

WIRRAL COUNCIL

PENSIONS COMMITTEE

13 JANUARY 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2010/11

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the treasury management policy statement and the treasury management annual plan and strategy for Merseyside Pension Fund for the financial year 2010/11.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 29 January 2003 the Pensions Committee approved a treasury management policy statement, which sets out a framework for treasury management operations. This policy statement requires that the Pensions Committee approves an annual plan and strategy. The plan and strategy were last approved by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 14 January 2009.
- 2.2 The treasury management policy statement is also due for review.
- 2.3 In November 2009 CIPFA published a fully revised code of practice for treasury management in the public services following the report "Risk and Return" from the Audit Commission.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 The policy statement is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and has been reviewed in light of the CIPFA publication.

4. PLAN AND STRATEGY

- 4.1 MPF will comply with the twelve treasury management practices set out in the treasury management policy statement.
- 4.2 The portfolio arrangements outlined in schedule 1 to the policy statement and shown below will be maintained. The purpose of the ranges around the core positions is to allow the internal investment team to effectively manage the uncertainties currently being faced in the financial environment. The core position remains at 1% of Fund assets following the change to the strategic benchmark approved on 26 November 2007.

	Core Position	Range
	%	%
Call Funds/ Overnight maturities	0.5	0.5 – 1.0
Deposits 1 month to 6 months	0.25	0.0 – 0.5
Deposits up to one year	0.25	0.0 – 0.25
TOTAL	1.0	

4.3 The main aims when managing liquid resources are:

- the security of capital
- the liquidity of investments
- matching inflows from lending to predicted outflows
- an optimum return on investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

4.4 For MPF the achievement of high returns from treasury activity is of secondary importance compared with the need to limit exposure of funds to the risk of loss.

4.5 The maximum maturity for any single treasury management investment is 1 year.

4.6 Counterparties are reviewed on a regular basis using a range of information sources, including credit rating agencies, internal research (both from the treasury team and internal investment managers), information from brokers, advice from the treasury management consultants, information on Government support for banks and the credit ratings of that Government support.

4.7 The level of due diligence performed by counterparties with whom MPF invests has significantly increased in the last eighteen months. To assist with the responses to such exercises, a specific resolution is sought regarding the delegated powers of authorised signatories to open and close bank and deposit accounts.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are none arising directly out of this report.

6 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none directly arising from this report.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are none arising from this report.

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are none arising from this report.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

10. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There are none arising from this report.

11. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are none arising from this report.

12. MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

12.1. This report has no particular implications for any Members or wards.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 Treasury Management Policy Statement – January 2003.

13.2. Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (fully revised second edition 2009) – CIPFA.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 That Members approve the policy statement, and annual plan and strategy for the treasury management function for 2010-11.

14.2 That Members confirm, for the avoidance of doubt, that the authorised signatories have delegated powers to open and close bank and deposit accounts.

IAN COLEMAN
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

MERSEYSIDE PENSION FUND
TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Merseyside Pension Fund adopts the key principles of 'CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice' (the Code), as described in Section 4 of that Code.
- 1.2 Accordingly the Fund will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management:
- This treasury management policy statement stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities
 - Suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which this organisation will seek to achieve these policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control these activities.

2 DELEGATION

- 2.1 Pensions Committee will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities including an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year and an annual report after its close. The Investment Monitoring Working Party (IMWP) will receive interim reports on treasury management.
- 2.2 Pensions Committee is responsible for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices and will delegate execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Director of Finance who will act in accordance with this policy statement, TMPs and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.
- 2.3 The IMWP is responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies and performance.

3 DEFINITION

- 3.1 Treasury management activities are defined as:
the management of the Fund's cash flows, its banking, money market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

- 3.2 The Fund regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on the risk implications for the Fund.
- 3.3 The Fund acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving best value in treasury management and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques within the context of effective risk management.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (TMPs)

