

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE – 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020**

**CABINET – 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020**

**COUNCIL – 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020**

**2020/21 TREASURY STRATEGY AND TREASURY UPDATE REPORT**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (DIRECTOR: FINANCE & HUMAN RESOURCES)**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR LEE CARTER**

**PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1** The report updates members on Treasury Management activities during 2019/20 to-date and details the Treasury Strategy recommended to be adopted for 2020/21.

The strategy in 2019/20 and recent years has been to limit investments in third parties, which reduces the Council's exposure to counterparty risk, and to take advantage of lower interest rates for borrowing. Maintaining high levels of very cheap temporary financing has generated surplus treasury management returns of more than £17.0m in recent years which has reduced the impact of Government cuts to the Council's grants and therefore helped to protect front line services.

Following discussion with the Council's external treasury advisors, Arlingclose, we also continued to lock into some fixed term borrowing during 2019/20 taking advantage of lower long term interest rates as well as reducing the risk of future interest rate fluctuations. The PWLB (currently the main source of long-term lending for Local Authorities) increased interest rates by 100 basis points in October 2019 and the associated impact has been built into the budget strategy going forward. For the remainder of 2019/20 we will aim to use temporary borrowing where possible to minimise the in-year impact. It should be noted that the Council's budget for 2019/20 and the Cabinet's proposals issued for consultation in January 2020 for 2020/21 include allowance for locking in all the anticipated financing requirement at fixed interest rates that are higher than current PWLB rates for any duration (from 1 year to 50 years) which ensures that the Council's budget in relation to Treasury Management is robust. The Council will continue to receive regular advice from Arlingclose who are a firm of expert advisors specialising in all aspects of local government treasury management and we act in accordance with the advice received.

The report also sets out expected external financing requirements. We have an excellent track record of complying with all the prudential indicators and limits agreed by Council and are operating well within the overall approved credit ceiling. The proportion of the Council's net revenue budget used to service loan repayment is 9.1% in the current financial year. This compares to 9.7% for the average unitary authority. The Council has increased its external financing requirements in recent years as it follows a more commercial approach. This has included investment in NuPlace which

provides high quality homes for rent from a reliable landlord, mainly at market rent levels and an expansion of the Property Investment Portfolio to attract and retain jobs for local people and to provide other regeneration benefits for our residents. These investments are expected to bring long term capital growth which will strengthen the Council's balance sheet as well as generating revenue returns well in excess of the associated loan repayment charges. They will also bring other direct and indirect financial and other benefits to the residents of the Borough including additional income from council tax, business rates and new homes bonus which will be used to help support front line services such as Adult Social Care, as well as protecting and creating jobs for local people. The Council's solar farm generates an index linked surplus of around £200k pa the surplus is used to help support front line services.

This report and the Prudential Indicators report, which will be considered by Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> February and Full Council on 5<sup>th</sup> March, set out our overall approach to treasury management and the controls that are put in place to ensure that council taxpayers' interests are protected and risks are managed as effectively as possible.

## **1.2 2019/20 Treasury Management Update**

The treasury portfolio at the end of December 2019 showed overall net indebtedness of £239.8m (borrowing: £262.9m less investments: £23.1m). Base rates have remained at 0.75% throughout 2019/20 and are not expected to increase in the short term.

The borrowing strategy for 2019/20 is

- to take new borrowing within shorter maturities before gradually lengthening maturities, and
- to take advantage of longer term loans when opportunities arise.

The PWLB (currently the main source of long-term lending for Local Authorities) increased interest rates by 100 basis points in October 2019 and the associated impact has been built into the budget strategy going forward. For the remainder of 2019/20 we will aim to use temporary borrowing where possible to minimise the in-year impact. Fortunately, £90m long-term borrowing was taken in the months prior to the interest rate change to lock into the very low rates available at the time and to reduce exposure to future interest rate fluctuations.

To date in 2019/20 part of our Equal Instalment of Principal PWLB loans have matured and 5 new PWLB loans totalling £25m have been taken (£10m since the last update report (see 4.3)). Short term borrowing has been used to fund short term cash flow requirements and take advantage of low interest rates.

As referred to above, a large part of the Council's total existing borrowing and planned further borrowings relates to funding projects which will generate some income. These are budgeted to generate returns in excess of the annual loan repayment charges and other operating costs.

The overall investment strategy for 2019/20 is to gain maximum benefit but with security of the principal sum invested being the primary consideration. The weighted average return on internal investments at the end of December 2019 was 0.61%

compared to a benchmark return for the period of 0.5% based on average DMO overnight rate. A schedule of short-term investments is shown at Appendix F.

The Markets in Financial Instruments Directive II (MIFID II) came into place on 3 January 2018 and the Council has opted to be categorised as a professional client which allows access to financial services and advice it may otherwise be unable to obtain (such as advice from Arlingclose, our treasury advisors). As part of the regulations, the authority must hold a minimum investment balance which is currently set at £10m.

### **1.3 TREASURY STRATEGY**

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy is set within the parameters of the relevant statute, guidance and accounting standards which include the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services and the Prudential Code.

The Council is currently expected to be required to borrow up to £29.6m in 2020/21 based on the current capital programme plans and will adopt a flexible approach to borrowing. In consultation with its treasury management advisors consideration will be given to affordability, maturity profile of existing external financing, interest rate and refinancing risk as well as borrowing source, which is usually expected to be the Public Works Loan Board, but may also include the LGA Municipal Bonds Agency, European Investment Bank or commercial sources, and any new opportunities which may arise following the PWLB rate increase.

The strategy for any investments will generally be to reduce investments in order to reduce counter-party risk and to reduce net interest costs as longer-term borrowing rates will tend to be greater than we are able to earn on new investments, but we will look to lengthen investment periods, where cash flow permits, to achieve higher interest rates within acceptable risk parameters. We would generally anticipate holding investments equal to the requirements set out under MIFID II, currently £10m. Maximum investment levels with counterparties will be set to ensure prudent diversification is achieved whilst recognising that strict investment criteria that the Council applies severely reduces the number of suitable available counterparties and therefore sums with individual counterparties may be up to £15m at any one time.

The report also includes: the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Statement - the policy is in line with that previously agreed and the Prudential Indicators associated with Treasury Management for 2020/21.

It should be noted that there may be some changes to the Treasury Strategy before it is presented to Cabinet on 20 February as further information becomes available. If this is necessary, the final strategy will be circulated to Audit Committee Members for information with any significant changes highlighted.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **2.1 Members are asked to**

1. Note the treasury management activities for the first half year,
2. Note the Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix A) and
3. Recommend that Cabinet and Full Council approve the Treasury Strategy, including the Annual Investment Strategy for 2020/21 together with the associated treasury Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, which will apply from 2019/20 onwards.

### 3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific priority plan objectives?	
	Yes	Maximisation of investment income whilst managing risks and minimising borrowing costs helps to support the council's overall financial position and therefore the delivery of all service and policy objectives.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
<b>TARGET COMPLETION / DELIVERY DATE</b>	Part of ongoing Treasury Management Activities within the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy approved by Council.	
<b>FINANCIAL / VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	Where appropriate these are detailed in the body of the report
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>The Council's Treasury Strategy has to comply with the relevant statute, codes and guidance which are set out both in the main body of this report and its appendices.</p> <p>The Director: Finance &amp; Human Resources (Section 151 Officer) has responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council. In providing this report the Director: Finance &amp; Human Resources is meeting one of the responsibilities of the post contained within the Council's Constitution at Part 2, Article 12, paragraph 12.04(f) which states "The Chief financial Officer will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of governance, audit, probity and propriety, risk management and the approval of the statement of accounts through provision of support to the Audit Committee."</p>
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	The key opportunities and risks associated with treasury management activities are set out in the body of the report and in the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy approved by Council and will be regularly monitored throughout the year.
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	

## PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 4. 2019/20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

