial implications attached to this report.

### **Legal Implications**

12. None.

### **Risks**

13. Identification of risk is an integral part of all audits.

CRAIG PULLEN  
INTERIM AUDIT MANAGER

**SYSTEMIC CONTROL WEAKNESSES**

**APPENDIX 1**

**Background**

The table below lists systemic control weaknesses which have been identified at either or both councils (SODC and VWHDC), from the internal audit reports issued in final since 1 April 2010. The table will be reviewed and updated by the audit manager, head of finance and the strategic director (section 151 officer) on an ongoing basis, and will be used to inform the annual audit plan and the scope of individual reviews.

**Definition**

A systemic control weakness is defined for the purpose of this table, as a significant control weakness which has been identified across a number of operational areas.

**Methodology**

Every recommendation made by internal audit has been logged within a recommendation register according to an Institute of Internal Auditors control type definition, and a point system has been used - 1 point for a low risk recommendation, 2 points for a medium risk recommendation and 3 points for a high risk recommendation. The points have been totalled against each control type, and the top 10% control weaknesses have been listed as a systemic control weakness according to their recommendation point totals.

**Systemic control weaknesses as at 31 December 2013**

No	Systemic control weakness	Council	Rec point total	List Entry Date	Movement Since Last Committee
1	Policies, procedures and guidance notes are not comprehensive, up to date and are not owned by a responsible officer.	Joint	163	01/08/11	Decrease (34)
2	There should be regular financial reconciliations.	Joint	39	05/06/13	Decrease (2)
	All officers/members should be trained in their role and corporate responsibilities	Joint	39	02/09/13	Decrease (7)
4	Documents should be filed appropriately.	Joint	34	21/06/12	Decrease (11)
5	Management information should be reported appropriately.	Joint	32	31/12/13	New
	Information should be accurate.	Joint	32	31/12/13	New

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# Audit and Corporate Governance Committee



Report of Interim Audit Manager

Author: Craig Pullen

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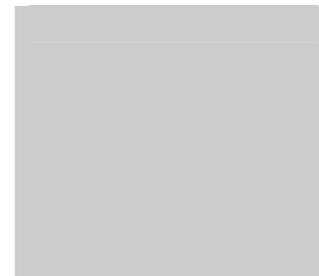
Cabinet member responsible: Councillor David Dodds

Tel: 01844 216794

E-mail: david.dodds@southoxon.gov.uk

To: Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

DATE: 28 January 2014



## Internal audit management report quarter three 2013/2014

Recommendation(s)

- (a) That members note the content of the report

### Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is:
  - to report on management issues within internal audit;
  - to summarise the progress against the 2013/2014 audit plan up to 31 December 2013; and
  - to summarise the priorities for quarter four 2013/2014.
2. The contact officer for this report is Craig Pullen, Interim Audit Manager for South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, telephone (SODC) 01491 823544 and (VWHDC) 01235 547615.

### Strategic objectives

3. Managing our business effectively.

## Background

4. The CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the UK 2006 states that the head of internal audit should prepare a risk-based audit plan, which should outline the assignments to be carried out and the broad resources required to deliver the plan.
5. The CIPFA Code also states that the audit committee should approve the annual internal audit plan and monitor progress against the plan. This Committee approved the annual internal audit plan on 19 March 2013.

## Management issues

6. Recruitment for a new auditor will commence in January 2014 with the intention of having the successful candidate in post for April. Adrianna Partridge will be involved in the recruitment.

## Progress against the 2013/2014 audit plan

7. Progress against the approved audit plan has been calculated for the quarter and year to date and is summarised in **appendix 1** attached.
8. Performance figures are as follows:

	Target	YTD	Q1 13/14	Q2 13/14	Q3 13/14	Q4 13/14
<b>Chargeable</b> (identifiable client and/or specific IA deliverable)	73%	73.5%	74.5%	69.5%	77.0%	-
<b>Non-Chargeable</b> (corporate, not IA deliverable)	8%	6.5%	7.5%	5.5%	7.0%	-
<b>Lost</b> (i.e. leave, study, sickness)	19%	20.0%	18.0%	25.0%	16.0%	-

9. As at 31 December 2013 the status of audit work against the 2013/2014 audit plan is as follows:

### Planned

Strategic, operational and financial assurance work known and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee.

