

**Treasury Management Strategy 2020-2021****WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL****FINANCE & MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****29<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2020****TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT****2020/2021****I. Introduction**

Treasury Management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has substantial invested 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 Council's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Council 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 Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council'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 2020/21](#). [Link](#)

**2. 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 Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21.

UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) for November registered 1.5% year on year, unchanged from the previous month. Core inflation, which excludes the more volatile components, was also 1.5% in November. The most recent labour market data for the three months to October 2019 showed the unemployment rate remained at 3.8% while the employment rate was 76.2%, just above recent record-breaking highs. The headline 3-month average annual growth rate for pay was 3.2% in October as wages dipped steadily. In real terms, after adjusting for inflation, pay growth decreased to 3.5%.

GDP growth rose by 0.3% 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 1.0% from 1.2%. Services and construction added positively to growth, by 0.6% and 0.4% respectively, while production was flat and agriculture recorded a fall of 0.2%. 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 Bank of England maintained Bank Rate to 0.75% in November 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

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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.

Growth in Europe remains soft, driven by a weakening German economy which saw GDP fall -0.1% in Q2 and is expected to slip into a technical recession in Q3. Euro zone inflation was 0.8% year on year in September, well below the European Central Bank's target of 'below, but close to 2%' and leading to the central bank holding its main interest rate at 0% while cutting the deposit facility rate to -0.5%. In addition to maintaining interest rates at ultra-low levels, the ECB announced it would recommence its quantitative easing programme from November.

In the US, the Federal Reserve began easing monetary policy again in 2019 as a pre-emptive strike against slowing global and US economic growth on the back on of the ongoing trade war with China. At its last meeting the Fed cut rates to the range of 1.50-1.75% and financial markets expect further loosening of monetary policy in 2020. US GDP growth slowed to 1.9% annualised in Q3 from 2.0% in Q2.

**3. Credit Outlook**

Credit conditions for larger UK banks have remained relatively benign over the past year. The UK's departure from the European Union was delayed three times in 2019 and while there remains some concern over a global economic slowdown, this has yet to manifest in any credit issues for banks. Meanwhile, the post financial crisis banking reform is now largely complete, with the new ring-fenced banks embedded in the market.

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 of a hard Brexit 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.

**4. Interest Rate Forecast**

The Council's treasury management adviser Arlingclose is forecasting that Bank Rate will remain at 0.75% until the end of 2022. The risks to this forecast are deemed to be significantly weighted to the downside, particularly given the upcoming uncertainty on Brexit and the continuing global economic slowdown. 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 and its Bank Rate decision (7-2 vote to hold rates) that the MPC now believe this is less likely even in the event of a deal.

Gilt yields have risen but remain at low levels and only some very modest upward movement from current levels are expected based on Arlingclose's interest rate projections. The central case is for 10-year and 20-year gilt yields to rise to around 1.00% and 1.40% respectively over the time horizon, with broadly balanced risks to both the upside and downside. However, short-term volatility arising from both economic and political events over the period is a near certainty.

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

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**6. Balances**

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, the Council held £42.24 million of investments. This is set out in further detail at Appendix B. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

	<b>31.3.19 Actual £m</b>	<b>31.3.20 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31.3.21 Forecast £m</b>	<b>31.3.22 Forecast £m</b>	<b>31.3.23 Forecast £m</b>
External Borrowing	0	27.6	28.4	28.8	29.1
General Fund CFR	8.6	36.0	36.3	35.8	35.2
<b>Internal borrowing</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>6.1</b>
Less: Usable reserves	-32.6	-24.1	-19.7	-17.0	-16.4
Less: Working capital	-8.7	-9.2	-12.5	-13.7	-12.8
<b>Investments</b>	<b>-32.7</b>	<b>-24.9</b>	<b>-24.3</b>	<b>-23.6</b>	<b>-23.1</b>

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Council's current strategy is to maintain investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.

CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Council currently has no debt and expects to comply with this recommendation during 2020/21 and the subsequent years.

**7. Borrowing Strategy**

The Council currently does not hold any loans but does expect to need to borrow in 2020/21. The Council may however borrow to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing for 2020/21 of £41.3 million.

The treasury management function ensures that the Council's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet this service activity. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities.

The Council'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 Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

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Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Council'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.

The Council has currently no borrowing but if needed the preferred option was to borrow from the PWLB but the government increased PWLB rates by 1% in October 2019 making it now a relatively expensive option. The Council will now look to borrow any long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate 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 Council may arrange forward starting loans, 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.

**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 (except Gloucestershire County Council Pension Fund)
- capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues

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 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.

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**Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the limit on the net exposure to variable interest rates in the treasury management indicators below.

