ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
REPORT TO:	**COUNTY COUNCIL**
DATE:	**09 MARCH 2021**
SUBJECT:	**TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2021/22**
LEAD OFFICER:	**MARC JONES, DIRECTOR OF FUNCTION (RESOURCES) AND SECTION 151 OFFICER**
CONTACT OFFICER:	**JEMMA ROBINSON, SENIOR ACCOUNTANT**
Nature and reason for reporting For scrutiny - consistent with professional guidance.	

1. This report is presented to ensure that the Council is implementing best practice in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Treasury Management. The code recommends that prior to being presented for adoption, members should scrutinise the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, the annual MRP Policy Statement, the annual Treasury Management Policy Statement and the Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation). This Authority's scheme of delegation charges the Audit & Governance Committee with this function.

2. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (Section 7) recommends that the Authority's Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) should be approved, documented and monitored. It goes on to state that the nature and extent of the involvement of an organisation's responsible body in approving and monitoring its TMPs and accompanying schedules is a matter for local decision and recognises that in some organisations this may be delegated to the responsible officer. In all cases, it should be subjected to scrutiny by the responsible body following recommendations by the responsible officer. This Authority has produced documented TMPs, and were approved by the Audit Committee on 11 February 2020.

3. In terms of updates to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, there are no proposed amendment to the core principals and policies of the 2020/21 Statement.

4. As noted in the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2020/21, presented to the Council on 09 March 2021, due to the large sums of grants received from Welsh Government to help deal with the Covid crisis and the availability of call accounts to the Council, this has resulted in the Council holding balances in call accounts over and above the limits approved within the Annual Investment Strategy included in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) 2020/21. When producing the TMSS 2020/21, these unprecedented times could not be foreseen. In light of this, counterparty limits have been assessed and reviewed when producing the TMSS for 2021/22. Appendix 8 has been amended (with specific reference to NatWest Bank cash limit).

5. Under the revised Code of Practice, it is a requirement that the Council prepares a Capital Strategy, which takes a longer-term view as to the capital investment that is required and how that investment will be funded. The Executive will approve this Strategy, along with other budget resolutions. This Treasury Management Strategy sits below the Capital Strategy, and considers the impact of that strategy on the Council's borrowing and investments. It sets out how both strategies will be undertaken in a controlled way, which is in line with a suitable level of risk that the Council wishes to take, bearing in mind the guidance set out in the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

6. Recommendations

- Note the contents of the covering report; and
- To approve the 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy Statement (which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, MRP Policy, Annual Treasury Management Policy and the Prudential and Treasury Indicators) (Annex A to this report).

ANNEX A

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT

ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY, MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. CIPFA defines treasury management as:-
"*The management of the local authority's borrowing, 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*."

The Treasury Management Policy Statement defines the policies and objectives of the treasury management activities (see **Appendix 1**).

1.2. The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

1.3. The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning, to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. On occasion, when it is prudent and economic, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

1.4. The contribution the treasury management function makes to the Authority is critical, as the balance of debt and investment operations ensure liquidity or the ability to meet spending commitments as they fall due, either on day-to-day revenue or for larger capital projects. The treasury operations will see a balance of the interest costs of debt and the investment income arising from cash deposits affecting the available budget. Since cash balances generally result from reserves and balances, it is paramount to ensure adequate security of the sums invested, as a loss of principal will in effect result in a loss to the Council's cash reserves.

2. CIPFA CODE OF PRACTICE ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT

2.1. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the Council to prepare and approve the following documents:-

- A Capital Strategy Statement which sets out a high level, long term overview of capital expenditure and financing, along with details on any associated risks and how they will be managed as well as the implications for future financial sustainability. The aim of this capital strategy is to ensure that all elected members on the full council fully understand the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.
- A Treasury Management Strategy which sets out the Council's strategy in terms of borrowing and investment which follows on from the Capital Strategy, sets out the constraints on borrowing, determines a set of prudential indicators and determines the Council's risk appetite and strategy in respect of investments.

2.2. The key principles of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice are set out in **Appendix 2**.

3. EXTERNAL CONTEXT

3.1. Setting the Treasury Management Strategy cannot be undertaken in isolation, and consideration must be given to the economic situation as this has an impact on investment interest rates, the cost of borrowing and the financial strength of counterparties. A full summary of the economic outlook is set out in **Appendix 3**, but the main points to consider are as follows:-

- World growth has been in recession in 2020 and this is likely to continue into the first half of 2021 before recovery in the second half.
- Inflation is expected to briefly peak at just over 2% towards the end of 2021, but this is a temporary short lived factor.
- Continuing uncertainty surrounding Brexit and its impact on the UK and Eurozone economy, however the final agreement of a trade deal in December 2020 has eliminated a significant downside risk for the UK economy.
- Investment returns are likely to remain exceptionally low during 2021/22 with little increase in the following two years.

3.2. Having considered the available information and having considered the advice from the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, the following table sets out the Council's view on interest rate levels for the following 3 years:-

Table 1
Prospects for Interest Rates to March 2024

Annual Average	Bank Rate (%)	PWLB Borrowing Rates (including certainty rate adjustment)		
		5 year	25 year	50 year
March 2021	0.10	0.80	1.50	1.30
June 2021	0.10	0.80	1.60	1.40
September 2021	0.10	0.80	1.60	1.40
December 2021	0.10	0.80	1.60	1.40
March 2022	0.10	0.90	1.60	1.40
June 2022	0.10	0.90	1.70	1.50
September 2022	0.10	0.90	1.70	1.50
December 2022	0.10	0.90	1.70	1.50
March 2023	0.10	0.90	1.70	1.50
June 2023	0.10	1.00	1.80	1.60
September 2023	0.10	1.00	1.80	1.60
December 2023	0.10	1.00	1.80	1.60
March 2024	0.10	1.00	1.80	1.60

Information provided by Link Asset Services is attached as **Appendix 4**.

Borrowing interest rates fell to historically very low rates as a result of the COVID crisis and the quantitative easing operations of the Bank of England. The unexpected increase of 100 bps in PWLB rates on top of the then current margin over gilt yields of 80 bps in October 2019, required an initial major rethink of local authority treasury management strategy and risk management. However, in March 2020, the Government started a consultation process for reviewing the margins over gilt rates for PWLB borrowing for different types of local authority capital expenditure. On 25.11.20, the Chancellor announced the conclusion to the review of margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates; the standard and certainty margins were reduced by 1% but a prohibition was introduced to deny access to borrowing from the PWLB for any local authority which had purchase of assets for yield in its three year capital programme

3.3. Bank Rate is unlikely to rise from 0.10% for a considerable period. It is very difficult to say when it may start rising. Given the forecast for bank base rates, the suggested budgeted investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to about three months during each financial year are as follows (the long term forecast is for periods over 10 years in the future):

2020/21: 0.10%;
2021/22: 0.10%;
2022/23: 0.10%;
2023/24: 0.10%;
2024/25: 0.25%;
Long term later years: 2.00%.

3.4. The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is probably now skewed to the upside, but is subject to major uncertainty due to the virus and how quickly successful vaccines may become available and widely administered to the population. There is uncertainty regarding Brexit in relation to the economic impact of the deal agreed between the UK and the EU. There is relatively little UK domestic risk of increases or decreases in Bank Rate and significant changes in shorter term PWLB rates. The Bank of England has effectively ruled out the use of negative interest rates in the near term and increases in Bank Rate are likely to be some years away given the underlying economic expectations. However, it is always possible that safe haven flows, due to unexpected domestic developments and those in other major economies, or a return of investor confidence in equities, could impact gilt yields, (and so PWLB rates), in the UK.

3.5. Inter-local authority lending and borrowing rates have also declined due to the surge in the levels of cash seeking a short-term home at a time when many local authorities are probably having difficulties over accurately forecasting when disbursements of funds received will occur or when further large receipts will be received from the Government.

4. THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT POSITION

4.1. Borrowing

4.1.1. The Council's current external borrowing is set out in Table 2 below. A full analysis is attached as **Appendix 5**.

Table 2
Summary of the Council's Current Outstanding Loans

PWLB LOANS					
	PWLB / PWLB Maturity	**PWLB EIP/ Annuity**	**Market Loans**	**PWLB Variable**	**Total Maturing**
Loan Outstanding	£121,684k	£208k	£0k	£0k	£121,892k
Average life (years)	30.62	5.28	0.00	0.00	30.57
Average rate (%)	4.58	9.42	0.00	0.00	4.59

OTHER LOANS						
	Salix Loan 1	**Salix Loan 2**	**Salix Loan 3**	**Salix Loan 4**	**Salix Loan 5**	**Total**
Outstanding Balance	£58k	£228k	£509k	£224k	£1,614k	£2,633k
Repayment Date	2024/25	2025/26	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	
Interest Rate (%)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

4.2. Investments

4.2.1. Any surplus cash is currently invested in short term deposit accounts, call accounts and with other UK local authorities. The balance invested in these accounts changes daily (balance as at 31 December 2020 was £34.8m).

4.2.2. Under the current treasury management strategy, the Council invests surplus cash ensuring first of all the security of the deposit, secondly the liquidity of the deposit and, finally, the return on the investment. In practice, in order to ensure the first and second principles, the rate of return on investments is sacrificed and the current average return on investments is 0.09% (as at 31 December 2020).

5. IMPACT OF FUTURE PLANS ON BORROWING

5.1. Capital expenditure is partly funded from borrowing and the capital programme, as set out in the Capital Strategy, is set out in Table 3 below**:-**

Table 3
Proposed Capital Expenditure Programme 2021/22 – 2023/24

	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Non - HRA	**15,842**	**16,380**	**17,221**
HRA	**20,313**	**18,816**	**22,670**
Commercial Activities / Non Financial Investment	**0**	**0**	**0**
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**36,155**	**35,196**	**39,891**
Financed By			
Capital Grants	**12,042**	**9,181**	**10,282**
Capital Receipts	**0**	**100**	**100**
Reserves	**921**	**0**	**0**
Revenue	**15,639**	**10,156**	**10,510**
Balance Funded from Borrowing	**7,553**	**15,759**	**18,999**

5.2. An important factor to consider is the impact of borrowing on the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is the measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. Borrowing is not limited to external borrowing from PWLB but also the use of the Council's own cash balances (internal borrowing) which have been used to fund capital expenditure.

