

## **Pension Fund Cash Lending Counterparty Criteria**

The following criteria will be used to manage counterparty risks to Somerset County Council Pension Fund for cash deposits from 8th March 2019 (subject to adoption by the SCC Pensions Committee): -

### **Financial Institutions**

Any Financial Institution that is authorised by the FCA to accept deposits, or is a passported EEA institution, which is entitled to accept deposits in the UK, or is a UK Building Society can be lent to, subject to the following rating criteria at the time of the deposit: -

### **Rating of Counterparty**

The following long term ratings are the minimum acceptable level:

Fitch A-  
S&P A-  
Moody's A3

The maximum deposit amount for any authorised counterparty that has as a minimum all three ratings above will be £10m.

### **Operational Bank Accounts**

Amounts contained in operational bank accounts with the Pension Fund's main Bank (currently Nat West) will not count in the calculation of Nat West's limit as defined above. In the event of unexpected receipts after 2pm on any given working day, money may be placed in an instant access Nat West call account overnight, in breach of the above limits. Whenever this occurs the total lending to Nat West must be reduced to back within their limit on the following working day.

If the Pension Fund's main bank (currently Nat West) have their ratings downgraded below minimum criteria, the instant access Call Account facility may still be used for short-term liquidity requirements and business continuity arrangements.

## Public Sector Bodies

Any UK Local Authority or Public Body will have a limit of £10m. Any employer member of the fund may not be used

The UK Government Debt Management Office (DMADF) will be unlimited.

The table below gives a definition and rough comparison of various ratings by the three main agencies: -

### Definitions of Rating Agency Ratings

	Fitch		Moody's		S&P	
Short-Term	<b>F1+</b>	Exceptionally strong	<b>P-1</b>	Superior	<b>A-1+</b>	Extremely strong
	<b>F1</b>	Highest quality			<b>A-1</b>	Strong
	<b>F2</b>	Good quality	<b>P-2</b>	Strong	<b>A-2</b>	Satisfactory
	<b>F3</b>	Fair quality	<b>P-3</b>	Acceptable	<b>A-3</b>	Adequate
	<b>B</b>	Speculative	<b>NP</b>	Questionable	<b>B and below</b>	Significant speculative characteristics
	<b>C</b>	High default risk				
	<b>(+) or (-)</b>		<b>(1,2, or 3)</b>		<b>(+) or (-)</b>	
Long-Term	<b>AAA</b>	Highest quality	<b>Aaa</b>	Exceptional	<b>AAA</b>	Extremely strong
	<b>AA</b>	V High quality	<b>Aa</b>	Excellent	<b>AA</b>	Very strong
	<b>A</b>	High quality	<b>A</b>	Good	<b>A</b>	Strong
	<b>BBB</b>	Good quality	<b>Baa</b>	Adequate	<b>BBB</b>	Adequate capacity
	<b>BB</b>	Speculative	<b>Ba</b>	Questionable	<b>BB and below</b>	Significant speculative characteristics
	<b>B</b>	Highly Speculative	<b>B</b>	Poor		
	<b>CCC</b>	High default risk	<b>Caa</b>	Extremely poor		

## Financial Groups

For Financial Groups (where two or more separate counterparties are owned by the same eventual parent company) a consolidated limit equal to the limit of a single counterparty (£10m) will apply to the group.

## **Money Market Funds**

With regulatory changes now effected, previously titled Constant Net Asset Value (CNAV) Money Market Funds have been converted into Low Volatility Net Asset Value (LVNAV) funds. Any LVNAV Fund used must be rated by at least two of the main three ratings agency, and must have the following, (or equivalent LVNAV) ratings.

Fitch AAmmf

Moody's Aaa-mf

Standard & Poor's AAAM

UK Government bond funds and Sterling short dated investment grade corporate bond funds may also be used.

Subject to the above, deposits can be made with the following limits: -

The lower of £10m or 0.5% of the total value for individual Funds.

## **Diversification**

At least three counterparties/financial groups must be used if total funds invested are greater than £10m, with each having an investment of at least £1m. No more than 50% of total funds invested can be placed with any single counterparty/financial group.

## **Other Indicators**

The Fund will use a range of indicators, not just credit ratings. Among other indicators to be taken into account will be: -

- Credit Default Swaps and Government Bond Spreads.
- GDP, and Net Debt as a Percentage of GDP for sovereign countries.
- Likelihood and strength of Parental Support.
- Government Guarantees and Support, including ability to support.
- Share Price.
- Market information on corporate developments and market sentiment towards the counterparties and sovereigns.
- Other macroeconomic factors.