2013/2014	Planned	Complete	Draft	In progress	To commence
<b>PLANNED</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
Joint	27	15	1	5	6
SODC	2	2	0	0	0
VWHDC	1	0	0	0	1

Adhoc

Unplanned project work based on agreed terms of reference with the audit manager (i.e. implementation of new systems) and responsive work issued and agreed by the section 151 officer, members or senior management team (i.e. investigations).

2013/2014	Requested	Complete	Draft	In progress	To commence
<b>ADHOC</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Joint	1	1	0	0	0
SODC	0	0	0	0	0
VWHDC	1	1	0	0	0

Follow up

Work undertaken to ensure that agreed recommendations have been implemented. The number of follow-up audits is a rolling number, all internal audit reports are followed up after six months.

2013/2014	Requested	Complete	Draft	In progress	To commence
<b>FOLLOW-UP</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>
SODC	20	13	0	0	7
VWHDC	18	11	0	0	7

**Priorities for 2013/2014 quarter four (January 2014 – March 2014)**

10. The priorities for quarter four are to:

- successfully recruit a new auditor
- to complete the audit plan
- develop and agree the audit plan for 2014/2015

11. Remaining 2013/2014 planned audit work can be reviewed in **appendix 2**.

**Financial implications**

12. There are no financial implications attached to this report.

**Legal implications**

13. None.

**Risk implications**

14. Identification of risk is an integral part of all audits.

CRAIG PULLEN  
INTERIM AUDIT MANAGER

System Name	Status	Audit Allocation	Total Days Used	Exception Issues	Audit Opinion	No. of Recs	High	No. Agreed	Medium	No. Agreed	Low	No. Agreed	Total Not Agreed
As at 31 December 2013													
<b>JOINT</b>													
<b>Payroll (23 priority score)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	32											
SODC			17.5		Satisfactory	6	0	0	3	3	3	3	0
VWHDC			17.5		Satisfactory	6	0	0	4	4	2	2	0
<b>Disaster Recovery (21)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	10											
SODC			5.0		Satisfactory	8	0	0	5	4	3	3	1
VWHDC			5.0		Satisfactory	7	0	0	6	5	1	1	1
<b>Section 106 Commuted Sum/CIL (21)</b>	<b>To commence Q4</b>	20											
SODC			0.0										
VWHDC			0.0										
<b>Housing &amp; Council Tax Reduction Scheme (20)</b>	<b>In progress</b>	30											
SODC			10.0										
VWHDC			10.0										
<b>National Non-Domestic Rate (20)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	24											
SODC			11.0		Full	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
VWHDC			11.0		Full	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Council Tax (19)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	24											
SODC			12.5		Full	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
VWHDC			12.5		Full	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Creditor Payments (19)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	20											
SODC			11.0		Full	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
VWHDC			10.5		Full	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>General Ledger (19)</b>	<b>In progress</b>	20											
SODC			6.5										
VWHDC			6.5										
<b>Sundry Debtors (19)</b>	<b>In progress</b>	20											
SODC			6.0										
VWHDC			6.0										
<b>Pro-Active Anti-Fraud Review (19)</b>	<b>To commence Q4</b>	16											
SODC			0.5										
VWHDC			0.5										
<b>Cash Office (19)</b>	<b>To commence Q4</b>	10											
SODC			0.0										
VWHDC			0.0										