**8. Investment Strategy**

The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Council's investment balance has ranged between £29.928m and £50.498m. Levels are expected to drop in the forthcoming year as the Council will make a £4 million contribution to the Oxfordshire Local Government Pension Scheme using its earmarked revenue reserves. The capital expenditure programme is largely funded by borrowing and the Council expects to set a balanced budget with a small contribution to the General Fund.

**Objectives**

Both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance require the Council 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 Council'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 Council 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, security will be measured as receiving the contractually agreed amount at maturity, even though this may be less than the amount originally invested.

**Strategy**

Given the increasing risk and very low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Council will carry on to diversify into more secure and/or higher yielding asset classes during 2020/21, as it has done so for many years now. The majority of the Council's surplus cash is currently invested in short-term unsecured bank deposits, money market funds and pooled funds. This diversification will represent a continuation of the strategy adopted in 2015/16.

As part of this diversification, the Council will also assess which current investments include investments in fossil fuel industries. The Council has declared a Climate Change Emergency and would therefore prefer its treasury investments to be divested away from fossil fuel industries. Any re-investment will need to be carried out in a managed way to protect the security of the Council's investments, ensure that liquidity is maintained and that the investment yield is in line with current investments to protect the Council's revenue position. Any new investments will need to comply with this Treasury Management Strategy or the associated Capital and Investment Strategies.

**Approved counterparties:** The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 2 below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

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Table 2: Approved investment counterparties and limits

Credit rating	Banks unsecured	Banks secured	Government	Corporates	Registered Providers
UK Govt	n/a	n/a	£ Unlimited 50 years	n/a	n/a
AAA	£6m 5 years	£6m 20 years	£6m 50 years	£5m 20 years	£5m 20 years
AA+	£6m 5 years	£6m 10 years	£6m 25 years	£4m 10 years	£5m 10 years
AA	£6m 4 years	£6m 5 years	£5m 15 years	£4m 5 years	£5m 10 years
AA-	£6m 3 years	£6m 4 years	£5m 10 years	£3m 4 years	£5m 10 years
A+	£6m 2 years	£6m 3 years	£5m 5 years	£3m 3 years	£5m 5 years
A	£6m 13 months	£6m 2 years	£5m 5 years	£3m 2 years	£3m 5 years
A-	£6m 6 months	£6m 13 months	£5m 5 years	£2m 13 months	£3m 5 years
None	£5m 6 months	£5m 6 months	n/a	n/a	Through Due Diligence Checks
<b>Pooled funds</b>	£5m per fund manager				

**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.

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**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 generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero 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 and registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed. If the Registered Providers has no credit rating then due diligence checks through Arlingclose will be carried out beforehand. The Council has approval to lend up to £14.4 million to Cottsway Housing Association after due diligence was carried out by Arlingclose in 2019/20. This will run from 2019/20 to whenever the final drawdown is required.

**Pooled funds:** Shares or units 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 Council 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 Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

**Real estate investment trusts:** 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.

**Public Sector Social Impact Fund:** specialist Public Sector Investment Fund, domiciled in the UK, investing in a diversified range of UK secured assets with positive social impact, generating competitive market returns. By pooling together the resources and knowledge of like-minded Public Sector groups, Local Authorities cash flows are improved, investments in projects with long-lasting social impact are created and benefitting the lives of local constituents.

Investments must be backed by real assets in mature businesses that consistently deliver real yields.

Examples include:

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Automotive – electric car charging points

Education – special needs schools

Energy – solar/wind

Environmental – forestry

Finance – local lending vehicles

Industrial – energy savings and efficiency equipment

Property – social housing

A large proportion of investments will see local authorities both source investment ideas and also act as high quality creditors backing their proposals.

**Operational bank accounts:** The Council banks with Lloyds (Lloyds Banking Group). On adoption of this Strategy, it will meet the minimum credit criteria of A- (or equivalent) long term. It is the Council's intention that even if the credit rating of Lloyds Bank falls below the minimum criteria A- the bank will continue to be used for short term liquidity requirements (overnight and weekend investments) and business continuity arrangements.

**Policy Investments:** The Council will provide cash-flow cover for a third-party organisations linked to the Council. The following limit is set for 2020/21:-

- Publica Group - £500k up to one year duration
- Ubico - £500k up to one year duration

**Risk assessment and credit ratings:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council'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 Council 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 and reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Council's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the credit rating criteria.



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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 Council 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 Council'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 Council's revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £25 million on 31st March 2020. In order that no more than 25% of available reserves 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 £6 million. A group of banks under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits will also be placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors as below. 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.

