South Derbyshire District Council

Treasury Management Report Q1 2019/20

Introduction

The Authority has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve treasury management semi-annual and annual reports.

The Authority's treasury management strategy for 2019/20 was approved at a meeting of the Authority on 14th February 2019. The Authority 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 risk are therefore central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.

The 2017 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Authority's Capital Strategy, complying with CIPFA's requirement, was approved by full Council on 17th January 2019.

The detail that follows is in accordance with the CIPFA Code and is written with support from the Council's Treasury Advisor, Arlingclose.

External Context

Economic background

UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) for June 2019 was 2.0% year/year, coming in at consensus and meeting the Bank of England's inflation target. The most recent labour market data for the three months to May 2019 showed the unemployment rate remain at a low of 3.8% while the employment rate of 76.0% dipped by 0.1%, the first quarterly decrease since June to August 2018. The 3-month average annual growth rate for pay excluding bonuses was 3.6% as wages continue to rise steadily and provide some upward pressure on general inflation. Once adjusted for inflation, real wages were up 1.7%.

There was a rise in quarterly GDP growth in the first calendar quarter for 2019 to 0.5%, from 0.2% in Q4 2018 with stockpiling ahead of the (now delayed) 29th March Brexit distorting data. Production and construction registered positive output and growth, however at the end of June 2019, seasonally adjusted Markit UK Construction PMI (Purchasing Manager's Index) logged a record-low figure of 43.1, suggesting that construction has suffered a largest contraction in output since April 2009. GDP growth was 1.8% year/year, however with the service sector slowing and a weaker global backdrop the outlook was for subdued growth.

Politics has been a big driver over the last quarter. The 29th March Brexit deadline was extended to 12th April and then to 31st October 2019: there is still no clear consensus as to the terms on which the UK will leave the EU. Theresa May announced her resignation as Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party in May and the leadership contest for her successor has resulted in Boris Johnson being appointed as Prime Minister.

The struggling British high street has continued to dominate headlines with the Arcadia group being saved from collapse in June following an agreement for rent reductions from landlords. The car industry has also struggled in the UK and beyond with announcements of cuts to 12,000 jobs across Europe by Ford.

With the deterioration in the wider economic environment, compounded by Brexit-related uncertainty and the risk of a no-deal Brexit still alive, the speech by Bank of England Governor Mark Carney in early July signalled a major shift to the Bank's rhetoric and increased the possibility of interest rate cuts, rather the Bank's erstwhile 'gradual and limited' rate hike guidance.

Globally, tensions between the US and China became progressively more fraught with US President Donald Trump threatening to more than double tariffs on some Chinese goods. There were also moves in both the US and UK to block or restrict access to markets by Chinese telecoms giant Huawei. Amid low inflation and a weak economy in the Eurozone Mario Draghi signalled in late June that another round of stimulus (QE) may be likely. The US and EU have also carved the path for interest rates to be cut in the future.

Financial markets

2018 was a year to forget in terms of performance of riskier asset classes, most notably equities. However, since the beginning of 2019 markets have rallied, and the FTSE 100 is up over 10% in pure price terms for the first 6 months of the calendar year. Nearly all of these gains were realised in the last quarter of FY 2018/19, as Q1 2019/20 has only seen a modest increase of around 2%.

Gilt yields continued to display significant volatility over the period on the back of ongoing economic and political uncertainty in the UK and Europe. Gilt yields fell - the 5-year benchmark gilt yield falling to 0.63% at the end of June from 0.75% at the start of April. There were falls in the 10-year and 20-year gilts over the same period dropping from 1.00% to 0.83% and from 1.47% to 1.35% respectively. Money markets rates stabilised with 1-month, 3-month and 12-month LIBID (London Interbank Bid) rates averaged 0.60%, 0.68% and 0.92% respectively over the period.

Recent activity in the bond markets and PWLB interest rates highlight that weaker economic growth is not just a UK phenomenon but a global risk. The US yield curve inverted (10-year Treasury yields were lower than US 3-month money market rates) in March 2019 and this relationship remained and broadened throughout the period. History has shown that a recession hasn't been far behind a yield curve inversion. Germany sold 10-year Bunds at -0.24% in June, the lowest yield on record. Bund yields had been trading at record lows in the secondary market for some time; however the negative yield in the primary market suggests that if investors were to hold until maturity, they are guaranteed to sustain a loss - highlighting the uncertain outlook for Europe's economy.

Credit background

Credit Default Swap (CDS) spreads fell slightly across the board during the quarter, continuing to remain low in historical terms. After hitting around 97bps at the start of the period, the spread on non-ringfenced bank NatWest Markets plc fell back to around 82bps at the end of June, while for the ringfenced entity, National Westminster Bank plc, the spread fell from 67bps to 58bps. The other main UK banks, as yet not separated into ringfenced and non-ringfenced from a CDS perspective, traded between 28 and 59bps at the end of the period.