<b>Business Continuity (19)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	14												
SODC			5.5		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>8</b>	0	0	6	6	2	2	<b>0</b>	
VWHDC			5.5		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>8</b>	0	0	6	6	2	2	<b>0</b>	
<b>Health &amp; Safety (18)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	20												
SODC			8.0		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>4</b>	1	1	3	3	0	0	<b>0</b>	
VWHDC			8.0		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>4</b>	1	1	3	3	0	0	<b>0</b>	
<b>Treasury Management (17)</b>	<b>In progress</b>	14		Audit work commenced in November 2013 and will complete in February 2014 to allow for sufficient testing data										
SODC			3.0											
VWHDC			3.0											
<b>Capital Management and Accounting (17)</b>	<b>Draft Issued</b>	14												
SODC			6.0											
VWHDC			6.0											
<b>Council Fees &amp; Charges (17)</b>	<b>To commence Q4</b>	20												
SODC			0.0											
VWHDC			0.0											
<b>Licensing (17)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	20												
SODC			12.5		<b>Limited</b>	<b>12</b>	0	0	5	5	7	7	<b>0</b>	
VWHDC			12.0		<b>Limited</b>	<b>15</b>	0	0	7	7	8	8	<b>0</b>	
<b>Lone Working/ Officer Security (16)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	20												
SODC			10.0		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>6</b>	0	0	3	2	3	3	<b>1</b>	
VWHDC			10.0		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>4</b>	0	0	2	1	2	2	<b>1</b>	
<b>Brown Bins (16)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	20												
SODC			9.5		<b>Full</b>	<b>1</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1	<b>0</b>	
VWHDC			9.5		<b>Full</b>	<b>1</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1	<b>0</b>	
<b>Post Room (including receipt of valuable items) (16)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	20												
SODC			7.0		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>6</b>	0	0	1	1	5	5	<b>0</b>	
VWHDC			7.0		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>4</b>	0	0	0	0	4	4	<b>0</b>	
<b>Intra Council Recharges (16)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	20												
SODC			8.5		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>5</b>	1	1	3	3	1	1	<b>0</b>	
VWHDC			8.5		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>4</b>	1	1	3	3	0	0	<b>0</b>	
<b>Temporary Accommodation (including rent deposit, rent in advance &amp; rent accounting) (15)</b>	<b>To commence Q4</b>	24												
SODC			0.5											
VWHDC			0.5											
<b>Stock Control (15)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	12												
SODC			6.0		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>6</b>	0	0	3	3	3	3	<b>0</b>	
VWHDC			6.0		<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>4</b>	0	0	2	2	2	2	<b>0</b>	
<b>RIPA (15)</b>	<b>Completed</b>	10												
SODC			3.5		<b>Full</b>	<b>3</b>	0	0	0	0	3	3	<b>0</b>	
VWHDC			3.5		<b>Full</b>	<b>3</b>	0	0	0	0	3	3	<b>0</b>	
<b>Credit Card Usage (14)</b>	<b>In progress</b>	8												
SODC			4.0											
VWHDC			4.0											

HR Grievance Procedures (13)	To commence Q4	14												
SODC			0.0											
VWHDC			0.0											
Environmental Health Food & Safety (8)	Completed	20												
SODC			11.0		Satisfactory	9	0	0	2	1	7	6	2	
VWHDC			11.0		Satisfactory	7	0	0	1	1	6	5	1	
<b>SODC</b>														
Community Loans Scheme (14)	Completed	4	4.0		Full	3	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	
Leader Project Grant Verification (9)	Completed	5	3.0		-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>VWHDC</b>														
Wantage Civic Hall (14)	To commence Q4	10	0.0											
<b>IA PLANNED AUDIT TOTALS</b>	-	<b>515</b>	<b>356</b>		<b>Full</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>7</b>	
					<b>Satisfactory</b>									
					<b>Limited</b>									
					<b>Nil</b>									

**FOLLOW UP AUDITS 2012/2013**

System Name	Total Days Used	Original Audit Opinion Issued	Total No. of Recs Agreed	Implemented	Partly Implemented	Not Implemented	Ongoing
<b>SODC</b>							
Verification of budgets savings 2011/2012	0.5	Satisfactory	3	1	2	0	0
Discretionary grants	0.5	Satisfactory	4	3	0	0	1
Carbon management programme	0.5	Satisfactory	7	1	0	1	5
Seasonal leisure activities	0.5	Full	2	1	0	1	0
Information governance	0.5	Satisfactory	3	1	0	1	1
Data protection	0.5	Satisfactory	5	1	2	0	2
Mobile Home Parks	1	Satisfactory	9	5	1	3	0
Cornerstone	0.5	Satisfactory	6	4	1	1	0
Budgetary Control	0.5	Full	4	3	0	0	1
Development Management	0.5	Full	2	1	0	1	0
Receipt of Income	0.5	Satisfactory	2	1	0	0	1
<b>VWHDC</b>							
Verification of budget savings 2011/2012	0.5	Satisfactory	3	1	2	0	0
Discretionary grants	0.5	Limited	7	5	0	0	2
Carbon management programme	0.5	Satisfactory	7	1	0	1	5
Seasonal leisure activities	0.5	Full	2	2	0	0	0
Information governance	0.5	Satisfactory	3	1	0	1	1
Data protection	0.5	Satisfactory	5	1	2	0	2
Mobile Home Parks	1	Satisfactory	11	4	2	4	1
Budgetary Control	0.5	Full	2	2	0	0	0
Development Management	0.5	Full	1	1	0	0	0
Receipt of Income	0.5	Satisfactory	2	1	0	0	1