5.3. Capital expenditure will increase the CFR but only by the sum that is not funded from grants, capital receipts, reserves or revenue. The CFR will also reduce annually by the sum of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which is charged to revenue. The level of the CFR is an important measure to ensure that the Council does not commit itself to unaffordable levels of borrowing.

5.4. In order to ensure that the Council has sufficient funds available to repay debt as it falls due, the Council is required to make a charge to the revenue account each year and this charge is known as the Minimum Revenue Provision. Regulations require that the Council approves a MRP statement in advance of each financial year. The policy for 2021/22 is set out in **Appendix 6**. The Council's MRP was substantially revised in 2018 but there are no changes from that revised policy for 2021/22. By making the MRP charge each year, the Council's cash balances are replenished and that, in turn, reduces the level of internal borrowing.

5.5. The policy will provide an equal charge on borrowing up to 31 March 2018 and, for all borrowing after that date, the MRP charge will be based on the useful life of the asset which has been funded from borrowing, e.g. if £1m is borrowed to fund the capital expenditure on an asset that has an asset life of 20 years, the annual MRP in respect of that loan would be £50k per annum. As new borrowing is undertaken, it will increase the MRP charge over time and this increase in costs is allowed for in the Council's budgets. The Council may choose to pay more MRP in any given year. These overpayments of MRP (which in the Council's case, are to ensure enough cash for loan repayments), can, if needed, be reclaimed in later years. Up until 31 March 2020, the total overpayments were £212k and related specifically to the Salix loans where the MRP charged to the revenue account has been calculated on the basis of the life of the loan rather than on the life of the asset which was funded by the loan. This ensures that the Council has sufficient cash to repay the loans when they become due for repayment.

5.6. The impact of the Council's capital expenditure plans and the MRP charge on the CFR and level of external and internal borrowing is shown in Table 4 below:-

Table 4
Capital Financing Requirement and Borrowing 2020/21 to 2023/24

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Capital Financing Requirement				
Opening Balance of CFR	**136,904**	**142,687**	**146,084**	**157,552**
Capital Expenditure	33,798	36,155	35,196	39,891
External Capital Grants	(14,976)	(12,042)	(9,181)	(10,283)
Capital Receipts	(665)	0	(100)	(100)
Revenue Contribution & Reserves	(8,878)	(16,560)	(10,156)	(10,510)
Minimum Revenue Provision	(3,496)	(4,156)	(4,291)	(4,590)
CLOSING BALANCE OF CFR	**142,687**	**146,084**	**157,552**	**171,960**

External Borrowing				
Opening Balance of External Borrowing	**139,232**	**133,803**	**140,991**	**154,099**
Borrowing to Fund Capital Expenditure	9,279	7,553	15,759	18,999
Borrowing to Fund Loan Repayments	0	0	0	0
Borrowing to Replace Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0
Loan Repayments	(14,708)	(365)	(2,651)	(2,222)
Closing Balance of External Borrowing	**133,803**	**140,991**	**154,099**	**170,875**
Internal Borrowing				
Opening Balance of Internal Borrowing	**(2,328)**	**8,884**	**5,093**	**3,453**
Replacement of Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0
Funding Loan Repayments from External Borrowing	0	0	0	0
External Loan Repayments	14,708	365	2,651	2,222
Borrowing to Fund Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Minimum Revenue Provision	(3,496)	(4,156)	(4,291)	(4,590)
Closing Balance of Internal Borrowing	**8,884**	**5,093**	**3,453**	**1,085**
TOTAL BORROWING	**142,687**	**146,084**	**157,552**	**171,960**

6. BORROWING STRATEGY

6.1. The Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement) has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This approach is prudent as investment returns are low and counterparty risk is still an issue that needs to be considered. As part of this strategy, the ability to externally borrow to repay the reserves and balances, if needed, is important. Table 4 indicates that £8.884m may need to be externally borrowed if urgently required. This is the amount of Council reserves and balances used in the past to fund the capital programme instead of taking out borrowing.

6.2. Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2021/22 treasury operations. The Section 151 Officer will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances:-

- if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in long and short term rates (e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long term borrowings will be postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing will be considered if it is cost effective to do so.
- If it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long and short term rates than that currently forecast, perhaps arising from an acceleration in the start date and in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are lower than they are projected to be in the next few years.
- Any decisions will be reported to this Committee at the next available opportunity.

6.3. External v Internal Borrowing

6.3.1. Current conditions indicate a need for a flexible approach to the choice between internal and external borrowing. Many of the factors which lay behind previous policies to externalise all borrowing remain valid, e.g.:-

- With a continuing historically abnormally low Bank Rate and PWLB rates, there remains a unique opportunity for local authorities to actively manage their strategy of undertaking new external borrowing.

6.3.2. However, it remains the case that there are certain limitations to this approach, as previously noted, e.g.:-

- The policy can cause exposure to credit risk (e.g. risk of the bank defaulting on the debt), so this aspect must be very carefully managed;
- Careful on-going consideration needs to be given to the difference between borrowing rates and investment rates to ensure the Council obtains value for money once an appropriate level of risk management has been attained to ensure the security of its investments.

6.3.3. In favour of internalisation, over the medium term, investment rates are expected to continue to be below long term borrowing rates. This means that value for money considerations would indicate that value could best be obtained by avoiding new external borrowing and by using internal cash balances to finance new capital expenditure, or to replace maturing external debt (this is referred to as internal borrowing). This would maximise short term savings.

6.3.4. However, short term savings by avoiding new long term external borrowing in 2021/22 must also be weighed against the potential for incurring additional long term extra costs, by delaying unavoidable new external borrowing until later years when PWLB long term rates are forecast to be higher. Additionally, the cash flow implications of internalising borrowing require regular review and will limit the potential extent of internalising borrowing.

6.4. Borrowing in Advance of Need

6.4.1. The Council will not borrow more than, or in advance of, its needs, solely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement estimates, and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.

6.4.2. In determining whether borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need, the Council will:-

1. ensure that there is a clear link between the capital programme and maturity profile of the existing debt portfolio which supports the need to take funding in advance of need;
2. ensure the ongoing revenue liabilities created, and the implications for the future plans and budgets, have been considered;
3. evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow;
4. consider the advantages and disadvantages of alternative forms of funding;
5. consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use; and
6. consider the impact of borrowing in advance on temporarily (until required to finance capital expenditure) increasing investment cash balances and the consequent increase in exposure to counterparty risk, and other risks, and the level of such risks given the controls in place to minimise them.

6.4.3. Risks associated with any borrowing in advance activity will be subject to prior appraisal and subsequent reporting through the mid-year or annual reporting mechanism.

6.5. Debt Rescheduling

6.5.1. Rescheduling of current borrowing in our debt portfolio is unlikely to occur as there is still a very large difference between premature redemption rates and new borrowing rates, even though the general margin of PWLB rates over gilt yields was reduced by 100 bps in November 2020.

6.5.2. The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include:-

- the generation of cash savings and/or discounted cash flow savings;
- helping to fulfil the treasury strategy; and
- enhance the balance of the portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

6.5.3. Consideration will also be given to identify if there is any residual potential for making savings by running down investment balances to repay debt prematurely as short term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on current debt.

6.5.4. All rescheduling will be reported to the Audit Committee at the earliest practicable meeting following its action.

6.6. Debt Profile

6.6.1. As can be seen from **Appendix 5**, the existing borrowing is due to be repaid in various years up to 2068/69. As part of any decision on future borrowing, the Council will aim to ensure that the repayment date is arranged so as to smooth out repayments as far as possible, but priority will be given to the interest rate payable when determining the type of loan (maturity or annuity) and the length of the loan.

7. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

7.1. In-house funds: Investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (i.e. rates for investments up to 12 months). Greater returns are usually obtainable by investing for longer periods. While most cash balances are required in order to manage the ups and downs of cash flow where cash sums can be identified that could be invested for longer periods, the value to be obtained from longer term investments will be carefully assessed.

- If it is thought that Bank Rate is likely to rise significantly within the time horizon being considered, then consideration will be given to keeping most investments as being short term or variable.

- Conversely, if it is thought that Bank Rate is likely to fall within that time period, consideration will be given to locking higher rates currently obtainable, for longer periods.

7.2. Management of Risk

7.2.1. CIPFA has extended the meaning of 'investments' to include both financial and non-financial investments. This report deals solely with financial investments (as managed by the treasury management team). Non-financial investments, essentially the purchase of income yielding assets, are covered in the Capital Strategy (a separate report).

7.2.2. The Council's investment policy has regard to the following:-

- Welsh Government's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance");
- CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes 2017 ("the Code");
- CIPFA Treasury Management Guidance Notes 2018;
- The Council's investment priorities will be security first, portfolio liquidity second and then yield (return).

7.2.3. The above guidance from the Welsh Government and CIPFA place a high priority on the management of risk. This Authority has adopted a prudent approach to managing risk and defines its risk appetite by the following means: -

1. Minimum acceptable **credit criteria** are applied in order to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties. This also enables diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk. The key ratings used to monitor counterparties are the short term and long-term ratings.

2. **Other information**: ratings will not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution; it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To achieve this consideration, the Council will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as "**credit default swaps**" and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.

3. **Other information** sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.

4. This Authority has defined the list of **types of investment instruments** that the treasury management team are authorised to use. There are two lists in **Appendix 7** under the categories of 'specified' and 'non-specified' investments.

    - **Specified investments** are those with a high level of credit quality and subject to a maturity limit of one year. All investments with local authorities are also specified investments regardless of the length of period to maturity.

