WEST OF ENGLAND Combined Authority | BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET BRISTOL SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ITEM 10

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY ("WECA")

DATE: 01 MARCH 2017

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2017/18

Purpose of Report

1. The report sets out Treasury Management Strategy including authorised lending institutions in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REPORT

Appendix 1 - Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18
Appendix 2 - Investment Strategy 2017/18
Appendix 3 - Authorised Lending List
Appendix 4 - Economic and Interest Rate Forecast

Issues for Consideration

2. The WECA is required to adopt the CIPFA Treasury Management in Public services Code of Practice 2011 Edition, which requires the WECA to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year. In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued revised guidance on local authority investments in March 2010 that requires the WECA to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year.

2017/18 Treasury Management & Investment Strategy

3. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to 'have regard to' the Prudential Code and to set Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the WECA's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

3.1. The Act therefore requires the WECA to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Investment Strategy; this sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

3.2. The suggested strategy for 2017/18 in respect of the following aspects of the treasury management function is based on officer views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts provided by the WECA's treasury advisor.

3.3. The strategy covers:

- Treasury limits in force which will limit the treasury risk and activities of the WECA;
- Treasury Management Indicators;
- The current treasury position;
- The borrowing requirement;
- Prospects for interest rates;
- The borrowing strategy;
- The investment strategy.

3.4. It is a statutory requirement under Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for the WECA to produce a balanced budget. In particular, Section 32 requires a local authority to calculate its budget requirement for each financial year to include the revenue costs that flow from capital financing decisions. This, therefore, means that increases in capital expenditure must be limited to a level whereby the impact on the revenue budget from: -

- increases in interest charges caused by increased borrowing to finance additional capital expenditure, and
- any increases in running costs from new capital projects , and
- increases in the Minimum Revenue Provision for capital expenditure

are limited to a level which is affordable within the projected income of the WECA for the foreseeable future.

3.5. The revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public services Code of Practice 2011 Edition, requires the Treasury Management Strategy and policies to be scrutinised by the WECA Audit Committee and this report will be considered at their first meeting, when established, in 2017/18.

3.6. The proposed Treasury Management Strategy is attached as Appendix 1 and includes the Treasury Management Indicators required by the Treasury Management Code.

3.7. The indicators provide for a no borrowing to be undertaken by the WECA during 2017/18 pending further detailed work to be undertaken of project prioritisation and delivery by the WECA. The proposed Budget which will be brought to the WECA on 15th March 2017 will reflect this position accordingly.

3.8. Appendix 1 also sets out that the WECA will have no debt at 31st March 2017.

3.9. The 2017/18 Investment Strategy is attached at Appendix 2. This sets ‘outer limits’ for treasury management operations. While the strategy uses credit ratings in a “mechanistic” way to rule out counterparties, in operating within the policy Officers complement this with the use of other financial information when making investment decisions, for example Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices, Individual Ratings, and the financial press.

3.10. The Counterparty listing in Appendix 3 includes credit ratings from three agencies, as well as a sovereign rating for each country. Counterparties who now meet the minimum criteria as recommended in Appendix 2 as at 31st December 2016 are included in the listing in Appendix 3.

3.11. Interest rate forecasts from the WECA’s interim Treasury advisors (Arlingclose) are included in Appendix 4.

Legal Implications

4. This report fulfils the WECA's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance when setting the Treasury Management Strategy.

Human Resources Implications

5. None directly – temporary arrangements for the provision of Treasury related services from Bath & North East Somerset Council have been put in place by the interim Chief Finance Officer .

Environmental Implications

6. None directly.

Social Implications

7. None directly.

Economic Implications

8. These are set out within the body of the report and the appendices. The proposed WECA Budget will include appropriate estimates for interest earnings from the short term investment of WECA cash flows.

Equality Impact Assessment

9. There are now direct implications arising from this report.

Risks, Mitigations and Opportunities

10. The WECA's lending & borrowing list is regularly reviewed during the financial year and credit ratings are monitored throughout the year. All lending/borrowing transactions are within approved limits and with approved institutions. Investment & Borrowing advice is provided by our Treasury Management advisers – Arlingclose.