**FOLLOW UP AUDITS 2013/2014**

System Name	Total Days Used	Original Audit Opinion Issued	Total No. of Recs Agreed	Implemented	Partly Implemented	Not Implemented	Ongoing
<b>SODC</b>							
Community Loans Scheme	0.5	Full	3	2	0	0	1
Lone Working & Officer Security	0.5	Satisfactory	5	1	0	4	0
<b>VWHDC</b>							
Lone Working & Officer Security	0.5	Satisfactory	3	0	0	3	0

**UNPLANNED WORK 2013/2014**

**CONSULTANCY**

System Name	Status	Audit Allocation	Total Days Used	Requested By
<b>JOINT</b>				
Banking Services Tender	Completed	2 days	N/A	S151 Officer
<b>SODC</b>				
None				
<b>VWHDC</b>				
None				

**CONTINGENCY**

System Name	Status	Audit Allocation	Total Days Used	Requested By
<b>JOINT</b>				
None				
<b>SODC</b>				
None				
<b>VWHDC</b>				
S106 Calculated Sums	Completed	10 days	N/A	Chief Executive

**SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT**

System Name	Status	Audit Allocation	Total Days Used	Requested By
<b>JOINT</b>				
None				
<b>SODC</b>				
None				
<b>VWHDC</b>				
None				

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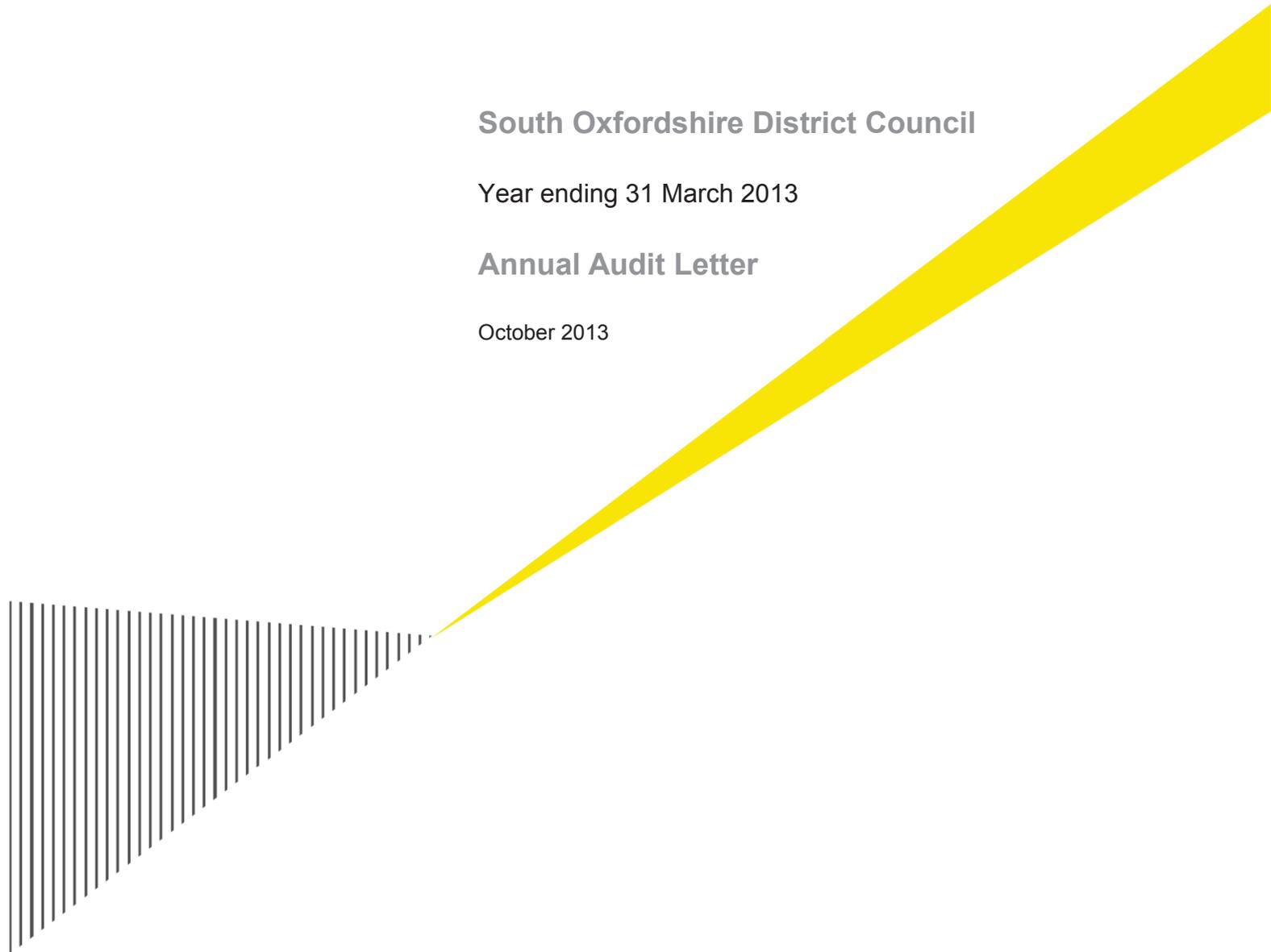
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**South Oxfordshire District Council**