#### 4.1 CURRENT PORTFOLIO POSITION

	<b>31 March 2019</b>	<b>31 Dec 2019</b>
	<b>Principal £m</b>	<b>Principal £m</b>
Fixed Rate Borrowing – PWLB	159.526	177.936
Fixed Rate Borrowing – LOBO	25.000	25.000
Fixed Rate Borrowing – Market	15.000	15.000
Variable Rate Borrowing – Temporary Market	<u>67.398</u>	<u>45.000</u>
<b>Total External Financing</b>	<b>266.924</b>	<b>262.936</b>
Investments (excl. NuPlace share capital)	<u>15.685</u>	<u>23.121</u>
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>15.685</b>	<b>23.121</b>
<b>Net Indebtedness (excl. NuPlace)</b>	<b>251.239</b>	<b>239.815</b>
Investment in NuPlace	11.600	12.000
	<b>239.639</b>	<b>227.815</b>

#### 4.2 Interests Rates

UK interest rates have remained at 0.75% throughout 2019/20 to date. The Bank of England Quantitative Easing programme remains at £435bn. The Bank of England having previously indicated interest rates may need to rise if a Brexit agreement was reached, stated in its November Monetary Policy Report that the MPC now believe this is less likely in the event of a deal. Arlingclose expects the base rate to remain at 0.75% for the foreseeable future, although this is also dependent on clarity relating to Brexit. The markets forecast an even slower rise over the same period.

#### 4.3 Borrowing & Rescheduling

The borrowing strategy for the current year has been to borrow temporarily to take advantage of low interest rates where possible and to undertake new longer term borrowing initially in shorter maturities before gradually extending maturities.

##### Rescheduling

During 2019/20 no rescheduling of debt has taken place as market conditions have not been favourable, however the scope for opportunities is regularly monitored.

##### New Borrowing

Between the period 1 June 2019 (previous Member update) and 31 December 2019, £72.0m of temporary loans have been raised in order to fund short-term cash flow

requirements at various points. Interest rates have ranged from 0.70% to 0.81% - interest rates have remained fairly low during this time. Outstanding temporary borrowing at 31 December 2019 was £45.0m

The following longer term borrowing has been undertaken since June 2019 with a view to slowly locking in to some longer-term fixed interest rates.

Date	Loan	Period	Amount	Interest Rate
06/08/19	Maturity	50 years	£5,000,000	1.99%
20/08/19	Maturity	50 years	£5,000,000	1.67%

#### **4.4 Investments**

The strategy for the current year is: The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return.

The majority of the Council's investments are internally managed – currently just temporary investments for cash flow purposes.

##### Temporary Investments

The majority of funds are invested by the Council's own officers in order to maximise returns from day to day cash flows. In total £4,831m of investments were placed between 1 June and 31 December. Interest rates have ranged from 0.50% to 0.80% and periods ranged from overnight deposits to 2 days. £23.121m temporary investments were held at 31 December 2019.

##### Longer Term Investments

We currently hold no longer term investments.

It should be noted that under the current guidance from our Treasury Advisors our investment policy would mean that new deposits with financial institutions should not be placed for longer than 13 months

Overall the weighted average return on all internal investments for the year to date was 0.61% compared to a benchmark return for the period of 0.50%.

##### Overall Position and Exposure

A full analysis of all Council investments at the end of December 2019 is shown in Appendix F.

Our current counterparty limit and maximum exposure is £15.0m for the current year with any one counterparty, with exception of the Debt Management Office (DMO) which is unlimited as it is Government guaranteed. At the end of December the greatest exposure with a single counterparty was £6.139m with Lloyds Bank (26.6% of the total portfolio).

The Council is guided by its Treasury advisers, Arlingclose, in assessing investments.

## 4.5 Leasing

Each year the Council arranges operating and finance leases for assets such as vehicles, computers and equipment. This helps to spread the cost over a number of years.

There have been two drawdowns to date in 2019/20 which were undertaken in January. The drawdowns consisted of finance leases from JCB Finance totalling £0.029m and funded the purchase of Leisure equipment over three years and a van over five years.

## 5. TREASURY STRATEGY FOR 2020/21 TO 2021/22

### 5.1 Background

#### 5.1.1 The CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice

Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in a different report, the Investment Strategy which is also part of the Service & Financial Planning suite of reports considered by Cabinet and full Council.

#### 5.1.2 External Context

**Economic background:** The UK's progress negotiating its exit from the European Union, together with its future trading arrangements, will continue to be a major influence on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2020/21. The General Election has removed some uncertainty and the Withdrawal Agreement Bill is now expected to pass through Parliament in January. However, uncertainties around the UK's future trading relationship with the EU remain as these have to be concluded in an ambitious transition period timeframe by December 2020.

GDP growth rose by 0.4% in the third quarter of 2019 from -0.2% in the previous three months with the annual rate falling further below its trend rate to 1.1% from 1.2%. Services, construction and production added positively to growth, by 0.5%, 1.2% and 0.1% respectively, while agriculture recorded a fall of 0.1%. Looking ahead, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Report (formerly the Quarterly Inflation Report) forecasts economic growth to pick up during 2020 as Brexit-related uncertainties dissipate and

provide a boost to business investment helping GDP reach 1.6% in Q4 2020, 1.8% in Q4 2021 and 2.1% in Q4 2022.

The headline rate of UK Consumer Price Inflation remained the same in November 2019 at 1.5% year-on-year, the same as October 2019, however continuing to fall from highs of 2.1% in July and April 2019 as accommodation services and transport continued to contribute to a level of inflation below the BOE target of 2%. Labour market data continues to be positive. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployment rate continues to hold at historic lows at 3.8%, its lowest level since 1975. The 3-month average annual growth rate for pay excluding bonuses rose to 3.5% in November 2019 providing some evidence that a shortage of labour is supporting wages. However, adjusting for inflation this means real wages were only up by 2.0% in October 2019 and is likely to have some beneficial impact on household spending.

Domestic inflationary pressures have abated, as domestic gas and electricity price freezes have taken effect until 2020. The price of oil has fallen through the year, despite a rise in prices in December 2019. The limited inflationary pressure from real wages will likely keep inflation below the Bank of England target of 2%. The Bank of England maintained Bank Rate at 0.75% in December following a 7-2 vote by the Monetary Policy Committee. Despite keeping rates on hold, MPC members did confirm that if Brexit uncertainty drags on or global growth fails to recover, they are prepared to cut interest rates as required. Moreover, the downward revisions to some of the growth projections in the Monetary Policy Report suggest the Committee may now be less convinced of the need to increase rates even if there is a Brexit deal.

The US economy has continued to perform relatively well compared to other developed nations; however, the Federal Reserve has started to unwind its monetary tightening through 2019. The Federal Reserve has cut rates three times to 1.5% - 1.75%, to stimulate growth as GDP growth has started to fall (to 2.1%).

The fallout from the US-China trade war continues which, risks contributing to a slowdown in global economic activity in 2020. Recent suggestions have been an initial compromise and potential unwinding of tariffs; however, this can change quickly. Slow growth in Europe, combined with changes in leadership at the ECB and IMF has led to a change of stance in 2019. Quantitative easing has continued and been extended.

**Credit outlook:** The recent Bank of England stress tests assessed all seven UK banking groups. The tests scenarios include deep simultaneous recessions in the UK and global economies that are more severe overall than the global financial crisis, combined with large falls in asset prices and a separate stress of misconduct costs. All seven banks passed the test on both a CET1 ratio and a leverage ratio basis. Major Banks have steadily increased their capital for many years now. However, there are a number of shortcomings in the Bank's approach; timeliness as the results are over 11 months of out date when they are published, being based on end-2018 balance sheets; ring-fencing, as the tests ignore the restrictions on transferring capital between ring-fenced "retail" banks and non-ring-fenced "investment" banks within the larger groups and; coverage – the tests should be expanded to cover a wider range of UK banks and building societies.



The Bank of England will seek to address some of these issues in 2020, when Virgin Money/Clydesdale will be added to the testing group and separate tests will be included of ring-fenced banks.