10.1 The 2011 edition of the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice requires effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and policies. The WECA Audit Committee will carry out this scrutiny.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The WECA is recommended to:-

1. **Approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement at Appendix 1.**

2. **Approve the Investment Strategy as detailed in Appendix 2.**

3. **Agree that for transitional purposes, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Investment Strategy may be applied with immediate effect to support any investment of cash balances which may be required in the current financial year (2016/17)**

4. **Note that the relevant Budget proposals for 2017/18 will be based upon the assumptions and indicators set out in these strategies.**

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Background Papers

None.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – 2017/2018

Introduction

The WECA is recommended to adopt the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice Fully Revised 2011 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year.

In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued revised guidance on local authority investments in March 2010 that requires the Authority to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year.

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

As a result of Treasury managements activities the WECA will be 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 WECA's treasury management strategy.

Treasury Borrowing Limits for 2017/18 to 2019/20

There is a statutory duty under s.3 of the Local Government Act 2003, and supporting regulations, for the WECA to determine and keep under review how much it can afford to borrow. This amount is termed the 'Affordable Borrowing Limit'.

The Authority must have regard to the Prudential Code when setting the Affordable Borrowing Limit. The Code requires an authority to ensure that its total capital investment remains within sustainable limits.

The Affordable Borrowing Limit must include all planned capital investment to be financed by external borrowing and any other forms of liability, such as credit arrangements. The Affordable Borrowing Limit is to be set on a rolling basis for the forthcoming year and two successive financial years.

It is proposed to set this limit at £nil whilst the WECA considers is capital spending plans and priorities in accordance with its approved Assurance Framework.

Treasury Management Indicators for 2017/18 – 2019/20

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

<u>Security: average credit rating</u>

The Authority will measure its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	2017/18
Minimum Portfolio average credit rating	A-

Interest rate exposures

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

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures	10%	10%	10%

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

Maturity structure of borrowing

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

	Upper	Lower
Under 12 months	50%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	75%	0%
24 months and within five years	75%	0%
Five years and within 10 years	100%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%

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.

Principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days

The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the proportion of total long-term principal sum invested to final maturities over 364 days will be:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Limit on proportion of principal invested over 364 days	30%	30%	30%

Borrowing limits

The Authorised limits for external debt include current commitments and proposals in the budget report for capital expenditure, plus additional headroom over and above the operational limit for unusual cash movements.

The Operational boundary for external debt is based on the same estimates as the authorised limit but without the additional headroom for unusual cash movements. This level also factors in the proposed approach to use internal cash-flow and future capital receipts as the preferred financing method for the capital programme.

	2017/18	**2018/19**	**2019/20**
Operational boundary – borrowing Operational boundary – other long-term liabilities Operational boundary – TOTAL	**£nil**	**£nil**	**£nil**
Authorised limit – borrowing Authorised limit – other long-term liabilities Authorised limit – TOTAL	**£nil**	**£nil**	**£nil**

External Context & Prospects for Interest Rates (Arlingclose Ltd)

The Chief Finance Officer has appointed Arlingclose as the interim treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Authority to formulate a view on interest rates. The following section gives their commentary on the economic context and views on the prospects for future interest rates.

Economic background: The major external influence on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2017/18 will be the UK's progress in negotiating a smooth exit from the European Union. Financial markets were wrong-footed by the referendum outcome and have since been weighed down by uncertainty over whether leaving the Union also means leaving the single market. Negotiations are expected to start once the UK formally triggers exit in early 2017 and last for at least two years. Uncertainty over future economic prospects will therefore remain throughout 2017/18.

The fall and continuing weakness in sterling and the near doubling in the price of oil in 2016 have combined to drive inflation expectations higher. The Bank of England is forecasting that Consumer Price Inflation will breach its 2% target in 2017, the first time since late 2013, but the Bank is expected to look through inflation overshoots over the course of 2017 when setting interest rates so as to avoid derailing the economy.