    - **Non-specified investments** are those with less high credit quality, may be for periods in excess of one year and/or are more complex instruments which require greater consideration by Members and officers before being authorised for use. (Investments, [other than investments with local authorities], which would be specified investments apart from originally being for a period longer than 12 months remain as non-specified even when the remaining period to maturity falls to under twelve months.)

5. **Non-specified investments limit**. The Council has determined that it will limit the maximum total exposure to non-specified investments by ensuring that no non-specific investment is undertaken without the prior consent of the Council. The Council does not hold any non-specified investments, nor does it intend to during 2021/22 (see **Appendix 7**).

6. **Lending limits** (amounts and maturity) for each counterparty will be set through applying the matrix table as set out in the Creditworthiness section of this strategy.

7. **Transaction limits** are set for each type of investment in **Appendix 8**.

8. This Authority will set a limit for the amount of its investments which are invested for **longer than 365 days** (see **Appendix 11**).

9. Investments will only be placed with counterparties from countries with a specified minimum **sovereign rating** (see **Appendix 9**).

10. This Authority has engaged **external consultants** to provide expert advice on how to optimise an appropriate balance of security, liquidity and yield, given the risk appetite of this Authority in the context of the expected level of cash balances and need for liquidity throughout the year.

11. All investments will be denominated in **sterling.**

12. As a result of the change in accounting standards for 2020/21 under **IFRS 9,** this authority will consider the implications of investment instruments which could result in an adverse movement in the value of the amount invested and resultant charges at the end of the year to the General Fund. The Welsh Government has passed a statutory override to allow Welsh local authorities time to adjust their portfolio of all pooled investments by delaying implementation of IFRS 9 for five years until 31.03.23.

7.3. Creditworthiness Policy

7.3.1. The primary principle governing the Council's investment criteria is the security of its investments, although the yield or return on the investment is also a key consideration. After this main principle, the Council will ensure that:-

- It maintains a policy covering the categories of investment types it will invest in, criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security. This is set out in the specified and non-specified investment sections below; and

- It has sufficient liquidity in its investments. For this purpose it will set out procedures for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These procedures also apply to the Council's prudential indicators covering the maximum principal sums invested.

7.3.2. The Section 151 Officer will maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the criteria set out in **Appendix 8** and will revise the criteria and submit them to Council for approval as necessary. These criteria are separate to that which determines which types of investment instrument are either specified or non-specified as it provides an overall pool of counterparties considered high quality which the Council may use, rather than defining what types of investment instruments are to be used.

7.3.3. Credit rating information is supplied the Link Group, our treasury advisors, on all active counterparties that comply with the criteria below. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria would be omitted from the counterparty (dealing) list. Any rating changes, rating Watches (notification of a likely change), rating Outlooks (notification of the longer term bias outside the central rating view) are provided to officers almost immediately after they occur and this information is considered before dealing. For instance, a negative rating Watch applying to a counterparty at the minimum Council criteria will be suspended from use, with all others being reviewed in light of market conditions.

7.3.4. As an additional layer to the minimum credit rating criteria described above, this Council also employs the creditworthiness service provided by Link Asset Services. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:-

- Credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies;
- Credit Default Swaps (CDS) spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- Sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

7.3.5. This modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit watches and credit outlooks in a weighted scoring system which is then combined with an overlay of CDS spreads from which the end product is a series of colour coded bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes are used by the Council, at the discretion of the Section 151 Officer, to assist in determining the duration for investments. The Council will, therefore, normally use counterparties within the following durational bands:-

Yellow:	5 years *
Dark pink :	5 years for Ultra-Short Dated Bond Funds with a credit score of 1.25
Light pink :	5 years for Ultra-Short Dated Bond Funds with a credit score of 1.5
Purple:	2 years
Blue:	1 year (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)
Orange:	1 year
Red:	6 months
Green:	100 days
No colour:	not to be used

7.3.6. The Link Asset Services creditworthiness service uses a wider array of information than just primary ratings and, by using a risk weighted scoring system, does not give undue preponderance to just one agency's ratings.

7.3.7. Typically, the minimum credit ratings criteria the Council use will be a Short Term rating (Fitch or equivalents) of F1 and a Long Term rating of A-. There may be occasions when the counterparty ratings from one rating agency are marginally lower than these ratings but may still be used. In these instances, consideration will be given to the whole range of ratings available, or other topical market information, to support their use.

7.3.8. All credit ratings will be monitored daily. The Council is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of the Link Asset Services' creditworthiness service.

- If a downgrade results in the counterparty / investment scheme no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.

- In addition to the use of credit ratings, the Council will be advised of information in movements in credit default swap spreads against the iTraxx benchmark and other market data on a daily basis via its Passport website, provided exclusively to it by Link Asset Services. Extreme market movements may result in downgrade of an institution or removal from the Council's lending list.

7.3.9. Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition this Council will also use market data and market information and information on any external support for banks to help support its decision making process.

7.3.10. Although the credit rating agencies changed their outlook on many UK banks from Stable to Negative during the quarter ended 30.06.20 due to upcoming risks to banks' earnings and asset quality during the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, the majority of ratings were affirmed due to the continuing strong credit profiles of major financial institutions, including UK banks. However, during Q1 and Q2 2020, banks made provisions for expected credit losses and the rating changes reflected these provisions. As we move into future quarters, more information will emerge on actual levels of credit losses. (Quarterly earnings reports are normally announced in the second half of the month following the end of the quarter.) This has the potential to cause rating agencies to revisit their initial rating adjustments earlier in the current year. These adjustments could be negative or positive, although it should also be borne in mind that banks went into this pandemic with strong balance sheets. This is predominantly a result of regulatory changes imposed on banks following the Great Financial Crisis. Indeed, the Financial Policy Committee (FPC) report on 6th August revised down their expected credit losses for the UK banking sector to "somewhat less than £80bn". It stated that in its assessment, "banks have buffers of capital more than sufficient to absorb the losses that are likely to arise under the MPC's central projection". The FPC stated that for real stress in the sector, the economic output would need to be twice as bad as the MPC's projection, with unemployment rising to above 15%.

7.3.11. All three rating agencies have reviewed banks around the world with similar results in many countries of most banks being placed on Negative Outlook, but with a small number of actual downgrades.

7.3.12. Although bank CDS prices, (these are market indicators of credit risk), spiked upwards at the end of March / early April 2020 due to the heightened market uncertainty and ensuing liquidity crisis that affected financial markets, they have returned to more average levels since then. Nevertheless, prices are still elevated compared to end-February 2020. Pricing is likely to remain volatile as uncertainty continues. However, sentiment can easily shift, so it will remain important to undertake continual monitoring of all aspects of risk and return in the current circumstances. Link monitor CDS prices as part of their creditworthiness service to local authorities and the Council has access to this information via its Link-provided Passport portal.

7.4. Country Limits

7.4.1 The Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- from Fitch Ratings (or equivalent from other agencies if Fitch does not provide). The list of countries that qualify using this credit criteria as at the date of this report are shown in **Appendix 9**. This list will be added to or deducted from by officers should ratings change in accordance with this policy.

8. GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

8.1. The Prudential Code reflects a move towards self regulation for local authorities and effective corporate governance is one of the key elements to the successful implementation of the Code.

8.2. Corporate Governance includes the following elements:-

- A formal role for the Section 151 Officer;
- Setting and monitoring of Prudential and Treasury Indicators;
- A scheme of delegation and a process of formal approval;
- Reporting on Treasury Management matters to Members.

8.3. Role of the Section 151 Officer and Members

8.3.1. The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that matters relating to Treasury Management and Capital Financing are taken into account and reported to the Executive / full Council for consideration and that procedures are established to monitor performance.

8.3.2. The Section 151 Officer must ensure that prudential indicators are set and monitored in order to demonstrate the legislative requirement that the Council's financial plans are affordable.

8.3.3. Members also play an important role in not just authorising the relevant decisions but also in scrutinising treasury management processes, decisions and performance. In order to undertake this role, the CIPFA Code requires the responsible officer to ensure that Members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management. This especially applies to Members responsible for scrutiny. In order to support the scrutiny role of the members of the Audit and Governance Committee, the Committee's members received training in treasury management, delivered by the appointed treasury management consultants on 7 November 2019. Further training will be arranged when required. The training needs of treasury management officers are regularly reviewed and addressed.

8.3.4. The Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation and a fuller explanation of the role of the Section 151 Officer is set out in **Appendix 10**.

8.4. Treasury Management Advice

8.4.1. The Council uses Link Asset Services as its external treasury management advisors. The Treasury Management advisory service was advertised for tender for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019 with an option to extend for two years, with Link Asset Services (previously Capita Asset Services) being the successful tenders. The Council exercised the option to extend for two years. In accordance with procurement regulations, the Council will retender this service during early 2021 for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026 with an option to extend for two years.

8.4.2. The Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers. All decisions will be undertaken with regards to all available information, including, but not solely, our treasury advisers. Final responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the Council.

8.4.3. It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review.

8.5. Prudential and Treasury Indicators

8.5.1. The Prudential and Treasury Indicators set out in **Appendix 11** cover affordability, prudence and sets out limits for capital expenditure, external debt and the structure of the debt. It is for the Council to set the Prudential Indicators and it is important to not just consider the indicators for each individual year in isolation but also to consider the past performance and the future forecasts. A fuller explanation of the purpose of each indicator is set out in **Appendix 12.**

8.6. Reporting

8.6.1. The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of polices, estimates and actuals. These reports are required to be adequately scrutinised by Committee before being recommended to the Council. This role is undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee.

8.6.2. **Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators and Treasury** Strategy - the first and most important report (this report) covers:-

- the Treasury Management Strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury management indicators;
- an Investment Strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed);
- a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);
- a Treasury Management Policy Statement (definition of the policies and objectives of the treasury management function); and
- the capital plans (including the associated prudential indicators).

8.6.3. **A Mid-Year Treasury Management Report** - this will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary and whether the treasury strategy is meeting its objectives or whether any policies require revision.

