

Committee: Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Date: Wednesday 23 January 2019
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)	Councillor Sean Gaul (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Hannah Banfield	Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Ian Corkin	Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Tom Wallis	Councillor Sean Woodcock

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

4. Urgent Business

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

5. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 November 2018.

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive communications from the Chairman.

7. **Internal Audit Update 2018/19** (Pages 5 - 14)

Report of the Executive Director – Finance (Interim)

Purpose of report

To receive CW Audit Services update report for 2018/19.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the contents of the 2018/19 internal audit progress report from CW Audit Services.

8. **External Audit Progress Update**

Verbal update by Executive Director: Finance and Governance (Interim)

9. **Draft Treasury Management Strategies 2019/20** (Pages 15 - 52)

Report of the Executive Director – Finance (Interim)

Purpose of report

To submit the draft suite of Treasury Management Strategies for 2019/20.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To recommend the draft Treasury Management Strategies 2019/20 to Council.

10. **Work Programme**

To consider and review the Work Programme.

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members Room at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk or 01295 227956 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Evacuation Procedure

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the car park as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

Access to Meetings

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Aaron Hetherington, Democratic and Elections
aaron.hetherington@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk, 01295 227956

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive

Published on Tuesday 15 January 2019

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 21 November 2018 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)
Councillor Sean Gaul (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Tom Wallis

Substitute Members: Councillor Barry Richards (In place of Councillor Sean Woodcock)
Councillor Barry Wood (In place of Councillor Ian Corkin)

Also Present: Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member – Financial Management and Governance
Anand Persaud, Audit Manager, CW Audit Services

Apologies for absence: Councillor Hannah Banfield
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Officers: Adele Taylor, Executive Director: Finance and Governance (Interim) & Section 151 Officer
Kelly Watson, Deputy Section 151 Officer
Aaron Hetherington, Democratic and Elections Officer

39 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

40 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

41 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

42 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

44 **External Audit: Annual Audit Letter 2017/18 and Internal Audit Progress Report**

The Executive Director, Finance and Governance submitted a report which sought consideration of the Ernst and Young LLP Annual Audit Letter, which included comments on the external audit of the 2017/18 Statement of Accounts. The report also presented the CW Audit Internal Audit Progress Report 2018/19.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration the key issues raised in the Annual Audit Letter 2017/18 be noted.
- (2) That having given due consideration key issues raised in the Internal Audit Report 2018/19 be noted.

45 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - September 2018**

The Assistant Director, Performance and Transformation and the Assistant Director, Finance and Procurement submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of each month.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report be noted.
- (2) That having given due consideration, the Leadership Risk Register be noted and no issues be identified for further consideration.

46 **Treasury Management Report - October 2018**

The Executive Director, Finance and Governance submitted a report which presented information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2018/19 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the October 2018 Treasury Management Report be noted.

47 **Work Programme**

The Committee considered its work programme.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted

48 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 3 and 7 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

49 **Corporate Fraud**

The Senior Investigation Officer submitted an exempt report which provided an overview of the current progress of the Authority's counter fraud response following the delegation of authority in July 2018 to Oxford City Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt report be noted.

50 **Treasury Management Report - October 2018 - Exempt Appendix**

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.38 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

23 January 2019

Internal Audit Update 2018/19

Report of the Executive Director – Finance (Interim)

This report is public

Purpose of report

To receive CW Audit Services update report for 2018/19.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the contents of the 2018/19 internal audit progress report from CW Audit Services.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Internal Audit undertakes a programme of work each year which is produced in consultation with senior management. The plan will be monitored for progress during the year and regular reports and updates will be provided to the Committee.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 Internal Audit is on track to deliver its planned programme of work for the 2018/19 year see Appendix 1.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Annual plan sets out the work programme for Internal Audit 2018/19 and provides the framework for assessing the internal control framework in place. This work programme will assist the Committee is gaining further assurance on the Councils internal controls.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 None

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Members may choose to seek additional information from CW audit services and officers.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

Kelly Watson, Deputy S151 Officer, 0300 003 0206

Kelly.watson@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from any outcome of this report.

Comments checked by:

Richard Hawtin, Team Leader – Non-contentious, 01295 221695

Richard.hawtin@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Risk Management Implications

- 7.3 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Louise Tustian

Louise Tustian, Team Leader – Strategic Intelligence and Insight , 01295 221786

louise.tustian@Cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

All wards are affected

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

All corporate plan themes.

Lead Councillor

None

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	CW Audit Services Update Report 2018/19
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Adele Taylor, Executive Director - Finance and S151 Officer (Interim)
Contact Information	adele.taylor@Cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk 01295 221634

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Cherwell and South Northamptonshire Councils

Internal Audit
Progress Report 2018/19

January 2019



1. Introduction

The purpose of the report is to update the committee on progress made in delivering the 2018/19 audit plan to the end of December 2018. The agreed joint internal audit plan for the 2018/19 year totals 327 days. Appendix A provides details of the audit assignments included in the 2018/19 year, and an update on progress where assignments have commenced.

2. Summary of reviews completed

Review	Key issues arising from audit	Level of assurance				
General Ledger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconcile and balance payroll control accounts. Ensure bank account reconciliations are maintained up-to-date. 	Significant				
System control objective	Level of Assurance					
	Full	Significant	Moderate	Limited	No	
All input* is properly controlled and verified and processing is complete, accurate and timely.		✓				
All output is appropriate and enables the production of accurate final accounts.		✓				
Access to system functions is restricted to authorised personnel and the security and integrity of the system is maintained.	✓					

Review	Key issues arising from audit	Level of assurance
Creditor Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce regular monitoring reports highlighting invoices supported by retrospective orders and take action to educate service areas on the need to ensure orders are placed prior to committing the Councils to non-pay expenditure. Take action to address open and incomplete orders on the system. 	Moderate

System control objective	Level of Assurance				
	Full	Significant	Moderate	Limited	No
Payments to suppliers are accurate, timely, properly accounted for and only made in respect of authorised invoices and for goods and services received and procured in line with the council's financial regulations and contract procedure rules.			✓		
Only authorised amendments can be made to the creditors masterfile.	✓				
All payment runs are subject to independent review and appropriately authorised before processing.		✓			
Output from the creditors system is complete, accurate and regular and is subject to independent review and monitoring by management.			✓		
Adequate segregation of duties exists including system access.	✓				

Review	Key issues arising from audit	Level of assurance
Treasury Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree treasury management transactions to the GL on a quarterly basis. 	Significant

System control objective	Level of Assurance				
	Full	Significant	Moderate	Limited	No
Investments are properly accounted for in accordance with current legislation and governing instruments, within a written policy agreed by the Council.	✓				
All expenditure on investments is properly authorised and reconciled to bank / ledger.		✓			
Investment performance and compliance with Prudential Indicators is effectively monitored.	✓				
All long term borrowing and short term borrowing, including PWLB is authorised by the s151 Officer, Head of Finance or nominated officer and is set out in written financial instructions.	✓				
A detailed register of loans is maintained that records interest and repayment terms for all loans and from which outstanding loans & loans repaid are readily identifiable and regularly reconciled to bank/control accounts.	✓				

3. Recommendation tracking

The current status of all recommendations due for implementation by the 31st December 2018, including recommendations raised by the Councils' previous internal auditors, PWC, is summarised as follows:

Recommendations due for implementation by 31 st December 2018				
Priority*	Number	Implemented or Closed	Ongoing	Pending
1	0	0	0	0
2	24	21	3	0
3	47	42	4	1
4	35	31	4	0
Totals	106	94	11	1

*Level 1 is the highest level of risk we attach to a recommendation.