Initial post-referendum economic data showed that the feared collapse in business and consumer confidence had not immediately led to lower GDP growth. However, the prospect of a leaving the single market has dented business confidence and resulted in a delay in new business investment and, unless counteracted by higher public spending or retail sales, will weaken economic growth in 2017/18.

Looking overseas, with the US economy and its labour market showing steady improvement, the market has priced in a high probability of the Federal Reserve increasing interest rates in December 2016. The Eurozone meanwhile has continued to struggle with very low inflation and lack of momentum in growth, and the European Central Bank has left the door open for further quantitative easing.

The impact of political risk on financial markets remains significant over the next year. With challenges such as immigration, the rise of populist, anti-establishment parties and negative interest rates resulting in savers being paid nothing for their frugal efforts or even penalised for them, the outcomes of Italy's referendum on its constitution (December 2016), the French presidential and general elections (April – June 2017) and the German federal elections (August – October 2017) have the potential for upsets.

Credit outlook: Markets have expressed concern over the financial viability of a number of European banks recently. Sluggish economies and continuing fines for pre-crisis behaviour have weighed on bank profits, and any future slowdown will exacerbate concerns in this regard.

Bail-in legislation, which ensures that large investors including local authorities will rescue failing banks instead of taxpayers in the future, has now been fully implemented in the European Union, Switzerland and USA, while Australia and Canada are progressing with their own plans. The credit risk associated with making unsecured bank deposits has therefore increased relative to the risk of other investment options available to the Authority; returns from cash deposits however continue to fall.

Interest rate forecast: The Authority's treasury adviser Arlingclose's central case is for UK Bank Rate to remain at 0.25% during 2017/18**.** The Bank of England has, however, highlighted that excessive levels of inflation will not be tolerated for sustained periods. Given this view and the current inflation outlook, further falls in the Bank Rate look less likely. Negative Bank Rate is currently perceived by some policymakers to be counterproductive but, although a low probability, cannot be entirely ruled out in the medium term, particularly if the UK enters recession as a result of concerns over leaving the European Union.

Gilt yields have risen sharply, but remain at low levels. The Arlingclose central case is for yields to decline when the government triggers Article 50. Long-term economic fundamentals remain weak, and the quantitative easing (QE) stimulus provided by central banks globally has only delayed the fallout from the build-up of public and private sector debt. The Bank of England has defended QE as a monetary policy tool, and further QE in support of the UK economy in 2017/18 remains a possibility, to keep long-term interest rates low.

Arlingclose Interest Rate Forecasts

Arlingclose central interest rate forecast – December 2016

	Bank Rate	3 month LIBID	12 month LIBID	20-year gilt yield*
Q1 2017	0.25	0.25	0.60	1.70
Q2 2017	0.25	0.25	0.50	1.50
Q3 2017	0.25	0.25	0.50	1.40
Q4 2017	0.25	0.30	0.50	1.40
H1 2018	0.25	0.30	0.50	1.40
H2 2018	0.25	0.30	0.55	1.43
H1 2019	0.25	0.30	0.77	1.53
H2 2019	0.25	0.30	0.90	1.63

* The Authority can currently borrow from the PWLB at 0.80% above gilt yields

The Authority Budget will assume investment interest rates to remain constant at average rate of 0.30% for 2017/18 & beyond, reflecting the planned short-term duration of investments.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at Appendix 4.

Local Context

Current Portfolio Position

The Authority currently holds no borrowing and this is not expected to change during 2017/18.

The investments will be dependent on actual cash flows during 2017/18 although it is likely that the first gainshare payment of £30M will be received from government in March 2016/17. As such it is proposed that Investment Strategy will apply with immediate effect.

Borrowing Strategy

As at 31st March 2017, the Authority will hold no long-term loans, no borrowing is anticipated during 2017/18. Therefore a debt-free strategy will be maintained until such a time as the Authority has been able to determine a more detailed capital strategy together agreement of a prioritised capital investment programme.