S&P upgraded RBS Group and its subsidiaries, including National Westminster Bank PLC, Natwest Markets PLC, the Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster Bank Ltd. S&P raised the long-term issuer ratings by one notch due to RBS Group's strengthened credit fundamentals following a long period of restructuring. S&P believes the group and its subsidiaries have enhanced their capacity to manage the current UK political and economic uncertainties.

There were minimal other credit rating changes during the period. Moody's revised the outlook on Barclays Bank PLC to positive from stable to reflect the bank's progress in its restructuring plans, including de-risking the balance sheet, improving its risk profile and profitability and resolving litigation issues in the US. Moody's also revised the outlook to stable from negative for Goldman Sachs International Bank, reflecting a slowdown in loan growth as well as a stronger revenue growth for sales and trading.

Local Context

On 31st March 2019, the Authority had net borrowing of £19.45m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. This fell to £17.19m by the end of the quarter. 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. These factors are summarised in below.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

	31.3.19 Actual £'000	**30.06.19 Actual £'000**
Housing Revenue Account		
Debt Outstanding	57,423	57,423
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	61,584	61,584
Statutory Debt Cap	66,853	66,853
Borrowing Capacity (Cap less Debt Outstanding)	**9,430**	**9,430**
General Fund		
Debt Outstanding	0	0
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	5,653	5,653
Borrowing Capacity (Cap less Debt Outstanding)	**5,653**	**5,653**
Total Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	**67,237**	**67,237**

The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk and keep interest costs low.

The overall treasury management position at 30th June 2019 and the change during the year is shown below.

Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.19 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.6.19 Balance £m	Average Rate %
Long-term borrowing:				
Fixed	47,423	0	47,423	3.19%
Variable	10,000	0	10,000	0.86%
Short-term borrowing	28	0	28	0.00%
Total borrowing	**57,451**	**0**	**57,451**	
Long-term investments	2,000	0	2,000	4.09
Short-term investments	33,500	3,500	37,000	0.85
Cash and cash equivalents	2,500	-1,239	1,261	0.55
Total investments	**38,000**	**2,261**	**40,261**	
Net borrowing	**19,451**	**2,261**	**17,190**	

Borrowing Activity

At 30th June 2019 the Authority held £57.4m of loans. These loans were taken out by the Authority in 2011/12 for the purpose of HRA self-financing. The principal element of these loans is repayable in full on maturity, with interest being paid each March and September.

The short-term borrowing of £28k relates to deposits received from two Parish Councils within the District. These loans can be recalled on immediate notice. Interest is calculated at the Bank of England Base Rate, less 1%. No interest is currently being paid due to the Base Rate being less than 1%.

The following table shows the maturity dates of the loans and rate of interest payable.

Borrowing Position

Loan Profile	Type	Value £'000	Rate %	Maturity
Public Works Loan Board	Variable	10,000	0.92	2021/22
Public Works Loan Board	Fixed	10,000	2.70	2023/24
Public Works Loan Board	Fixed	10,000	3.01	2026/27
Public Works Loan Board	Fixed	10,000	3.30	2031/32
Public Works Loan Board	Fixed	10,000	3.44	2036/37
Public Works Loan Board	Fixed	7,423	3.50	2041/42
Total Long-term borrowing		**57,423**		
Short-term Parish Council Loans		**28**	0.00	
Total borrowing		**57,451**		

The Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective.

Treasury Investment Activity

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the quarter, the Authority's investment balance ranged between £38m and £40m due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position during the quarter is shown in the table below.

Treasury Investment Position

	31.03.19 Balance £'000	Q1 2019 Movement £'000	30.06.19 Balance £'000	30.06.19 Rate of Return %
Banks (unsecured)	2,500	-1239	1,261	0.55
Local Authorities	25,000	6,000	31,000	0.89
Money Market Funds	8,500	-2,500	6,000	0.72
CCLA Property Fund	2,000	0	2,000	4.09
Total investments	**38,000**	**2,261**	**40,261**	

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

In furtherance of these objectives, and given the increasing risk and falling returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Authority has undertaken greater detailed cash flow forecasting which has enabled it to enter into longer-term deposits with other Local Authorities, therefore securing a higher rate of return.

The Authority participates in the Arlingclose quarterly investment benchmarking exercises. This enables us to measure our investment portfolio against other similar Local Authorities. The progression of risk and return are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose's quarterly benchmarking in the table below at the end of quarter 1.

Investment Benchmarking – Treasury investments managed in-house (excludes CCLA)

	Credit Score	**Credit Rating**	**Bail-in Exposure**	**Weighted Average Maturity (days)**	**Rate of Return %**
30.06.2019	3.85	AA-	19%	159	0.85
Similar LAs	4.28	AA-	63%	81	0.88
All LAs	4.31	AA-	62%	28	0.85

Credit Score: This is a value-weighted average score calculated by weighting the credit score of each investment by its value. A higher number indicates a higher risk.