Year ending 31 March 2013

**Annual Audit Letter**

October 2013





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The Members  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
Benson Lane  
Crowmarsh Gifford  
Wallingford  
Oxfordshire  
OX10 8ED

23 October 2013

Dear Members,

## Annual Audit Letter

The purpose of this Annual Audit Letter is to communicate to the Members of South Oxfordshire District Council and external stakeholders, including members of the public, the key issues arising from our work, which we consider should be brought to their attention.

We have already reported the detailed findings from our audit work to those charged with governance of South Oxfordshire District Council in the following report:

---

2012/13 Audit Results Report for South  
Oxfordshire District Council

Issued 12 September 2013 and presented to  
the Audit and Corporate Governance  
Committee on 26 September 2013

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The matters reported here are the most significant for the Authority.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of South Oxfordshire District Council for their assistance during the course of our work.

Yours faithfully

Maria Grindley  
For and behalf of Ernst & Young LLP  
Enc

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In March 2010 the Audit Commission issued a revised version of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' ('Statement of responsibilities'). It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the [Audit Commission's website](#).

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the Audit Commission's appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The Standing Guidance serves as our terms of appointment as auditors appointed by the Audit Commission. The Standing Guidance sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2010 (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Annual Audit Letter is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Members of the audited body, and is prepared for their sole use. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure - If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

# 1. Executive summary

Our 2012/13 audit work has been undertaken in accordance with the Audit Planning Report we issued on 11 March 2013 and is conducted in accordance with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

The Authority is responsible for preparing and publishing its Statement of Accounts, accompanied by the Annual Governance Statement. In the Annual Governance Statement, the Authority reports publicly on an annual basis on the extent to which they comply with their own code of governance, including how they have monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period. The Authority is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

As auditors we are responsible for:

- ▶ forming an opinion on the financial statements;
- ▶ reviewing the Annual Governance Statement;
- ▶ forming a conclusion on the arrangements that the Authority has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- ▶ undertaking any other work specified by the Audit Commission.

Summarised below are the conclusions from all elements of our work:

Audit the financial statements of South Oxfordshire District Council for the financial year ended 31 March 2013 in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland)

On 27 September 2013 we issued an unqualified audit opinion in respect of the Authority.

Form a conclusion on the arrangements the Authority has made for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

On 27 September 2013 we issued an unqualified value for money conclusion.

Issue a report to those charged with governance of the Authority (the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee) communicating significant findings resulting from our audit.

On 12 September we issued our report in respect of the Authority.

Report to the National Audit Office on the accuracy of the consolidation pack the Authority is required to prepare for the Whole of Government Accounts.

We reported our findings to the National Audit Office on 26 September 2013.

Consider the completeness of disclosures in the Authority's Annual Governance Statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work and consider whether it complies with CIPFA / SOLACE guidance.

No issues to report.

Consider whether, in the public interest, we should make a report on any matter coming to our notice in the course of the

No issues to report.

audit.

