

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOYDER

 GOYDER South Australia's Heartland	TREASURY POLICY	Department	F&A
		Version No:	1.3
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		Responsibility:	DOF

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past Council either borrowed for asset expenditure or utilised existing cash reserves. Cash reserves are funds set aside for future purposes. Examples include the replacement of the Council's assets such as CWMS infrastructure and Waste Management Plant. Until these funds are required they can be used for other purposes.

Investing cash whilst also borrowing may result in an interest differential cost to council. It depends on what interest rate Council is currently paying on its existing loans compared to what interest could be earned on investing surplus funds. If Council was currently earning 0.5% on its invested cash there would be no financial benefit in paying off any existing loans where the interest rate is less than 0.5%.

1.1 Objectives

This Treasury Management Policy provides clear direction to management, staff and Council in relation to the treasury function and establishes a decision making framework that :

- ensures funds are available as required to support approved outlays by either setting reserve funds aside or borrowing funds in accordance with the Long Term Financial Plan; and
- ensures that interest rate and other risks (e.g. liquidity risks and investment credit risks) are acknowledged and responsibly managed and are reasonably likely to minimise on average over the longer term, the net interest costs associated with borrowing and investing

1.2 Legislative Requirements

Chapter 8 of the *Local Government Act 1999* – Sections 122 and 123 - generally provides that a Council should have strategic plans and an annual business plan and budget. This implies a level of forward planning in relation to the management of the Council's funds.

A related provision which requires certain prudential information to be gathered and analysed in relation to major projects is found in Chapter 4 - Section 48 - of the Act, before Council:

- Engages in a commercial project where the expected recurrent or capital expenditure of the projects exceeds an amount set by Council;
- Engages in any project where the expected capital expenditure of the Council over the ensuing five years is likely to exceed 20% of the Council's average annual operating expenses over the previous five financial years; and
- Engages in any project where the expected capital cost of the project over the ensuing five years is likely to exceed \$4,000,000.

Chapter 9 of the *Local Government Act 1999* - Sections 133 and 134 - generally provides that a Council can:

- Obtain funds from a range of sources, including taxation and borrowing, appropriate

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- to the Council carrying out its functions (a very broad power);
- Borrow funds and enter into arrangements to protect against adverse interest rate movements on borrowings; and
- Invest Council funds.

The *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations* – Regulation 5 - require the preparation of a Budgeted Cash Flow Statement as part of the Council's annual budget papers.

2. WHEN DOES COUNCIL BORROW?

The management of Council's debt should focus on the net debt situation, that is, borrowings less investments. Council should ensure that they are not borrowing at higher interest rates when they have significant funds invested at lower interest rates. Focusing on principal and interest payments alone is inappropriate (but still important), cash reserves and interest earned also contribute to the financial health of Council. Similarly, a net movement in principal (new debt less principal repayments) is the appropriate focus, as is net interest paid (or earned). It is the impact of net debt transactions that affect Council's ability to provide funds for operations. Note that a deficit in Council's annual budget result adds to (and a budget surplus reduces) net debt.

An alternative to borrowing, in the case of capital expenditure peaks and troughs, is to build up cash reserves in years when capital expenditures are lower and to use the cash reserves in years when higher expenditures are incurred. An inherent danger in cash reserves is that they can readily be diverted to other uses than those originally intended, leaving the Council with the alternative of raising funds from other sources or reducing operational expenditure. Cash reserves need to be carefully managed to both achieve optimum investment incomes and to be available when needed for the planned capital expenditure. Additionally, cash reserves and borrowings need to be monitored carefully to ensure an optimal net interest impact.

As part of the annual budget process Council will consider existing cash reserves held and the interest savings on using those funds rather than external debt.

Generally, capital expenditures on new major projects, which have long lives, should be paid for by the residents who will consume the services provided by the infrastructure. Using borrowings to pay for such expenditures allows the cost of providing the services to be spread over a number of years.

Where the borrowings are for commercial purposes, the return on the investment should be able to service the debt redemption, including consideration of community service obligations.

3. HOW ARE BORROWINGS STRUCTURED?

Consideration will be given to the structure of any borrowings that Council makes. Generally when interest rates are low they will be on a long-term, credit foncier fixed interest rate basis. When interest rates are increasing interest rate exposure may then be minimised with a mix of short and long term borrowings. The mix would also include fixed and floating interest rates.

4. BUDGET RESULT

Council has to maintain liquidity to be able to pay its liabilities when they fall due. Council's budget result is defined as follows;

Current Assets

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Less: Trade & Other Payables
Short-term Provisions
Cash Backed Reserves
Equals the Budget Result

5. NET DEBT LEVEL

Council is required to report in its Annual Budget, Financial Statements and the Long Term Financial Plan the following treasury indicators;

5.1 Net Financial Liabilities

What is owed to others less money held, invested or owed to Council?

Calculated as:

Total Liabilities (from Balance Sheet)

Less: Current cash and cash equivalents
Current trade & other receivables
Current other financial assets
Non-current financial assets
Council's limit is 20% of total annual revenue less NRM levy.

5.2 Net Financial Liabilities Ratio

Calculated as:

Net financial liabilities (as above)

Divided by: Total operating revenues

Less: NRM levy raised
Council's limit is 20%.

5.3 Interest Cover Ratio

How much income is used in paying interest on borrowings. This ratio indicates the extent to which Council's operating revenues are committed to net interest expense.

Calculated as:

Finance costs expense

Less: Investment Income

Divided by: Total operating revenues

Less: NRM levy raised
Less: Investment Income
Council's limit is 10%.

6. REPORTING

6.1 Valuation and measurement

All reports are to account for borrowings in accordance with the provisions of Accounting Standard;

- AASB7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures
- AASB 132 Financial Instruments: Presentation
- AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement.

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Annual averages are to be calculated by using the weighted average of end of month balances

6.2 Annual Review

Each year a report will be prepared which summarises the cost of new debt and any savings achieved by using existing cash reserves rather than debt in accordance with the Reserve Policy.

7. RECORDS

All records should be treated in accordance with Local Government GDS40.

8. REVIEW

This document shall be reviewed by Council within two (2) years (or on significant change to legislation or aspects included in this policy that could affect the health and safety of workers).

9. REVIEW HISTORY

Document History	Version No:	Issue Date:	Description of Change:
	1.0	24/6/14	Adopted.
	1.1	10/10/15	Reviewed by AC - NC
	1.1	17/11/15	Reviewed by Council. Refer NCOR-112015-4868
	1.2	19/7/16	Reviewed by AC - 05/16
	1.2	16/8/16	Reviewed by Council. Refer NCOR-82016-7736
	1.2	15/8/17	Reviewed by AC - NC
	1.2	19/08/19	Reviewed by AC - 07/19
	1.2	17/09/19	Reviewed by Council 202/19
	1.3	21/09/21	Reviewed by AC refer AC08/21
	1.3	19/10/21	Reviewed by Council refer 153/21