

## Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018/19

### 1. Introduction

In February 2011 the Authority adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2011 Edition* (the Treasury Management Code) which requires the Authority to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year. In addition, the March 2010 Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) *Guidance on Local Authority Investments* requires the Authority to approve an Investment Strategy before the start of each financial year.

CIPFA consulted on changes to the Treasury Management Code and the *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* (The Prudential Code) in February and August 2017. In December 2017, CIPFA published its new 2017 editions of the Treasury Management Code and the Prudential Code.

CLG is currently considering feedback from a consultation exercise on proposed changes to its Guidance on Local Authority Investment. Changes are expected to be made to the Guidance, however, the changes have not been published at the time of preparing this Strategy Statement. In addition, updated sector specific guidance notes on the Treasury Management Code have not been published, which include the updated treasury management indicators for local authorities.

In response to these changes, the Council will consider the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19 based upon the requirements of the 2011 Treasury Management Code and in line with current governance practices. A Capital Strategy will also be considered by Council, however, both Strategies may require further amendments once the Treasury Management Guidance Notes, which include the Treasury Management Indicators, and the new DCLG Investment Guidance is available.

This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance.

The Authority has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are therefore central to the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy.

### 2. Economic background

The major external influence on the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19 will be the UK's progress in negotiating its exit from the European Union and agreeing future trading arrangements. The domestic economy has remained relatively robust since the surprise outcome of the 2016 referendum, but there are indications that uncertainty over the future is now weighing on growth. Transitional arrangements may prevent a cliff-edge, but will also extend the period of uncertainty for several years. Economic growth is therefore forecast to remain sluggish throughout 2018/19.

Consumer price inflation reached 3.0% in September 2017 as the post-referendum devaluation of sterling continued to feed through to imports. Unemployment continued to fall and the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee judged that the extent of spare capacity in the economy seemed limited and the pace at which the economy can grow without generating inflationary pressure had fallen over recent years. With its inflation-control mandate in mind, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee raised official interest rates to 0.5% in November 2017.

In contrast, the US economy is performing well and the Federal Reserve is raising interest rates in regular steps to remove some of the emergency monetary stimulus it has provided for the past decade. The European Central Bank is yet to raise rates, but has started to taper its quantitative easing programme, signalling some confidence in the Eurozone economy.

### **3. Credit outlook**

High profile bank failures in Italy and Portugal have reinforced concerns over the health of the European banking sector. Sluggish economies and fines for pre-crisis behaviour continue to weigh on bank profits, and any future economic slowdown will exacerbate concerns in this regard.

Bail-in legislation, which ensures that large investors including local authorities will rescue failing banks instead of taxpayers in the future, has now been fully implemented in the European Union, Switzerland and USA, while Australia and Canada are progressing with their own plans. In addition, the largest UK banks will ringfence their retail banking functions into separate legal entities during 2018. There remains some uncertainty over how these changes will impact upon the credit strength of the residual legal entities.

The credit risk associated with making unsecured bank deposits has therefore increased relative to the risk of other investment options available to the Authority; returns from cash deposits however remain very low.

### **4. Interest rate forecast**

The Authority's treasury adviser Arlingclose's central case is for UK Bank Rate to remain at 0.50% during 2018/19, following the rise from the historic low of 0.25%. The Monetary Policy Committee re-emphasised that any prospective increases in Bank Rate would be expected to be at a gradual pace and to a limited extent.

Future expectations for higher short term interest rates are subdued and on-going decisions remain data dependant and negotiations on exiting the EU cast a shadow over monetary policy decisions. The risks to Arlingclose's forecast are broadly balanced on both sides. The Arlingclose central case is for gilt yields to remain broadly stable across the medium term. Upward movement will be limited, although the UK government's seemingly deteriorating fiscal stance is an upside risk. A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## 5. Balances

On 31st December 2017, the Authority held £38.855 million of investments. This is set out in further detail at **Appendix 2**. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

|                           | 31.3.17<br>Actual<br>£000 | 31.3.18<br>Estimate<br>£000 | 31.3.19<br>Forecast<br>£000 | 31.3.20<br>Forecast<br>£000 | 31.3.21<br>Forecast<br>£000 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Total CFR</b>          | 0                         | 0                           | 3,500                       | 7,500                       | 7,500                       |
| External borrowing        | 3,100                     | 0                           | 0                           | 0                           | 0                           |
| <b>Internal borrowing</b> | 0                         | 0                           | 3,500                       | 7,500                       | 7,500                       |
| Usable reserves           | 22,500                    | 19,000                      | 16,000                      | 13,000                      | 13,000                      |
| Working capital           | 4,900                     | 4,900                       | 4,900                       | 4,900                       | 4,900                       |
| <b>Investments</b>        | <b>30,500</b>             | <b>27,400</b>               | <b>21,000</b>               | <b>14,000</b>               | <b>14,000</b>               |

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing for temporary cashflow purposes only and use current investments for internal borrowing.