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Determine whether any other action should be taken in relation to our responsibilities under the Audit Commission Act.

No issues to report.

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Issue a certificate that we have completed the audit in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Practice issued by the Audit Commission.

On 27 September 2013 we issued our audit completion certificate.

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Issue a report to those charged with governance of the Authority summarising the certification (of grant claims and returns) work that we have undertaken.

We will issue our annual certification report to those charged with governance with respect to the 2012/13 financial year later in the year.

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## 2. Key findings

### 2.1 Financial statement audit

We audited the Authority's Statement of Accounts in line with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the Audit Commission. We issued an unqualified audit report on 27 September 2013.

Our audit did not identify any material misstatements, and only a small number of presentation and disclosure amendments were required to the financial statements. This demonstrates the robustness of the Authority's closedown and review process for producing the draft financial statements.

The main issues identified as part of our audit of your financial statements, including our conclusions in relation to the areas of risk/areas of audit emphasis outlined in our Audit Plan, were set out for Members in our Audit Results Report. There are no significant issues we wish to raise for your attention in this letter.

### 2.2 Value for money conclusion

We are required to carry out sufficient work to conclude on whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

In accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission, in 2012/13 our conclusion was based on two criteria:

- ▶ The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience; and
- ▶ The organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 27 September 2013. Our audit did not identify any significant matters.

### 2.3 Objections received

We received no objections to the 2012/13 accounts from members of the public.

### 2.4 Whole of government accounts

We reported to the National Audit office on 26 September 2013 the results of our work performed in relation to the accuracy of the consolidation pack the Authority is required to prepare for the whole of government accounts. We did not identify any areas of concern.

### 2.5 Annual governance statement

We are required to consider the completeness of disclosures in the Authority's Annual Governance Statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work, and consider whether it complies with CIPFA / SOLACE guidance. We completed this work and did not identify any areas of concern.

### 2.6 Certification of grants claims and returns

We will issue the Annual Certification Report for 2012/13 later in the year.

### **3. Control themes and observations**

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, we are required to communicate to you any significant deficiencies.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in internal control.

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# Certification of claims and returns annual report 2012-13

South Oxfordshire District Council

January 2014

Ernst & Young LLP



**The Members – Audit and Corporate  
Governance Committee**

South Oxfordshire District Council  
Benson Lane  
Crowmarsh Gifford  
Wallingford  
Oxfordshire  
OX10 8ED

January 2014

Dear Members,

**Certification of claims and returns annual report 2012-13  
South Oxfordshire District Council**

We are pleased to report on our certification work. This report summarises the results of our work on South Oxfordshire District Council's 2012-13 claims and returns.

**Scope of work**

Local authorities claim large sums of public money in grants and subsidies from central government and other grant-paying bodies and are required to complete returns providing financial information to government departments. In some cases these grant-paying bodies and government departments require certification from an appropriately qualified auditor of the claims and returns submitted to them.

Under section 28 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Audit Commission may, at the request of authorities, make arrangements for certifying claims and returns because scheme terms and conditions include a certification requirement. When such arrangements are made, certification instructions issued by the Audit Commission to appointed auditors of the audited body set out the work they must undertake before issuing certificates and set out the submission deadlines.

Certification work is not an audit. Certification work involves executing prescribed tests which are designed to give reasonable assurance that claims and returns are fairly stated and in accordance with specified terms and conditions.

In 2012-13, the Audit Commission did not ask auditors to certify individual claims and returns below £125,000. The threshold below which auditors undertook only limited tests remained at £500,000. Above this threshold, certification work took account of the audited body's overall control environment for preparing the claim or return. The exception was the housing and council tax benefits subsidy claim where the grant paying department set the level of testing.

Where auditors agree it is necessary audited bodies can amend a claim or return. An auditor's certificate may also refer to a qualification letter where there is disagreement or uncertainty, or the audited body does not comply with scheme terms and conditions.

**Statement of responsibilities**

In March 2013 the Audit Commission issued a revised version of the 'Statement of responsibilities of grant-paying bodies, authorities, the Audit Commission and appointed auditors in relation to claims and

returns' (statement of responsibilities). It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the Audit Commission website.