4 TMP 1 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Director of Finance will design, implement and monitor all arrangements for the identification, management and control of treasury management risk and will report annually on the adequacy/suitability thereof, and will report, as a matter of urgency, the circumstances of any actual or likely difficulty in achieving the Fund's objectives.
- 4.2 The Fund regards a key objective of its treasury management activities to be the security of the principal sums it invests. Accordingly, it will ensure that its counterparty lists and limits reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations with whom funds may be deposited, and will limit its investment activities to the instruments, methods and techniques referred to in TMP 4 and listed in the schedule (4.1, 4.2) to this document. It also recognises the need to have, and will therefore maintain, a formal counterparty policy in respect of those organisations with whom it may enter into financing arrangements.
- 4.3 The Fund will ensure that it has adequate though not excessive cash resources to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available to it, which are necessary for the achievement of its business objectives.
- 4.4 The Fund will manage its exposure to interest rates with a view to securing its interest revenue as far as is possible within cash flow constraints and by the prudent use of permissible instruments.
- 4.5 The Fund will achieve these objectives by the prudent use of its approved investment instruments, methods and techniques, primarily to create stability and certainty of costs and revenues, but at the same time retaining a sufficient degree of flexibility to take advantage of unexpected, potentially advantageous changes in the level and structure of interest rates. The above are subject at all times to the consideration and, if required, approval of any policy or budgetary implications.

- 4.6 It will manage its exposure to fluctuations in exchange rates so as to minimise any detrimental impact.
- 4.7 The Fund will ensure that all of its treasury management activities comply with its statutory powers and regulatory requirements. It will demonstrate such compliance, if required to do so, to all parties with whom it deals in such activities. In framing its counterparty list it will ensure that there is evidence of counterparties' powers, authority and compliance in respect of the transactions they may effect with the organisation, particularly with regard to duty of care and fees charged.
- 4.8 The Fund recognises that future legislative or regulatory changes may impact on its treasury management activities and so far as it is reasonably able to do so will seek to minimise the risk of these impacting adversely on the organisation.
- 4.9 The Fund will ensure that it has identified the circumstances, which may expose it to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings. Accordingly, it will employ suitable systems and procedures, and will maintain effective contingency management arrangements, to these ends.
- 4.10 The Fund will seek to ensure that its stated treasury management policies and objectives will not be compromised by adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums it invests, and will accordingly seek to protect itself from the effects of such fluctuations

5 TMP 2 Performance Measurement

- 5.1 The Fund is committed to the pursuit of value for money in its treasury management activities. Accordingly the treasury management will be the subject of ongoing analysis of the value it adds. It will be the subject of regular examinations of alternative methods of service delivery and the scope for other potential improvements. The performance of the treasury management function will be measured using the criteria set out in the schedule (2.1) to this document.

6 TMP 3 Decision Making and analysis

- 6.1 The Fund will maintain full records of its treasury management decisions, and of the processes and practices applied in reaching these decisions, both for the purposes of learning from the past, and for demonstrating that reasonable steps were taken to ensure that issues relevant to those decisions were taken into account at the time. The issues to be addressed and processes and practices to be pursued in reaching decisions are detailed in the schedule (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4) to this document.

7 TMP 4 Approved Instruments, methods and techniques

- 7.1 The Fund will undertake its treasury management activities by employing only those instruments, methods and techniques detailed in the schedule (4.1, 4.2) to this document.

8 TMP 5 Organisation, clarity and segregation of responsibilities, and dealing arrangements

- 8.1 The Fund considers it essential for the purposes of effective control and monitoring of its treasury management activities, for the reduction of the risk of fraud or error, and for the pursuit of optimum performance, that these activities are structured and managed in a fully integrated manner and that there is at all times clarity of treasury management responsibilities.
- 8.2 The principle on which this will be based is a clear distinction between those charged with setting treasury management policies and those charged with implementing and controlling these policies, particularly with regard to the execution and transmission of funds, the recording and administering of treasury management decisions, and the audit and review of the treasury management function.
- 8.3 If and when the Fund intends, as a result of a lack of resources or other circumstances to depart from these principles, the “responsible officer” will ensure that the reasons are properly reported and the implications properly considered and evaluated.
- 8.4 As Director of Finance, I am the responsible officer. I shall ensure that there are clear written statements of the responsibilities for each post engaged in treasury management and the arrangements for absence cover. The responsible officer will also ensure that at all times those engaged in treasury management will follow the policies and procedures set out. The present arrangements are detailed in the schedule (5.5, 5.6) to this document.
- 8.5 The responsible officer will ensure there is proper documentation for all deals and transactions, and that procedures exist for the effective transmission of funds.
- 8.6 The delegations to the responsible officer in respect of treasury management are set out in the schedule (5) to this document. The responsible officer will fulfil all such responsibilities in accordance with this policy statement and TMPs and the CIPFA Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

9 TMP 6 Reporting Requirements and Management Information Requirements

- 9.1 The Fund will ensure that regular reports are prepared and considered on the implementation of its treasury management policies; on the effects of decisions taken and transactions executed in pursuit of these policies; on the implications of changes, particularly budgetary, resulting from regulatory, economic, market or other factors affecting its treasury management activities; and on the performance of the treasury management function.
- 9.2 Pensions Committee will receive an annual report on the strategy and plan to be pursued in the coming year.
- 9.3 An annual report on the performance of the treasury management function, on the effects of the decisions taken and the transactions executed in the past year, and on any circumstances of non-compliance with the Fund's treasury management policy statement and TMPs, will be received by the Pensions Committee.
- 9.4 The IMWP will receive interim reports on treasury management.

