

# borrowing management policy

## 1 Introduction

This policy has been established to ensure the prudent financial management for the issuance and management of Council debt.

The policy incorporates the requirements of the Local Government Act and should be read together with the Investment Policy. Together they form the Treasury Management Policy of the Council.

This policy is for the Christchurch City Council and includes the Christchurch City Council Sinking Fund Commissioners. For the purposes of limiting total debt levels of the Council and financial management ratios, the debt levels and liquid investments of Christchurch City Holdings Ltd, parent only, (a 100% owned holding company) are added to the Council figures.

To determine the scope of this policy, the definition of terms used shall be that of the Local Government Act and Accounting Standards in force.

Standard and Poor's has provided a joint credit rating for both the Council and Christchurch City Holdings Ltd. The rating is AA (Long Term) and A1 (Short Term). It is an objective of this policy that the ratings at this level be maintained as a minimum.

## 2 Principles

The following principles underlie the policy:

- 2.1 Borrowed funds will be used to fund capital expenditure and investment. An allowed exception is for working capital overdraft under section 4.12. Debt will be used as a residual funds source after funds generated from depreciation are applied to renewal and new capital expenditure. The mix of debt and revenue funding for capital funding will be determined by the Financial Plan each year.
- 2.2 Debt raised will be repaid over the economic life of assets restricted to a maximum of 20 years to ensure inter-generational equity.
- 2.3 Interest costs are part of operating expenditure and will be funded from operating revenue.
- 2.4 The annual debt repayment provision will be funded from operating revenue.
- 2.5 Interest rate exposure will be managed consistent with the aim to:
  - have interest costs where possible at or below interest rates projected from time to time in the Council's Long Term Financial Strategy or the rates determined to be economically feasible for specific assets funded
  - hedging is only allowed for debt in place (or part thereof) or where there is a commitment to borrow in the near future and not for speculative purposes
  - remain risk averse

- maintain a mix of both fixed and floating rates, where appropriate, to maintain flexibility and advantage in case of interest change.

- 2.6 Debt financing is recognised as a component in the Council's Funding Policy and Long Term Financial Strategy to provide inter-generational equity which prevents costs being incurred by the current generation which are for the benefit of future generations.

## 3 Limits on Total Borrowing

- 3.1 The forecast interest rate payable on external debt intended to be raised by the Council in the ensuing year will be budgeted for and disclosed in the Financial Plan.
- 3.2 Total external debt as a percentage of total assets of the Council and Christchurch City Holdings Ltd, parent only, shall be no more than 12%.
- 3.3 The total external debt of the Council and Christchurch City Holdings Ltd combined as a percentage of realisable assets (all assets excluding infrastructural and restricted assets) shall be no more than 33%.
- 3.4 Net interest paid on term debt by the Council and Christchurch City Holdings Ltd combined will not exceed 8% of the consolidated gross revenue provided interest rates do not rise above 8.5%. Should rates rise then the Council will approve a further limit to contain interest costs.
- 3.5 The ratio of net external debt of the Council and Christchurch City Holdings Ltd combined to funds flow from operations shall not exceed five times, ie an ability to repay debt over five years (medium term) before net capital additions.

**Note:** Funds flow from operations is the net cash surplus of gross revenue over operating cash expenses (excludes depreciation).

## 4 Borrowing

- 4.1 All external debt of the Council including financial leases must be authorised by resolution of the Council.
- 4.2 The aggregate amount the Council determines as not being so significant as to require specific authorisation under Section 122Z (c) (ii) (A), is \$500,000.
- 4.3 Loans raised by the Council are to be secured by a charge on Rates revenue.
- 4.4 Except as qualified in section 4.6 below, new loans raised in any particular year are to be no greater than the amount disclosed in the Financial Plan for that year and applied only to capital projects and investments listed in the Financial Plan.
- 4.5 Borrowing will be applied to project funding after utilisation of other capital funding identified in the