Ongoing Level 2 Recommendations			
Subject	Original target date	Revised target	Latest update
Revised policy/procedures for debt recovery.	30/06/18	31/01/19	Policy currently in draft.
More robust procedures for recovery action to be taken in respect of debts that are more than 28 days old.	20/04/18	31/01/19	Forms part of the sundry debtors review that is currently underway.
GDPR Action Plan	9/12/18	31/01/19	Creating a new integrated work plan including the findings from the previously received consultant report, the internal audit report and other findings.

Appendix A - 2018/19 Internal audit plan

Area	Audit Assignment	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Current Status	Assurance Level
Corporate Governance & Systems	Cybersecurity		✓			Final report	Significant
	Information Governance - GDPR		✓			Final report	Moderate
	Information Technology - IT Disaster Recovery				✓	Scope agreed	
	Business Continuity Management		✓			Fieldwork complete	
	Corporate Health & Safety		✓			Final report	Significant
	Procurement & Contract Management			✓	✓	Fieldwork ongoing	
	Human Resources - Recruitment		✓	✓		Draft report	
	Legal Compliance	✓	✓			Final report	Significant
Financial Assurance	Budget management & MTFP/ Financial Resilience			✓	✓	Fieldwork complete	
	Capital Programme & Project Management		✓			Draft report	
	Payroll				✓	Scope agreed	
	General Ledger			✓		Final report	Significant
	Creditor Payments			✓		Final report	Moderate
	Treasury Management			✓		Final report	Significant
	Council Tax			✓	✓	Fieldwork ongoing	
	Business Rates			✓	✓	Fieldwork ongoing	
	Debtors			✓	✓	Fieldwork ongoing	
	Benefits			✓	✓	Fieldwork ongoing	
	Homes England Grant Certification*		✓			Audit Compliance Checklist submitted.	N/A
	DFG certification – CDC and SNC		✓			Certifications provided for both Councils	N/A

*Funded from contingency days

Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

23 January 2019

Draft Treasury Management Strategies 2019/20

Report of the Executive Director – Finance (Interim)

This report is public

Purpose of report

To submit the draft suite of Treasury Management Strategies for 2019/20.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To recommend the draft Treasury Management Strategies 2019/20 to Council.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Code of Practice on Treasury Management, approved by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and adopted in full by the Council in 2004, requires that Treasury Management, Capital and Investment Strategies are produced prior to the beginning of the financial year to which they relate. These strategies form the cornerstone of proper treasury management, and are central to the operation, management reporting and performance assessment.
- 2.2 The Council appointed Arlingclose as its Treasury Management advisor in April 2017. The highest standard of stewardship of public funds remains of the utmost importance to the Council.

3.0 Report Details

Draft Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20

- 3.1 The proposed strategy for 2019/20 (Appendix 1) has been fully reviewed and updated.
- 3.2 In consultation with Arlingclose and with full reference to the CIPFA Code of Practice, the Council has reviewed its risk appetite and associated priorities in relation to security, liquidity and yield in respect of returns from various financial instruments.

- 3.3 The draft strategy meets the requirements included within the CLG's Guidance on local government investments.

Draft Capital Strategy 2019/20

- 3.4 This strategy is new for 2019/20 and demonstrates how the council takes capital expenditure decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.
- 3.5 The strategy sets out the long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made and gives due consideration to both risk and reward and impact on the achievement of priority outcomes.

Draft Investment Strategy 2019/20

- 3.6 This strategy is revised for 2019/20 and now relates only to non-treasury management investments. The purpose of the strategy is to demonstrate how the council:
- Makes investment decisions (governance, advice taken etc)
 - Demonstrates investments are tied to corporate objectives
 - Assesses and monitors risk
 - Assesses and monitors return
 - Ensures there is appropriate capacity, skills and culture to support its strategy
- 3.7 Investments which are covered by this strategy include such things as:
- Loans to third parties (e.g. subsidiaries, charities, businesses)
 - Purchase of shares (in subsidiaries, businesses etc)
 - Property

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 There is a requirement to produce a revised suite of Treasury Management Strategies prior to the start of each financial year, this requires full council approval.

5.0 Consultation

None

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 None. This is a requirement placed upon all local authorities.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The financial implications of Treasury Management activity are incorporated into the draft budget 2019/20 and MTFs 2019/20 to 2023/24.

Comments checked by:
Kelly Watson, Deputy Section 151 Officer, 0300 003 0206
Kelly.Watson@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 Presentation of this report is in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice and Prudential Code.

Comments checked by:
Nick Graham, Director – Law and Governance, 0300 0030106
Nick.Graham@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Risk Management Implications

- 7.3 There are no risk implications arising directly from any outcome of this report. Treasury management is itself the management of risk and therefore these strategies demonstrate how the council manages treasury, capital and investment risk.

Comments checked by:
Louise Tustian, Team Leader, Strategic Intelligence and Insight, 01295 221786
louise.tustian@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

All wards are affected

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

All corporate plan themes.

Lead Councillor

Cllr Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20
Appendix 2	Capital Strategy 2019/20
Appendix 3	Investment Strategy 2019/20
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Joanne Kaye, Group Accountant, Finance & Procurement,
Contact Information	Joanne.Kaye@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk 01295 221545

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Cherwell District Council

Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/20

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Treasury management is the management of the council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the council's prudent financial management.
- 1.2 Treasury risk management at the council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the council's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 1.3 Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in a different report, the Investment Strategy.