10 TMP 7 Budgeting, accounting and audit arrangements

- 10.1 The budget for the treasury management function will be included as part of the budget for the Fund which is submitted to Pensions Committee on an annual basis.
- 10.2 The Fund will account for its treasury management activities, for decisions made and transactions executed, in accordance with appropriate accounting practices and standards, and with statutory and regulatory requirements in force for the time being.

11 TMP 8 Cash and cash flow management

- 11.1 All monies in the hands of the Fund will be under the control of the Director of Finance and will be aggregated for cash flow and investment purposes. Cash flow projections will be prepared on a regular and timely basis, and the responsible officer will ensure that these are adequate for the purposes of monitoring compliance with liquidity risk management. The present arrangements for preparing cash flow projections are set out in the schedule (8.1, 8.2) to this document.

12 TMP 9 Money Laundering

- 12.1 The Fund is alert to the possibility that it may become subject of an attempt to involve it in a transaction involving the laundering of money. Accordingly it will maintain procedures for verifying and recording the identity of Counterparties and will ensure that staff involved in this are properly trained.

13 TMP 10 Training and Qualifications

- 13.1 The Fund recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff involved in the treasury management function are fully equipped to undertake the duties and responsibilities allocated to them. It will therefore seek to appoint individuals who are both capable and experienced and will provide training for staff to enable them to acquire and maintain an appropriate level of expertise, knowledge and skills. I shall recommend and implement the necessary arrangements. The present arrangements are set out in the schedule (5.6) to this document.
- 13.2 I shall ensure that Pension Committee Members tasked with Pension Fund responsibilities have access to training relevant to their needs and responsibilities.

14 TMP 11 Use of external service providers

- 14.1 The Fund recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the Fund at all times. The Fund recognises there may be potential value of employing external providers of treasury management services, in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. When it employs such service providers, it will ensure it does so for reasons, which will have been subjected to a full evaluation of the costs and benefits. It will also ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review.
- 14.2 The Fund will ensure, where feasible and necessary that a spread of service providers is used, to avoid overreliance on one or a small number of companies. Where services are subject to formal tender or re-tender arrangements, legislative requirements will always be observed. The monitoring of such arrangements rests with the Director of Finance. Details of the current arrangements are set out in the schedule (9.1, 9.2) to this document.

15 TMP 12 Corporate Governance

- 15.1 The Fund is committed to the pursuit of proper corporate governance throughout its businesses and services, and to establishing the principles and practices by which this can be achieved. Accordingly the treasury management function and its activities will be undertaken with openness and transparency, honesty, integrity and accountability.
- 15.2 The Fund has adopted and has implemented the key principles of the Code. This, together with the other arrangements detailed in the schedule to this document, are considered vital to the achievement of proper corporate governance in treasury management and I shall monitor and, if and when necessary, report upon the effectiveness of these arrangements.

**MERSEYSIDE PENSION FUND:
SCHEDULE TO TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**SCHEDULE 1:
RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 1.1 The Fund has the following range of approved maximum limits for counterparties subject to meeting the high credit criteria determined by the Fund

CATEGORY	LIMIT Per Institution/Group
Fund's Bank	£30m
Fund's Custodian (Internal Managers)	£30m
Fund's Custodian (External Managers)	£30m
Approved Bank	£20m
Approved Building Societies	£15m
All Local Authorities	No limit
Money Market Funds with a Constant Net Asset value	£30m

At the time of placing a deposit, a maximum country limit of 10% of the cash portfolio in any single jurisdiction outside the UK will be maintained.

- 1.2 Under exceptional circumstances e.g. transitional arrangements on appointment of new Investment Managers, these limits may be exceeded for a limited period with the prior written approval of the Head of Pension Fund and Fund Operating Group (FOG). Such instances will be reported to the following meeting of the IMWP.
- 1.3 Counterparties are reviewed on a regular basis using a range of information sources, including credit rating agencies, internal research (both from the treasury team and internal investment managers), information from brokers, advice given to Wirral Council by their treasury management consultants, information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that government support.