Challenger banks hit the news headlines in 2019 with Metro Bank and TSB Bank both suffering adverse publicity and falling customer numbers.

Looking forward, the potential for a no UK-EU trade deal being agreed and ratified and/or a global recession remain the major risks facing banks and building societies in 2020/21 and a cautious approach to bank deposits remains advisable.

**Interest rate forecast:** The Authority's treasury management advisor Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to remain at 0.75% for the foreseeable future but there remain substantial risks to this forecast, dependant on Brexit/trade deal outcomes as well as the evolution of the global economy.

Arlingclose also expects gilt yields to remain at low levels for the foreseeable future and judges the risks to be weighted to the downside.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at Appendix D.

For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new treasury management investments will be made at an average rate of 0.56%, and that new long-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 4.0%.

### 5.1.3 Local Context

The Authority's current level of external financing and investments is set out at Appendix B.

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR, together with Usable Reserves, are the core drivers of the Authority's Treasury Management activities.

The Authority is able to borrow funds in excess of the current level of its CFR up to the projected level in 2022/23. The Authority is likely to only borrow in advance of need if it felt the benefits of borrowing at interest rates now compared to where they are expected to be in the future, outweighs the current cost and risks associated with investing the proceeds until the borrowing was actually required.

The forecasted movement in the CFR in coming years is one of the Prudential Indicators (PIs). The estimates, based on the current Revenue Budget and Capital Programmes, are:

**Table 1: Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)**

	<b>31/03/19 Actual £m</b>	<b>31/03/20 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31/03/21 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31/03/22 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31/03/23 Estimate £m</b>
Capital Financing Requirement	445.020	469.165	496.636	534.086	556.617
Less: Other long term liabilities (e.g. PFI)	-53.864	-51.545	-50.337	-51.186	-48.300
<b>Borrowing CFR</b>	<b>391.156</b>	<b>417.620</b>	<b>446.263</b>	<b>482.900</b>	<b>508.317</b>
Less: External Borrowing	-266.924	-298.888	-328.486	-365.913	-392.120
<b>Internal Borrowing</b>	<b>124.232</b>	<b>118.732</b>	<b>117.777</b>	<b>116.987</b>	<b>116.197</b>

The table above shows an increasing Capital Financing Requirement and will require the Council to undertake additional longer term borrowing as well as converting from temporary borrowing we currently hold to fix borrowing at the most appropriate time for the Council dependent on market conditions.

The row relating to external borrowing includes debt associated with funding the Council's Housing Investment Programme through NuPlace, the Telford Growth Fund/PIP investments, solar farm and other commercial investments. The anticipated income from these projects is projected to generate a surplus after funding the debt and operational costs which will be used to support front line services. The outstanding debt relating to the Housing Investment Programme could be repaid by the eventual sale, in many years time, of some or all of the properties held by the Council's wholly owned company.

CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to fully comply with this recommendation during 2020/21.

#### **5.1.4 Borrowing Strategy**

The Authority currently holds £262.9m of loans, a reduction of £12.7m on the previous year. The balance sheet forecast shows that the Authority expects borrowing to increase by year end and continue to increase over the next few years. The Authority may however borrow to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing.

**Objectives:** The Authority's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to

renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

**Strategy:** Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.

By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. Whilst such a strategy is most likely to be beneficial over the next 1 – 2 years as official interest rates remain low, it is unlikely to be sustainable in the medium-term. The benefits of internal borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2020/21 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

The Authority has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but the government increased PWLB rates by 1% in October 2019 making it now clearly a more expensive option than previous although may still represent good value compared to alternative options. The Authority will consider alternative options for borrowing any long-term loans, such as banks, pension funds and local authorities, and the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code.

Alternatively, the Authority may arrange forward starting loans during 2020/21, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

In addition, the Authority may borrow further short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

**Sources of Borrowing:** The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and any successor body
- any institution approved for investments (see below)
- any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds
- capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues
- Registered Housing providers
- Capital market bond investors

**Other sources of debt finance:** In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leasing
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

**Municipal Bonds Agency:** UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It plans to issue bonds on the capital markets and lend the proceeds to local authorities. This will be a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to meet its obligations for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to full Council.

**LOBOs:** The Authority holds £25.0m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. £20m of these LOBOs have remaining options prior to the end of the financial year, and although the Authority understands that lenders are unlikely to exercise their options in the current low interest rate environment, there remains an element of refinancing risk. Rates payable were competitive compared to PWLB rates at the time that the loans were taken out. The Authority will take the option to repay LOBO loans at no cost if it has the opportunity to do so. Total borrowing via LOBO loans will be limited to £25.0m.

**Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Authority exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below. Financial derivatives may be used to manage this interest rate risk.

**Debt rescheduling:** The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Authority may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk.

## 5.2 Investment Strategy

The Authority holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the current financial year, the Authority's investment balance has ranged between £10.1m and £35.45m and we expect to normally maintain an investment balance of between £10 million and £20 million in the forthcoming year – unless the MIFID requirement is relaxed in which case the amount of investment held may reduce.

**Objectives:** The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest

rate of return, or yield. The Authority’s objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested.

**Negative Interest Rates:** If the UK enters into a recession in 2020/21, there is a small chance that the Bank of England could set its Bank Rate at or below zero, which is likely to feed through to negative interest rates on all low risk, short-term investment options. This situation already exists in many other European countries. In this event, the Council would seek, to the extent possible, to minimise and keep the impact of negative rates close to zero within the framework of the Council’s creditworthiness policy.

**Strategy:** All of the Authority’s surplus cash remains invested in short-term unsecured bank deposits and money market funds. This diversification will represent a continuation of the strategy adopted in 2019/20.

**Business models:** Under the new IFRS 9 standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Authority’s “business model” for managing them. The Authority aims to achieve value from its internally managed treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.

**Approved counterparties:** The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 3 below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

#### Approved Investment Counterparties

Credit Rating	Banks Unsecured	Banks Secured	Government	Corporates	Registered Providers
UK Govt	n/a	n/a	£ Unlimited 50 years	n/a	n/a
AAA	£15m 5 years	£15m 20 years	£15m 50 years	£7.5m 20 years	£15m 20 years
AA+	£15m 5 years	£15m 10 years	£15m 25 years	£7.5 m 10 years	£15m 10 years
AA	£15m 4 years	£15m 5 years	£15m 15 years	£7.5m 5 years	£15m 10 years
AA-	£15m 3 years	£15m 4 years	£15m 10 years	£7.5m 4 years	£15m 10 years
A+	£15m 2 years	£15m 3 years	£15m 5 years	£7.5m 3 years	£15m 5 years
A	£15m 13 months	£15m 2 years	£15m 5 years	£7.5m 2 years	£15m 5 years
A-	£15m 6 months	£15m 13 months	£15m 5 years	£7.5m 13 months	£15m 5 years
None	£0m	n/a	£4m	£1,000	£0m

<b>Credit Rating</b>	<b>Banks Unsecured</b>	<b>Banks Secured</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Corporates</b>	<b>Registered Providers</b>
	6 months		25 years	5 years	5 years
Pooled funds and real estate investment trusts		£10m per fund			

There is no intention to restrict investments to bank deposits, and investments may be made with any public or private sector organisations that meet the above credit rating criteria. The table reflects a lower likelihood that the UK and other governments will support failing banks as the bail-in provisions in the Banking Reform Act 2016 and the EU Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive are implemented.

**Credit rating:** Investment limits are set by reference to the lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's or Standard & Poor's. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

**Banks unsecured:** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

**Banks secured:** Covered bonds, reverse repurchase agreements and other collateralised arrangements with banks and building societies. These investments are secured on the bank's assets, which limits the potential losses in the unlikely event of insolvency, and means that they are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used to determine cash and time limits. The combined secured and unsecured investments in any one bank will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

**Government:** Loans, bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is an insignificant risk of insolvency, although they are not without risk. Investments with the UK Central Government may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

**Corporates:** Loans, bonds and commercial paper issued by companies other than banks and registered providers. These investments are not subject to bail-in, but are exposed to the risk of the company going insolvent. Loans to unrated companies will only be made either following an external credit assessment as part of a diversified pool in order to spread the risk widely.

