

Appendix B

**Treasury Management Update
Quarter Ended 30 September 2017
Report of Chief Officer (Resources)**

Treasury Management Update

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1. Introduction

The CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice for Treasury Management recommends that members be updated on treasury management activities regularly (through the reporting of the Treasury Management Strategy, and annual and midyear reports). This report is in line with best practice in accordance with that Code, to help demonstrate transparency and promote accountability. As such, it is a requirement that this half yearly update be referred onto Council for information.

2. Economic Background (provided by Capita Asset Services)

After the UK economy surprised on the upside with strong growth in 2016, growth in 2017 has been disappointingly weak; quarter 1 came in at only +0.3% (+1.7% y/y) and quarter 2 was +0.3% (+1.5% y/y) which meant that growth in the first half of 2017 was the slowest for the first half of any year since 2012. The main reason for this has been the sharp increase in inflation, caused by the devaluation of sterling after the referendum, feeding increases in the cost of imports into the economy. This has caused, in turn, a reduction in consumer disposable income and spending power and so the services sector of the economy, accounting for around 75% of GDP, has seen weak growth as consumers cut back on their expenditure. However, more recently there have been encouraging statistics from the manufacturing sector which is seeing strong growth, particularly as a result of increased demand for exports. It has helped that growth in the EU, our main trading partner, has improved significantly over the last year.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting of 14 September 2017 surprised markets and forecasters by suddenly switching to a much more aggressive tone in terms of its words around warning that the Bank Rate will need to rise. The Bank of England Inflation Reports during 2017 have clearly flagged up that they expected CPI inflation to peak at just under 3% in 2017, before falling back to near to its target rate of 2% in two years time. Inflation actually came in at 2.9% in August, (this data was released on 12 September), and so the Bank revised its forecast for the peak to over 3% at the 14 September meeting MPC. This marginal revision can hardly justify why the MPC became so aggressive with its wording; rather, the focus was on an emerging view that with unemployment falling to only 4.3%, the lowest level since 1975, and improvements in productivity being so weak, that the amount of spare capacity in the economy was significantly diminishing towards a point at which they now needed to take action. In addition, the MPC took a more tolerant view of low wage inflation as this now looks like a common factor in nearly all western economies as a result of increasing globalisation. This effectively means that the UK labour faces competition from overseas labour e.g. in outsourcing work to third world countries, and this therefore depresses the negotiating power of UK labour. However, the Bank was also concerned that the withdrawal of the UK from the EU would effectively lead to a decrease in such globalisation pressures in the UK, and so would be inflationary over the next few years.

It, therefore, looks very likely that the MPC will increase the Bank Rate to 0.5% in November or, if not, in February 2018. The big question after that will be whether this will be a one off increase or the start of a slow, but regular, increase in the Bank Rate. As at the start of

October, short sterling rates are indicating that financial markets do not expect a second increase until May 2018 with a third increase in November 2019. However, some forecasters are flagging up that they expect growth to improve significantly in 2017 and into 2018, as the fall in inflation will bring to an end the negative impact on consumer spending power while a strong export performance will compensate for weak services sector growth. If this scenario were to materialise, then the MPC would have added reason to embark on a series of slow but gradual increases in Bank Rate during 2018. While there is so much uncertainty around the Brexit negotiations, consumer confidence, and business confidence to spend on investing, it is far too early to be confident about how the next two years will pan out.

3. Interest Rate Forecast

The Council's treasury advisor, Capita Asset Services, has provided the following forecast:

| | Dec-17 | Mar-18 | Jun-18 | Sep-18 | Dec-18 | Mar-19 | Jun-19 | Sep-19 | Dec-19 | Mar-20 |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Bank rate | 0.25% | 0.25% | 0.25% | 0.25% | 0.25% | 0.25% | 0.50% | 0.50% | 0.75% | 0.75% |
| 5yr PWLB rate | 1.50% | 1.60% | 1.70% | 1.70% | 1.80% | 1.80% | 1.90% | 1.90% | 2.00% | 2.00% |
| 10yr PWLB rate | 2.20% | 2.30% | 2.30% | 2.40% | 2.40% | 2.50% | 2.50% | 2.60% | 2.60% | 2.70% |
| 25yr PWLB rate | 2.90% | 2.90% | 3.00% | 3.00% | 3.10% | 3.10% | 3.20% | 3.20% | 3.30% | 3.30% |
| 50yr PWLB rate | 2.70% | 2.70% | 2.80% | 2.80% | 2.90% | 2.90% | 3.00% | 3.00% | 3.10% | 3.10% |

Capita Asset Services undertook its last review of interest rate forecasts on 9 August after the quarterly Bank of England Inflation Report. There was no change in MPC policy at that meeting. However, the MPC meeting of 14 September revealed a sharp change in sentiment whereby a majority of MPC members said they would be voting for an increase in Bank Rate "over the coming months". It is therefore possible that there will be an increase to 0.5% at the November MPC meeting. If that happens, the question will then be as to whether the MPC will stop at just withdrawing the emergency Bank Rate cut of 0.25% in August 2016, after the result of the EU withdrawal referendum, or whether they will embark on a series of further increases in Bank Rate during 2018.