- 1.4 Counterparties will be added and removed from the Fund's counterparty list using the range of information sources detailed and full documentation will be retained. The approved list is maintained as an internal electronic document.
- 1.5 For credit rated counterparties, the minimum criteria will be the short-term/long-term ratings assigned by various agencies which include Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's

	Fitch	Moody's	Standard & Poor's
Long-term	AA-	Aa3	AA-
Short-term	F1	P2	A-1

This means that the Fund will only make investments that have a very high credit rating.

- 1.6 Credit rating are monitored on a real-time basis for two credit rating agencies (Fitch and Moody's) on information from the Council's Treasury management advisors, and the Fund's lending list is updated accordingly with any changes, including 'rating watch' notices. The Fund will review the third rating agency (Standard & Poor's) on a monthly basis and update the spreadsheet accordingly. The Fund will have regard to ratings issued by all three agencies and make decisions on the basis of lowest rating.
- 1.7 If a credit rating of a counterparty goes below the minimum criteria set by the Fund, the counterparty will be removed from the counterparty list for any new lending and where possible funds will be withdrawn immediately.
- 1.8 The Fund requires liquid resources to meet pension payments and administrative expenses. The cash flows from realisation and purchase of investments can be large and concentrated and the Fund needs to maintain facilities and resources to meet these.
- 1.9 The Fund's cash flows are in balance, with outflows to pensioners matched by income from contributions. In an environment where a significant proportion of investment income is directly re-invested, the levels of liquid resources held need to be adequate. Pensions Committee and the IMWP have agreed the following base portfolio.

	Core Position	Range
	%	%
Call Funds/ Overnight maturities	0.5	0.5 – 1.0
Deposits 1 month to 6 months	0.25	0.0 – 0.5
Deposits up to one year	0.25	0.0 – 0.25
TOTAL	1.0	

- 1.10 It will manage its exposure to fluctuations in exchange rates. In general, the Fund will only hold foreign currencies to fund pending investment transactions

thus limiting the exposure of treasury management activities to fluctuations in exchange rates so as to minimise any detrimental impact.

SCHEDULE 2: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

- 2.1 The performance of the Fund's investments are independently measured by WM Company. The performance of cash will be included as part of this process and be benchmarked against an appropriate inter-bank rate. This performance measurement is subject to scrutiny by Pensions Committee and IMWP.
- 2.2 The costs of investment management generally including treasury management expenses are separately accounted for in the Annual Statement of Accounts. Comparisons are made between internal and external fund management costs.

SCHEDULE 3: DECISION MAKING AND ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Decision-making is delegated as indicated in the management arrangements set out in schedule 5. Day to day decisions are constrained by the risk controls set out in the other schedules such as approved instruments and counterparties etc.
- 3.2 Tactical decision making by officers will seek to use information from brokers to meet cashflows whilst gaining maximum return within risk constraints. Officers will have access to up to date market information.
- 3.3 Strategic decision making by officers and members will seek to set in place a plan that meets the needs of the Pension Fund in relation to its overall investment plan. The external advisers to the Fund (actuary and independent advisers) will help to ensure that decisions are well informed.
- 3.4 A risk assessment form will be completed for each treasury management transaction, detailing the circumstances at the time the decision is made and providing evidence of the issues considered.

SCHEDULE 4: APPROVED INSTRUMENTS, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

- 4.1 The Fund will use the following instruments for its internally managed treasury management activities.
 - AAA rated money market funds with a constant Net Asset Value
 - Call funds
 - Fixed term deposits with counterparties
 - Forward Fixed term deposits with counterparties

Structured Fixed term deposits with counterparties (See Note 1)
Cash at bank (RBS)

Note 1: these are effectively loans which give MPF or borrower the option to cancel agreement or renegotiate duration/interest rate of the loan at fixed periods agreed at commencement of loan. These products allow the internal team the opportunity to gain additional yield if their view on interest rates is correct, as the counterparty will have a contrarian view on either the direction or speed of interest rate changes.

- 4.2 The Fund will permit external fund managers to use all instruments permitted under the Investment Manager Agreement.

SCHEDULE 5: ORGANISATION, CLARITY AND SEGREGATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES, AND DEALING ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 The structure for the treasury management functions is as follows.