**Registered providers:** Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by or secured on the assets of registered providers of social housing, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Homes & Communities Agency

and as providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

**Pooled funds:** Shares in diversified investment vehicles consisting of the any of the above investment types, plus equity shares and property. These funds have the advantage of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a fee. Short-term Money Market Funds that offer same-day liquidity and very low or no volatility will be used as an alternative to instant access bank accounts, while pooled funds whose value changes with market prices and/or have a notice period will be used for longer investment periods.

Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Authority to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

**Real estate investment funds:** Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties. Investments in REIT shares cannot be withdrawn but can be sold on the stock market to another investor.

**Risk assessment and credit ratings:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "rating watch negative" or "credit watch negative") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn [on the next working day] will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

**Other information on the security of investments:** The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support, reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if officers working on

treasury management issues have substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2011, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority's cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government via the Debt Management Office or invested in government treasury bills for example, or with other local authorities. This will cause a reduction in the level of investment income earned, but will protect the principal sum invested.

**Investment Limits:** The Authority has revenue reserves, which could be used to cover investment losses which were £92.3 million on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 although not all of these are available. In order that no more than 50% of reserves (as recommended by the code) will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £15 million, which is clearly well within the limit. A group of banks under the same ownership or a group of funds under the same management will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits will also be placed on investments in brokers' nominee accounts (e.g. King & Shaxson), foreign countries and industry sectors. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

**Approved Instruments:** The Authority may lend or invest money using any of the following instruments:

- interest-bearing bank accounts
- fixed term deposits and loans
- callable deposits and loans where the borrower may repay before maturity, but subject to a maximum of £5 million in total
- certificates of deposit
- bonds, notes, bills, commercial paper and other marketable instruments, and shares in money market funds and other pooled funds,

Investments may be made at either a fixed rate of interest, or at a variable rate linked to a market interest rate, such as LIBOR, subject to the limits on interest rate exposures below.

**Liquidity management:** The Authority uses cash flow forecasting to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis, with receipts under-estimated and payments over-estimated to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium term financial plan and cash flow forecast.



### **5.3 Ethical Investments**

The Council will not knowingly directly invest in organisations whose activities include practices which directly pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the mission and values of the Council. At the same time the Council will take full responsibility for proper management of risk and safeguarding its investments by ensuring that they are diversified and made with organisations suitably credit assessed.

The Council's lending activity will be subject to (in order of rank)

- the assessment of meeting the minimum lending criteria as specified in the current Treasury Management Strategy and the minimum credit ratings as outlined in the Strategy.
- meeting the Security, Liquidity & Yield (SLY) criteria as set out in the current Treasury Management Strategy, and
- investments are not contrary to the values outlined in the Ethical Investment Framework (Appendix G)

### **5.4 The use of Financial Instruments for the Management of Risk**

Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

The Authority will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

In line with CIPFA Code, the Authority will seek external advice and will consider that the advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.

### **5.5 Financial Implications**

The budget for investment income in 2020/21 is £0.12m, based on an average investment portfolio of £21.3m at an interest rate of 0.56%. The budget for debt interest paid in 2020/21 is £9.9m million, based on an average debt portfolio of

£316.6m at an average interest rate of 3.14%. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, or actual interest rates, differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

## **5.6 Balanced Budget Requirement**

The Authority complies with the provisions of S32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget.

## **5.7 2020/21 MRP Statement**

The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 08 (SI 08/414) place a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision has been issued by the Secretary of State and local authorities are required to “have regard” to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The four MRP options available are:

Option 1: Regulatory Method

Option 2: CFR Method

Option 3: Asset Life Method

Option 4: Depreciation Method

NB This does not preclude other prudent methods.

MRP in 2020/21: Options 1 and 2 may be used only for supported expenditure. Methods of making prudent provision for self-financed expenditure include Options 3 and 4 (which may also be used for supported expenditure if the Council chooses).

The MRP Statement will be submitted to Council before the start of the 2020/21 financial year. If it is ever proposed to vary the terms of the original MRP Statement during the year, a revised statement should be put to Council at that time.

The Council will calculate MRP by the following methods –

Historic MRP (re pre 2007/08 borrowing). This will be calculated by dividing the balance at 31/3/07 (calculated in accordance with regulations) by 50 for an annual charge that charges over a finite period rather than a 4% reducing balance. Broadly in line with option 3.

MRP in respect of prudential borrowing, government supported allocations since 2007/08 and PFI will be charged over the life of the asset on an annuity basis (option 3 in the regulations).

MRP for borrowing in respect of NuPlace is set at £0 due the expectation that the value will appreciate over time and that the houses could all eventually be sold in which case the Council would apply the capital receipts arising to reduce the Capital Financing Requirement until the original principal borrowed had been fully repaid.

Along the same lines as NuPlace, MRP for borrowing in respect of Investment Properties will be calculated as 20% of the value of the annuity MRP to reflect that although there will normally be capital appreciation, a downturn in the economy could result in reductions in value of commercial/industrial investment properties.

Also MRP in respect of leases brought on Balance Sheet under the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) based Accounting Code of Practice will match the annual principal repayment for the associated deferred liability which is broadly in line with the life of the asset.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2020/21 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2021/22.

## **5.8 Monitoring and Reporting on the Treasury Outturn and Prudential Indicators**

The Director: Finance & Human Resources will report to the Audit Committee on treasury management activity / performance and Performance Indicators as follows -

- Half yearly against the strategy approved for the year. The authority will produce an outturn report on its treasury activity no later than 31<sup>st</sup> July after the financial year end and an update report alongside the Treasury Strategy in the last quarter of the financial year, and
- Audit Committee will be responsible of the scrutiny of treasury management activity and practices rather than the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee.

## **6. OTHER ITEMS**

### **6.1 Training**

CIPFA's Code of Practice requires the responsible officer to ensure that all members tasked with treasury management responsibilities, including scrutiny of the treasury management function, receive appropriate training relevant to their needs and understand fully their roles and responsibilities.

Reviewing and addressing training needs: The authority regularly reviews the training needs of its staff involved with treasury management and ensures that staff are appropriately trained.

### **6.2 Investment Consultants / Treasury Advisors**

The Council uses Arlingclose as its external treasury management advisers.

The Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times.

Reviewing and addressing training needs: The authority regularly reviews the training needs of its staff involved with treasury management and ensures that staff are appropriately trained.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities  
Temporary Borrowing Records  
PWLB records

Investment records  
Draft Treasury Strategy provided by Arlingclose  
Local Government Act 2003  
CLG Guidance on Local Authority Investments  
Audit Commission – Risk and Return

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## **TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council adopts the key recommendations of CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the Code), as described in Section 5 of the Code.
- 1.2 Accordingly, the Council will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management:-
  - A treasury management policy statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities
  - Suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.
- 1.3 The Council will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities including, as a minimum, an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in its TMPs.
- 1.4 The Council delegates responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to Audit Committee and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to Director: Finance & Human Resources, who will act in accordance with the organisation's policy statement and TMPs and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.
- 1.5 The Council nominates Audit Committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.

### **2. POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

- 2.1 The Council defines its treasury management activities as:

“The management of the Council's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

This Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

This Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.”

- 2.2 The Council's borrowing will be affordable, sustainable and prudent and consideration will be given to the management of interest rate risk and refinancing risk. The source from which the borrowing is taken and the type of borrowing should allow the Council transparency and control over its debt. The Council will look to minimise borrowing through the use of maturing investments to fund capital expenditure rather than reinvestment.
- 2.3 The Council's primary objective in relation to investments remains the security of capital. The liquidity or accessibility of the Authority's investments followed by the yield earned on investments remain important but are secondary considerations. Generally as investments mature they will not be reinvested but be used to minimise borrowing.