The funding of this programme will then be considered as part of the business case development for specific projects and overall cash flow requirements for programme delivery.

APPENDIX 2

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Investment Policy

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

Investment instruments identified for use in the financial year are listed below under the 'Specified' and 'Non-Specified' Investments categories. Counterparty limits will be as set through the Authority's Treasury Management Practices – Schedules.

The strategy of this policy is to set outer limits for treasury management operations. In times of exceptional market uncertainty, Authority Officers will operate in a more restrictive manner than the policy allows, as has been the case during recent years.

West of England Revolving Investment Fund (RIF)

Previously Bath and North East Somerset Council was the Accountable Body for the West of England Revolving Investment Fund, and acted as an agent holding Government grants until they are ready to be distributed to Local Authorities for infrastructure works over the coming years. The role is expected to transfer to the WECA during 2017/18 subject to appropriate agreement with CLG.

The funds are invested primarily to protect the capital, and in order to achieve this high level of capital security, investments are made solely with UK Central Government and UK Local Authorities. Any interest earned on these investments is reinvested into the fund.

Local Growth Fund (LGF)

Similarly it is anticipated for 2017/18 onwards, the WECA will act as Accountable Body for Local Growth Fund (LGF).

LGF Investments will be made in line with the Authority's overall Treasury Management Strategy. Interest is earmarked to fund the Authority's corporate support and governance costs that come with performing the Accountable Body function for the LEP.

APPENDIX 2

Approved Investment Counterparties

The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparties in the following table, subject to the cash and time limits shown:

Credit Rating	Banks Unsecured	Banks Secured	Government	Corporates	Registered Providers
UK Central Govt.	N/A	N/A	£unlimited 50 Years	N/A	N/A
AAA	£10m 5 Years	£15m 20 Years	£10m 50 Years	£10m 20 Years	£5m 20 Years
AA+	£10m 5 Years	£15m 10 Years	£15m 25 Years	£5m 10 Years	£5m 10 Years
AA	£10m 4 Years	£15m 5 Years	£15m 15Years	£5m 5 Years	£5m 10 Years
AA-	£10m 3 Years	£15m 4 Years	£10m 10 Years	£5m 4 Years	£5m 10 Years
A+	£10m 2 Years	£15m 3 Years	£10m 5 Years	£5m 3 Years	£5m 5 Years
A	£10m 13 Month	£10m 2 Years	£10m 5 Years	£5m 2 Years	£5m 5 Years
A-	£10m 6 Months	£10m 13 months	£10m 5 Years	£5m 13 Months	£5m 5 Years
BBB+	£5m 3 Months	£10m 6 Months	£10m 2 Years	£3m 6 months	£3m 2 Years
BBB	£5m Overnight	£5m 3 Months	N/A	N/A	N/A
None	£1m 6 Months	N/A	£10m 25 Years	£50,000 5 Year	£3m 5 Years
Pooled Funds	£10m Per Fund				

The majority of the Authority's investments will be made for relatively short periods and in higher credit rated investments, giving priority to security and liquidity ahead of yield. However, where the Authority has identified a core cash balance that is not required for any cash outflows in the short term, these funds will be considered suitable for a wider range of investments, with a greater focus on achieving a level of investment income that can support Authority services. These may include long-term investments with registered providers of social housing, small businesses or corporate bond funds where an enhanced return is paid to cover the additional risks presented. Standard risk mitigation techniques, such as wide diversification and external credit assessments, will be employed, and no such investment will be made without a specific recommendation from the Authority's treasury management adviser.

APPENDIX 2

In addition, the Authority may invest with organisations and pooled funds without credit ratings, following an external credit assessment and advice from the Authority's treasury management adviser.

Banks Unsecured

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

Current Bank Account: The Authority's current accounts are held with National Westminster Bank plc (NatWest), which is close to the bottom of the above credit rating criteria. The Authority will treat NatWest as "high credit quality" for the purpose of making investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day, subject to the bank maintaining a credit rating no lower than BBB-.