Pensions Committee

Oversees all aspects of Merseyside Pension Fund on behalf of Wirral Council and the other admitted bodies. Reviews investment strategy and overall administration of the Fund.

Investment Monitoring Working Party (IMWP)

Makes recommendations to Pensions Committee following consultation with in-house managers and external advisers.

Responsible Officer

The Director of Finance, with responsibilities as set out in twelve Treasury Management Practices.

Fund Operating Group (FOG)

Includes reviewing the day to day operation of the investments function.

Financial Controller

Responsible for team that undertakes treasury management activities.

- 5.2 The day to day transactions for treasury management are executed by the treasury management team supervised by the Fund Accountant (Compliance).
- 5.3 The transmission of Funds is carried out by the settlements team through electronic banking system and the recording of transactions is monitored by the Fund Accountant (Operations) ensuring an adequate separation of duties in the system.

- 5.4 The physical authorisation of the release of payments from the bank account is made by the Fund's authorised signatories as approved by Pensions Committee.
- 5.5 There are sufficient staff employed in the process to cover absences and maintain a separation of duties; the duties of staff are outlined in their job descriptions.
- 5.6 The staff involved in the system have an adequate level of relevant qualifications. Further training, as required, is made available as part of ongoing staff development.

Director of Finance	CPFA
Head of Pension Fund	FCSI, ACIB
Financial Controller	CPFA
Fund Accountant (Compliance)	CPFA
Fund Accountant (Operations)	CIMA
Senior Settlements Officer	AAT
Compliance & Valuations Officer	Chartered MCSI
Investment Assistant	

- 5.7 Dealing arrangements will be detailed within application forms (where applicable) and approved by an authorised signatory.
- 5.8 The Fund's policy is not to tape treasury management conversations, although faxed or emailed confirmation is required of the deal from the broker or directly from the counterparty before the payment is released.
- 5.9 Treasury management facilities are set up with the approval of at least one of the Fund's authorised signatories.
- 5.10 Treasury management facilities provided on the internet will be agreed with the Head of Pension Fund and will be scrutinised by the Compliance Section to ensure all necessary controls are in place.

SCHEDULE 6: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 The Fund will ensure that regular reports are prepared and considered on the implementation of its treasury management policies; on the effects of decisions taken and transactions executed in pursuit of these policies; on the implications of changes, particularly budgetary, resulting from regulatory, economic, market or other factors affecting its treasury management activities; and on the performance of the treasury management function.
- 6.2 Pensions Committee will receive an annual report on the strategy and plan to be pursued in the coming year.

- 6.3 An annual report on the performance of the treasury management function, on the effects of the decisions taken and the transactions executed in the past year, and on any circumstances of non-compliance with the Fund's treasury management policy statement and TMPs, will be received by the Pensions Committee.
- 6.4 The IMWP will receive interim reports on treasury management.
- 6.5 The Fund Accountant (Compliance) will produce monthly reports for the Financial Controller prior to FOG meetings.

SCHEDULE 7: BUDGETING, ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1 The Fund will ensure that its auditors and those charged with regulatory review have access to all information and papers supporting the activities of the treasury management function as are necessary for the proper fulfilment of their roles, and that such information and papers demonstrate compliance with external and internal policies and approved practices. The information made available under present arrangements is detailed in the schedule (10.1) to this document.

SCHEDULE 8: CASH FLOW

- 8.1 Given the unpredictable nature of cashflows in investment management and in the payment of lump sum benefits, the Fund is not able to forecast cash flows precisely. The Fund has designed its cash portfolio to meet the principal material predictable cash flows i.e. pension pay days, and retains a sufficient level of liquidity to cover other calls on cash.
- 8.2 The investments office maintains cash flow statements on a monthly basis updated weekly for predictable cash flows and uses this as a tool to assist the treasury management function.

SCHEDULE 9: USE OF EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

- 9.1 The main providers of services to the Fund are money market brokers. As the Fund does not borrow funds it does not pay commission to the brokers. The performance of brokers is under regular review by staff.
- 9.2 The Fund's main clearing bank contract is the subject of regular tendering exercises.

SCHEDULE 10: CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE

10.1 The Fund is administered by Wirral Council is subject to its corporate governance arrangements including regular internal audit and annual external audit. The treasury management function is examined by both of these audits regularly as a high priority area. I shall ensure that all documentation listed below is made available to auditors:

- Internal policies
- Internal records of deals
- Counterparty confirmations