## EXISTING PORTFOLIO PROJECTED FORWARD

	Current Portfolio £m	%	31/03/20 Estimate £m	31/03/21 Estimate £m	31/03/22 Estimate £m	31/03/23 Estimate £m	31/03/24 Estimate £m
<b>External Borrowing:</b>							
Fixed Rate – PWLB	177.9	56.6	174.8	194.7	232.1	258.3	282.8
Fixed Rate – LOBO	25.0	8.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Fixed Rate – Market	15.0	4.8	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
Variable Rate – PWLB	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Variable Rate – Market	45.0	14.3	85.2	95	95	95	95
<b>Total External Borrowing</b>	<b>262.9</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>300.0</b>	<b>329.7</b>	<b>367.1</b>	<b>393.3</b>	<b>417.8</b>
<b>IFRS Long Term Liabilities:</b>							
PFI	51.5	16.4	51.5	50.3	51.2	48.3	45.1
Finance Leases	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Gross External Debt</b>	<b>314.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>351.5</b>	<b>380.0</b>	<b>418.3</b>	<b>441.6</b>	<b>462.9</b>
<b>Investments:</b>							
Managed in-house	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Short-term monies (Deposits / monies on call / MMFs)	23.1	100.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Long-term investments (maturities over 12 months)	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>
<b>(Net Borrowing Position) / Net Investment Position</b>	<b>-291.3</b>		<b>-331.5</b>	<b>-360.0</b>	<b>-398.3</b>	<b>-421.6</b>	<b>-442.9</b>

## Prudential Indicators 2019/20 to 2023/24

### 1 Background:

There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing their Prudential Indicators.

### 2. Gross debt and the Capital Financing Requirement:

This is a key indicator of prudence. In order to ensure that over the medium term debt will only be for a capital purpose, the local authority should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional increases to the capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years.

The Director: Finance & Human Resources reports that the authority had no difficulty meeting this requirement in 2018/19, nor are there any difficulties envisaged for the current or future years. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans and the proposals in the approved budget.

### 3. Estimates of Capital Expenditure:

- 3.1 This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, to consider the impact on Council Tax.

	19/20 Approved £m	19/20 Revised £m	20/21 Estimate £m	21/22 Estimate £m	22/23 Estimate £m	23/24 Estimate £m
<b>Total</b>	<b>77.458</b>	<b>53.165</b>	<b>83.854</b>	<b>40.096</b>	<b>32.807</b>	<b>24.500</b>

- 3.2 Capital expenditure will be financed or funded as follows:

	19/20 Approved £m	19/20 Revised £m	20/21 Estimate £m	21/22 Estimate £m	22/23 Estimate £m	23/24 Estimate £m
Capital receipts	6.490	3.342	12.492	1.980	6.550	0.000
Government Grants	26.879	17.295	28.801	0.000	0.000	0.000
Revenue / External contributions	9.698	5.144	12.963	0.689	0.050	0.000
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>43.067</b>	<b>25.781</b>	<b>54.256</b>	<b>2.669</b>	<b>6.600</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Prudential Borrowing	34.391	27.384	29.598	37.427	26.207	24.500



	19/20 Approved £m	19/20 Revised £m	20/21 Estimate £m	21/22 Estimate £m	22/23 Estimate £m	23/24 Estimate £m
<b>Total Funding</b>	34.391	27.384	29.598	37.427	26.207	24.500
<b>Total Financing and Funding</b>	<b>77.458</b>	<b>53.165</b>	<b>83.854</b>	<b>40.096</b>	<b>32.807</b>	<b>24.500</b>

#### 4. Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream:

4.1 This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs. The definition of financing costs is set out in the Prudential Code.

4.2 The ratio is based on costs net of investment income.

	19/20 Approved %	19/20 Revised %	20/21 Estimate %	21/22 Estimate %	22/23 Estimate %	23/24 Estimate %
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.89</b>	<b>5.69</b>	<b>7.44</b>	<b>8.38</b>	<b>9.25</b>	<b>9.29</b>

#### 5. Capital Financing Requirement:

5.1 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. The calculation of the CFR is taken from the amounts held in the Balance Sheet relating to capital expenditure and its financing.

	19/20 Approved £m	19/20 Revised £m	20/21 Estimate £m	21/22 Estimate £m	22/23 Estimate £m	23/24 Estimate £m
<b>Total CFR</b>	<b>482.033</b>	<b>469.215</b>	<b>496.686</b>	<b>534.136</b>	<b>556.667</b>	<b>577.514</b>

#### 6. Actual External Debt:

6.1 This indicator is obtained directly from the Council's balance sheet. It is the closing balance for actual gross borrowing plus other long-term liabilities. This Indicator is measured in a manner consistent for comparison with the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit.

<b>Actual External Debt as at 31/03/19</b>	<b>£m</b>
Borrowing	266.924
Other Long-term Liabilities	53.864
<b>Total</b>	<b>320.788</b>

## 7. Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt:

- 7.1 The Council has an integrated treasury management strategy and manages its treasury position in accordance with its approved strategy and practice. Overall borrowing will therefore arise as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Council and not just those arising from capital spending reflected in the CFR.
- 7.2 The **Authorised Limit** sets the maximum level of external borrowing on a gross basis (i.e. not net of investments) for the Council. It is measured on a daily basis against all external borrowing items on the Balance Sheet (i.e. long and short term borrowing, overdrawn bank balances and long term liabilities). This Prudential Indicator separately identifies borrowing from other long term liabilities such as finance leases. It is consistent with the Council's existing commitments, its proposals for capital expenditure and financing and its approved treasury management policy statement and practices.
- 7.3 The Authorised Limit has been set on the estimate of the most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for unusual cash movements.
- 7.4 The Authorised Limit is the statutory limit determined under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (referred to in the legislation as the Affordable Limit).

	<b>19/20 Approved £m</b>	<b>19/20 Revised £m</b>	<b>20/21 Estimate £m</b>	<b>21/22 Estimate £m</b>	<b>22/23 Estimate £m</b>	<b>23/24 Estimate £m</b>
Borrowing	440	440	450	450	480	500
Other Long term Liabilities	63	64	64	64	64	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>554</b>

- 7.5 The Operational Boundary links directly to the Council's estimates of the CFR and estimates of other cashflow requirements. This indicator is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit reflecting the most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario but without the additional headroom included within the Authorised Limit.
- 7.6 The Director: Finance & Human Resources has delegated authority, within the total limit for any individual year, to effect movement between the separately agreed limits for borrowing and other long-term liabilities. Decisions will be based on the outcome of financial option appraisals and best value considerations. Any movement between these separate limits will be reported to the next meeting of the Audit Committee.

	<b>19/20 Approved £m</b>	<b>19/20 Revised £m</b>	<b>20/21 Estimate £m</b>	<b>21/22 Estimate £m</b>	<b>22/23 Estimate £m</b>	<b>23/24 Estimate £m</b>
Borrowing	420	420	430	430	460	480
Other Long- term Liabilities	59	60	60	60	60	50

<b>Total</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>530</b>
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## 8. Gross Debt and the Capital Finance Requirement

8.1 The purpose of this treasury indicator is to highlight a situation where the Council is planning to borrow in advance of need. If these figures exceed CFR (which they don't) they would indicate we are borrowing in advance of need.

<b>Gross and Net Debt</b>	<b>19/20 Estimated £m</b>	<b>20/21 Authorised £m</b>	<b>21/22 Authorised £m</b>	<b>22/23 Authorised £m</b>	<b>23/24 Authorised £m</b>
Outstanding Borrowing (at nominal value)	298.938	328.536	365.963	392.170	416.670
Other Long-term Liabilities (at nominal value)	51.545	50.337	51.186	48.300	45.128
<b>Gross Debt</b>	<b>350.483</b>	<b>378.873</b>	<b>417.149</b>	<b>440.470</b>	<b>461.798</b>

## 9. Upper Limits for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure and Variable Interest Rate Exposure:

9.1 These indicators allow the Council to manage the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. This Council calculates these limits on net principal outstanding sums, (i.e. fixed rate debt net of fixed rate investments / total debt net of total investments)

9.2 The upper limit for variable rate exposure has been set to ensure that the Council is not exposed to interest rate rises which could adversely impact on the revenue budget. The limit allows for the use of variable rate debt to offset exposure to changes in short-term rates on investments.