8.6.4. **An Annual Treasury Report** - this is a backward looking review document and provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

APPENDICES

1. Treasury Management Policy Statement
2. Treasury Management Key Principles
3. Economic background
4. Interest rate forecasts
5. Loan maturity profile
6. MRP Policy Statement
7. Specified and non-specified investments
8. Counterparty criteria
9. Approved countries for investments
10. Treasury management scheme of delegation and the role of the Section 151 Officer
11. Prudential and Treasury Indicators
12. Explanation of Prudential Indicators
13. Glossary of, and information on, Prudential & Treasury Management indicators

APPENDIX 1

Treasury Management Policy Statement

1. CIPFA defines its treasury management activities as: “The management of the authority’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’’.

2. This organisation 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.

3. This organisation 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 comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

APPENDIX 2

The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice

The key principles of CIPFA's ***Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (2011 Edition)***, as described in Section 4 of that Code are as follows:-

Key Principle 1:
Public service organisations should put in place formal and comprehensive objectives, policies and practices, strategies and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of their treasury management activities.

Key Principle 2:
Their policies and practices should make clear that the effective management and control of risks are prime objectives of their treasury management activities and that responsibility for these lies clearly within their organisations. Their appetite for risk should form part of their annual strategy, including any use of financial instruments for the prudent management of those risks, and should ensure that priority is given to security and liquidity when investing funds.

Key Principle 3:
They should acknowledge that the pursuit of value for money in treasury management and the use of suitable performance measures are valid and important tools for responsible organisations to employ in support of their business and service objectives; and that, within the context of effective risk management, their treasury management policies and practices should reflect this.

The Code then goes on to say that:

"In framing these recommendations, CIPFA acknowledges the difficulties of striving for effective risk management and control, whilst at the same time pursuing value for money. This code does not seek to be prescriptive about how this issue should be handled, particularly since it covers such a wide variety of organisations. However, where appropriate, the sector specific guidance notes give suitable advice. CIPFA recognises that no two organisations in the public services are likely to tackle this issue in precisely the same manner but success in this area of treasury management is likely to be viewed, especially in value for money terms, as an indicator of a strongly performing treasury management function."

"Even though it dates back to 1991, CIPFA considers that the report by the Treasury and Civil Service Committee of the House of Commons on the BCCI closure is still pertinent, wherein it was stated that:"

"In balancing risk against return, local authorities should be more concerned to avoid risks than to maximise returns."

"Indeed this view was supported by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee report into local authority investments in 2009."

"It is CIPFA's view that throughout the public services the priority is to protect capital rather than to maximise return. The avoidance of all risk is neither appropriate nor possible. However, a balance must be struck with a keen responsibility for public money."

Accordingly the Authority will adopt, as part of the standing orders, the following four clauses;

1. The Authority 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; and
- suitable treasury management practices (TMPs) setting out the manner in which the Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.

The content of the Policy Statement and TMPs will follow the recommendations contained in Sections 6 and 7 of the Code, subject only to amendment where necessary to reflect the particular circumstances of the Authority. Such amendments will not result in the Authority materially deviating from the Code's key principles.

2. The County Council, Executive Committee and the Audit Committee will receive reports on the Authority's treasury management policies, practices and activities, including; an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review report and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in the TMPs.

3. The County Council/Executive Committee are responsible for the implementation of the Authority's treasury management policies and practices in accordance with the Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation. The S151 Officer is responsible for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions, who will act in accordance with the Authority's policy statement and TMPs and, if he/she is a CIPFA member, CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

4. The Authority nominates Audit Committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

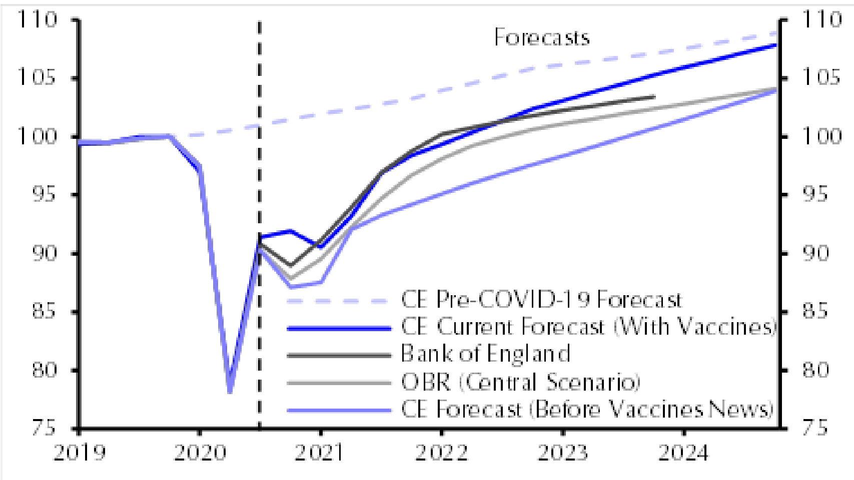
- **UK.** The key quarterly meeting of the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee kept **Bank Rate** unchanged on 5.11.20. However, it revised its economic forecasts to take account of a second national lockdown from 5.11.20 to 2.12.20 which is obviously going to put back economic recovery and do further damage to the economy. It therefore decided to do a further tranche of **quantitative easing (QE) of £150bn**, to start in January when the current programme of £300bn of QE, announced in March to June, runs out. It did this so that "announcing further asset purchases now should support the economy and help to ensure the unavoidable near-term slowdown in activity was not amplified by a tightening in monetary conditions that could slow the return of inflation to the target".
- Its forecasts appeared, at that time, to be rather optimistic in terms of three areas:
  - The economy would recover to reach its pre-pandemic level in Q1 2022
  - The Bank also expected there to be excess demand in the economy by Q4 2022.
  - CPI inflation was therefore projected to be a bit above its 2% target by the start of 2023 and the "inflation risks were judged to be balanced".
- Significantly, there was no mention of **negative interest rates** in the minutes or Monetary Policy Report, suggesting that the MPC remains some way from being persuaded of the case for such a policy, at least for the next 6 -12 months. However, rather than saying that it "stands ready to adjust monetary policy", the MPC this time said that it will take "whatever additional action was necessary to achieve its remit". The latter seems stronger and wider and may indicate the Bank's willingness to embrace new tools.
- One key addition to **the Bank's forward guidance in August** was a new phrase in the policy statement, namely that "it does not intend to tighten monetary policy until there is clear evidence that significant progress is being made in eliminating spare capacity and achieving the 2% target sustainably". That seems designed to say, in effect, that even if inflation rises to 2% in a couple of years' time, do not expect any action from the MPC to raise Bank Rate – until they can clearly see that level of inflation is going to be persistently above target if it takes no action to raise Bank Rate. Our Bank Rate forecast currently shows no increase, (or decrease), through to quarter 1 2024 but there could well be no increase during the next five years as it will take some years to eliminate spare capacity in the economy, and therefore for inflationary pressures to rise to cause the MPC concern. **Inflation** is expected to briefly peak at just over 2% towards the end of 2021, but this is a temporary short lived factor due to base effects from twelve months ago falling out of the calculation, and so is not a concern. Looking further ahead, it is also unlikely to be a problem for some years as it will take a prolonged time for spare capacity in the economy, created by this downturn, to be used up.

- **Public borrowing** was forecast in November by the Office for Budget Responsibility (the OBR) to reach £394bn in the current financial year, the highest ever peace time deficit and equivalent to 19% of GDP. In normal times, such an increase in total gilt issuance would lead to a rise in gilt yields, and so PWLB rates. However, the QE done by the Bank of England has depressed gilt yields to historic low levels, (as has similarly occurred with QE and debt issued in the US, the EU and Japan). This means that new UK debt being issued, and this is being done across the whole yield curve in all maturities, is locking in those historic low levels through until maturity. In addition, the UK has one of the longest average maturities for its entire debt portfolio, of any country in the world. Overall, this means that the total interest bill paid by the Government is manageable despite the huge increase in the total amount of debt. The OBR was also forecasting that the government will still be running a budget deficit of £102bn (3.9% of GDP) by 2025/26. However, initial impressions are that they have taken a pessimistic view of the impact that vaccines could make in the speed of economic recovery.
- Overall, **the pace of recovery** was not expected to be in the form of a rapid V shape, but a more elongated and prolonged one. The initial recovery was sharp after quarter 1 saw growth at -3.0% followed by -18.8% in quarter 2 and then an upswing of +16.0% in quarter 3; this still left the economy 8.6% smaller than in Q4 2019. While the one month second national lockdown that started on 5th November caused a further contraction of 5.7% m/m in November, this was much better than had been feared and showed that the economy is adapting to new ways of working. This left the economy 'only' 8.6% below the pre-crisis level.

- **Vaccines – the game changer.** The Pfizer announcement on 9th November of a successful vaccine has been followed by approval of the Oxford University/AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccines. The Government has a set a target to vaccinate 14 million people in the most at risk sectors of the population by 15th February; as of mid-January, it has made good, and accelerating progress in hitting that target. The aim is to vaccinate all adults by September. This means that the national lockdown starting in early January, could be replaced by regional tiers of lighter restrictions, beginning possibly in Q2. At that point, there would be less reason to fear that hospitals could become overwhelmed any more. Effective vaccines have radically improved the economic outlook so that it may now be possible for GDP to recover to its pre-virus level as early as Q1 2022. These vaccines have enormously boosted confidence that **life could largely return to normal during the second half of 2021**. With the household saving rate having been exceptionally high since the first lockdown in March, there is plenty of pent-up demand and purchasing power stored up for when life returns to normal.