Credit Rating: This is based on the long-term rating assigned to each institution in the portfolio, by ratings agencies Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's. Ratings rang from AAA to D, and can be modified by +/-

Bail-in Exposure: The adoption of a bail-in regime for failed banks results in a potential increased risk of loss of funds for local authority should this need to be implemented. Therefore a lower exposure to bail-in investments reduces this risk.

Weighted Average Maturity: This is an indicator of the average duration of the internally-managed investments. Similar authorities have a similar profile to South Derbyshire; other larger authorities tend to hold a greater proportion of fund in money markets than fixed-term deposits with other LAs, due to their cash flow requirements.

Rate of Return: This is the average rate received on internally managed investments. At the quarter-end we had a few lower rate investments that were secured prior to the base rate rise in August 2018, which reduced the average rate of return compared to other authorities.

The Authority deposited £1m in the CCLA Property Fund on 28th September 2017, with the investment purchasing 317,985 units at an offer price of 314.48p per unit. Following member approval, the Authority subsequently deposited a further £1m in the fund on 28th August 2018, with this investment purchasing 308,261 units at an offer price of 324.40p per unit.

Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's investment objectives is regularly reviewed.

The performance of the investment over the last quarter is shown in the table below. Although past performance is no guarantee of future returns, the movement in the bid (selling) price so far shows how the value of the investment is moving closer to the original purchase price. This reinforces the notion that the Fund should only be considered for long-term investments.

CCLA Property Fund Performance

		2018/19	**2019/20**
		Q4	**Q1**
Dividend Received	£	20,736	19,695
Annual Equivalent Interest Rate	%	4.26	4.09%
Bid (Selling) Price	pence/unit	301.95	302.19

Readiness for Brexit: The scheduled leave date for the UK to leave the EU is now 31st October 2019 and there remains little political clarity as to whether a deal will be agreed by this date, the potential of a no-deal Brexit has not been ruled out. Particularly as this new leave date approaches the Authority will ensure there are enough accounts open at UK-domiciled banks and Money Market Funds to hold sufficient liquidity and that its account with the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) remains available for use in an emergency.

Performance Indicators

The main indicator the Council uses to measure its return on short-term investments to average over the year, is the Average 7-Day Money Market Rate. This is a standard measure of performance. Performance for the first three quarters is shown below.

	As at 31.03.19	As at 30.06.19
Average 7-Day Money Market Rate (Target)	0.65%	0.66%
Average Interest Rate Achieved on Short Term Deposits	0.66%	0.77%

Compliance

The Chief Finance Officer is pleased to report that all treasury management activities undertaken during quarter 1 complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in the table below:

Investment Limits

	Maximum Investment during Q1 £m	Maximum Invested per Counterparty £m	Limit	Maximum Term	Complied
Debt Management Office	£8m	£8m	£20m in total	364 days	✓
Other Local Authorities	£32m	£5m	£5m per Authority	364 days	✓
Money Market funds	£10m	£2m	£10m total, £2m per fund	60 days	✓
CCLA Property Fund	£2m	£2m	£2m	Indefinite period	✓
Named Counterparties (HSBC/Lloyds/BOS/Close Bros/Santander)	£2.56m	£1.62m	£2m per Bank	6 months	✓
Named Counterparties (Barclays/Goldman Sachs/NatWest/RBS)	£1.06m	£1.06m	£2m per Bank	100 days	✓
Named Counterparties (Nationwide/Coventry)	0	0	5% of total deposits	6 months	✓
Named Counterparties (Leeds Building Society)	0	0	5% of total deposits	100 days	✓
Foreign Counterparties	0	0	AAA rated - £1m per Bank	1 month	✓
Independent Building Societies	0	0	£1m per Society	100 days	✓

Outlook for the remainder of 2019/20

Having increased interest rates by 0.25% in November 2018 to 0.75%, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is now expected to maintain Bank Rate at this level for the foreseeable future. There are, however, upside and downside risks to this forecast, dependant on Brexit outcomes and the evolution of the global economy.

The resignation of Theresa May has added further political uncertainty. Boris Johnson appears to be the frontrunner to become Prime Minister and also appears to favour exiting the EU on 31st October. It is unlikely the UK will be able to negotiate a different withdrawal deal before the deadline.

With the downside risks to the UK economy growing and little likelihood of current global trade tensions being resolved imminently and global growth recovering soon thereafter, our treasury advisor Arlingclose's central forecast is for that the Bank of England's MPC will maintain Bank Rate at 0.75% but will stand ready to cut rates should the Brexit process engender more uncertainty for business and consumer confidence and for economic activity.

	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50
Arlingclose Central Case	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Downside risk	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50

Gilt yields have fallen to recent lows. Resolution of global political uncertainty would see yields rise but volatility arising from both economic and political events continue to offer longer-term borrowing opportunities for those clients looking to lock in some interest rate certainty.