	<b>Existing level (or Benchmark level) at 31/03/19 %</b>	<b>19/20 Approved %</b>	<b>19/20 Revised %</b>	<b>20/21 Estimate %</b>	<b>21/22 Estimate %</b>	<b>22/23 Estimate %</b>	<b>23/24 Estimate %</b>
<b>Upper Limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Upper Limit for Variable Interest Rate Exposure</b>	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
<b>Local Indicator – Upper limit for net variable rate exposure*.</b>	70	70	70	70	70	70	70

\*Net principal re gross variable rate borrowing and investments divided by gross borrowing plus investments

9.3 The limits above provide the necessary flexibility within which decisions will be made for drawing down new loans on a fixed or variable rate basis; the decisions will ultimately be determined by expectations of anticipated interest rate movements as set out in the Council's treasury management strategy.

## 10. Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate borrowing:

10.1 This indicator highlights the existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates and is designed to protect against excessive exposures to interest rate changes in any one period, in particular in the course of the next ten years.

10.2 It is calculated as the amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate maturing in each period as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate. The maturity of borrowing is determined by reference to the earliest date on which the lender can require payment.

<b>Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing</b>	<b>Existing level 31.12.19 %</b>	<b>Lower Limit for 20/21 %</b>	<b>Upper Limit for 20/21 %</b>
under 12 months	17	0	70
12 months and within 24 months	5	0	30
24 months and within 5 years	8	0	50
5 years and within 10 years	12	0	75
10 years and within 20 years	14	0	75
20 years and within 30 years	1	0	75
30 years and within 40 years	11	0	100
40 years and within 50 years	19	0	100
50 years and above	13	0	100

## 11. Credit Risk:

11.1 The Council considers security, liquidity and yield, in that order, when making investment decisions.

11.2 Credit ratings remain an important element of assessing credit risk, but they are not a sole feature in the Council's assessment of counterparty credit risk.

11.3 The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted credit score of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments would be assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	<b>Target</b>
Portfolio average credit score	6 or lower, which is equivalent to a credit rating of 'A' or higher

11.4 The only indicators with prescriptive values remain to be credit ratings. Other indicators of creditworthiness are considered in relative rather than absolute terms.

**12. Upper Limit for total principal sums invested over 1 year:**

12.1 The purpose of this limit is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of the sums invested.

	<b>19/20 Approved %</b>	<b>19/20 Revised %</b>	<b>20/21 Estimate %</b>	<b>21/22 Estimate %</b>	<b>22/23 Estimate %</b>	<b>23/24 Estimate %</b>
	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>

## Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast January 2020

### Underlying assumptions:

- The global economy has entered a period of weaker growth in response to political issues. The UK economy continues to experience slower growth due to both Brexit uncertainty and the downturn in global activity. In response, global and UK interest rate expectations are low.
- Some improvement in global economic data and a more positive outlook for US/China trade negotiations has prompted worst case economic scenarios to be paired back.
- The new Conservative UK government will progress with achieving Brexit on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. The more stable political environment will prompt a partial return in business and household confidence in the short term, but the subsequent limited Brexit transition period, which the government is seeking to enforce, will create additional economic uncertainty.
- UK growth stalled in Q4. Inflation is running below target at 1.5%. The inflationary consequence of the relatively tight labour market have yet to manifest, while the slower global growth should reduce the prospect of externally driven pressure, although escalating geopolitical turmoil could continue to push up oil prices..
- The first few months of 2020 will indicate whether the economy benefits from restored confidence. The government will undertake substantial fiscal easing in 2020/21, which should help support growth in the event of a downturn in private sector activity.
- The weak outlook for the UK economy and current low inflation have placed pressure on the MPC to loosen monetary policy. Two MPC members voted for an immediate cut in the last two MPC meetings of 2019. The evolution of the economic data and political moves over the next few months will inform policy, but upside risks to Bank Rate are very limited.
- Central bank actions and escalating geopolitical risks will produce volatility in financial markets, including bond markets.

### Forecast:

- We have maintained our Bank Rate forecast at 0.75% for the foreseeable future. Substantial risks to this forecast remain, arising primarily from the government's policy around Brexit and the transitional period.
- Arlingclose judges that the risks are weighted to the downside.

- Gilt yields remain low due to the soft UK and global economic outlooks. US monetary policy and the UK government spending will be key influences alongside UK monetary policy.
- We expect gilt yields to remain at relatively low levels for the foreseeable future and judge the risks to be broadly balanced.

	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23
<b>Official Bank Rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Arlingclose Central Case	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Downside risk	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
<b>3-month money market rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
Arlingclose Central Case	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Downside risk	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
<b>1yr money market rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.10	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
Arlingclose Central Case	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85
Downside risk	0.30	0.50	0.55	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
<b>5yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.45	0.45	0.45
Arlingclose Central Case	0.50	0.50	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.70	0.75	0.75	0.75
Downside risk	0.35	0.50	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.70	0.75	0.75	0.75
<b>10yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.45
Arlingclose Central Case	0.75	0.80	0.80	0.85	0.85	0.90	0.90	0.95	0.95	1.00	1.05	1.10	1.10
Downside risk	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
<b>20yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.45
Arlingclose Central Case	1.20	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.40	1.40	1.40
Downside risk	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.50	0.50
<b>50yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.45
Arlingclose Central Case	1.20	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.40	1.40	1.40
Downside risk	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.50	0.50

PWLB Certainty Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 1.80%

PWLB Local Infrastructure Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.60%

**Recommended Sovereign and Counterparty List (Section 8)**

- **Group Limits** - For institutions within a banking group, the authority executes a limit at the highest of any of the single banks within that group.
- **Sovereign Limit** – The Council will only invest a maximum of £15m of the portfolio with non UK sovereigns.

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Country/ Domicile</b>	<b>Counterparty</b>	<b>Maximum Counterparty Limit %/£m</b>	<b>Maximum Group Limit (if applicable ) %/£m</b>	<b>Council Holding At 31/12/19 £m</b>
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Santander UK Plc (Banco Santander Group)	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Bank of Scotland (Lloyds Banking Group)	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Lloyds (Lloyds Banking Group)	15	15	5.7
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Barclays Bank Plc	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	HSBC Bank Plc	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Nationwide Building Society	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	NatWest (RBS Group)	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS Group)	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Standard Chartered Bank	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Close Brothers Limited	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Goldman Sachs International Bank	15	15	0



<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Country/ Domicile</b>	<b>Counterparty</b>	<b>Maximum Counterparty Limit %/£m</b>	<b>Maximum Group Limit (if applicable ) %/£m</b>	<b>Council Holding At 31/12/19 £m</b>
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	UK	Leeds Building Society	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Australia	Australia and NZ Banking Group	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Australia	Commonwealth Bank of Australia	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Australia	National Australia Bank Ltd (National Australia Bank Group)	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Australia	Westpac Banking Corp	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Canada	Bank of Montreal	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Canada	Bank of Nova Scotia	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Canada	Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Canada	Royal Bank of Canada	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Canada	Toronto-Dominion Bank	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Finland	Nordea Bank Finland	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Finland	Pohjola Bank	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Germany	Deutsche Bank AG	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Germany	Landesbank Hessen – Thuringen (Helaba)	15	15	0

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Country/ Domicile</b>	<b>Counterparty</b>	<b>Maximum Counterparty Limit %/£m</b>	<b>Maximum Group Limit (if applicable ) %/£m</b>	<b>Council Holding At 31/12/19 £m</b>
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Netherlands	ING Bank NV	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Netherlands	Rabobank	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Netherlands	Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Singapore	DBS Bank Ltd	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Singapore	Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC)	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Singapore	United Overseas bank (UOB)	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Sweden	Svenska Handelsbanken	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	Switzerland	Credit Suisse	15	15	0
Term Deposits / CDs / Call Accounts	US	JP Morgan Chase Bank	15	15	0