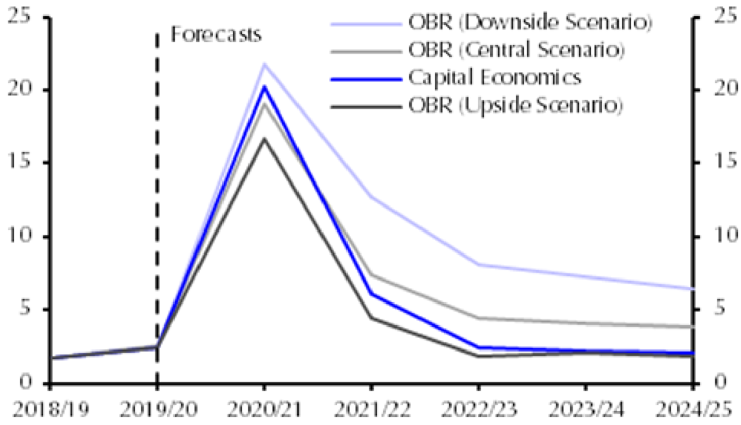
- Provided that both monetary and fiscal policy are kept loose for a few years yet, then it is still possible that in the second half of this decade, the economy may be no smaller than it would have been if COVID-19 never happened. The significant risk is if another mutation of COVID-19 appears that defeats the current batch of vaccines. However, now that science and technology have caught up with understanding this virus, new vaccines ought to be able to be developed more quickly to counter such a development, and vaccine production facilities are being ramped up around the world.

Chart: Level of real GDP (Q4 2019 = 100)



This recovery of growth which eliminates the effects of the pandemic by about the middle of the decade, would have major repercussions for public finances as it would be consistent with the government deficit falling to around 2.5% of GDP without any tax increases. This would be in line with the OBR's most optimistic forecast in the graph below, rather than their current central scenario which predicts a 4% deficit due to assuming much slower growth. However, Capital Economics forecasts assumed that politicians do not raise taxes or embark on major austerity measures and so, (perversely!), depress economic growth and recovery.

Chart: Public Sector Net Borrowing (as a % of GDP)



- There will still be some **painful longer term adjustments** as e.g. office space and travel by planes, trains and buses may not recover to their previous level of use for several years, or possibly ever, even if vaccines are fully successful in overcoming the current virus. There is also likely to be a **reversal of globalisation** as this crisis has exposed how vulnerable long-distance supply chains are. On the other hand, **digital services** are one area that has already seen huge growth.

- **Brexit.** The final agreement of a trade deal on 24.12.20 has eliminated a significant downside risk for the UK economy. The initial agreement only covers trade so there is further work to be done on the services sector where temporary equivalence has been granted in both directions between the UK and EU; that now needs to be formalised on a permanent basis. As the forecasts in this report were based on an assumption of a Brexit agreement being reached, there is no need to amend these forecasts.

- **Monetary Policy Committee meeting of 17 December.** All nine Committee members voted to keep interest rates on hold at +0.10% and the Quantitative Easing (QE) target at £895bn. The MPC commented that the successful rollout of vaccines had reduced the downsides risks to the economy that it had highlighted in November. But this was caveated by it saying, “Although all members agreed that this would reduce downside risks, they placed different weights on the degree to which this was also expected to lead to stronger GDP growth in the central case.” So, while vaccines are a positive development, in the eyes of the MPC at least, the economy is far from out of the woods in the shorter term. The MPC, therefore, voted to extend the availability of the Term Funding Scheme, (cheap borrowing), with additional incentives for small and medium size enterprises for six months from 30.4.21 until 31.10.21. (The MPC had assumed that a Brexit deal would be agreed.)

- **Fiscal policy.** In the same week as the MPC meeting, the Chancellor made a series of announcements to provide further support to the economy: -
  - An extension of the COVID-19 loan schemes from the end of January 2021 to the end of March.
  - The furlough scheme was lengthened from the end of March to the end of April.
  - The Budget on 3.3.21 will lay out the “next phase of the plan to tackle the virus and protect jobs”. This does not sound like tax rises are imminent, (which could hold back the speed of economic recovery).

- The **Financial Policy Committee** (FPC) report on 6.8.20 revised down their expected credit losses for the banking sector to “somewhat less than £80bn”. It stated that in its assessment, “banks have buffers of capital more than sufficient to absorb the losses that are likely to arise under the MPC’s central projection”. The FPC stated that for real stress in the sector, the economic output would need to be twice as bad as the MPC’s projection, with unemployment rising to above 15%.

- **US.** The Democrats gained the presidency and a majority in the House of Representatives in the November elections: after winning two key Senate seats in Georgia in elections in early January, they now also have a very slim majority in the Senate due to the vice president’s casting vote. President Biden will consequently have a much easier path to implement his election manifesto. However, he will not have a completely free hand as more radical Democrat plans may not be supported by all Democrat senators. His initial radical plan for a fiscal stimulus of $1.9trn, (9% of GDP), is therefore likely to be toned down in order to get through both houses.

- **The economy** had been recovering quite strongly from its contraction in 2020 of 10.2% due to the pandemic with GDP only 3.5% below its pre-pandemic level and the unemployment rate dropping below 7%. However, the rise in new cases during quarter 4, to the highest level since mid-August, suggests that the US could be in the early stages of a fourth wave. The latest upturn poses a threat that the recovery in the economy could stall. This is **the single biggest downside risk** to the shorter term outlook – a more widespread and severe wave of infections over the winter months, which is compounded by the impact of the regular flu season and, as a consequence, threatens to overwhelm health care facilities. Under those circumstances, individual states might feel it necessary to return to more draconian lockdowns.

- The restrictions imposed to control the spread of the virus are once again weighing on the economy with employment growth slowing sharply in November and declining in December, and retail sales dropping back. The economy is set for further weakness into the spring. **GDP growth** is expected to rebound markedly from the second quarter of 2021 onwards as vaccines are rolled out on a widespread basis and restrictions are loosened.

- After Chair Jerome Powell unveiled the **Fed's adoption of a flexible average inflation target** in his Jackson Hole speech in late August 2020, the mid-September meeting of the Fed agreed by a majority to a toned down version of the new inflation target in his speech - that *"it would likely be appropriate to maintain the current target range until labour market conditions were judged to be consistent with the Committee's assessments of maximum employment and inflation had risen to 2% and was on track to moderately exceed 2% for some time."* This change was aimed to provide more stimulus for economic growth and higher levels of employment and to avoid the danger of getting caught in a deflationary "trap" like Japan. It is to be noted that inflation has actually been under-shooting the 2% target significantly for most of the last decade, (and this year), so financial markets took note that higher levels of inflation are likely to be in the pipeline; long-term bond yields duly rose after the meeting. The FOMC's updated economic and rate projections in mid-September showed that officials expect to leave the fed funds rate at near-zero until at least end-2023 and probably for another year or two beyond that. There is now some expectation that where the Fed has led in changing its inflation target, other major central banks will follow. The increase in tension over the last year between the US and China is likely to lead to a lack of momentum in progressing the initial positive moves to agree a phase one trade deal.

- The Fed's meeting on **5 November** was unremarkable - but at a politically sensitive time around the elections. At its **16 December** meeting the Fed tweaked the guidance for its monthly asset quantitative easing purchases with the new language implying those purchases could continue for longer than previously believed. Nevertheless, with officials still projecting that **inflation** will only get back to 2.0% in 2023, the vast majority expect the Fed funds rate to be still at near-zero until 2024 or later. Furthermore, officials think the balance of risks surrounding that median inflation forecast are firmly skewed to the downside. The key message is still that policy will remain unusually accommodative – with near-zero rates and asset purchases – continuing for several more years. This is likely to result in keeping Treasury yields low – which will also have an influence on gilt yields in this country.

- **EU**. In early December, the figures for Q3 GDP confirmed that the economy staged a rapid rebound from the first lockdowns. This provides grounds for optimism about growth prospects for next year. In Q2, GDP was 15% below its pre-pandemic level. But in Q3 the economy grew by 12.5% q/q leaving GDP down by "only" 4.4%. That was much better than had been expected earlier in the year. However, growth is likely to stagnate during Q4 and in Q1 of 2021, as a second wave of the virus has seriously affected many countries. The €750bn fiscal support package eventually agreed by the EU after prolonged disagreement between various countries, is unlikely to provide significant support, and quickly enough, to make an appreciable difference in the countries most affected by the first wave.

- With **inflation** expected to be unlikely to get much above 1% over the next two years, **the ECB** has been struggling to get inflation up to its 2% target. It is currently unlikely that it will cut its central rate even further into negative territory from -0.5%, although the ECB has stated that it retains this as a possible tool to use. The ECB's December meeting added a further €500bn to the PEPP scheme, (purchase of government and other bonds), and extended the duration of the programme to March 2022 and re-investing maturities for an additional year until December 2023. Three additional tranches of TLTRO, (cheap loans to banks), were approved, indicating that support will last beyond the impact of the pandemic, implying indirect yield curve control for government bonds for some time ahead. The Bank's forecast for a return to pre-virus activity levels was pushed back to the end of 2021, but stronger growth is projected in 2022. The total PEPP scheme of €1,850bn of QE which started in March 2020 is providing protection to the sovereign bond yields of weaker countries like Italy. There is therefore unlikely to be a euro crisis while the ECB is able to maintain this level of support. However, as in the UK and the US, the advent of highly effective vaccines will be a game changer, although growth will struggle before later in quarter 2 of 2021.

- **China.** After a concerted effort to get on top of the virus outbreak in Q1, economic recovery was strong in Q2 and then into Q3 and Q4; this has enabled China to recover all of the contraction in Q1. Policy makers have both quashed the virus and implemented a programme of monetary and fiscal support that has been particularly effective at stimulating short-term growth. At the same time, China's economy has benefited from the shift towards online spending by consumers in developed markets. These factors help to explain its comparative outperformance compared to western economies. However, this was achieved by major central government funding of yet more infrastructure spending. After years of growth having been focused on this same area, any further spending in this area is likely to lead to increasingly weaker economic returns in the longer term. This could, therefore, lead to a further misallocation of resources which will weigh on growth in future years.

- **Japan.** A third round of fiscal stimulus in early December took total fresh fiscal spending this year in response to the virus close to 12% of pre-virus GDP. That's huge by past standards, and one of the largest national fiscal responses. The budget deficit is now likely to reach 16% of GDP this year. Coupled with Japan's relative success in containing the virus without draconian measures so far, and the likelihood of effective vaccines being available in the coming months, the government's latest fiscal effort should help ensure a strong recovery and to get back to pre-virus levels by Q3 2021 – around the same time as the US and much sooner than the Eurozone.