2 External Context (provided by Arlingclose - December 2018)

Economic background

- 2.1 The UK's progress negotiating its exit from the European Union, together with its future trading arrangements, will continue to be a major influence on the Council's treasury management strategy for 2019/20.
- 2.2 UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) for October was up 2.4% year/year, slightly below the consensus forecast and broadly in line with the Bank of England's November Inflation Report. The most recent labour market data for October 2018 showed the unemployment rate edged up slightly to 4.1% while the employment rate of 75.7% was the joint highest on record. The 3-month average annual growth rate for pay excluding bonuses was 3.3% as wages continue to rise steadily and provide some pull on general inflation. Adjusted for inflation, real wages grew by 1.0%, a level still likely to have little effect on consumer spending.
- 2.3 The rise in quarterly GDP growth to 0.6% in Q3 from 0.4% in the previous quarter was due to weather-related factors boosting overall household consumption and construction activity over the summer following the weather-related weakness in Q1. At 1.5%, annual GDP growth continues to remain below trend. Looking ahead, the BoE, in its November Inflation Report, expects GDP growth to average around 1.75% over the forecast horizon, providing the UK's exit from the EU is relatively smooth.
- 2.4 Following the Bank of England's decision to increase Bank Rate to 0.75% in August, no changes to monetary policy have been made since. However, the Bank expects that should the economy continue to evolve in line with its November forecast, further increases in Bank Rate will be required to return inflation to the 2% target. The Monetary Policy Committee continues to reiterate that any further increases will be at a gradual pace and limited in extent.
- 2.5 While US growth has slowed over 2018, the economy continues to perform robustly. The US Federal Reserve continued its tightening bias throughout 2018, pushing rates to the current 2%-2.25% in September. Markets continue to expect one more rate rise in December, but expectations are fading that the further hikes previously expected in 2019 will materialise as concerns over trade wars drag on economic activity.

Credit outlook

- 2.6 The big four UK banking groups have now divided their retail and investment banking divisions into separate legal entities under ring-fencing legislation. Bank of Scotland, Barclays Bank UK, HSBC UK Bank, Lloyds Bank, National Westminster Bank, Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster Bank are the ring-fenced banks that now only conduct lower risk retail banking activities. Barclays Bank, HSBC Bank, Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets and NatWest Markets are the investment banks. Credit rating agencies have adjusted the ratings of some of these banks with the ring-fenced banks generally being better rated than their non-ring-fenced counterparts.
- 2.7 The Bank of England released its latest report on bank stress testing, illustrating that all entities included in the analysis were deemed to have passed the test once the levels of capital and potential mitigating actions presumed to be taken by management were factored in. The BoE did not require any bank to raise additional capital.
- 2.8 European banks are considering their approach to Brexit, with some looking to create new UK subsidiaries to ensure they can continue trading here. The credit strength of these new banks remains unknown, although the chance of parental support is assumed to be very high if ever needed. The uncertainty caused by protracted negotiations between the UK and EU is weighing on the creditworthiness of both UK and European banks with substantial operations in both jurisdictions.

Interest rate forecast

- 2.9 Following the increase in Bank Rate to 0.75% in August 2018, Arlingclose is forecasting two more 0.25% hikes during 2019 to take official UK interest rates to 1.25%. The Bank of England's MPC has maintained expectations for slow and steady rate rises over the forecast horizon. The MPC continues to have a bias towards tighter monetary policy but is reluctant to push interest rate expectations too strongly. Arlingclose believes that MPC members consider both that ultra-low interest rates result in other economic problems, and that higher Bank Rate will be a more effective policy weapon should downside Brexit risks crystallise when rate cuts will be required.
- 2.10 The UK economic environment remains relatively soft, despite seemingly strong labour market data. Arlingclose's view is that the economy still faces a challenging outlook as it exits the European Union and Eurozone growth softens. While assumptions are that a Brexit deal is struck and some agreement reached on transition and future trading arrangements before the UK leaves the EU, the possibility of a "no deal" Brexit still hangs over economic activity (*at the time of writing this commentary in mid-December*). As such, the risks to the interest rate forecast are considered firmly to the downside.
- 2.11 Gilt yields and hence long-term borrowing rates have remained at low levels but some upward movement from current levels is expected based on Arlingclose's interest rate projections, due to the strength of the US economy and the ECB's forward guidance on higher rates. 10-year and 20-year gilt yields are forecast to remain around 1.7% and 2.2% respectively over the interest rate forecast horizon, however volatility arising from both economic and political events are likely to continue to offer borrowing opportunities.
- 2.12 The economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at Appendix A.

For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that investments will be made at an average rate of 1.03%, and that loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 1.78%.

3 Local Context

- 3.1 On 31st December 2018, the council held £89.5m of borrowing and £15.7m of investments. This is set out in further detail below:

	31.12.18 Actual Portfolio £m	31.12.18 Average Rate %
External borrowing:		
Public Works Loan Board	41.0	2.05%
Local authorities	48.5	1.02%
Total gross external debt	89.5	1.49%
Treasury investments:		
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	2.0	0.65%
UK Government	7.6	0.50%
Money Market Funds	6.1	0.72%
Total treasury investments	15.7	0.61%
Net debt	73.8	1.68%

Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

	31.3.18 Actual £m	31.3.19 Estimate £m	31.3.20 Forecast £m	31.3.21 Forecast £m	31.3.22 Forecast £m
General Fund CFR	137.5	176.8	223.6	246.4	243.2
Less: External borrowing **	(111.5)	(96.0)	(68.0)	(41.0)	(41.0)
Internal/(over) borrowing	26.0	80.8	155.6	205.4	202.2
Less: Usable reserves	(17.1)	(17.1)	(17.1)	(17.1)	(17.1)
Less: Working capital	(28.0)	(28.0)	(28.0)	(28.0)	(28.0)
Investments/(New borrowing required)	19.1	(35.7)	(110.5)	(160.3)	(157.1)

** shows only loans to which the council is currently committed

- 3.2 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The council's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.
- 3.3 The council has an increasing CFR due to the capital programme, but minimal investments and will therefore be required to borrow up to a total of £201m over the forecast period.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2019/20.

4 Borrowing Strategy

- 4.1 The council currently (31/12/2018) holds £89.5 million of loans, a decrease of £22 million on the previous year end, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the council expects to borrow up to a total of £178

million in 2019/20. The council may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £225 million.

Objectives

- 4.2 The council's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

Strategy

- 4.3 Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.
- 4.4 By doing so, the council 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 council with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the council borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2019/20 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.
- 4.5 Alternatively, the council may arrange forward starting loans during 2019/20, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

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

Sources of borrowing

- 4.6 The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
- Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and any successor body
 - any institution approved for investments (see below)
 - any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
 - any other UK public sector body
 - UK public and private sector pension funds (except Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund)
 - capital market bond investors
 - UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues

Other sources of debt finance

- 4.7 In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:
- leasing
 - hire purchase
 - Private Finance Initiative
 - sale and leaseback

- 4.8 The council has previously raised around 40% of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but it continues to investigate other sources of finance, such as local authority loans and bank loans, which may be available at more favourable rates.