*\*\*Please note this list could change if, for example, a counterparty/country is upgraded, and meets our other creditworthiness tools. Alternatively, if a counterparty is downgraded, this list may be shortened. The counterparty list was correct as at 31 December 2019*

## Summary of Treasury Investments

Total risk per counterparty as at 31 December 2019

	<b>Credit Rating</b>	<b>Total £000</b>
<u>Fixed Deposits</u>		
Lloyds	UK A+	6,139
Svenska Handelsbanken	UK AA	6,000
Debt Management Office	UK Government	6,002
Money Market Funds	AAAm	4,980
<b>Total cash deposits</b>		<b><u>23,121</u></b>

### Sovereign Analysis:

Lloyds Bank	100% UK
Svenska Handelsbanken	100% UK
DMO	100% UK
MMFs	7% UK / 93% NON-UK

## **Ethical Investment Framework – Telford and Wrekin Council**

At the current time the Council's treasury activity consists principally of making short-dated loans to the UK Government (through the Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility) and to banks and building societies which adheres to the S-L-Y principles of (Security, Liquidity and Yield, in that order).

The preservation of capital is the Council's principal and overriding priority. The banks and building societies on the Council's lending list are selected only if the institutions and the sovereign meet a minimum credit criteria. In accordance with its social and corporate governance responsibilities, the Council seeks to support institutions which additionally have an ethical and responsible approach to environmental and social issues including employment and global trade. These "ethical" criteria and their basis are described below.

### **1. Environmental and Social Standards**

#### **Equator Principles**

The Equator Principles (EPs) are a voluntary set of guidelines based on the environmental and social standards practiced by the International Finance Committee when evaluating financing projects. Financial institutions that adopt the Principles agree to use a screening process aiming to ensure that environmental and social assessments help inform decisions to finance development projects. This allows signatories to engage proactively with their stakeholders on environmental and social policy issues.

The EPs are a screening framework for determining, assessing and managing environmental and social risk in project finance transactions for major infrastructure and industrial projects. The EPs are adopted voluntarily by financial institutions and are applied where total project capital costs exceed US\$10 million. The EPs are primarily intended to provide a minimum standard for due diligence to support responsible risk decision-making. They are based on the International Finance Corporation's performance standards on social and environmental sustainability and on the World Bank Group Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines.

Financial institutions which are signatories to the EPs commit to not providing loans to projects where the borrower will not or is unable to comply with their respective social and environmental policies and procedures that implement the EPs.

The following banks relating to institutions on the Council's lending list have adopted the Equator Principles:

- Barclays plc (parent of Barclays Bank)
- HSBC Holding plc (parent of HSBC plc)
- Lloyds Banking Group (parent of Bank of Scotland plc and Lloyds Bank plc)
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Standard Chartered plc
- Banco Santander (parent of Santander UK plc).
- Svenska Handelsbanken AB (parent of Handelsbanken UK)

<http://www.equator-principles.com/index.php/members-reporting>

## 2. Human Rights, Labour and Environment

The **UN Global Compact** is a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

Corporations which sign up to the UN Global Compact are encouraged to themselves embrace and in turn, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values which are derived from:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- The United Nations Convention Against Corruption

### Human Rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

### Labour

- Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and
- Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

### Environment

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

### Anti-Corruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

The following banks relating to institutions on the Council's lending list are participants/stakeholders of the UN Global Compact:

- HSBC
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Standard Chartered
- Gruppo Santander (ultimate parent of Santander UK plc).
- Lloyds Banking Group
- Svenska Handelsbanken AB
- Nationwide Building Society
- The Royal Bank of Scotland Group

- Australia and New Zealand Banking Group
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- National Australia Bank
- Westpac Banking Corp.
- Nordea Bank AB
- Rabobank Group
- DBS Bank Ltd
- Credit Suisse

<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/ParticipantsAndStakeholders/index.html>

### **Limitations to ethical policies:**

It should be noted here that the individual institutions which have signed up to the Equator Principles and to the Global Compact screen borrowers before lending for infrastructure and industrial projects.

However, financial institutions also engage daily in money market and interbank lending transactions; the criteria for such lending is based primarily on credit risk assessment (i.e. the assessment of their lending being repaid in full and on time when it is due). Being a signatory to the EPs will not necessarily be a critical feature of such credit assessment and the Council is not in a position to monitor interbank lending. The same applies to an individual financial signing up to the UN Global Compact.

It should also be noted that becoming a signatory of voluntary guidelines (Equator Principle or Global Compact) does not guarantee that that institution's policies and practices are of a better standard than those institutions which are not signatories to the voluntary guidelines.

**Activist investment:** The Council does not invest directly in shares traded on the markets or in corporate bonds. Not only are such investments inherently higher risk investments, and requires a distinct and separate set of fund management expertise. Under current legislation (SI 2003 No 3146) the purchase of share capital or loan capital of a body corporate is a capital expenditure investment which, on sale or maturity, becomes a capital receipt and is unsuitable for the Council's treasury investments which are primarily the cash management of its operating surpluses and reserves. Corporate bond and equity investments would however be made by the Council's pension fund (run by Shropshire Council).

Other than through its pension fund (which is measured by Shropshire Council), the Council cannot seek to influence decision making at a company by voicing concerns, engaging in a dialogue with management, or lobbying other shareholders for support. Activist investors attempt to purchase sufficient shares or obtain seats on the board with the goal of effecting major change in the company to make the company more valuable financially or socially (for example to change management policies and adopt better governance; optimise shareholder value through acquisitions/divestitures, be more socially responsible etc).

## Credit Ratings – A Guide.

### *Long-term credit ratings and Sovereign Ratings*

Fitch Rating' long-term credit ratings are set up along a scale from 'AAA' to 'D', first introduced in 1924 and later adopted and licensed by Standard & Poors (S&P). Moody's also uses a similar scale, but names the categories differently. Like S&P, Fitch also uses intermediate modifiers for each category between AA and CCC (i.e., AA+, AA, AA-, A+, A, A-, BBB+, BBB, BBB- etc.).

#### Investment grade

- **AAA** : the best quality, reliable and stable
- **AA** : good quality, a bit higher risk than AAA
- **A** : economic situation can affect finance
- **BBB** : medium class counterparties, which are satisfactory at the moment

#### Non-investment grade

- **BB** : more prone to changes in the economy
- **B** : financial situation varies noticeably
- **CCC** : currently vulnerable and dependent on favourable economic conditions to meet its commitments
- **CC** : highly vulnerable, very speculative bonds
- **C** : highly vulnerable, perhaps in bankruptcy or in arrears but still continuing to pay out on obligations
- **D** : has defaulted on obligations and Fitch believes that it will generally default on most or all obligations
- **NR** : not publicly rated

### *Short-term credit ratings*

Fitch's short-term ratings indicate the potential level of default within a 12-month period.

- **F1+** : best quality grade, indicating exceptionally strong capacity of obligor to meet its financial commitment
- **F1** : best quality grade, indicating strong capacity of obligor to meet its financial commitment
- **F2** : good quality grade with satisfactory capacity of obligor to meet its financial commitment
- **F3** : fair quality grade with adequate capacity of obligor to meet its financial commitment but near term adverse conditions could impact the obligor's commitments
- **B** : of speculative nature and obligor has minimal capacity to meet its commitment and vulnerability to short term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions
- **C** : possibility of default is high and the financial commitment of the obligor are dependent upon sustained, favourable business and economic conditions
- **D** : the obligor is in default as it has failed on its financial commitments.