The Authority is currently debt free, however, the Council is developing plans to increase car parking facilities in Cirencester which will result in a positive capital financing requirement. Over the forecast period, the capital can be financed from internal borrowing. The impact of internal borrowing on funds available for investment has been set out in Table 1.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years.

## 6. Borrowing Strategy

The Authority does not currently hold any loans and does not expect to need to borrow in 2018/19. The Authority may however borrow to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £12 million.

### Objectives

The Authority's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. At present the council holds no debt on its balance sheet.

### Strategy:

Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost

effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.

By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal / short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2018/19 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

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

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

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

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

- operating and finance leases
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

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

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

## 7. Investment Strategy

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Authority's investment

balance has averaged £32.144 million. In recognition of potential capital investment in car parking the level of investment balance is expected to reduce to around £28million in 2018/19.

## Objectives

Both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested.

## Negative interest rates

If the UK enters into a recession in 2018/19, there is a small chance that the Bank of England could set its Bank Rate at or below zero, which is likely to feed through to negative interest rates on all low risk, short-term investment options. This situation already exists in many other European countries. In this event, security will be measured as receiving the contractually agreed amount at maturity, even though this may be less than the amount originally invested. Given the increasing risk and low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Authority aims to carry on and diversify into more secure and/or higher yielding asset classes during 2018/19. This is especially the case for the estimated £20m that is available for longer-term investment. The majority of the Authority's surplus cash is currently invested in short-term unsecured bank deposits, certificates of deposit and money market funds. This diversification will represent change in strategy over the coming year.

## Approved counterparties

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

Table 2: Approved investment counterparties and limits

| Credit rating | Banks unsecured | Banks secured   | Government              | Corporates      | Registered Providers |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| UK Govt       | n/a             | n/a             | £ Unlimited<br>50 years | n/a             | n/a                  |
| AAA           | £7m<br>5 years  | £7m<br>20 years | £10m<br>50 years        | £5m<br>20 years | £5m<br>20 years      |
| AA+           | £7m<br>5 years  | £7m<br>10 years | £10m<br>25 years        | £4m<br>10 years | £5m<br>10 years      |
| AA            | £7m<br>4 years  | £7m<br>5 years  | £7m<br>15 years         | £4m<br>5 years  | £5m<br>10 years      |
| AA-           | £7m<br>3 years  | £7m<br>4 years  | £7m<br>10 years         | £3m<br>4 years  | £5m<br>10 years      |

| Credit rating       | Banks unsecured  | Banks secured    | Government     | Corporates       | Registered Providers |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| A+                  | £7m<br>2 years   | £7m<br>3 years   | £7m<br>5 years | £3m<br>3 years   | £5m<br>5 years       |
| A                   | £7m<br>13 months | £7m<br>2 years   | £7m<br>5 years | £3m<br>2 years   | £3m<br>5 years       |
| A-                  | £7m<br>6 months  | £7m<br>13 months | £7m<br>5 years | £2m<br>13 months | £3m<br>5 years       |
| None                | £2m<br>6 months  | £2m<br>6 months  | n/a            | n/a              | n/a                  |
| <b>Pooled funds</b> | £5m per fund     |                  |                |                  |                      |

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

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

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

**Government:** Loans, bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is an insignificant risk of insolvency. Investments with the UK Central Government may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

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

**Registered providers:** Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by or secured on the assets of registered providers of social housing, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency and, as providers of public services; they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

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

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

**Operational bank accounts**

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

**Policy investments**

The Authority has agreed to provide cash-flow cover for its third-party organisation linked to the Authority. The following limits are set for 2018/19:-

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

**Risk assessment and credit ratings**

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

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

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

## **Other information on the security of investments**

The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations, in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may meet the credit rating criteria.

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

## **Specified investments**

The CLG Guidance defines specified investments as those:

- denominated in pound sterling,
- due to be repaid within 12 months of arrangement,
- not defined as capital expenditure by legislation, and
- invested with one of:
  - the UK Government,
  - a UK local authority, parish council or community council, or
  - a body or investment scheme of "high credit quality".

The Authority defines "high credit quality" organisations and securities as those having a credit rating of A- or higher that are domiciled in the UK or a foreign country with a sovereign rating of AA+ or higher. For money market funds and other pooled funds "high credit quality" is defined as those having a credit rating of A- or higher.

## **Non-specified investments**

Any investment not meeting the definition of a specified investment is classed as non-specified. The Authority does not intend to make any investments denominated in foreign currencies, nor any that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation, such as company shares. Non-specified investments will therefore be limited to long-term investments, i.e. those that are due to mature 12 months or longer from the date of arrangement, and investments with bodies and schemes not meeting the definition on high credit quality. Limits on non-specified investments are shown in table 3 below.