Municipal Bonds Agency

- 4.9 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 full council.

LOBOs

- 4.10 The council does not hold any LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost.

Short-term and variable rate loans

- 4.11 These loans leave the council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below.

Debt rescheduling

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

5 Investment Strategy

- 5.1 The council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months (January - December 2018), the council's investment balance has ranged between £5 million and £70 million. Levels in the forthcoming year are expected to be general lower, ranging from £10m and £25m, but may vary for short periods to due to cashflow needs and borrowing opportunities.

Objectives

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

Negative interest rates

- 5.3 If the UK enters into a recession in 2019/20, there is a small chance that the Bank of England could set its Bank Rate at or below zero, which is likely to feed through to negative interest rates on all low risk, short-term investment options. This situation already exists in many other European countries. In this event, security will be measured as receiving the contractually agreed amount at maturity, even though this may be less than the amount originally invested.

Strategy

- 5.4 Given the increasing risk and low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the council would aspire to diversify into more secure and/or higher yielding asset classes. However, given the low level of funds available for longer-term investment and the high liquidity requirements, the council's surplus cash is likely to remain invested in short-term bank deposits and call accounts, money market funds, and deposits with the UK Government and other local authorities.

Business models

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

Approved counterparties

- 5.6 The council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 3 below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

Table 3: Approved investment counterparties and limits

Credit rating	Banks unsecured	Banks secured	Government	Corporates	Registered Providers
UK Govt	n/a	n/a	£ Unlimited 50 years	n/a	n/a
AAA	£3m 5 years	£3m 20 years	£5m 50 years	£3m 20 years	£3m 20 years
AA+	£3m 5 years	£3m 10 years	£5m 25 years	£3m 10 years	£3m 10 years
AA	£3 m 4 years	£3m 5 years	£5m 15 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 10 years
AA-	£3m 3 years	£3m 4 years	£5m 10 years	£3m 4 years	£3m 10 years
A+	£3m 2 years	£3m 3 years	£5m 5 years	£3m 3 years	£3m 5 years
A	£3m 13 months	£3m 2 years	£5m 5 years	£3m 2 years	£3m 5 years
A-	£3m 6 months	£3m 13 months	£5m 5 years	£3m 13 months	£3m 5 years
None	None	None	£5m 2 years	None	None
Pooled funds and real estate investment trusts		£5m per fund or trust			

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

Credit rating

- 5.7 Investment limits are set by reference to the lowest published long-term credit rating from a selection of external rating agencies. 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

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

Banks secured

- 5.9 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

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

Corporates

- 5.11 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.

Registered providers

- 5.12 Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by or secured on the assets of registered providers of social housing and registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

Pooled funds

- 5.13 Shares or units in diversified investment vehicles consisting of the any of the above investment types, plus equity shares and property. These funds have the advantage of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a fee. Short-term Money Market Funds that offer same-day liquidity and very low or no volatility will be used as an alternative to instant access bank accounts, while pooled funds whose value changes with market prices and/or have a notice period will be used for longer investment periods.
- 5.14 Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the

need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

Real estate investment trusts

- 5.15 Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties.

Operational bank accounts

- 5.16 The council may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments, but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £50,000 per bank wherever possible e.g. except for overnight balances where funds are received during the day and it is too late to transfer to another counterparty. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the council maintaining operational continuity.

Risk assessment and credit ratings

- 5.17 Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the council's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:
- no new investments will be made,
 - any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
 - full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.
- 5.18 Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "rating watch negative" or "credit watch negative") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Other information on the security of investments

- 5.19 The council understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support, reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the council's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria. In addition to Arlingclose ratings and advice, the council maintains an internal counterparty 'Watch List' based on intelligence from a variety of other sources available to officers.

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

Investment limits

- 5.21 In order that the council's revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are not 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 £5 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

	Cash limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£5m each
UK Central Government	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£5m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£5m per manager
Negotiable instruments held in a broker's nominee account	£3m per broker
Foreign countries	£5m per country
Registered providers and registered social landlords	£10m in total
Unsecured investments with building societies	£10m in total
Loans to unrated corporates	£5m in total
Money market funds	£15m in total
Real estate investment trusts	£5m in total

Liquidity management

- 5.22 The council uses in-house 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 council being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the council's medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

6 Treasury Management Indicators

- 6.1 The council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

Interest rate exposures

- 6.2 This indicator is set to control the council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£160,000
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£160,000

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at current rates.

Maturity structure of borrowing

- 6.3 This indicator is set to control the council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	80%	10%
12 months and within 24 months	80%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	80%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	80%	0%
10 years and above	80%	0%

- 6.4 Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment. The upper and lower limits as shown above provide the scope to accommodate new loan(s) in the most appropriate maturity band at the time of borrowing

Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year

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

Price risk indicator	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£10m	£5m	£5m

7 Related Matters

The CIPFA Code requires the council to include the following in its treasury management strategy.

Financial Derivatives

- 7.1 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).

- 7.2 The council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the council is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.
- 7.3 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.

Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II)

- 7.4 The council has opted up to professional client status with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a greater range of services but without the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the council's treasury management activities, the Executive Director of Finance and Governance believes this to be the most appropriate status.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The budget for investment income in 2019/20 is £0.15 million, based on an average investment portfolio of £15 million at an average interest rate of 1.03%.

The budget for debt interest paid in 2019/20 is £2.764 million, based on an average debt portfolio of £155 million at an average interest rate of 1.78%.