- **World growth.** World growth will has been in recession in 2020 and this is likely to continue into the first half of 2021 before recovery in the second half. Inflation is unlikely to be a problem for some years due to the creation of excess production capacity and depressed demand caused by the coronavirus crisis.

- Until recent years, world growth has been boosted by increasing **globalisation** i.e. countries specialising in producing goods and commodities in which they have an economic advantage and which they then trade with the rest of the world. This has boosted worldwide productivity and growth, and, by lowering costs, has also depressed inflation. However, the rise of China as an economic superpower over the last thirty years, which now accounts for nearly 20% of total world GDP, has unbalanced the world economy. The Chinese government has targeted achieving major world positions in specific key sectors and products, especially high tech areas and production of rare earth minerals used in high tech products. It is achieving this by massive financial support, (i.e. subsidies), to state owned firms, government directions to other firms, technology theft, restrictions on market access by foreign firms and informal targets for the domestic market share of Chinese producers in the selected sectors. This is regarded as being unfair competition that is putting western firms at an unfair disadvantage or even putting some out of business. It is also regarded with suspicion on the political front as China is an authoritarian country that is not averse to using economic and military power for political advantage. The current trade war between the US and China therefore needs to be seen against that backdrop. It is, therefore, likely that we are heading into a period where there will be a **reversal of world globalisation and a decoupling of western countries** from dependence on China to supply products. This is likely to produce a backdrop in the coming years of weak global growth and so weak inflation.

Summary

Central banks are, therefore, likely to support growth by maintaining loose monetary policy through keeping rates very low for longer. Governments could also help a quicker recovery by providing more fiscal support for their economies at a time when total debt is affordable due to the very low rates of interest. They will also need to avoid significant increases in taxation or austerity measures that depress demand and the pace of recovery in their economies.

If there is a huge surge in investor confidence as a result of successful vaccines which leads to a major switch out of government bonds into equities, which, in turn, causes government debt yields to rise, then there will be pressure on central banks to actively manage debt yields by further QE purchases of government debt; this would help to suppress the rise in debt yields and so keep the total interest bill on greatly expanded government debt portfolios within manageable parameters. It is also the main alternative to a programme of austerity.

INTEREST RATE FORECASTS

Brexit. The interest rate forecasts provided by Link in paragraph 3.3 were predicated on an assumption of a reasonable agreement being reached on trade negotiations between the UK and the EU by 31.12.20. There is therefore no need to revise these forecasts now that a trade deal has been agreed. Brexit may reduce the economy's potential growth rate in the long run. However, much of that drag is now likely to be offset by an acceleration of productivity growth triggered by the digital revolution brought about by the COVID crisis.

The balance of risks to the UK

- The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is probably now skewed to the upside, but is still subject to some uncertainty due to the virus and the effect of any mutations, and how quick vaccines are in enabling a relaxation of restrictions.
- There is relatively little UK domestic risk of increases or decreases in Bank Rate and significant changes in shorter term PWLB rates. The Bank of England has effectively ruled out the use of negative interest rates in the near term and increases in Bank Rate are likely to be some years away given the underlying economic expectations. However, it is always possible that safe haven flows, due to unexpected domestic developments and those in other major economies, could impact gilt yields, (and so PWLB rates), in the UK.

Downside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates currently include:

- **UK government** takes too much action too quickly to raise taxation or introduce austerity measures that depress demand and the pace of recovery of the economy.
- **UK - Bank of England** takes action too quickly, or too far, over the next three years to raise Bank Rate and causes UK economic growth, and increases in inflation, to be weaker than we currently anticipate.
- A resurgence of the **Eurozone sovereign debt crisis.** The ECB has taken monetary policy action to support the bonds of EU states, with the positive impact most likely for "weaker" countries. In addition, the EU agreed a €750bn fiscal support package. These actions will help shield weaker economic regions for the next two or three years. However, in the case of Italy, the cost of the virus crisis has added to its already huge debt mountain and its slow economic growth will leave it vulnerable to markets returning to taking the view that its level of debt is unsupportable. There remains a sharp divide between northern EU countries favouring low debt to GDP and annual balanced budgets and southern countries who want to see jointly issued Eurobonds to finance economic recovery. This divide could undermine the unity of the EU in time to come.
- Weak capitalisation of some **European banks**, which could be undermined further depending on extent of credit losses resultant of the pandemic.
- **German minority government & general election in 2021.** In the German general election of September 2017, Angela Merkel's CDU party was left in a vulnerable minority position dependent on the fractious support of the SPD party, as a result of the rise in popularity of the anti-immigration AfD party. Angela Merkel has stepped down from being the CDU party leader but she will remain as Chancellor until the general election in 2021. This then leaves a major question mark over who will be the major guiding hand and driver of EU unity when she steps down.
- **Other minority EU governments.** Italy, Spain, Austria, Sweden, Portugal, Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium also have vulnerable minority governments dependent on coalitions which could prove fragile.

- **Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary** now form a strongly anti-immigration bloc within the EU, and they had threatened to derail the 7 year EU budget until a compromise was thrashed out in late 2020. There has also been a rise in anti-immigration sentiment in Germany and France.
- **Geopolitical risks,** for example in China, Iran or North Korea, but also in Europe and other Middle Eastern countries, which could lead to increasing safe haven flows.

Upside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates

- **UK -** a significant rise in inflationary pressures e.g. caused by a stronger than currently expected recovery in the UK economy after effective vaccines are administered quickly to the UK population, leading to a rapid resumption of normal life and return to full economic activity across all sectors of the economy.
- The **Bank of England is too slow** in its pace and strength of increases in Bank Rate and, therefore, allows inflationary pressures to build up too strongly within the UK economy, which then necessitates a rapid series of increases in Bank Rate to stifle inflation.

Rhan o gyngor dderbyniwyd gan / An extract from advice received from: Link Asset Services

Rhagolygon Graddfeydd Llog 2021/2024
Interest Rate Forecasts 2021/2024

The PWLB rates below are based on the new margins over gilts announced on 26th November 2020.
PWLB rates and forecast shown below have taken into account the 20 basis point certainty rate reduction effective as of the 1st November 2012.

Link Group Interest Rate View	9.11.20					(The Capital Economics forecasts were done 11.11.20)							
These Link forecasts have been amended for the reduction in PWLB margins by 1.0% from 26.11.20													
	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
6 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
12 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
5 yr PWLB	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
10 yr PWLB	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30
25 yr PWLB	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80
50 yr PWLB	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60
Bank Rate													
Link	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Capital Economics	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	-	-	-	-	-
5yr PWLB Rate													
Link	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Capital Economics	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	-	-	-	-	-
10yr PWLB Rate													
Link	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30
Capital Economics	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	-	-	-	-	-
25yr PWLB Rate													
Link	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80
Capital Economics	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	-	-	-	-	-
50yr PWLB Rate													
Link	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60
Capital Economics	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	-	-	-	-	-

Rhan o gyngor dderbyniwyd gan / An extract from advice received from: Link Asset Services

ATODIAD 5 /APPENDIX 5

DADANSODDIAD BENTHYCIADAU PWLB YN AEDDFEDU 2021/22 YMLAEN / PWLB LOANS MATURITY ANALYSIS 2021/22 ONWARDS						
	Aeddefedu PWLB Maturity £'000	Blwydd-dal PWLB EIP/ Annuity £'000	Benthyciadau Marchnad/ Market Loans £'000	Amrywiol/ PWLB Variable £'000	Cyfanswm yn Aeddfedu/ Total Maturing £'000	%Yn Aeddfedu o'r Cyfran yn sefyll/ Maturing of Total Outstanding %
2021/22	0	14	0	0	14	0.0
2022/23	2,285	15	0	0	2,300	1.9
2023/24	1,854	16	0	0	1,870	1.5
2024/25	0	18	0	0	18	0.0
2025/26	0	20	0	0	20	0.0
2026/27	1,381	22	0	0	1,403	1.2
2027/28	2,165	24	0	0	2,189	1.8
2028/29	263	26	0	0	289	0.2
2029/30	1,538	21	0	0	1,559	1.3
2030/31	451	15	0	0	466	0.4
2031/32	1,941	9	0	0	1,950	1.6
2032/33	315	8	0	0	323	0.3
2033/34	637	0	0	0	637	0.5
2034/35	624	0	0	0	624	0.5
2035/36	611	0	0	0	611	0.5
2036/37	599	0	0	0	599	0.5
2037/38	587	0	0	0	587	0.5
2038/39	225	0	0	0	225	0.2
2039/40	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	4.1
2040/41	3,500	0	0	0	3,500	2.9
2042/43	1,000	0	0	0	1,000	0.8
2043/44	1,020	0	0	0	1,020	0.8
2044/45	1,010	0	0	0	1,010	0.8
2045/46	11,464	0	0	0	11,464	9.4
2050/51	2,000	0	0	0	2,000	1.6
2052/53	28,238	0	0	0	28,238	23.2
2054/55	3,000	0	0	0	3,000	2.5
2055/56	3,500	0	0	0	3,500	2.9
2056/57	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	4.1
2057/58	8,513	0	0	0	8,513	7.0
2059/60	1,763	0	0	0	1,763	1.4
2064/65	10,000	0	0	0	10,000	8.2
2066/67	6,200	0	0	0	6,200	5.1
2068/69	15,000	0	0	0	15,000	12.3
	121,684	**208**	**0**	**0**	**121,892**	**100.0**
Cyfartaledd bywyd (blynyddoedd)/ Average life (years	30.62	5.28	0.00	0.00	30.57	
Cyfartaledd graddfa (%)/ Average rate (%)	4.58	9.42	0.00	0.00	4.59	

PROFFIL AD-DALU BENTHYCIADAU ERAILL 2021/22 YMLAEN / OTHER LOANS REPAYMENT PROFILE 2021/22 ONWARDS						
	Benthyciad Salix Loan 1 **£'000**	**Benthyciad Salix Loan 2** **£'000**	**Benthyciad Salix Loan 3** **£'000**	**Benthyciad Salix Loan 4** **£'000**	**Benthyciad Salix Loan 5** **£'000**	**Cyfanswm / Total** **£'000**
2021/22	16	46	64	26	199	351
2022/23	16	46	64	26	199	351
2023/24	17	46	64	26	199	352
2024/25	9	45	64	26	200	344
2025/26	0	45	64	26	200	335
2026/27	0	0	63	27	200	290
2027/28	0	0	63	27	200	290
2028/29	0	0	63	27	200	290
2029/30	0	0	0	13	200	213
2030/31	0	0	0	0	200	200
Cyfanswm / Total	**58**	**228**	**509**	**224**	**1,997**[1]	**3,016**

[1] Total amount to be repaid differs from the total amount outstanding in Table 4.1.1 due to only having received £1,614k to date, however £1,997k will be received.