**Table 4: Investment limits**

	<b>Cash limit</b>
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£6m each
UK Central Government	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£6m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£5m per manager
Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS)	£2m max per REIT
Foreign countries	£4m per country
Registered providers	£15m in total
Unsecured investments with building societies	£5m in total per BS
Money Market Funds	£15m in total

**Liquidity management:** The Council uses purpose-built cash flow forecasting software, Logotech, to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Council being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and cash flow forecast.

### **Treasury Management Indicators**

The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

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**Security:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating 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 are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	Target
Portfolio average credit rating	A

**Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest rate exposures, expressed as the proportion of net principal borrowed will be:

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposure	50%	50%	50%

Fixed rate investments and borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for at least 12 months, measured from the start of the financial year or the transaction date if later. All other instruments are classed as variable rate.

**Principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£22m	£22m	£22m

### **Limits to borrowing activity**

**The operational boundary:** This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed. In most cases, this would be a similar figure to the CFR, but may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual debt.

Operational boundary	2019/20 Revised £million	2020/21 Estimate £million	2021/22 Estimate £million	2022/23 Estimate £million
Total	38.0	38.3	37.8	37.2

**The authorised limit for external debt:** A further key prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

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This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

The Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

Authorised Limit	2019/20 Revised £ million	2020/21 Estimate £ million	2021/22 Estimate £ million	2022/23 Estimate £ million
Total	41.0	41.3	40.8	40.2

### Other Items

There are a number of additional items that the Council is obliged by CIPFA or CLG to include in its Treasury Management Strategy.

**Policy on the use of financial derivatives:** 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 Council 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 Council 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, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, 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.

**Investment training:** The needs of the Council's treasury management staff for training in investment management are assessed annually as part of the staff appraisal process, and additionally when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change. Staff will regularly attend training courses, seminars and conferences provided by Arlingclose, CIPFA and other such organisations.

**Investment advisers:** The Council appointed Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers back in December 2018 for three years plus the option for a further two years after a joint tender with Gloucestershire County Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Cheltenham Borough Council. The Council receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues.

### Financial Implications

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The budget for investment income in 2020/21 is £680,000 based on an average investment portfolio of £21.5 million in liquid assets returning an interest rate of 1% and £15.6 million in longer term investment returning an average 3%. If actual levels of investments and actual interest rates differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

## Appendix A – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast January 2020

### Underlying assumptions:

- The global economy is entering a period of slower growth in response to political issues, primarily the trade policy stance of the US. The UK economy has displayed a marked slowdown in growth due to both Brexit uncertainty and the downturn in global activity. In response, global and UK interest rate expectations have eased.
- Some positivity on the trade negotiations between China and the US has prompted worst case economic scenarios to be pared back. However, information is limited, and upbeat expectations have been wrong before.
- 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 transitional period, which the government is seeking to enforce, will create additional economic uncertainty.
- UK economic growth has stalled in Q4 2019. Inflation is running below target at 1.5%. The inflationary consequences of the relatively tight labour market have yet to manifest, while 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 low inflation has 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 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 continue to produce significant volatility in financial markets, including bond markets.

### Forecast:

- Although Arlingclose have maintained the Bank Rate forecast at 0.75% for the foreseeable future, there are substantial risks to this forecast, dependant 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 UK government spending will be key influences alongside UK monetary policy.

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•We expect gilt yields to remain at relatively low levels for the foreseeable future and judge the risks to be broadly balanced.

	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Average
<b>Official Bank Rate</b>														
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.21
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	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	-0.73
<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	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	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	-0.73
<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	0.23
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	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	-0.60
<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	0.37
Arlingclose Central Case	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.57
Downside risk	-0.35	-0.50	-0.50	-0.55	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.56
<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	0.37
Arlingclose Central Case	0.75	0.75	0.80	0.80	0.85	0.85	0.90	0.90	0.95	0.95	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.88
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	-0.45
<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	0.37
Arlingclose Central Case	1.20	1.20	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.40	1.40	1.30
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	-0.45
<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	0.37
Arlingclose Central Case	1.20	1.20	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.40	1.40	1.30
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	-0.45

## Appendix B – Existing Investment Position

	31 <sup>st</sup> December Actual Portfolio £m	31 <sup>st</sup> December Average Rate %
<b>Treasury investments:</b>		
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	7.000	0.80%
Government (incl. local authorities)	7.000	0.85%
Money Market Funds	12.740	0.73%
Other pooled funds	12.000	2.74%
Corporate bonds and loans	2.500	4.75%
REIT	1.000	Unknown at present (3%-5%)
<b>Total treasury investments</b>	<b>42.240</b>	<b>1.70%</b>