If actual levels of investments and borrowing, or actual interest rates, differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

9 Other Options Considered

- 9.1 The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Executive Director of Finance and Governance, having consulted the Lead Member for Financial Management & Governance, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable	Debt interest costs will initially	Increases in debt interest costs

loans instead of long-term fixed rates	be lower	will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

Appendix A – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast - December 2018

Underlying assumptions:

- Our central interest rate forecasts are predicated on there being a transitional period following the UK's official exit from the EU.
- The MPC has a bias towards tighter monetary policy but is reluctant to push interest rate expectations too strongly. We believe that MPC members consider that: 1) tight labour markets will prompt inflationary pressure in the future, 2) ultra-low interest rates result in other economic problems, and 3) higher Bank Rate will be a more effective policy weapon if downside risks to growth crystallise.
- Both our projected outlook and the increase in the magnitude of political and economic risks facing the UK economy means we maintain the significant downside risks to our forecasts, despite the potential for slightly stronger growth next year as business investment rebounds should the EU Withdrawal Agreement be approved. The potential for severe economic outcomes has increased following the poor reception of the Withdrawal Agreement by MPs. We expect the Bank of England to hold at or reduce interest rates from current levels if Brexit risks materialise.
- The UK economic environment is relatively soft, despite seemingly strong labour market data. GDP growth recovered somewhat in the middle quarters of 2018, but more recent data suggests the economy slowed markedly in Q4. Our view is that the UK economy still faces a challenging outlook as the country exits the European Union and Eurozone economic growth softens.
- Cost pressures are easing but inflation is forecast to remain above the Bank's 2% target through most of the forecast period. Lower oil prices have reduced inflationary pressure, but the tight labour market and decline in the value of sterling means inflation may remain above target for longer than expected.
- Global economic growth is slowing. Despite slower growth, the European Central Bank is conditioning markets for the end of QE, the timing of the first rate hike (2019) and their path thereafter. More recent US data has placed pressure on the Federal Reserve to reduce the pace of monetary tightening – previous hikes and heightened expectations will, however, slow economic growth.
- Central bank actions and geopolitical risks have and will continue to produce significant volatility in financial markets, including bond markets.

Forecast:

- The MPC has maintained expectations of a slow rise in interest rates over the forecast horizon, but recent events around Brexit have dampened interest rate expectations. Our central case is for Bank Rate to rise twice in 2019, after the UK exits the EU. The risks are weighted to the downside.
- Gilt yields have remained at low levels. We expect some upward movement from current levels based on our central case that the UK will enter a transitional period following its EU exit in March 2019. However, our projected weak economic outlook and volatility arising from both economic and political events will continue to offer borrowing opportunities.

Appendix 1

	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Average
Official Bank Rate														
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.17
Arlingclose Central Case	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.13
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-0.85
3-mth money market rate														
Upside risk	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.17
Arlingclose Central Case	0.90	0.95	1.10	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.27
Downside risk	-0.20	-0.45	-0.60	-0.80	-0.90	-0.90	-0.90	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.76
1-yr money market rate														
Upside risk	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.33
Arlingclose Central Case	1.15	1.25	1.35	1.50	1.70	1.60	1.50	1.40	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.40
Downside risk	-0.35	-0.50	-0.60	-0.80	-0.90	-0.90	-0.90	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.77
5-yr gilt yield														
Upside risk	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.37
Arlingclose Central Case	1.15	1.25	1.35	1.50	1.50	1.40	1.35	1.35	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.33
Downside risk	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.80	-0.80	-0.70	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.66
10-yr gilt yield														
Upside risk	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.37
Arlingclose Central Case	1.50	1.65	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.75	1.75	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70
Downside risk	-0.55	-0.70	-0.70	-0.80	-0.80	-0.75	-0.75	-0.70	-0.70	-0.70	-0.70	-0.70	-0.70	-0.71
20-yr gilt yield														
Upside risk	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.37
Arlingclose Central Case	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.18
Downside risk	-0.60	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.73
50-yr gilt yield														
Upside risk	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.37
Arlingclose Central Case	1.90	1.95	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.99
Downside risk	-0.60	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.73

PWLB Certainty Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.80%

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

Cherwell District Council

Capital Strategy 2019/20

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This capital strategy is a new report for 2019/20, giving a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It has been written in an accessible style to enhance members' understanding of these sometimes technical areas.

2 Capital Expenditure and Financing

- 2.1 Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, which will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10,000 are not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.

For details of the Council's policy on capitalisation, see Financial Regulations

In 2019/20, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £49.2m as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions

	2017/18 actual	2018/19 forecast	2019/20 budget	2020/21 budget	2021/22 budget
Services	19.4	7.7	5.7	0.5	0.2
Capital investments	84.6	33.6	43.5	24.7	0
TOTAL	104.4	41.3	49.2	25.2	0.2

- 2.2 The main capital projects include the Build Programme, Castle Quay 2, Tramway Industrial Estate and replacement IT systems.

Governance

- 2.3 Service managers bid as part of the annual budget setting process, and throughout the year, to include projects in the Council's capital programme. Bids are collated by the Finance and a calculation of the financing cost is undertaken (which can be nil if the project is fully externally financed). The Budget Planning Committee appraises all bids based on a comparison of service priorities against financing costs and makes recommendations to the Executive. The final capital programme is then presented to Council in February each year.

- 2.4 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions

	2017/18 actual	2018/19 forecast	2019/20 budget	2020/21 budget	2021/22 budget
External sources	3.5	0.4	0.4	0	0
Own resources	7.2	1.6	2.0	2.0	3.0
Debt	93.3	39.3	46.8	23.2	-2.8
TOTAL	104.0	41.3	49.2	25.2	0.2

- 2.5 Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP and use of capital receipts are as follows:

Table 3: Replacement of debt finance in £ millions

	2017/18 actual	2018/19 forecast	2019/20 budget	2020/21 budget	2021/22 budget
Own resources	7.2	1.6	2.0	2.6	3.0

The Council's full minimum revenue provision statement is available via the Council's website.

- 2.6 The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £46.8 during 2019/20. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2018 actual	31.3.2019 forecast	31.3.2020 budget	31.3.2021 budget	31.3.2022 budget
TOTAL CFR	137.5	176.8	223.6	246.4	243.2

Asset management

- 2.7 To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council has an asset management strategy in place. This is a multi-level approach structured as follows:

- At a tenancy level the Comprehensive Asset Register (a database of key lease events) is being updated and used to identify forthcoming lease events such as expiries, rent reviews and breaks. These are allocated to specific asset managers to progress whose work schedules are reviewed monthly.
- At a property level this comprises the preparation of asset management plans for each asset which is then subject to periodic review and updating. This process is ongoing and intended to allow a critical examination of the performance of each asset and inform medium / long term decision making, such as the asset's suitability for simple retention, future capital investment or sale.
- At a portfolio level the make-up of the portfolio will be considered bi-annually in terms of its sector weighting and suitability to meet the Council's longer term objectives of providing a secure risk weighted income stream

Asset disposals

- 2.8 When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. The Council is currently also permitted to spend capital receipts on service transformation projects until 2021/22. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The council does not expect to receive any capital receipts in the coming financial year.

3 Treasury Management

- 3.1 Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

The Council currently has £89.5m borrowing at an average interest rate of 1.49% and £15.7m treasury investments at an average rate of 0.61%.

Borrowing strategy

- 3.2 The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short-term loans (currently available at around 0.75%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher (currently 2.0 to 3.0%).

Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2018 actual	31.3.2019 forecast	31.3.2020 budget	31.3.2021 budget	31.3.2022 budget
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	111.5	131.7	178.5	201.3	198.1
Capital Financing Requirement	137.5	176.8	223.6	246.4	243.2

- 3.3 Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from table 6, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term.

Affordable borrowing limit

- 3.4 The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 7: Prudential Indicators: Operational boundary and Authorised limit for external debt in £m

	2018/19 limit	2019/20 limit	2020/21 limit	2021/22 limit
Operational boundary total external debt	205	205	205	205
Authorised limit total external debt	225	225	225	225

Further details on borrowing can be found in the treasury management strategy.

Investment strategy

- 3.5 Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.
- 3.6 The Council’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield. Focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

Table 8: Treasury management investments in £millions

	31.3.2018 actual	31.3.2019 forecast	31.3.2020 budget	31.3.2021 budget	31.3.2022 budget
Near-term investments	19.1	15	15	15	15
Longer-term investments	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	19.1	15	15	15	15

Further details on treasury investments can be found in the treasury management strategy.

Governance

- 3.7 Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Director of Finance and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Council. Reports on treasury management activity are presented to the Accounts, Audit & Risk Committee. The Accounts, Audit & Risk Committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

4 Investments for Service Purposes

- 4.1 The Council makes investments to assist local public services, including making loans to and buying shares in the Council's subsidiaries, providing loans to local charities and businesses where there is demonstrable public benefit. In light of the public service objective, the Council is willing to take more risk than with treasury investments; however, it still plans for such investments to at least break even.

Governance

- 4.2 Decisions on service investments are made by the relevant service manager in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and must meet the criteria and limits laid down in the Investment Strategy. Most loans and shares are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

Further details on service investments are in the Investment Strategy]:

5 Commercial Activities

- 5.1 With central government financial support for local public services declining, the Council invests in commercial property mainly for financial gain but also for strategic economic regeneration. Total commercial investments are currently valued at £89m with the largest being Castle Quay.
- 5.2 With financial return being an objective, the Council accepts higher risk on commercial investment than with treasury investments. The principal risk exposures are listed below together with an outline of how those risks are managed:

Illiquidity:	<p>The council acknowledges illiquidity as a risk in property and whilst it cannot be avoided the risk is mitigated by the following strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The council invests across a range of sectors. Illiquidity is to an extent fluid and at any given time varies across sectors. This allows the Council the opportunity to effect sales, if required, in the more liquid sectors. b) The Council's assets are likewise diversified in terms of lot size. This affords the Council the ability to access a range of purchaser types e.g. small local investors, listed property companies or institutions. c) The Council does not invest in high risk assets which can be the most illiquid of all. d) The Council's investments are not what is termed 'Investment Grade', but they are fundable – i.e. if sold they could be suitable for debt backed investors. e) The Council does not invest in specialist properties, where the market tends to be most illiquid. f) The Council's assets are uncharged. It is often lenders who require assets to be sold and whilst gearing does not increase illiquidity per se, it can expose an owner to greater risk of selling an illiquid asset at an inopportune time.
Tenant default:	<p>The Council's portfolio is not populated by large national concerns and tenant default risk is managed in two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tenants are vetted when entering the portfolio either as new tenants when property is let or as replacement tenants when existing tenants assign their leases. It has to be acknowledged that there is less control when a tenant applies for consent to assign, though guarantees may be sought. 2. Risk is managed by diversification as only a small proportion of tenants will fail in any given year. At present the Council has over 150 tenants paying in excess of £5,000 per annum and the largest of them accounts for only 5.6% of the portfolio's aggregate rent roll.
Obsolescence:	<p>A significant proportion of the Council's portfolio comprises industrial / warehouse buildings and simple retail assets which have relatively low obsolescence compared to offices where there are substantial amounts of plant and machinery. Where we have offices we try to introduce sinking / replacement funds where we are able to collect from tenants an annual sum to put towards high cost items such as the replacement of lifts or air conditioning. An example of this is the Banbury Health Centre which has a renewals fund set at £10,000 per annum. In other leases we will try to negotiate terms which allow for the replacement of obsolete plant when it is beyond economic repair.</p> <p>Where matters of public policy override commercial concerns our portfolio is more vulnerable. For example, at Banbury Museum, the Council may be responsible for significant capital outlay on plant and machinery as it nears the end of its useful economic life.</p>

Capital expenditure	Please see above but also note that the Council aims to let space on Full Repairing terms which either makes the tenant either explicitly responsible for maintaining the asset or allows CDC to recover the cost of repairs through the service charge provisions of the relevant lease.
Market risk:	<p>Two key market risks are falling rents in response to declining economic conditions and extended marketing voids when leases end or tenants fail. These risks are mitigated in three main ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lease lengths should be 3 – 5 yrs + which obviates most market risks during the period of the tenancy. 2. Rents are reviewed in an upwards only direction. This means that they cannot fall during the term of a lease. 3. Tenant failure – see above under Tenant Default, re: vetting and diversification policies. <p>An additional risk is over-exposure to town centre retailing as the portfolio's largest assets are Castle Quay Shopping Centre in Banbury and Pioneer Square in Bicester. These are both strategic investments and in respect of Castle Quay we rely heavily on external advisors, particularly Montague Evans, to identify and manage both upside and downside risks.</p>
Returns eroded by inflation:	All investment assets incorporate periodic rent reviews which provide a hedge against inflation. Property is generally accepted as performing better than fixed income assets in times of inflation.
Rising interest rates:	The portfolio is ungeared and therefore un-mortgaged

Governance

- 5.3 Decisions on commercial investments are made by Members and Statutory Officers in line with the criteria and limits approved by Council in the Investment Strategy. Property and most other commercial investments are also capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

Further details on commercial investments and limits on their use are in pages Investment Strategy

- 5.4 The Council also has commercial activities in trading companies, exposing it to normal commercial risks. These risks are managed by the governance structure in place. The Shareholder Committee is regularly informed of the progress of each

company. The Shareholder meets with the directors both formally and informally to ensure there is a consistent dialog between the companies and the council.

6 Liabilities

- 6.1 In addition to debt of £89.5m detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit (valued at £86m).

It has also set aside £4m predominantly to cover the risk of business rates appeals provisions. The Council is also at risk of having to refund the NHS for business rates if the on-going legal case is found in their favour.

Governance

- 6.2 Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by [service managers] in consultation with Statutory Officers. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by Finance and reported monthly to the Budget Planning and Executive committees. New liabilities are reported to full council for approval/notification as appropriate.