The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the Audit Commission's appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

This annual certification report is prepared in the context of the statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to those charged with governance and is prepared for the sole use of the audited body. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

### **Summary**

Section 1 of this report outlines the results of our 2012-13 certification work.

We checked and certified 2 claims and returns with a total value of £75,415,558.16. We met all submission deadlines. Our certification work found errors which the Council corrected. The amendments had a marginal effect on the grant due.

The Council has implemented the recommendations from last year and has improved arrangements.

Fees for certification work are summarised in section 2. The Audit Commission applied a general reduction of 40% to certification fees in 2012-13. We have included the actual fees for 2011-12 and their values after the 40% reduction to assist year on year comparisons.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on 28 January 2014.

Yours faithfully

Maria Grindley  
Director  
Ernst & Young LLP  
Enc

## **Certification of claims and returns annual report 2012-13**

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## 1. Summary of 2012-13 certification work

We certified 2 claims and returns in 2012-13. The main findings from our certification work are provided below.

### Housing and council tax benefits subsidy claim

Scope of work	Results
Value of claim presented for certification	£35,287,607
Limited or full review	Full
Amended	Amended – subsidy increased by £5,991
Qualification letter	No
Fee - 2012-13	£14,830
Fee - 2011-12	£28,038
<b>Recommendations from 2011-12:</b>	<b>Findings in 2012-13</b>
Parameters should be uploaded separately onto the system rather than being grouped.	No issues were identified with the parameters uploaded on the system in 2012/13.

Councils run the Government's housing and council tax benefits scheme for tenants and council taxpayers. Councils responsible for the scheme claim subsidies from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) towards the cost of benefits paid.

### National non-domestic rates return

Scope of work	Results
Value of return presented for certification	£40,127,951.16
Limited or full review	Full
Amended	Not Amended
Qualification letter	No
Fee – 2012-13	£820
Fee – 2011-12	£3,784
<b>Recommendations from 2011-12:</b>	<b>Findings in 2012-13</b>
None	None

The Government runs a system of non-domestic rates using a national uniform business rate. Councils responsible for the scheme collect local business rates and pay the rate income over to the Government. Councils have to complete a return setting out what they have collected under the scheme and how much they need to pay over to the Government.

We found no errors on the national non-domestic rates return and we certified the amount payable to the pool without qualification.

## 2. 2012-13 certification fees

For 2012-13 the Audit Commission replaced the previous schedule of maximum hourly rates with a composite indicative fee for certification work for each body. The indicative fee was based on actual certification fees for 2010-11 adjusted to reflect the fact that a number of schemes would no longer require auditor certification. There was also a 40 per cent reduction in fees reflecting the outcome of the Audit Commission procurement for external audit services.

The indicative composite fee for South Oxfordshire District Council for 2012-13 was £15,650. The actual fee for 2012-13 was £15,650. This compares to a charge of £31,822 in 2011-12.

Claim or return	2011-12	2011-12	2012-13	2012-13
	Actual fee £	2011-12 fee less 40% reduction £	Indicative fee £	Actual fee £
Certification of claims and returns - annual report	31,822	19,093	15,650	15,650
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,822</b>	<b>19,093</b>	<b>15,650</b>	<b>15,650</b>

### 3. Looking forward

For 2013-14, the Audit Commission has calculated indicative certification fees based on the latest available information on actual certification fees for 2011-12, adjusted for any schemes that no longer require certification. The Audit Commission has indicated that the national non-domestic rates return will not require certification from 2013-14.

The Council's indicative certification fee for 2013-14 is £16,800. The actual certification fee for 2013-14 may be higher or lower than the indicative fee, if we need to undertake more or less work than in 2011-12 on individual claims or returns. Details of individual indicative fees are available at the following link:

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/audit-regime/audit-fees/201314-fees-and-work-programme/individual-certification-fees/>

We must seek the agreement of the Audit Commission to any proposed variations to indicative certification fees. The Audit Commission expects variations from the indicative fee to occur only where issues arise that are significantly different from those identified and reflected in the 2011-12 fee.

The Audit Commission has changed its instructions to allow appointed auditors to act as reporting accountants where the Commission has not made or does not intend to make certification arrangements. This removes the previous restriction saying that the appointed auditor cannot act if the Commission has declined to make arrangements. This is to help with the transition to new certification arrangements, such as those DCLG will introduce for business rates from 1 April 2013.

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