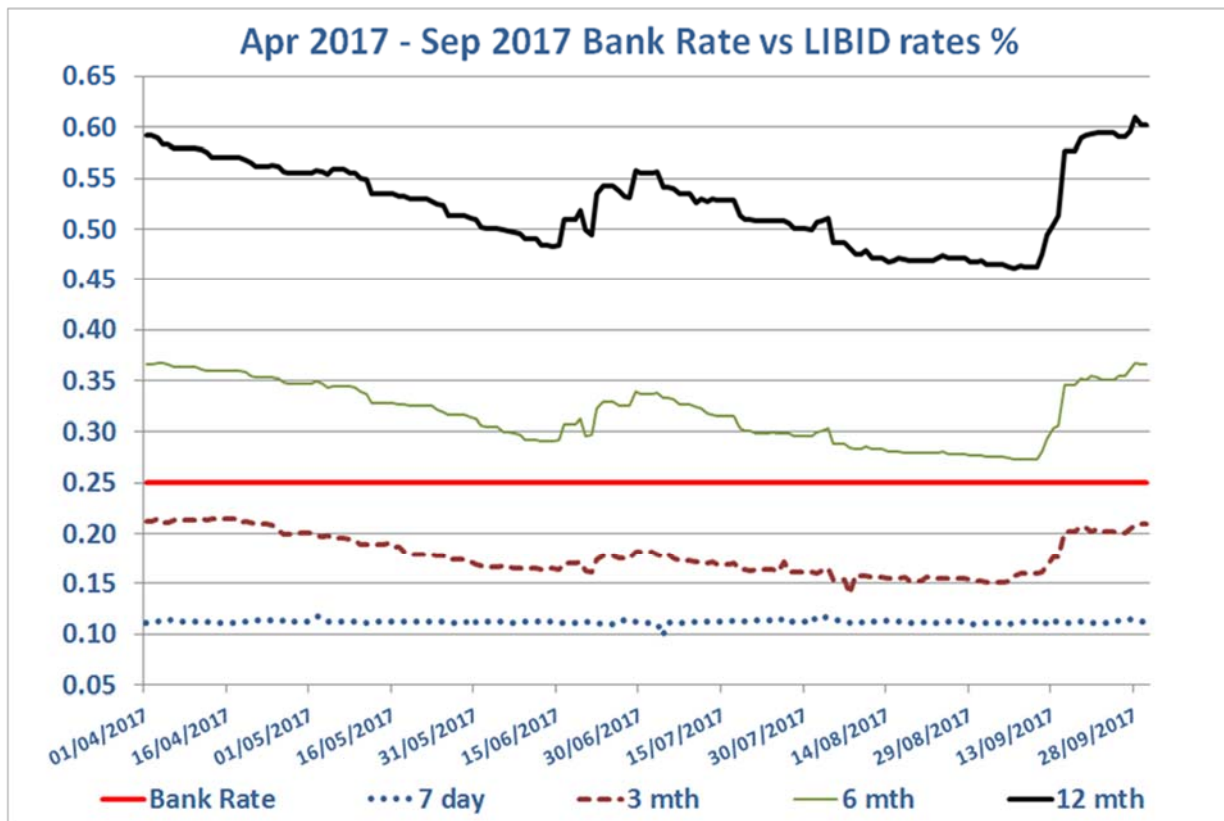
The overall balance of risks to economic recovery in the UK is currently to the downside but huge variables over the coming few years include just what final form Brexit will take, when finally agreed with the EU, and when.

4. Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) for 2017/18, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the Council on 01 March 2017. It sets out the Council's investment priorities as being:

- Security of capital;
- Liquidity; and
- Yield.