Further details on liabilities and guarantees are on page 72 of the 2017/18 statement of accounts

7 Revenue Budget Implications

- 7.1 Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

Table 9: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2017/18 actual	2018/19 forecast	2019/20 budget	2020/21 budget	2021/22 budget
Financing costs (£m)	0.7	2.1	2.8	2.8	2.8
Proportion of net revenue stream	4%	11%	12%	12%	11%

Further details on the revenue implications of capital expenditure are in the 2019/20 revenue budget

Sustainability

- 7.2 Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Section 151 Officer is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable.

8 Knowledge and Skills

- 8.1 The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Section 151 Officer is a qualified accountant with many years' experience, the Assistant Director of Property and Investments is a chartered surveyor with over twenty years' experience of asset management and commercial property investment. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA, ACT (treasury), and the RICS.
- 8.2 Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers, and a range of the current property advisors is as follows:
- Banbury based surveyors White Commercial and Bankier Sloane provide advice on the local property market, and assistance with new lettings, lease renewals and rent reviews.
 - Montague Evans supply asset management and facilities management in respect of Castle Quay.
 - GVA Grimley also supply specialist accounting services in respect of Castle Quay.
 - Montague Evans and Colliers both provide property valuation services
 - BWD and Jackson Criss assist with Castle Quay lettings
 - Gardiner Theobald provide project management, QS, CDM and Design services on Castle Quay
 - Broomfield Property Ltd and Prime Project Management Ltd provide service relating to Castle Quay

This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

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Cherwell District Council

Investment Strategy 2019/20

1 Introduction

1.1 The council invests its money for three broad purposes:

- because it has surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as **treasury management investments**),
- to support local public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (**service investments**), and
- to earn investment income (known as **commercial investments** where this is the main purpose).

1.2 This investment strategy is a new report for 2019/20, meeting the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the government in January 2018, and focuses on the second and third of these categories.

2 Treasury Management Investments

2.1 The council typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, lead to a cash surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The balance of treasury management investments is expected to be an average of £15m during the 2019/20 financial year.

Contribution

2.2 The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the council is to support effective treasury management activities.

Further details

2.3 Full details of the council's policies and its plan for 2019/20 for treasury management investments are covered in a separate document, the treasury management strategy.

3 Service Investments: Loans

Contribution

3.1 The council lends money to its subsidiaries, local parishes, the local Business Improvement District, and local charities to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth. The main loans issued are to the council's subsidiaries – Graven Hill Village Holding Company Ltd and Crown House Banbury

Ltd. Graven Hill is an ambitious self-build housing development providing significant housing in Bicester. Crown House is redeveloping a derelict building in the centre of Banbury which will provide significant rental opportunities in the town centre while removing an eye-sore.

Security

- 3.2 The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the council, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as follows:

Table 1: Loans for service purposes in £ millions

Category of borrower	31.3.2018 actual			2019/20
	Balance	Loss allowance	Net figure in accounts	Approved Limit
Subsidiaries	37.827	0	37.827	51.0
Local Council	0.725	0	0.725	1.0
Local charities	0.05	0	0.05	0.2
Local Business	0.02	0	0.02	1.5
Parishes	0.111	0	0.111	1.0
TOTAL	38.733	0	38.733	54.7

- 3.3 Accounting standards require the council to set aside loss allowance for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The figures for loans in the council's statement of accounts from 2018/19 onwards will be shown net of this loss allowance. However, the council makes every reasonable effort to collect the full sum lent and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments.

Risk assessment

- 3.4 The council assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans by approaching each loan request individually. The bulk of the council's loans are to its subsidiaries. When the council considers whether or not to create or acquire a subsidiary a full business case is prepared which sets out the optimal financing of the company. This will include an assessment of the market in which it will be competing, the nature and level of competition, how that market may evolve over time, exit strategy and any ongoing investment requirements. External advisors are used where appropriate to complement officer expertise and second opinions from alternate advisors is sought in order to monitor and maintain the quality of advice provided by external advisors.

- 3.5 Other service loans are evaluated against a set of criteria designed to demonstrate:
- Evidence of project objectives and needs analysis is provided
 - The loan must have a demonstrable community impact
 - The loan would provide up to 50% of the whole project cost
 - Such a loan can only be applied for by constituted voluntary organisations with their own bank account; Town or Parish councils; charitable organisations
 - The loan cannot be applied retrospectively
 - The applicant has provided evidence of its financial stability and of its ability to manage the proposed scheme
 - The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed scheme has been developed following good practice in terms of planning, procurement and financial appraisal
 - The applicant has provided evidence the affordability of their proposed scheme and the loan repayments
 - That the project furthers the council's priorities as reflected in its Business Plan

4 Service Investments: Shares

Contribution

- 4.1 The council invests in the shares of its subsidiaries to support local public services and stimulate local economic and housing growth. The council currently holds shares in Graven Hill Holding Company Ltd and Crown House Banbury Ltd. .

Security

- 4.2 One of the risks of investing in shares is that they fall in value meaning that the initial outlay may not be recovered. In order to limit this risk, upper limits on the sum invested in each category of shares have been set as follows:

Table 2: Shares held for service purposes in £ millions

Category of company	31.3.2018 actual			2019/20
	Amounts invested	Gains or losses	Value in accounts	Approved Limit
Subsidiaries	22.538	0	22.538	35.0
TOTAL	22.538	0	22.538	35.0

Risk assessment

- 4.3 The council assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding shares by maintaining close links with the boards of directors of the companies through an established Shareholder Committee. Risk is assessed as above in Service Loans.

Liquidity

- 4.4 The maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed are assessed on a project by project basis. The decision will balance both the long term viability of the subsidiary and the revenue and capital requirements of the council.

Non-specified Investments

- 4.5 Shares are the only investment type that the council has identified that meets the definition of a non-specified investment in the government guidance. The limits above on share investments are therefore also the council's upper limits on non-specified investments. The council has not adopted any procedures for determining further categories of non-specified investment since none are likely to meet the definition.

5 Commercial Investments: Property

Contribution

- 5.1 The council invests in local commercial and residential property with the intention of making a profit that will be spent on local public services. The portfolio comprises a cross section of retail, office and industrial assets together with a health centre. The three largest investments are as follows:
- Castle Quay, Banbury; a covered shopping centre and development site
 - Pioneer Square, Bicester; a modern retail parade of shops
 - Franklins House, Bicester; a mixed use complex comprising offices, hotel, business centre and public library
- 5.2 These three assets contribute an aggregate £6m gross income to the council's revenue budget. They are all town centre properties and afford the council an opportunity to influence the amenity and environment of its two principal strategic centres. Castle Quay will, in particular, allow the development of a new leisure orientated focal point to help revitalise Banbury town centre.