**Table 3: Non-specified investment limits**

|  | <b>Cash limit</b> |
|--|-------------------|
| Total long-term investments  | £20m              |
| Total investments without credit ratings or rated below A- (except UK Government and local authorities)  | £10m              |
| Total investments (except pooled funds) with institutions domiciled in foreign countries rated below AA+ | £10m              |

**Investment limits:** The Authority's revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £27 million on 31st March 2018. In order that no more than 25% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £7 million. A group of banks under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits will also be placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

**Table 4: Investment limits**

|   | <b>Cash limit</b> |
|---|-------------------|
| Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government | £7m each          |
| UK Central Government                                     | unlimited         |
| Any group of organisations under the same ownership       | £7m per group     |
| Any group of pooled funds under the same management       | £5m per manager   |
| Foreign countries   | £4m per country   |
| Registered providers                                      | £5m in total      |
| Unsecured investments with building societies             | £5m in total      |
| Loans to unrated corporates                               | £5m in total      |
| Money Market Funds  | £15m in total     |

### **Liquidity management**

The Authority uses purpose-built cash flow forecasting software to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

## 8. Non-Treasury Investments

Although not classed as treasury management activities and therefore not covered by the CIPFA Code or the CLG Guidance, the Authority may also purchase property for investment purposes and may also make loans and investments for service purposes. Such loans and investments will be subject to the Authority's normal approval processes for revenue and capital expenditure and need not comply with this treasury management strategy.

### Treasury Management Indicators

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

#### **Security**

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

|                                 | <b>Target</b> |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Portfolio average credit rating | A+            |

#### **Interest rate exposures**

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

|  | <b>2018/19</b> | <b>2019/20</b> | <b>2020/21</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposure    | 100%           | 100%           | 100%           |
| Upper limit on variable interest rate exposure | 50%            | 50%            | 50%            |

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

#### **Principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days**

The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

|   | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Limit on principal invested beyond year end | £20m    | £20m    | £20m    |

### **Other Items**

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

### **Policy on the use of financial derivatives**

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

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

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

### **Investment training**

The needs of the Authority's treasury management staff for training in investment management are assessed as part of the staff appraisal process, and additionally when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change.

Officers regularly attend training courses, seminars and conferences provided by Arlingclose and CIPFA.

### **Investment advisers**

The Authority recently appointed Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers for three years plus the option for a further two years after a joint tender with West Oxfordshire District Council. The Authority receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues.

### **Investment of money borrowed in advance of need**

The Authority may, from time to time, borrow in advance of need, where this is expected to provide the best long-term value for money. Since amounts borrowed will be invested until spent, the Authority is aware that it will be exposed to the risk of loss of the borrowed sums, and the risk that investment and borrowing interest rates may change in the intervening period. These risks will be managed as part of the Authority's overall management of its treasury risks.

The total amount borrowed will not exceed the authorised borrowing limit of £7.5 million. The maximum period between borrowing and expenditure is expected to be two years, although the Authority is not required to link particular loans with particular items of expenditure.

### **Financial Implications**

The budget for investment income in 2018/19 is £351,300, based on an average investment portfolio of £28 million; with £10 million invested in pooled funds at an average interest rate of 3% and £18 million invested in liquid funds at an interest rate of 0.53%. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, and actual interest rates differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

**Appendix 1 – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast November 2017****Underlying assumptions:**

- In a 7-2 vote, the MPC increased Bank Rate in line with market expectations to 0.5%. Dovish accompanying rhetoric prompted investors to lower the expected future path for interest rates. The minutes re-emphasised that any prospective increases in Bank Rate would be expected to be at a gradual pace and to a limited extent.
- Further potential movement in Bank Rate is reliant on economic data and the likely outcome of the EU negotiations. Policymakers have downwardly assessed the supply capacity of the UK economy, suggesting inflationary growth is more likely. However, the MPC will be wary of raising rates much further amid low business and household confidence.
- The UK economy faces a challenging outlook as the minority government continues to negotiate the country's exit from the European Union. While recent economic data has improved, it has done so from a low base: UK Q3 2017 GDP growth was 0.4%, after a 0.3% expansion in Q2.
- Household consumption growth, the driver of recent UK GDP growth, has softened following a contraction in real wages, despite both saving rates and consumer credit volumes indicating that some households continue to spend in the absence of wage growth. Policymakers have expressed concern about the continued expansion of consumer credit; any action taken will further dampen household spending.
- Some data has held up better than expected, with unemployment continuing to decline and house prices remaining relatively resilient. However, both of these factors can also be seen in a negative light, displaying the structural lack of investment in the UK economy post financial crisis. Weaker long term growth may prompt deterioration in the UK's fiscal position.
- The depreciation in sterling may assist the economy to rebalance away from spending. Export volumes will increase, helped by a stronger Eurozone economic expansion.
- Near-term global growth prospects have continued to improve and broaden, and expectations of inflation are subdued. Central banks are moving to reduce the level of monetary stimulus.
- Geo-political risks remains elevated and helps to anchor safe-haven flows into the UK government bond (gilt) market.

