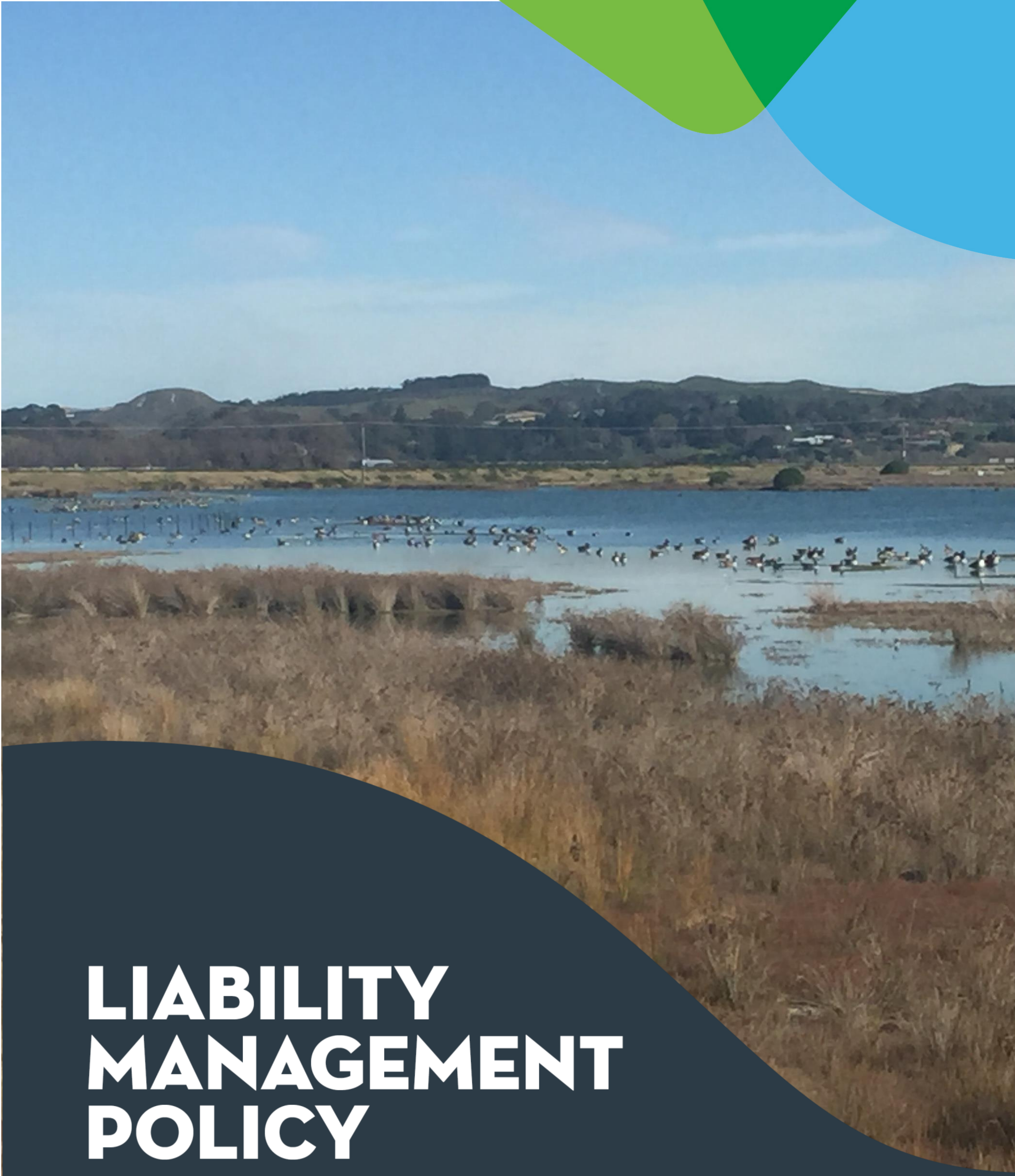

# LIABILITY MANAGEMENT POLICY

NAPIER
CITY COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera o Ahuriri

# Liability Management Policy

| | |
|---|---|
| **Adopted by** | Napier City Council on 25 March 2021 |
| **Relevant Legislation** | Section 104 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) |
| **NCC Documents Referenced** | Published in the Long Term Plan 2021-2031 |

## Purpose

This policy is provided in accordance with Section 102 (1) of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), and must state the local authority is policies in respect of the management of both borrowing and other liabilities.