Banks Secured

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

Government

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

Corporates

Loans, bonds and commercial paper issued by companies other than banks and registered providers. These investments are not subject to bail-in, but are exposed to the risk of the company going insolvent.

Loans to unrated companies will only be made as part of a diversified pool in order to spread the risk widely. They will however only be made following a favourable external credit assessment and on the specific advice of the Authority's treasury management adviser.

Registered Providers

Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by or secured on the assets of Registered Providers of Social Housing, formerly known as Housing Associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency and, as providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

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

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

Risk Assessments & Credit Ratings

The Authority (through is appointed Treasury service provider) uses long-term credit ratings from the three main rating agencies Fitch Ratings Ltd, Moody's Investors Service Inc and Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC to assess the risk of investment default. The lowest available credit rating will be used to determine credit quality, unless an investment-specific rating is available.

Long-term ratings are expressed on a scale from AAA (the highest quality) through to D (indicating default). Ratings of BBB- and above are described as investment grade, while ratings of BB+ and below are described as speculative grade. The Authority's credit rating criteria are set to ensure that it is unlikely that the Authority will hold speculative grade investments, despite the possibility of repeated downgrades.

Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:
- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that an BBB+ 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.

If further counterparties are identified during the year that meet the minimum credit rating criteria and conform to the other criteria set out in the Treasury Management Practice Schedules, they can be added to the lending list following the agreement of the Chief Financial Officer.

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

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

Foreign countries

Investments in foreign countries will be limited to those that hold a AAA or AA+ sovereign credit rating from all three major credit rating agencies, and to a maximum of £15m per country for those rated AAA and £10 million per country for those rated AA+. There is no limit on investments in the UK, irrespective of the sovereign credit rating.

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

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.

Specified Investments

Specified investments are those expected to offer relatively high security and liquidity, and can be entered into with the minimum of formalities. The CLG Guidance defines specified investments as those:

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

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

Non-Specified Investments

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

	£m
Total long-term investments	50
Total investments without credit ratings or rated below A-	10
TOTAL	**60**

The time limit for long-term investments in UK Local Authorities & Local Government will be 50 years.

Long-term investments will be limited to 50% of a counterparty's limit where it meets the above credit rating criteria (except the UK Government). The combined value of short-term and long-term investments with any organisation will not exceed the limits for specified investments highlighted above.

Liquidity management

The Authority regularly reviews and updates its cash flow forecasts to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed.
Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium term financial plan, levels of reserves and cash flow forecast.

Planned investment strategy for 2017/18

Investments are made in three broad categories:

- Short-term – cash required to meet known cash outflows in the next month, plus a contingency to cover unexpected cash flows over the same period.
- Medium-term – cash required to manage the annual seasonal cash flow cycle, including amounts to cover forecast shortages, planned uses of reserves, and a longer-term contingency.
- Long-term – cash not required to meet cash flows, and used primarily to generate investment income.

APPENDIX 2

Short-term funds are required to meet cash flows occurring in the next month or so, and the preservation of capital and liquidity is therefore of paramount importance. Generating investment returns is of limited concern here, although it should not be ignored. Bank deposit accounts and Money Market Funds will be the main methods used to manage short-term cash.

Medium-term funds which may be required in the next one to twelve months will be managed concentrating on security, with less importance attached to liquidity but a slightly higher emphasis on yield. The majority of investments in this period will be in the form of fixed term deposits with banks and building societies. Preference will continue to be given to investments with UK banks with approved credit ratings.

Cash that is not required to meet any liquidity need can be invested for the longer term with a greater emphasis on achieving returns that will support spending on local authority services. Decisions on making longer term investments (i.e. over 1 year) will be considered during the year after taking account of the interest rate yield curve, levels of core cash and the amount of temporary internal borrowing related to funding of capital spend. A wider range of instruments, including structured deposits, certificates of deposit, gilts and corporate bonds may be used to diversify the portfolio. The use of external fund managers that have the skills and resources to manage the risks inherent in a portfolio of long-term investments may be considered.

