



FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2023/2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Four Marks Parish Council (the Council) acknowledges the importance of investing funds to earn interest or other income on such of its funds as are not immediately required. This investment will be within the fiduciary duty of the Council to minimise or eliminate risk and maintain adequate liquidity.

This Strategy complies with the revised requirements set out in the Department of Communities and Local Government *Guidance on Local Government Investments* and takes into account Section 15 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003 and guidance within Governance and Accountability for Local Councils *Practitioner's Guide 2016*.

The Local Government Act 2003 states that a local authority may invest:

- for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment
- for the purpose of prudent management of its financial affairs

The Council defines its treasury management activities as *"the management of the Council's cash flows, its banking and money market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of best value performance consistent with those risks."*

2. POLICY

2.1 This strategy establishes formal objectives, policies and practices and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of the Council's treasury management activities and the associated risks.

3. INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Council's investment criteria, in priority order, are:

- 3.1.1 the security of its funds,
- 3.1.2 the adequate liquidity of its investments, and
- 3.1.3 the return on investment - the Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity

3.2 All investments will be made in sterling.

3.3 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) maintains the borrowing of money purely to invest or to lend and make a return is unlawful and the Council will not engage in such activity.

3.4 The choice of investment whether directly by the Council or indirectly via a pooled fund will be determined by the credit rating supplied by credit rating agencies, the investment spread, and whether regular review of risk is carried out. The objective is to confine investment to institutions of high credit quality.

For Information: Definitions covered in section 4 to 7

4. SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS

4.1 Specified Investments are those where the Council may safely invest without further inquiry and are those offering high security and high liquidity, made in sterling and with a maturity of no more than a year. Such short-term investments made with the UK Government or a Local Authority (as defined) or a Town/Parish Council will automatically be Specified Investments.

4.2 The Council, for prudent management of its treasury balances may use

4.2.1 Treasury Deposits with UK clearing banks

4.2.2 Local Authorities or other Public Authorities

4.2.3 Other approved public sector investment funds

4.3 The choice of institution and length of deposit will be at the approval of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

4.4 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

5. NON SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS

5.1 These investments have greater potential risk – examples include stocks and shares. Given the unpredictability and uncertainty surrounding such investments the Council will not use this type of investment.

6. LIQUIDITY OF INVESTMENTS

6.1 The Finance & General Purposes Committee in consultation with the Responsible Finance Officer will determine the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed so as not to compromise liquidity.

6.2 Investments will be regarded as commencing on the date the commitment to invest is entered into rather than the date on which the funds are paid over to the counterparty.

7. LONG TERM INVESTMENTS

7.1 Long Term Investments are defined in the Guidance is greater than 36 months.

8. INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2023 – 2024

8.1 For 2023/2024, the Council will continue to invest as much of its balance as possible in a low risk product in order to achieve its investment objectives. The Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF) has been identified as a low risk, high liquidity option. It is therefore recommended to transfer any funds above the risk level (currently £85,000) in the current account to the PSDF.

8.2 In considering the potential performance of lower liquidity investments it was recommended that the Council could potentially create a long term investment with the Public Sector Property Fund in order to aim to achieve an optimum return. It was agreed not to invest in this fund.

9. END OF YEAR INVESTMENT REPORT

9.1 Investment forecasts for the coming year are considered when the budget is prepared. At the end of the financial year the Responsible Finance Officer will report on investment activity to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

10. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF REGULATIONS

10.1 The Annual Investment Strategy must be reviewed annually and revised if considered necessary.

10.2 The Council reserves the right to make variations to the Investment Strategy at any time subject to the approval of Council. Any variations will be made available to the public.

11. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

11.1 In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this document will be posted on the Council's website: www.fourmarks-pc.org.uk