## Policy

Napier City Council (the Council) needs to source funds for capital development to ensure that the city continues to progress, and borrowing is an important part of that equation. It is critical to the prudent management of Council's finances that the level of debt is planned and carefully monitored. Council approves borrowing by resolution during the Annual Plan or the Long Term Plan (LTP) process. A resolution of Council is not required for hire purchase, leased, credit or deferred purchase of goods if the period of indebtedness is less than 91 days or the goods or services are obtained in the ordinary course of operations on normal terms for amounts not exceeding $250,000.

Council raises borrowing for the following primary purposes:

- General debt to fund Council's balance sheet.
- Specific debt associated with 'one-off' projects and capital expenditure.
- To fund assets with inter-generational qualities.
- To assist Council in its day-to-day financing, through leases and hire purchases, of equipment purchases and replacement.

Council considers that borrowing is the more prudent way of funding major projects which will benefit several generations of residents.

### New Borrowings

Council is able to fund through a variety of mechanisms including internal borrowing, the issue of fixed and floating rate wholesale and retail loan stock, commercial paper, New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency and direct bank borrowing. Stock/paper may be issued to the wholesale market via banks and brokers, but issues into the retail market require additional Council approval. Council has a general preference to firstly use available special funds for its borrowing requirements and thereafter utilise external funding sources.

Council does not borrow or enter into incidental arrangements within or outside New Zealand in currency other than New Zealand currency.

The authority to arrange new borrowings, or to refinance existing debt on more acceptable terms, is delegated to the Director Corporate Services, who has overall responsibility for all activities relating to implementation of approved policy, and for establishing appropriate structures, procedures and controls to support borrowing and risk management activity.

### Borrowing Limits

In managing borrowing, Council will adhere to the following limits in relation to external debt:

- Liquidity (term debt plus committed bank facilities and liquid available financial investments) to external debt must be at least 110%
- Net external debt as a percentage of total income will not exceed 230%

- Net interest expense as a percentage of total income will not exceed 10%
- Net Interest as a percentage of rates income will not exceed 15%

Council adheres to the borrowing limit that is reached first and provides the lowest level of debt capacity.

Borrowing Limit Definitions:

- Annual rates income is defined as the amount equal to the total revenue from any funding mechanism authorised by the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 together with any revenue received from other local authorities for services provided (and for which the other local authorities rate).
- Annual rates income excludes regional levies.
- Net external debt is defined as total external debt less cash investments.
- Liquidity is defined as external term debt plus committed bank facilities plus liquid financial investments divided by current external debt.
- Total income is defined as earnings from rates, government grants and subsidies, user charges, interest, dividends, financial and other revenue and excludes non-government capital contributions (e.g. developer contributions and vested assets).
- Net interest is defined as external interest expense less interest income.

### Liquidity and Credit Risk Management

Council's ability to readily attract cost-effective borrowing is largely driven by its ability to maintain a strong balance sheet as well as its ability to rate, and manage its image in the market, and its relationships with investors, the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA), bankers and brokers.

Where practical, Council seeks a diversified pool of external borrowing and ensures that bank borrowings and incidental arrangements are sought from strongly rated New Zealand registered banks (minimum Standard & Poor's (S&P) long-term credit rating A+).

Council minimises its liquidity risk by:

- Matching expenditure closely to its revenue streams and managing cashflow timing differences through its liquid investment portfolio and/or committed bank facilities
- Maintaining its cash management and financial investments in liquid and negotiable instruments
- Avoiding concentration of debt maturity dates

To ensure funds are available when needed, Council maintains sufficient available operating cashflow, committed bank facilities, and/or liquid financial investments to meet its projected cashflow commitments through the liquidity ratio, and maintains a $3 million liquidity buffer through cash deposits.

To minimise the risk of large concentrations of external debt maturing or being reissued in periods of illiquidity or where credit margins are high, Council ensures external debt maturities are spread over a band of periods.

When total external debt is $30 million or greater, Council will use the following maturity profile where prudent:

| Period | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|
| 0-3 years | 20% | 60% |
| 3-5 years | 20% | 60% |
| Over 5 years | 0% | 60% |

This will also be subject to Council funding needs.

### Internal Borrowing / Loans

Council has the option to use its day-to-day cashflow, financial investments and available special fund balances to internally fund capital expenditure as approved by Council resolution. Due to the interest rate margin between external investing and external borrowing, separating Council's investing and borrowing activities is not the most efficient use of its funds. Borrowing internally, utilising its own cash reserves, Council creates fiscal efficiencies by eliminating that margin.

Council manages debt on a net portfolio basis, and borrows externally only when it is commercially prudent to do so.

Interest on internally-funded loans is charged annually in arrears, on year end loan balances at the agreed three-year fixed interest rate. Except where a specific rate has been approved for particular circumstances, the three-year rate is set annually at the start of the financial year, based on the three-year swap rate plus the credit margin on three-year loan stock.