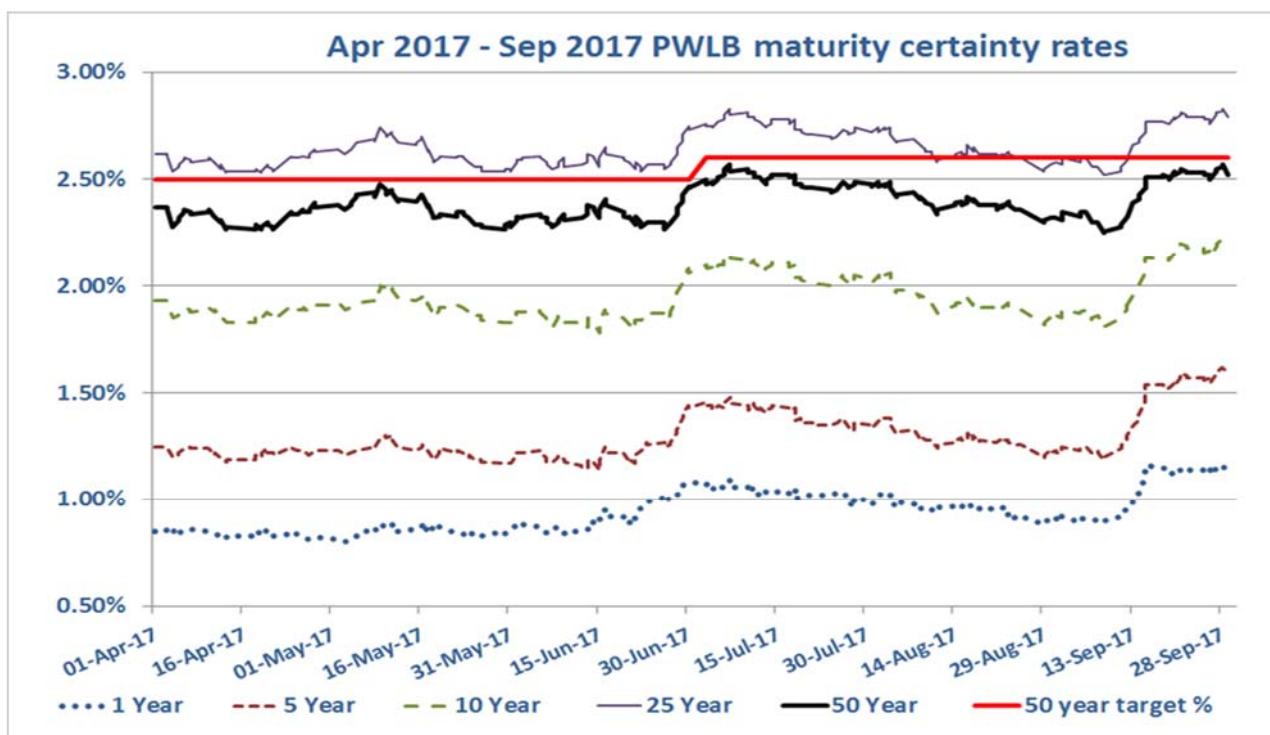
The Council aims to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. In the current economic climate it is considered



5. Borrowing (commentary provided by Capital Asset Services)

The Council's capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2017/18 is £86.7m. The CFR denotes the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. Due to the overall financial position there is no new underlying need to borrow for capital purposes (the Capital Financing Requirement – CFR), therefore no new borrowing has been undertaken.

The graph below shows the movement in PWLB maturity certainty rates for the first six months of the year to date.



6. Debt Rescheduling

Debt rescheduling opportunities have been very limited in the current economic climate given the consequent structure of interest rates, and following the increase in the margin added to gilt yields which has impacted PWLB new borrowing rates since October 2010. No debt rescheduling has therefore been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

7. Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

During the financial year to date the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and in compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review its affordable borrowing limits. The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators (affordability limits) as at 30 September are attached at Annex A. No changes are proposed so the information is only for noting.

8. Risk Management (Key Aspects)

Investment Security:

There is still significant inherent risk generally affecting counterparties (i.e. who investments are placed with). These are considered to be managed effectively through the creditworthiness framework currently applied.

Liquidity:

Liquidity risks are considered to be managed effectively, through cash flow monitoring arrangements and the periods chosen for investment, to help ensure that the Council will have sufficient cash available to meet its payment obligations and deal with the resulting impact on its cash flow.

Interest Risk:

Investment Returns are inevitably low. The Council has risk exposure because all of its borrowings are long-term/fixed, and inevitably its investments are shorter term, meaning that generally they are more affected or influenced by the Bank Rate. There is little that can be done to mitigate this risk at this point.

9. Other Issues

Canal Corridor North

Should the project proceed then it will have significant implications for the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19 and beyond. These will be factored into the review of the Strategy currently being undertaken and will also be highlighted in the relevant Canal Corridor North reported to be presented to Members in due course.

Revised CIPFA Codes

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), is currently conducting an exercise to consult local authorities on revising the Treasury Management Code and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes, and the Prudential Code. CIPFA is aiming to issue the revised codes during November.

A particular focus of this exercise is how to deal with local authority investments which are not treasury type investments such as investing in property in order to generate income for the authority at a much higher level than can be attained by treasury investments. One recommendation is that local authorities should produce a new report to members to give a high level summary of the overall capital strategy and to enable members to see how the cash resources of the authority have been apportioned between treasury and non-treasury investments. Officers are monitoring developments and will report to members when the new codes have been agreed and issued and on the likely impact on this authority.

Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MIFID II)

The EU has now set a deadline of 03 January 2018 for the introduction of regulations under MIFID II. These regulations will govern the relationship that financial institutions conducting lending and borrowing transactions will have with local authorities from that date. This will entail increased administration for each institution dealing with this authority and for each type of investment instrument we use. The fact that a significant proportion of the Councils investment portfolio is held in simple term deposits (which are excluded from MIFIDII) will mean that this will have minimal impact on the Authority.