The Authority has already reduced its cash position to repay fixed interest debt held at higher rates. The continuing low level of short-term interest rates will mean the on-going use of internal cash resources to minimise the new borrowing. This approach will be regularly reviewed in light of market conditions and the wider economic outlook.

Review Reports

The revised CIPFA Code of Practice requires that both mid year and annual review reports on treasury activities are reported to Full Authority.

Other Matters

The CLG Investment Guidance also requires the Authority to note the following matters each year as part of the investment strategy:

<u>Treasury management advisers</u>
The Chief Financial Officer has appointed Arlingclose Limited as the interim treasury management advisers and receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues, although responsibility for final decision making remains with the Authority and its officers. The services received include:

- advice and guidance on relevant policies, strategies and reports,
- advice on investment decisions,
- notification of credit ratings and changes,
- other information on credit quality,
- advice on debt management decisions,
- accounting advice,
- reports on treasury performance,
- forecasts of interest rates, and
- training courses.

The quality of this service is monitored by officers on a regular basis, focusing on supply of relevant, accurate and timely information across the headings above.

Investment training

The needs of the staff (either directly employed or those within our appointed treasury service provider) for training in investment management will be assessed every year or when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change.

Staff should regularly attend training courses, seminars and conferences provided by Arlingclose and CIPFA. Relevant staff are also encouraged to study professional qualifications from CIPFA, the Association of Corporate Treasurers and other appropriate organisations.