## **Support Ratings (1 – 5)**

### **The Purpose and Function of Support Ratings**

Support Ratings are Fitch Ratings' assessment of a potential supporter's propensity to support a bank and of its ability to support it. Its propensity to support is a judgment made by Fitch Ratings. Its ability to support is set by the potential supporter's own Issuer Default Ratings, both in foreign currency and, where appropriate, in local currency. Support Ratings do not assess the intrinsic credit quality of a bank. Rather they communicate the agency's judgment on whether the bank would receive support should this become necessary. These ratings are exclusively the expression of Fitch Ratings' opinion even though the principles underlying them may have been discussed with the relevant supervisory authorities and/or owners.

### **Timeliness and Effectiveness Requirements**

Fitch Ratings' Support Rating definitions are predicated on the assumption that any necessary "support" is provided on a timely basis. The definitions are also predicated on the assumption that any necessary support will be sufficiently sustained so that the bank being supported is able to continue meeting its financial commitments until the crisis is over.

### **Obligations and Financial Instruments Covered**

In terms of these definitions, unless otherwise specified, "support" is deemed to be in terms of foreign currency. It is assumed that typically the following obligations will be supported: senior debt (secured and unsecured), including insured and uninsured deposits (retail, wholesale and interbank); obligations arising from derivatives transactions and from legally enforceable guarantees and indemnities, letters of credit, and acceptances; trade receivables and obligations arising from court judgments.

Likewise, the agency does not assume that the following capital instruments will be supported when sovereign support is involved: preference/preferred shares or stock; hybrid capital (tier 1 and upper tier 2), including reserve capital instruments (RCIs) and variations upon RCIs; and common/ordinary equity capital. It is also assumed that there will be no support for any moral obligation on securitizations. The sovereign support status of subordinated debt is difficult to categorize in advance; it is assessed on a case by case basis, distinguishing among different jurisdictions.

### **Definitions:**

- 1:** A bank for which there is an extremely high probability of external support. The potential provider of support is very highly rated in its own right and has a very high propensity to support the bank in question. This probability of support indicates a minimum Long-Term Rating floor of 'A-'.
- 2:** A bank for which there is a high probability of external support. The potential provider of support is highly rated in its own right and has a high propensity to provide support to the bank in question. This probability of support indicates a minimum Long-Term Rating floor of 'BBB-'.
- 3:** A bank for which there is a moderate probability of support because of uncertainties about the ability or propensity of the potential provider of support to do so. This probability of support indicates a minimum Long-Term Rating floor of 'BB-'.



- 4:** A bank for which there is a limited probability of support because of significant uncertainties about the ability or propensity of any possible provider of support to do so. This probability of support indicates a minimum Long-Term Rating floor of 'B'.
- 5:** A bank for which external support, although possible, cannot be relied upon. This may be due to a lack of propensity to provide support or to very weak financial ability to do so. This probability of support indicates a Long-Term Rating floor no higher than 'B-' and in many cases no floor at all.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Affordable Borrowing Limit	The amount the authority would normally borrow at any point of time in the year. This boundary might be exceeded temporarily but only in exceptional circumstances. The limit is set by Full Council at the beginning of March and is a prudential indicator.
Annuity	A method of repaying a loan where the cash payment remains constant over the life of the loan, but the proportion in interest reduces and the proportion of principal repayment increases over time.
Authorised Borrowing Limit	The maximum amount the authority can borrow at any point of time in the year. This limit should never be exceeded. The limit is set by Full Council at the beginning of March and is a prudential indicator.
Bail-in	A method of rescuing a failing financial institution by cancelling some of its deposits and bonds. Investors may suffer a haircut but may be given shares in the bank as part compensation. See also bail-out
Bail-out	A method of rescuing a failing financial institution by the injection of public money. This protects investors at the expense of the taxpayer.
Call account	A deposit account that can be called back, normally on instant access.
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	This represents the underlying need for the authority to borrow and represents the assets of the authority less the long term capital liabilities.
Credit Default Swaps (CDS)	CDS are bought by investors to insure against defaults (i.e. the counterparty not being able to repay). The higher the cost/premium then the higher the risk – CDS therefore given a market view of the credit worthiness of an organisation.
Credit Ratings	Rating on the ability of an organisation to meet its obligations; ratings are assigned by independent, specialist companies, such as Fitch and Moody's using market intelligence they gather.
Credit Risk	The risk that the debtor will default on their obligations
Counterparty	The organisation that you are conducting your business with.
Debt Management Account Deposit Facility	Provided by the <a href="#">Debt Management Office</a> , users can place cash in secure fixed-term deposits. Deposits are guaranteed by the government and therefore have the equivalent of a sovereign triple-A credit rating.
Derivative Instruments	A security whose price is dependent upon or derived from one or more underlying assets. The derivative itself is merely a contract between two or more parties. Its value is determined by fluctuations in the

	underlying asset. The most common underlying assets include stocks, bonds, commodities, currencies, interest rates and market indexes. Most derivatives are characterized by high leverage. For example, a stock option is a derivative because it derives its value from the value of a stock. An interest rate swap is a derivative because it derives its value from one or more interest rate indices.
Discounts	These relate to Public Works Loans Board loans. If rates have increased since the borrowing was undertaken then part of the benefit that PWLB will achieve from being able to loan out at that higher rate are passed back to an authority if they repay the loan early.
Fund Managers	Independent investment managers who work to a specific mandate and invest funds on behalf of the Council
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards, the set of accounting rules in use by UK local authorities since 2010.
Inflation	The rise in prices of goods and services over a period of time.
Interest Rate Risk	The risk that the value of an investment will change due to changes to the interest rate.
Internal Borrowing	This is where the amount of an authority's borrowing is less than its CFR or underlying need to borrow and represents the use of internal balances rather than borrowing from the market.
LIBID	London inter-bank bid rate. Interest rate at which prime banks will <b>borrow</b> money in the London inter-bank market.
LIBOR	London inter-bank offer rate. Interest rate at which prime banks will <b>lend</b> money in the London inter-bank market. Fixed every day by the British Bankers Association to five decimal places.
Liquidity Risk	The risk of not being able to trade an investment quickly to release cash.
LOBO	Lender's Option Borrower's Option – a long term loan where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate on pre-determined dates. The borrower then has the option to either accept the new rate or repay the loan without penalty. LOBOs increase the borrower's interest rate risk and the loan should therefore attract a lower rate of interest initially.
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	This is the amount charged against the Income and Expenditure Account for the year in relation to the repayment of debt on borrowing in order to fund capital expenditure.

Money Market Fund (MMF)	Mutual funds that invest in short term debt instruments. They offer a higher level of security than banks and interest rates are generally higher.
Obligor	An <a href="#">individual</a> or <a href="#">company</a> that <a href="#">owes debt</a> to another individual or company (the <a href="#">creditor</a> ), as a <a href="#">result</a> of <a href="#">borrowing</a> or issuing <a href="#">bonds</a> .
Premia	This is the penalty applied to the early redemption of PWLB loans where rates have fallen since the loan was undertaken.
Prudential Code	A professional code of practice which provides regulatory framework to local authorities on capital expenditure, investments and borrowing activities.
Prudential Indicators	A set of indicators developed within the Prudential Code which define thresholds for investment and borrowing within a local authority.
PWLB	Public Works Loans Board – a Government agency providing long and short term loans to local authorities. Interest rates are generally lower than the private sector and slightly higher than the rates at which the Government themselves may borrow.
Quantitative Easing	This is where the government buy back their own gilt issuance to effectively pump money into the financial markets of the economy.
Re-scheduling	This relates to repaying existing borrowing early and replacing it with borrowing for a different period usually, but not necessarily, at lower rates
Return	The gain from holding an investment over a given period
Security	An investment instrument, other than an insurance policy or fixed annuity, issued by a corporation, government or other organisation which offers evidence of debt or equity.
Sovereign Exposure	Risk of exposure to one particular country.
Supranational Bonds	These are bonds (similar to gilts) issued by multi government development organisations and are supported by all of the governments who form part of the organisation. E.g. European Investment Bank and are usually very secure.
Treasury Management Code (TM Code)	CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes, to which local authorities are required by law to have regard.