APPENDIX 6

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2021/22

The Council is required to pay off an element of the accumulated Council Fund capital spend each year (the CFR) through a revenue charge (the minimum revenue provision, MRP), although it is also allowed to undertake additional voluntary payments if required (voluntary revenue provision, VRP).

The Welsh Government regulations require the full Council to approve an MRP Statement in advance of each year. A variety of options is provided to councils, so long as there is a prudent provision. The Council is recommended to approve the following MRP Statement:-

For capital expenditure incurred between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2018, financed by supported borrowing, the MRP policy will be to charge MRP on the Equal Instalment method, Asset Life basis over 50 years. The MRP on capital expenditure funded by unsupported borrowing during this period has already been charged using the Equal Instalment method, Asset Life basis using the estimated lives of the assets, based on information available at that time. This change in policy realigns the MRP policies for assets funded by supported borrowing and assets funded by unsupported borrowing.

From 1st April 2018 for all supported and unsupported borrowing (including PFI and finance leases), the MRP policy will also be the Equal Instalment Annuity Method, the Asset Life basis. However, the estimated life periods, will be set by the S151 Officer based upon advice received from the relevant officers and will have regard to Welsh Government guidance in relation to MRP and asset lives. Where land is purchased, the asset life will be based on the asset life of the asset placed on the land, which in the majority of cases will be 50 years in line with the asset life for buildings.

MRP charges based on asset life would not be charged until the year the asset becomes operational. The S151 Officer may postpone the MRP charge until the financial year following the one in which the asset becomes operational. The estimated asset life of the asset would be determined in the year the MRP commences and would not change over the life of the asset. The estimated life periods, will be set by the S151 Officer based upon advice received from the relevant officers and will have regard to Statutory requirements and Welsh Government guidance in relation to MRP and asset life. Where land is purchased, the asset life will be based on the asset life of the asset placed on the land, which in the majority of cases will be 50 years in line with the asset life for buildings.

As some types of capital expenditure incurred by the Council are not capable of being related to an individual asset, asset lives will be assessed on a basis, which most reasonably reflects the anticipated period of benefit that arises from the expenditure. In addition, whatever type of expenditure is involved, it will be grouped together in a manner which reflects the nature of the main component of expenditure and will only be divided up in cases where there are two or more major components with substantially different useful economic lives.

The Council retains the right to make additional voluntary payments to reduce debt if deemed prudent.

The Housing Revenue Account share of the CFR is subject to a 2% MRP charge, based upon the closing CFR for the previous year, in line with the approved 30-year business plan.

Any repayments included in annual PFI or finance leases are applied as MRP and will be consistent with the asset life basis over the life of the lease or PFI scheme.

Specified and Non-Specified Investments

The Welsh Government 'Guidance on Local Government Investments' (Effective from 1 April 2010) provides the definition of specified and non-specified investments.

Paragraph 5.1 of the 'Guidance' states that an investment is specified if all of the following apply:-

(a) the investment is denominated in sterling and any payments or repayments in respect of the investment are payable only in sterling; and

(b) the investment is not a long-term investment (*); and

(c) the making of the investment is not defined as capital expenditure by virtue of regulation 20(1)(d) of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003 [SI 3239 as amended]; and

(ch) the investment is made with a body or in an investment scheme of high credit quality (**); or with one of the following public-sector bodies:

- **(i)** the United Kingdom Government
- **(ii)** a local authority in England or Wales (as defined in section 23 of the 2003 Act) or a similar body in Scotland or Northern Ireland
- **(iii)** a parish or community council.

The 'Guidance' also states that any investment not meeting the definition of paragraph 5.1 is classified as a non-specified investment.

During 2021/22 the Council does not intend to make any investments in foreign currencies, nor any with low credit quality bodies, nor any that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation (such as company shares). Non-specified investments will therefore be limited to (i) long-term investments; and (ii) deposits with the Council's own banker for transactional purposes if it fails to meet the basic credit criteria; in this instance balances will be minimised as far as is possible

The table in Appendix 8 set out the investment criteria and limits for the categories of investments intended for use during 2021/22 and therefore form the basis for the approved lending list.

Any proposed revisions or amendments during the year to the categories of specified and non-specified investments to be used and / or to the associated credit rating criteria / investment limits will be subject to prior approval by the County Council.

***** *Section 2.4 of the 'Guidance' defines a long term investment as ''any investment other than (a) one which is due to be repaid within 12 months of the date on which the investment was made or (b) one which the local authority may require to be repaid within that period.''*

****** *For the purposes of high credit quality the 'Guidance' states that ''for the purposes of paragraph 5.1(d), Welsh ministers recommend that the Strategy should define high credit quality (and where this definition refers to credit ratings, paragraph 6.1 (***) is relevant).'*

**** Paragraph 6.1 of the 'Guidance' recommends that ''the Strategy should set out the authority's approach to assessing the risk of loss of investments, making clear in particular:*

- ***(a)*** *to what extent, if any, risk assessment is based upon credit ratings issued by one or more credit rating agencies;*
- ***(b)*** *where credit ratings are used, how frequently credit ratings are monitored and what action is to be taken when ratings change; and*
- ***(c)*** *what other sources of information on credit risk are used, additional to or instead of credit ratings.''*

The table in Appendix 8 of this strategy sets out what this Council defines as high credit quality and the associated investment criteria and limits and section 7.3 of this strategy sets out the Council's creditworthiness approach.

Counterparty Criteria

Category	Short Term Credit Rating (Fitch)	Short Term Credit Rating (Moody's)	Short Term Credit Rating (Standard & Poor's)	Long Term Credit Rating (Fitch)	Long Term Credit Rating (Moody's)	Long Term Credit Rating (Standard & Poor's)	Cash Limit	Time Limit
Bank and Building Societies (not nationalised or part nationalised)	**F1+**	**P-1**	**A-1+**	**AAA**	**Aaa**	**AAA**	**£10m**	**5 years**
	F1+	**P-1**	**A-1+**	**AA**	**Aa2**	**AA**	**£10m**	**3 years**
	F1+	**P-1**	**A-1+**	**AA-**	**Aa3**	**AA-**	**£10m**	**364 days**
	F1	**P-1**	**A-1**	**A**	**A2**	**A**	**£7.5m**	**6 months**
Nationalised / Part Nationalised UK Banks	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**£10m**	**364 days**
NatWest Bank (Part Nationalised)	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**£30m**	**364 days**
UK Central Government (irrespective of credit rating)	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**No maximum**	**No maximum**
UK Local Authorities*	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**£5m**	**364 days**
Money Market Funds	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**AAA**	**AAA**	**AAA**	**£5m**	**6 months**

as defined in the Local Government Act 2003

Notes and Clarifications

(1) Cash Limit

(i) The cash limits apply both to the individual counterparty and to the overall group to which it belongs (e.g. for the banks within the Lloyds Banking Group plc (being Bank of Scotland plc and Lloyds Bank plc), the investment limit applies to those banks individually and the banking group as a whole);

(ii) The overall cash limit for deposits over 364 days is £15m.

(2) Time Limit

(i) This up to and including the period indicated.

(3) Foreign Countries

(i) Investments in foreign countries will be limited to those that hold a sovereign credit rating of (Fitch) AA- or equivalent (from the agencies referred to in section 4.3 of this strategy) sovereign credit rating (based upon the lowest common denominator), and to a maximum of £10 million per foreign country.

(ii) Investments in countries whose lowest sovereign rating is not AA- or above will not be permitted. No country limit will apply to investments in the UK, irrespective of the sovereign credit rating.

(iii) Subsidiaries of foreign banking groups will normally be assessed according to the country of domicile of the parent organisation. However, Santander UK plc (a subsidiary of Spain's Banco Santander) will be classed as a UK bank due to its substantial UK franchises and the arms-length nature of the parent-subsidiary relationships.

(iv) Sovereign credit rating criteria and foreign country limits will not apply to investments in multilateral development banks (e.g. the European Investment Bank and the World Bank) or other supranational organisations (e.g. the European Union).

4. Credit Rating Downgrade

Should a credit rating downgrade place a counterparty below the minimum credit rating criteria for investment, the counterparty will cease to be used as soon as practicable.

If the S151 Officer wishes to continue investing with that counterparty approval will be sought from the Chair of the Audit Committee plus one other member of the Chair's choosing, who both must approve the action. This will then be reported as appropriate at the next available opportunity.

APPENDIX 9

Approved countries for investments [correct as at 5 January 2021]

This list is based on those countries which have sovereign ratings of AA- or higher (we show the lowest rating from Fitch, Moody's and S&P) and also, (except - at the time of writing - for Hong Kong, Norway and Luxembourg), have banks operating in sterling markets which have credit ratings of green or above in the Link Asset Services credit worthiness service.

Based on lowest available rating

AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

AA+

- Canada
- Finland
- U.S.A.

AA

- Abu Dhabi (UAE)
- France

AA-

- Belgium
- Hong Kong
- Qatar
- **U.K.**

Treasury management scheme of delegation

(i) County Council

- budget approval;
- approval of the annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy, annual Treasury Management Policy Statement and amendments thereto;
- approval of amendments to the Council's adopted clauses;
- receiving and reviewing monitoring reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities; and
- acting on recommendations received from the Audit Committee and/or Executive Committee.