**Forecast:**

- The MPC has increased Bank Rate, largely to meet expectations they themselves created. Future expectations for higher short term interest rates are subdued. On-going decisions remain data dependant and negotiations on exiting the EU cast a shadow over monetary policy decisions.

- Our central case for Bank Rate is 0.5% over the medium term. The risks to the forecast are broadly balanced on both sides.
- The Arlingclose central case is for gilt yields to remain broadly stable across the medium term. Upward movement will be limited, although the UK government's seemingly deteriorating fiscal stance is an upside risk.

Appendix 1

|                           | Dec-17 | Mar-18 | Jun-18 | Sep-18 | Dec-18 | Mar-19 | Jun-19 | Sep-19 | Dec-19 | Mar-20 | Jun-20 | Sep-20 | Dec-20 | Average |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <b>Official Bank Rate</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Upside risk               | 0.00   | 0.00   | 0.00   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.19    |
| Arlingclose Central Case  | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50    |
| Downside risk             | 0.00   | 0.00   | 0.00   | 0.00   | 0.00   | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.15   |
| <b>3-month LIBID rate</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Upside risk               | 0.10   | 0.10   | 0.10   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.22    |
| Arlingclose Central Case  | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50   | 0.50    |
| Downside risk             | -0.10  | -0.10  | -0.15  | -0.15  | -0.15  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.20   |
| <b>1-yr LIBID rate</b>    |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Upside risk               | 0.15   | 0.15   | 0.20   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.30   | 0.27    |
| Arlingclose Central Case  | 0.70   | 0.70   | 0.70   | 0.70   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.77    |
| Downside risk             | -0.15  | -0.20  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.15  | -0.26   |
| <b>5-yr gilt yield</b>    |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Upside risk               | 0.20   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.30   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.40   | 0.32    |
| Arlingclose Central Case  | 0.75   | 0.75   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.80   | 0.85   | 0.90   | 0.90   | 0.95   | 0.95   | 1.00   | 1.05   | 1.10   | 0.89    |
| Downside risk             | -0.20  | -0.20  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.35  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.33   |
| <b>10-yr gilt yield</b>   |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Upside risk               | 0.20   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.30   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.40   | 0.32    |
| Arlingclose Central Case  | 1.25   | 1.25   | 1.25   | 1.25   | 1.25   | 1.30   | 1.30   | 1.35   | 1.40   | 1.45   | 1.50   | 1.55   | 1.55   | 1.36    |
| Downside risk             | -0.20  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.30  | -0.35  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.40  | -0.33   |
| <b>20-yr gilt yield</b>   |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Upside risk               | 0.20   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.30   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.40   | 0.32    |
| Arlingclose Central Case  | 1.85   | 1.85   | 1.85   | 1.85   | 1.85   | 1.90   | 1.90   | 1.95   | 1.95   | 2.00   | 2.05   | 2.05   | 2.05   | 1.93    |
| Downside risk             | -0.20  | -0.30  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.30  | -0.35  | -0.40  | -0.45  | -0.50  | -0.50  | -0.50  | -0.50  | -0.50  | -0.38   |
| <b>50-yr gilt yield</b>   |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Upside risk               | 0.20   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.25   | 0.30   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.35   | 0.40   | 0.32    |
| Arlingclose Central Case  | 1.70   | 1.70   | 1.70   | 1.70   | 1.70   | 1.75   | 1.80   | 1.85   | 1.90   | 1.95   | 1.95   | 1.95   | 1.95   | 1.82    |
| Downside risk             | -0.30  | -0.30  | -0.25  | -0.25  | -0.30  | -0.35  | -0.40  | -0.45  | -0.50  | -0.50  | -0.50  | -0.50  | -0.50  | -0.39   |

## Appendix 2 – Existing Investment Portfolio Position

|   | 31.12.17<br>Actual Portfolio<br>£m | 31.12.17<br>Average Rate<br>% |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Treasury investments:</b>              |                                    |                               |
| Banks & building societies<br>(unsecured) | 22.4                               | 0.52                          |
| Government (incl. local authorities)      | 2                                  | 1.00                          |
| Corporate bonds and loans                 |                                    |                               |
| Money Market Funds                        | 15.5                               | 0.29                          |
| Other pooled funds                        | 1.02                               | 0.62                          |
| Property Fund                             | 0.5                                | 4.13                          |
| <b>Total treasury investments</b>         | <b>41.42</b>                       | <b>0.53</b>                   |