APPENDIX 3

Proposed Counterparty List - Unsecured Bank Investments

2017/18

CRITERIA			FITCH RATINGS			Moody's Ratings		S&P Ratings	
			S/Term	L/Term	Support	S/Term	L/Term	S/Term	L/Term
	Max Duration	Council Limit (£m)							
UK Banks	**Sovereign Rating**			**AA**			**Aa1**		**Aau**
Barclays Bank plc	6 months	10	F1	A	5	P-1	A1	A-2	A-
Close Brothers Ltd	13 months	10	F1	A	5	P-1	Aa3		
Goldman Sachs International	13 months	10	F1	A		P-1	A1	A-1	A+
HSBC Bank plc	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	1	P-1	Aa2	A-1+	AA-
Lloyds Banking Group									
Lloyds Bank plc	2 Years	10	F1	A+	5	P-1	A1	A-1	A
Bank of Scotland plc	2 Years	10	F1	A+	5	P-1	A1	A-1	A
Royal Bank of Scotland Group									
National Westminster Bank plc	3 Months	5	F2	BBB+	5	P-2	A3	A-2	BBB+
Royal Bank of Scotland plc	3 Months	5	F2	BBB+	5	P-2	A3	A-2	BBB+
Santander UK plc **(domiciled in UK)**	13 months	5	F1	A	2	P-1	Aa3	A-1	A
UK Building Societies									
Nationwide	13 months	10	F1	A	5	P-1	Aa3	A-1	A
Coventry	13 months	10	F1	A	5	P-1	A2	-	-
Leeds	6 months	10	F1	A-	5	P-2	A2	-	-
Foreign Banks									
Australia	**Sovereign Rating**			**AAA**			**Aaa**		**AAAu**
Australia & New Zealand Banking Group	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	1	P-1	Aa2	A-1+	AA-
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	1	P-1	Aa2	A-1+	AA-
National Australia Bank Ltd	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	1	P-1	Aa2	A-1+	AA-
Westpac Banking Corporation	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	1	P-1	Aa2	A-1+	AA-
Canada	**Sovereign Rating**			**AAA**			**Aaa**		**AAA**
Bank of Montreal	2 Years		F1+	AA-	2	P-1	Aa3	A-1	A+
Bank of Nova Scotia	2 Years	10	F1+	AA-	2	P-1	Aa3	A-1	A+
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	2 Years	10	F1+	AA-	2	P-1	Aa3	A-1	A+
Royal Bank of Canada	3 Years	10	F1+	AA	2	P-1	Aa3	A-1+	AA-
Toronto-Dominion Bank	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	2	P-1	Aa1	A-1+	AA-
		10							
Finland	**Sovereign Rating**			**AA+**			**Aa1**		**AA+**
OP Corporate Bank plc	2 Years	10				P-1	Aa3	A-1+	AA-
Germany	**Sovereign Rating**			**AAA**			**Aaa**		**AAAu**
Landesbank Hessen-Thuringen	13 months	10	F1+	A+		P-1	A1	A-1	A
Netherlands	**Sovereign Rating**			**AAA**			**Aaa**		**AAAu**
Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten	5 Years	10	F1+	AA+	1	P-1	Aaa	A-1+	AAA
Cooperatieve Rabobank UA	2 Years	10	F1+	AA-		P-1	Aa2	A-1	A+
ING Bank NV	13 months	10	F1	A+	5	P-1	A1	A-1	A
Singapore	**Sovereign Rating**			**AAA**			**Aaa**		**AAAu**
Development Bank of Singapore Ltd	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	1	P-1	Aa1	A-1+	AA-
Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	1	P-1	Aa1	A-1+	AA-
United Overseas Bank Ltd	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	1	P-1	Aa1	A-1+	AA-
Sweden	**Sovereign Rating**			**AAA**			**Aaa**		**AAAu**
Svenska Handelsbanken	3 Years	10	F1+	AA	2	P-1	Aa2	A-1+	AA-
Nordea Bank NV	3 Years	10	F1+	AA-	2	P-1	Aa3	A-1+	AA-
Switzerland	**Sovereign Rating**			**AAA**			**Aaa**		**AAAu**
Credit Suisse AG	13 months	10	F1+	A	5	P-1	A1	A-1	A
USA	**Sovereign Rating**			**AAA**			**Aaa**		**AA+u**
J P Morgan Chase Bank NA	2 Years	10	F1+	AA-	5	P-1	Aa3	A-1	A+
Supernational									
Council of Europe Development	5 Years	10	F1+	AA+	-	P-1	Aa1	A-1+	AA+
European Bank for Reconstruction & Dev	5 Years	10	F1+	AAA	-	P-1	Aaa	A-1+	AAA
European Investment Bank	5 Years	10	F1+	AAA	-	P-1	Aaa	A-1+	AAA
Inter-American Development Bank	5 Years	10	F1+	AAA	-	P-1	Aaa	A-1+	AAA
IBRD (World Bank)	5 Years	10	F1+	AAA	-	P-1	Aaa	A-1+	AAA
Nordic Investment Bank	5 Years	10	-	-	-	P-1	Aaa	A-1+	AAA

Summary Guide to Credit Ratings

Rating	Details
AAA	Highest credit quality – lowest expectation of default, which is unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.
AA	Very high credit quality - expectation of very low default risk, which is not likely to be significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.
A	High credit quality - expectations of low default risk which may be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.
BBB	Good credit quality - expectations of default risk are currently low but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.
BB	Speculative - indicates an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time.
B	Highly speculative - indicates that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.
CCC	Substantial credit risk - default is a real possibility.
CC	Very high levels of credit risk - default of some kind appears probable.
C	Exceptionally high levels of credit risk - default is imminent or inevitable.
RD	Restricted default - indicates an issuer that has experienced payment default on a bond, loan or other material financial obligation but which has not entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure, and which has not otherwise ceased operating.
D	Default - indicate san issuer that has entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure, or which has otherwise ceased business.

Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast

Underlying assumptions:

- The medium term outlook for the UK economy is dominated by the negotiations to leave the EU. The long-term position of the UK economy will be largely dependent on the agreements the government is able to secure with the EU and other countries.

- The global environment is also riddled with uncertainty, with repercussions for financial market volatility and long-term interest rates. Donald Trump's victory in the US general election and Brexit are symptomatic of the popular disaffection with globalisation trends. The potential rise in protectionism could dampen global growth prospects and therefore inflation. Financial market volatility will remain the norm for some time.

