

Pension Fund Cash Management Strategy 2015/16

Report by Chief Finance Officer

Introduction

1. The Oxfordshire Pension Fund maintains a balance of cash arising from the receipt of employer and employee contributions exceeding the amount of payments made on behalf of the Fund. The cash managed in-house by the Administering Authority, provides a working balance for the fund to meet its short term commitments and forms 0-5% of the Fund's strategic asset allocation.
2. The Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2009 S.I.No. 3093 state that from 1 April 2011 the administering authority must hold in a separate bank account all monies held on behalf of the Pension Fund. The regulations also state that the Administering Authority must formulate an investment policy to govern how the authority invests any Pension Fund money that is not needed immediately to make payments from the fund. This report sets out the strategy for the financial year 2015/16.

Management Arrangements

3. The pension fund cash balances are managed by the Council's Treasury Management and Pension Fund Investments team. Cash balances are reviewed on a daily basis and withdrawals and deposits arranged in accordance with the current strategy. Pension Fund cash deposits are held separately from the County Council cash.

Rebalancing

4. The Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund has a cash strategic asset allocation range of 0 – 5%. The cash balance is regularly monitored and reviewed as part of a quarterly fund rebalancing exercise.
5. Arrangements will be made for cash balances which are not required for cashflow purposes, to be transferred to the pension fund Investment Managers in accordance with the decisions taken during the rebalancing exercise.
6. In general a minimum cash balance of £10million will be retained following a fund rebalancing exercise, to meet cashflow requirements and private equity investment transactions. The level of cash balances will fluctuate on a daily basis and may be considerably higher than the minimum balance dependent upon the timing of transactions and strategic asset allocation decisions.

Investment Strategy

7. The Pension Fund cash investment policies and procedures will be in line with those of the administering authority. Priorities for the investment of cash will be:-
 - (a) The security of capital and
 - (b) The liquidity of investments
 - (c) Optimum return on investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity

Investment of Pension Fund Cash

8. Management of the Pension Fund's cash balances will be in accordance with the Administering Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy and policies and procedures. Lending limits relating to the council's in-house deposits will however not apply due to differences in the levels of cash held. The Pension Fund cash balances managed in-house will be deposited with a minimum of two counterparties.
9. The pension fund cash balances will be held predominantly in short-term instruments such as notice accounts, money market funds and short-term fixed deposits. Approved instruments for pension fund cash deposits will be the County Council's list of specified investments for maturities up to 1 year, excluding the Debt Management Account deposit facility which is not available to pension funds and UK Government Gilts which are managed by an external fund manager. The County Council's approved list of specified investments is attached at appendix 1.
10. Pension Fund deposits will be restricted to the County Council's approved counterparties at the time of deposit. Approved counterparties as at 25 February 2015 are shown in appendix 2.

Borrowing for Pension Fund

11. The Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2009 gives administering authorities a limited power to borrow on behalf of the pension fund for up to 90 days. The power cannot be used to invest, but only for cashflow management in specified circumstances which should in practice be exceptional, i.e. to ensure that benefits are paid on time, and in transition management situations when the allocation of a pension fund's assets is being amended. Money can only be borrowed for these purposes if, at the time of borrowing, the administering authority reasonably believes that the sum borrowed, and any interest charged as a result, can be repaid out of the pension fund within 90 days of the date when the money is borrowed.
12. Pension Fund management arrangements presume no borrowing normally, but the possibility remains of unexpected pressures occurring and in these

circumstances the power would enable the Pension Fund to avoid becoming forced sellers of fund assets due to cashflow requirements.

13. The Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) has delegated authority to borrow money for the Pension Fund in accordance with the regulations but only in exceptional circumstances. It is proposed that the authority to borrow on behalf of the Pension Fund continues to be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer during 2015/16.

**Oxfordshire County Council 2015/16 Approved Specified Investments for
Maturities up to one year**

Investment Instrument	Minimum Credit Criteria
Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility	N/A
Term Deposits – UK Government	N/A
Term Deposits – Banks and Building Societies	Fitch short-term F1, Long-term A-, Minimum Sovereign Rating AA+
Term Deposits with Nationalised Banks with Government Guarantee for wholesale deposits	N/A
Certificates of Deposit issued by Banks and Building Societies	A1 or P1
Money Market Funds with a Constant Net Asset Value	AAA
Other Money Market Funds and Collective Investment Schemes ¹	Minimum equivalent credit rating of A+. These funds do not have short term ratings
Reverse Repurchase Agreements – maturity under 1 year from arrangement and counterparty of high credit quality	Counterparty Rating: Fitch short-term F1, Long-term A-
Covered Bonds – maturity under 1 year from arrangement	A-
UK Government Gilts	AAA
Treasury Bills	N/A

¹ I.e., credit rated funds which meet the definition of a collective investment scheme as defined in SI 2004 No 534 and SI 2007 No 573.

Approved Counterparties as at 25/02/15

Ignis Sterling Liquidity Fund

Bank of Montreal

Bank of Nova Scotia

Barclays Bank Plc

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce

Close Brothers

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Coventry Building Society

Credit Suisse

Development Bank of Singapore

Goldman Sachs International Bank

HSBC Bank plc

Landesbank Hessen-Thuringen (Helaba)

Lloyds TSB Bank plc

National Australia Bank

National Bank of Canada

Nationwide Building Society

Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp

Rabobank

Royal Bank of Canada

Santander UK plc

Standard Chartered Bank

Svenska Handelsbanken

Toronto-Dominion Bank

United Overseas Bank