(ii) Executive Committee

- budget consideration;
- approval of the division of responsibilities;
- approval of the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment;
- receiving and reviewing monitoring reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities and making recommendations to the County Council as appropriate; and
- acting on recommendations received from the Audit Committee.

(iii) Audit Committee

- Scrutiny of Treasury Management matters as required by CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Council's Treasury Management Policy. This includes:-

  - scrutinising the annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy, Annual MRP Policy, Annual Treasury Management Policy and Treasury Management Practices and making recommendations to the Executive Committee and County Council as appropriate;
  - scrutinising proposals for amendments to the annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy, Annual MRP Policy, Annual Treasury Management Policy and Treasury Management Practices and to the adopted clauses and making recommendations to the Executive and County Council as appropriate;
  - receiving and scrutinising any other proposals relating to the treasury management which require a decision by the Executive or County Council; and
  - receiving and scrutinising monitoring reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities and make recommendations to the Executive and County Council as appropriate.

The Treasury Management role of the Section 151 Officer

The Section 151 (responsible) Officer's role includes:-

- recommending clauses, treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance;
- submitting regular treasury management policy reports;
- submitting budgets and budget variations;
- receiving and reviewing management information reports;
- reviewing the performance of the treasury management function;
- ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources and skills, and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function;
- ensuring the adequacy of internal audit, and liaising with external audit;
- recommending the appointment of external service providers; and

- Responsibility for the execution and administration of its Treasury decisions, including decision on borrowing, investment and financing, have been delegated to the Section 151 Officer, who will act in accordance with the Council's policy statements and TMP's.
- preparation of a capital strategy to include capital expenditure, capital financing, non-financial investments and treasury management, with a long term timeframe
- ensuring that the capital strategy is prudent, sustainable, affordable and prudent in the long term and provides value for money
- ensuring that due diligence has been carried out on all treasury and non-financial investments and is in accordance with the risk appetite of the authority
- ensure that the authority has appropriate legal powers to undertake expenditure on non-financial assets and their financing
- ensuring the proportionality of all investments so that the authority does not undertake a level of investing which exposes the authority to an excessive level of risk compared to its financial resources
- ensuring that an adequate governance process is in place for the approval, monitoring and ongoing risk management of all non-financial investments and long term liabilities
- provision to members of a schedule of all non-treasury investments including material investments in subsidiaries, joint ventures, loans and financial guarantees
- ensuring that members are adequately informed and understand the risk exposures taken on by an authority
- ensuring that the authority has adequate expertise, either in house or externally provided, to carry out the above
- creation of Treasury Management Practices which specifically deal with how non treasury investments will be carried out and managed, to include the following:-
    - Risk management (TMP1 and schedules), including investment and risk management criteria for any material non-treasury investment portfolios;
    - Performance measurement and management (TMP2 and schedules), including methodology and criteria for assessing the performance and success of non-treasury investments;
    - Decision making, governance and organisation (TMP5 and schedules), including a statement of the governance requirements for decision making in relation to non-treasury investments; and arrangements to ensure that appropriate professional due diligence is carried out to support decision making;
    - Reporting and management information (TMP6 and schedules), including where and how often monitoring reports are taken;
    - Training and qualifications (TMP10 and schedules), including how the relevant knowledge and skills in relation to non-treasury investments will be arranged.

PRUDENTIAL & TREASURY INDICATORS **APPENDIX 11**
BUDGET SETTING 2021/22

No.	Indicator					
	Affordability	**2019/20 out-turn**	**2020/21 estimate**	**2021/22 proposal**	**2022/23 proposal**	**2023/24 proposal**
1,2	Estimates of [or actual] ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream:					
	Council Fund	4.96%	4.80%	4.78%	4.73%	4.75%
	Housing Revenue Account (inclusive of settlement)	19.01%	16.34%	9.63%	13.17%	13.91%
	Total	6.62%	6.16%	5.36%	5.77%	5.90%
	Prudence					
3	Gross debt and the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Is the gross external debt < the CFR for the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for the current and the next two financial years?			✓	✓	✓
	Capital Expenditure	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
4,5	Estimates of [or actual] capital expenditure					
	Council Fund	18,203	22,788	15,842	16,380	17,221
	Housing Revenue Account	11,812	11,010	20,313	18,816	22,670
	Total	30,015	33,798	36,155	35,196	39,891
6,7	Estimates of [or actual] Capital Financing Requirement					
	Council Fund	96,906	103,489	105,669	111,946	117,767
	Housing Revenue Account	39,998	39,198	40,415	45,606	54,193
	Total	136,904	142,687	146,084	157,552	171,960
	External Debt	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
8	Authorised Limit					
	: General Borrowing	175,000	175,000	178,000	190,000	204,000
	: Other long term liabilities	3,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
	: Total	178,000	180,000	183,000	195,000	209,000

9	Operational Boundary					
	: General Borrowing	170,000	170,000	173,000	185,000	199,000
	: Other long term liabilities	3,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
	: Total	173,000	175,000	178,000	190,000	204,000
10	Actual External Debt	139,232				
Treasury Management		**2019/20 out-turn**	**2020/21 estimate**	**2021/22 proposal**	**2022/23 proposal**	**2023/24 proposal**
11	The Local Authority has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
12	Gross and net debt	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	The upper limit on the net debt as a proportion of gross debt					
13	The upper limit on fixed rate exposures:	155,000	155,000	158,000	170,000	184,000
	(net principal outstanding)					
14	The upper limit on variable rate exposures:	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
	(net principal outstanding)					
15	The limit for total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
	(any long term investments carried forward from previous years will be included in each year's limit)					
			2021/22 upper limit		**2021/22 lower limit**	
16	The upper and lower limits for the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing					
	• under 12 months		20%		0%	
	• 12 months and within 24 months		20%		0%	
	• 24 months and within 5 years		50%		0%	
	• 5 years and within 10 years		75%		0%	
	• 10 years and above		100%		0%	
			no change		no change	

Information on Prudential & Treasury Management indicators

A) Affordability

1 & 2 Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in this budget report.

B) Prudence

3 Gross Debt and the CFR

The Council needs to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2021/22 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.

C) Capital expenditure

The Council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the capital expenditure plans is reflected in the prudential indicators, which are designed to assist members' overview and confirm capital expenditure plans.

4 & 5 Estimates of Capital Expenditure

This is the forecast Capital Expenditure from 2020/21 to 2023/24, and is based on the Capital Programme for 2020/21 and the Capital Strategy for 2021/22.

6 & 7 The Council's borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement)

Another prudential indicator is the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is simply the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure above, which has not immediately been paid for through a revenue or capital resource, will increase the CFR.

The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which broadly reduces the borrowing need in line with each assets life, and so charges the economic consumption of capital assets as they are used.

The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. PFI schemes, finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the Council's borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a borrowing facility and so the Council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes. The Council currently has £nil of such schemes within the CFR.

CH) External Debt

8. **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. 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 S151 Officer reports that the Council complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the budget report.

9. **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 and the ability to fund under-borrowing by other cash resources.

Glossary

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE
Capital expenditure is expenditure on the purchase of a non-current asset, which will be used in providing services beyond the current financial year, or expenditure which adds to, and not merely maintains, the value of an existing non-current asset. Examples include: the building of a new school, the purchase of IT equipment, a major refurbishment of a care home.

CAPITAL FINANCING
Funds that are available to pay for capital expenditure. There are various methods of financing capital expenditure including borrowing, leasing, direct revenue financing, usable capital receipts, capital grants, capital contributions, revenue reserves and earmarked reserves.

CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT
The total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME
The capital schemes the Council intends to carry out over a specific period of time.

CAPITAL RECEIPTS
Capital receipts represent the proceeds from the disposal of land or other non-current assets. Proportions of capital receipts can be used to finance new capital expenditure, within rules set down by the government, but they cannot be used to finance revenue expenditure.

CIPFA
This is The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, the lead professional and regulatory body for local Authority accounting.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)
The HRA is a separate account to the Council Fund, and includes the income and expenditure arising from the provision of housing accommodation by the Council.

INTEREST RECEIVABLE OR PAYABLE
The effective interest rate method is used to measure the carrying value of a financial asset or liability measured at cost less accumulated amortisation, and to allocate associated interest income or expense to the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments or receipts through the expected life of the financial instrument to equal the amount at initial recognition. The effective interest is adjusted to the actual interest payment or receipt through the Movement in Reserves Statement to ensure only actual interest is charged to Council Tax. For financial assets and liabilities carried at cost because the effective rate of interest is the same as the carrying rate of interest, the carrying value is adjusted for accrued interest.

MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP)
The minimum amount which must be charged to the revenue account each year in order to provide for the repayment of loans and other amounts borrowed by the Council.

NET DEBT
The Net Debt is the Council's borrowings less cash and liquid resources.

PUBLIC WORKS LOANS BOARD (PWLB)
A Central Government Agency which provides loans for one year and/or more to authorities at interest rates only slightly higher than those at which the government can borrow itself.

REVENUE EXPENDITURE FUNDED BY CAPITAL UNDER STATUTE (REFCUS)
Expenditure which can be properly deferred (i.e. treated as capital in nature), but which does not result in, or remain matched with, a tangible asset. Examples of deferred charges are grants of a capital nature to voluntary organisations.

REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT
A grant paid by Central Government to authorities, contributing towards the general cost of their services.

SUPPORTED BORROWING
The Council borrows money to fund part of its capital programme. This borrowing is recognised by Central Government in its calculation of formula funding for the Council.

TEMPORARY BORROWING
Money borrowed for a period of less than one year.

UNSUPPORTED BORROWING
The Council can borrow additional money to the borrowing supported by Government to finance its capital expenditure as long as it is affordable and sustainable. This power is governed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code, with which the Council fully complies.