The component parts of the entire investment portfolio are described below:

Table 3: Property held for investment purposes in £ millions0

Property	Actual	Actual	31.3.2018 actual		31.3.2019 expected	
	Closing Balance 2016/17	Purchase / Build Costs 2017/18	Gains or (losses)	Value at 31.3.18	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts
Castle Quay		60.364	0.756	61.120	0	61.120
Pioneer Square	9.238		-1.212	8.026	0	8.026
Other properties valued under £5m	9.255	2.793	-0.324	11.725	0	10.481
TOTAL	18.493	63.157	-0.779	80.871	0	80.871

Security

- 5.3 In accordance with government guidance, the council considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is at or higher than its purchase cost including taxes and transaction costs.
- 5.4 A fair value assessment of the council's investment property portfolio has been made within the past twelve months, and the underlying assets provide security for capital investment. Should the 2018/19 year end accounts preparation and audit process value these properties below their purchase cost, then an updated investment strategy will be presented to full council detailing the impact of the loss on the security of investments and any revenue consequences arising therefrom.

Risk assessment

- 5.5 The council assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments by cash flow modelling the income and expenditure profile of each investment and interrogating that model across a range of scenarios to test the robustness of the investment. The modelling exercise is informed by the likelihood of tenant default and the chances that individual units will become empty during the hold period.
- 5.6 The property investment market is dynamic and we are kept abreast of developments by frequent communication and established relationships with local and national agents, supplemented by in-house investigations and reading of published research. The market is at present competitive in most asset sectors and our focus is on assets that are local, strategic and meet our investment return criteria. We are mindful of the council's need for a reliable future income streams and occupational demand is fundamental to our appraisals as longer let assets tend not to generate sufficiently attractive returns.
- 5.7 In all acquisitions we take external advice from acknowledged experts in the field and sense-check their input against our in-house knowledge, experience and expertise. The advice sourced covers market value but also, given the purpose of the

investment, letting risk, marketability and occupational demand, and likely expenditure over the hold period.

5.8 The council uses a number of local and national advisors and cross reference their views periodically. There is no single party who expects to be instructed by the council without competition.

5.9 Credit ratings are used on acquisitions, new lettings and when tenants request consent to assign their leases. The council uses D&B ratings and also study published accounts.

Credit ratings have not historically been used to monitor existing tenants but this will be introduced for our largest tenants this year.

5.10 A number of other strategies are used to mitigate risk:

- Tenant rent payment histories are analysed on any acquisition.
- Tenant rent payment patterns and arrears are examined in the existing portfolio.
- Introducing agents advise the council throughout the acquisition process and their advice includes market commentary at a national and a local level and commentary on perceived risks to the investment.
- In tandem with the above every acquisition is subject to a third party valuation by national surveyors who are independent i.e. not acting for the council or the vendor on the acquisition.

Liquidity

5.11 Compared with other investment types, property is relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice, and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. To ensure that the invested funds can be accessed when they are needed, for example to repay capital borrowed. The council acknowledges illiquidity as a risk in property and whilst it cannot be avoided the risk is mitigated by the following strategies:

- The council invests across a range of sectors. Illiquidity is to an extent fluid and at any given time varies across sectors. This allows the council the opportunity to effect sales, if required, in the more liquid sectors.
- The council's assets are likewise diversified in terms of lot size. This affords the council the ability to access a range of purchaser types e.g. small local investors, listed property companies or institutions.
- The council does not invest in high risk assets which can be the most illiquid of all.
- The council's investments are not what is termed 'Investment Grade', but they are fundable – i.e. if sold they could be suitable for debt backed investors.
- The council does not invest in specialist properties, where the market tends to be most illiquid.
- The council's assets are uncharged. It is often lenders who require assets to be sold and whilst gearing does not increase illiquidity per se, it can expose an owner to greater risk of selling an illiquid asset at an inopportune time.

6 Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees

- 6.1 Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments and financial guarantees carry similar risks to the council and are included here for completeness.

The council has contractually committed to the following loan amounts which have yet to be drawn upon:

Table 4: Loan Commitments and Guarantees

Borrower	Purpose	£m Contractually Available
Silverstone Heritage Ltd	Development of tourist attraction at Silverstone race track	1.0
Crown House Banbury Ltd	Redevelopment of town centre building into housing	1.8
Graven Hill Village Development Company Ltd	Revolving Credit Facility available to the council's subsidiary until 2026	17.0
Graven Hill Holding Company Ltd	Facility Agreement that has been in place since 2014 to deliver the project.	6.6
Graven Hill Development Company Ltd	Loan Note instrument to enable the company to deliver its objectives	10.0
TOTAL		36.4

7 Capacity, Skills and Culture

Elected members and statutory officers

- 7.1 The majority of senior statutory officers are qualified to degree level and have appropriate professional qualifications. Their shared business experience encompasses both the public and private sectors and the three most senior Property & Investment team members have on average 20+ years commercial experience.

Training and guidance are provided to support members in delivering their roles and support effective decision making.

Commercial Investments

- 7.2 Negotiations are either undertaken directly by Assistant Directors or at a senior level with Assistant Director direct involvement and oversight, alongside input from Directors and Lead Members where required. Assistant Directors are aware of the regulatory regime and convey that to all junior staff.

Corporate governance

- 7.3 There are appropriate corporate governance measures in place which comprise end to end decision making procedures. These include risk assessments within the organisation; presentation to relevant committees including Members, statutory officers approvals and relevant project boards. The annual Corporate Investment Strategy provides the reference point against which investment decisions are undertaken.

8 Investment Indicators

- 8.1 The council has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the council's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.

Total risk exposure

- 8.2 The first indicator shows the council's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the council is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the council has issued over third party loans.

Table 5: Total investment exposure in £millions

Total investment exposure	31.03.2018 Actual	31.03.2019 Forecast	31.03.2020 Forecast
Treasury management investments	19.1	15.0	15.0
Service investments: Loans	38.7	50.0	55.0
Service investments: Shares	22.5	23.0	33.0
Commercial investments: Property	80.9	91.0	100.0
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	161.2	179.0	203.0
Commitments to lend	1.8	36.4	34.0
TOTAL EXPOSURE	163.0	215.4	237.0

How investments are funded

- 8.3 Government guidance is that these indicators should include how investments are funded. The council's investments are funded by usable reserves, income received in advance of expenditure and borrowing.

Rate of return received

- 8.4 This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

Table 6: Investment rate of return (net of all costs)

Investments net rate of return	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Forecast	2019/20 Forecast
Treasury management investments	0.31%	0.58%	1.03%
Service investments: Loans	1% - 12%	1% - 12%	1% - 12%
Commercial investments: Property	Variable	Variable	Variable

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