- However, following significant global fiscal and monetary stimulus, the short term outlook for the global economy is somewhat brighter than earlier in the year. US fiscal stimulus is also a possibility following Trump's victory.

- Recent data present a more positive picture for the post-Referendum UK economy than predicted due to continued strong household spending.

- Over the medium term, economic and political uncertainty will likely dampen investment intentions and tighten credit availability, prompting lower activity levels and potentially a rise in unemployment.

- The currency-led rise in CPI inflation (currently 1.0% year/year) will continue, breaching the target in 2017, which will act to slow real growth in household spending due to a sharp decline in real wage growth.

- The depreciation in sterling will, however, assist the economy to rebalance away from spending. The negative contribution from net trade to GDP growth is likely to diminish, largely due to weaker domestic demand. Export volumes will increase marginally.

- Given the pressure on household spending and business investment, the rise in inflation is highly unlikely to prompt monetary tightening by the Bank of England, with policymakers looking through import-led CPI spikes to the negative effects of Brexit on economic activity and, ultimately, inflation.

- Bank of England policymakers have, however, highlighted that excessive levels of inflation will not be tolerated for sustained periods. Given this view and the current inflation outlook, further monetary loosening looks less likely.

Forecast:

- Globally, the outlook is uncertain and risks remain weighted to the downside. The UK domestic outlook is uncertain, but likely to be weaker in the short term than previously expected.
- The likely path for Bank Rate is weighted to the downside. The Arlingclose central case is for Bank Rate to remain at 0.25%, but there is a 25% possibility of a drop to close to zero, with a very small chance of a reduction below zero.
- Gilt yields have risen sharply, but remain at low levels. The Arlingclose central case is for yields to decline when the government triggers Article 50.

	Dec-16	Mar-17	Jun-17	Sep-17	Dec-17	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Average
Official Bank Rate														
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	**0.12**
Arlingclose Central Case	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**
Downside risk	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	**0.40**
3-month LIBID rate														
Upside risk	0.05	0.05	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.15	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	**0.18**
Arlingclose Central Case	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.30**	**0.29**
Downside risk	0.20	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.30	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	**0.34**
1-yr LIBID rate														
Upside risk	0.10	0.10	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	**0.23**
Arlingclose Central Case	**0.60**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.60**	**0.70**	**0.85**	**0.90**	**0.90**	**0.90**	**0.65**
Downside risk	0.10	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	**0.24**
5-yr gilt yield														
Upside risk	0.25	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	**0.39**
Arlingclose Central Case	**0.50**	**0.40**	**0.35**	**0.35**	**0.35**	**0.40**	**0.40**	**0.40**	**0.45**	**0.50**	**0.55**	**0.60**	**0.65**	**0.45**
Downside risk	0.30	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	**0.47**
10-yr gilt yield														
Upside risk	0.30	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	**0.39**
Arlingclose Central Case	**1.15**	**0.95**	**0.85**	**0.85**	**0.85**	**0.85**	**0.85**	**0.90**	**0.95**	**1.00**	**1.05**	**1.10**	**1.15**	**0.96**
Downside risk	0.30	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	**0.47**
20-yr gilt yield														
Upside risk	0.25	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	**0.39**
Arlingclose Central Case	**1.70**	**1.50**	**1.40**	**1.40**	**1.40**	**1.40**	**1.40**	**1.45**	**1.50**	**1.55**	**1.60**	**1.65**	**1.70**	**1.75**
Downside risk	0.40	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	**0.57**
50-yr gilt yield														
Upside risk	0.25	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	**0.39**
Arlingclose Central Case	**1.60**	**1.40**	**1.30**	**1.30**	**1.30**	**1.30**	**1.30**	**1.35**	**1.40**	**1.45**	**1.50**	**1.55**	**1.60**	**1.41**
Downside risk	0.40	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	**0.57**