The credit margin is determined by either Council's actual three-year margin or with reference to the LGFA credit curve for a non-credit rated guaranteeing Council borrower.

Gross Debt and Gross Debt Limits

Gross debt includes all external and internal borrowing and gross interest includes interest calculated on external and internal borrowings.

As an additional measure Council has set borrowing limits relating to Gross Debt and the cost of servicing Gross Debt.

- Gross Debt as a percentage of total income will not exceed 150%
- Gross interest expense as a percentage of total income will not exceed 12%
- Gross Interest as a percentage of rates income will not exceed 20%

The use of the Gross measures is an additional discipline that will be monitored and reported on internally. To avoid confusion, only the measures relating to external debt will be reported on when Council prepares its audited financial statements.

New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA) Limited

The Council may borrow from the LGFA and, in connection with that borrowing, may enter into the following related transactions to the extent it considers necessary or desirable:

- Contribute a portion of its borrowing back to the LGFA as an equity contribution to the LGFA, for example borrower notes.
- Provide guarantees of the indebtedness of other local authorities to the LGFA and of the indebtedness of the LGFA itself.
- Commit to contributing additional equity (or subordinated debt) to the LGFA if required.
- Secure its borrowing from the LGFA and the performance of other obligations to the LGFA or its creditors with a charge over the Council's rates and rates revenue.
- Subscribe for shares and uncalled capital in the LGFA.

### Interest Rate Risk Management

Council's borrowing gives rise to a direct exposure to wholesale interest rate movements. Given the long term nature of Council's assets, projects, inter-generational factors, and Council's intention to avoid an adverse impact on rates, Council prefers a percentage of fixed rate or hedged debt. Where possible, interest rate re-pricing risk is spread over a range of maturities.

Council reduces uncertainty due to interest rate movements by the active management of underlying interest rate exposures. Council's fixed rate debt, as a percentage of debt, should be between a minimum of 55% and a maximum of 100%. The percentages are calculated on the rolling 12-month projected external core debt level.

'External Debt' is the amount of total external core debt.

'Fixed Rate' is defined as an interest rate repricing date beyond 12 months on a continuous rolling basis.

'Floating Rate' is defined as an interest rate repricing date within 12 months.

Interest rate risk management objectives are reflected in the table below and outline the target fixed rate into time bands.

| Period of actual and planned forecast external debt | Fixed Rate Maturity Profile Target | |
|---|---|---|
| | Minimum | Maximum |
| 1 to 3 years | 20% | 60% |
| 3 to 5 years | 20% | 60% |
| 5 to 10 years | 0% | 60% |

These targets do not apply when external core debt is less than $15 million.

Maintaining a maturity profile outside the above targets for greater than 90 days requires reporting to Council.

### Interest Rate Strategy

Management implements interest rate risk management strategy through the use of the following approved instruments:

- Forward rate agreements
- Interest rate swaps
- Purchased interest rate swaptions
- Purchase of interest rate option products e.g. borrowers' caps, borrowers' swaptions
- Interest rate collar type option strategies (1:1 collars)

Selling interest rate options for the primary purpose of generating premium income is not permitted because of its speculative nature.

Credit exposure arising on interest rate instruments is restricted to $20 million with any one approved counterparty.

### Security

Council generally does not offer assets other than a charge over rates or rates revenue as security for any loan or performance of any obligation under an incidental arrangement. In exceptional circumstances, with prior Council approval, security may be offered as a charge over one or more specific assets. Where relevant a register of charges is established and maintained at Council's principal office.

In all borrowing and related activities, Council complies with the relevant provisions of the Securities Act.

### Repayment

Council repays external borrowings from the loan redemption reserve allocated to that borrowing, from general funds, rates revenue, asset sale proceeds, or through raising redemption loans. Subject to the appropriate approval and debt limits, a loan may be rolled over or re-negotiated as and when appropriate.

Repayment amounts on internal loans are set based on a table loan calculation over the life of the loan. Repayments are made annually at financial year end.

### Contingent Liabilities

Council provides financial guarantees to community organisations. Management ensures that the business plan of the guaranteed party furthers the strategic objectives of Council and that financial statements are received on an annual basis. The Council needs to be satisfied that any community organisation to which it provides a financial guarantee is capable of servicing the proposed borrowing from its income sources. The annual contingent loan liability must not exceed 7.5% of Council's non-targeted rate take for the year.

## Policy Review

The review timeframe of this policy will be no longer than every three years.

NAPIER
CITY COUNCIL
*Te Kaunihera o Ahuriri*