



INVESTMENTS POLICY

Version 1 as adopted by Full Council on 8th July 2024
Revision by the Finance Committee due: June 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy is created under guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003. The extant guidance was issued by MHCLG in 2018.
- 1.2. Helsby Parish Council acknowledges its responsibility to the community and the importance of prudently investing any reserves it holds.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The general policy objective of the council is prudent investment of its balances. The council's investment priorities are:
 - (i) Security of reserves; and then
 - (ii) Liquidity of investments.
- 2.2. The council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

3. Investment Policy

- 3.1. The parish council shall diversify its reserves between multiple relatively highly rated UK banks and building societies. The parish council shall only use specified investments as defined by MHCLG guidance.
- 3.2. A significant percentage of the council's bulked reserves shall be placed on interest bearing term/notice deposits.
- 3.3. To retain liquidity these shall be placed with phased end dates i.e. there will always be some maturing sooner than others.
- 3.4. No one investment shall be for a period longer than 12 months.
- 3.5. The parish council shall only invest with banks/building societies which it defines as "High Credit Quality". This being those with a minimum credit rating of A with Moody's Investors Service or BBB with Standard and Poor's or Fitch Ratings Ltd.

- 3.6. The parish council may also invest in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund subject to it maintaining a credit rating as required in 3.5.
- 3.7. Investments shall be decided and placed by the Responsible Financial Officer having used due diligence including as a minimum finance search engines and ratings agencies:
 - a. This shall be under the oversight of the Finance Committee; and
 - b. The actual movement of money shall be by the usual authorised signatories.
- 3.8. The procedure for undertaking investments, considering the need for timely and speedy placing of deals shall be documented by the Responsible Financial Officer and approved by the Finance Committee before any investments are placed.
- 3.9. The Responsible Financial Officer shall review credit ratings of organisations in which the council holds investments on a quarterly basis. Should the credit rating of an organisation fall below that specified under 3.5, the Responsible Financial Officer shall consult the Finance Committee and take the appropriate action.
- 3.10. The parish council considers that by only using specified investments that the officers and members involved in determining the placement of investments have sufficient capability and skills.

4. Investment of Current Year Funds

- 4.1. The Responsible Financial Officer may transfer a portion of current year funds into instant access interest bearing accounts and transfer funds from such interest bearing accounts on a routine basis as required, subject to oversight from the Finance Committee.
- 4.2. The Responsible Financial Officer shall determine and routinely review the minimum balance to be held in the current account in consultation with the Finance Committee and shall ensure this is maintained.
- 4.3. Unity's Instant Access Savings Account shall usually be used for this purpose and the effectiveness of this shall be reviewed by the Responsible Financial Officer in consultation with the Finance Committee at least annually.

5. Revision

- 5.1. Any revisions to this policy shall be approved by the Full Council.
- 5.2. The Finance Committee shall review this policy annually and recommend any proposed changes to Full Council prior to the commencement of the new financial year. Where no changes are proposed, Full Council shall note the policy.

5.3. Notwithstanding 5.2, this policy shall be reviewed in the event the Bank of England changes its base rate by more than 1%.