



SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (incorporating the Annual Investment Strategy) 2018/19

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1 Purpose and Scope

1.1 The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports on treasury activity each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimated and actual figures.

a) **Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19** (this report).

This report is the most important of the three reports and covers:

- The capital plans of the Council (including prudential indicators);
- The treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings are organised), including treasury indicators, and
- An investment strategy (investment options and limits applied).

b) **Mid Year Treasury Management Report** – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and assess whether treasury activity is adhering to the approved strategy, or whether any policies require revision.

c) **Annual Treasury Report** - This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators compared to the estimates within the strategy and the performance of actual treasury operations.

1.2 Scrutiny

These reports are required to be adequately scrutinised by committee before being recommended to the Council. This role is undertaken by the **Audit and Scrutiny Committee**.

1.3 The treasury management issues covered by this report are:

Capital Issues

- the capital plans and associated prudential indicators

Treasury management issues

- the current treasury position
- treasury indicators which will limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council
- prospects for interest rates
- the borrowing strategy
- policy on borrowing in advance of need
- debt rescheduling
- the investment strategy
- creditworthiness policy and
- policy on use of external service providers

1.4 These elements cover the requirements of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code (the Prudential Code), the CIPFA Treasury Management Code (the Code) and Scottish Government Investment Regulations.

1.5 The increased Member consideration of treasury management matters and the need to ensure that officers dealing with treasury management are trained and kept up to date requires a suitable training process for Members and officers. This Council will address this important issue by:

a) **Elected Members**

- Working with members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to identify their training needs
- Working with Link Asset Services to identify appropriate training provision for elected members

b) **Officers** dealing with treasury management matters will have the option of various levels of training including:

- Treasury courses run by the Council's advisers
- Attendance at CIPFA treasury management training events
- Attendance at the CIPFA Scottish Treasury Management Forum and information exchanged via the Treasury Management Forum network
- On the job training in line with the approved Treasury Management Practices (TMPs).

1.6 Treasury Management Consultants

The Council uses Link Asset Services as its external treasury management advisors.

The Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the Council at all times and will ensure that it does not rely solely upon information and advice from its external service providers.

It also recognises however that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to gain access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review.

1.7 The Treasury Management Strategy covers the treasury management activities for the Council (including any subsidiary organisations), the cash managed by the Council on behalf of the Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund, the Common Good and Trust Funds.

2 Background

2.1 The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

2.2 The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses. On occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

2.3 The Prudential and Treasury Indicators (summarised in **Annex A**) consider the affordability and impact of capital expenditure decisions, and set out the Council's overall capital framework. These Indicators have been developed in line with both the Prudential and Treasury Codes. The treasury service considers the effective funding of these decisions. Together they form part of the process which ensures the Council meets its balanced budget requirement under the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Treasury Management Strategy therefore forms an integral part of the Council's overall Financial Strategy covering both its revenue and capital budgets.

2.4 CIPFA defines treasury management as:

"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

3 The Capital Prudential Indicators 2017/18 – 2021/22

The Council's Financial Strategy sets out financial resource and management parameters within which it will deliver its Corporate Vision and Priorities. The Financial Strategy brings together various elements of financial policy and strategy, including the Treasury Management Strategy, and establishes the financial planning framework for the Council in terms of Revenue Expenditure and Capital Investment. The output from this framework is the Council's Financial Plan, approved annually in February, presenting the financial proposals for delivering its services and objectives.

The Financial Strategy establishes that the Financial Principles underpinning the planning for the Council's future service delivery are to:

- (i) Raise the funds required by the Council to meet approved service levels in the most effective manner;
- (ii) Manage the effective deployment of those funds in line with the Council's corporate objectives and priorities; and
- (iii) Provide stability in resource planning and service delivery as expressed through Corporate and Business Plans and the Revenue and Capital Financial Plan.

In order to adhere to these Principles, the Financial Strategy states that the Council will adopt Financial Objectives to:

"ensure capital borrowing is within prudential borrowing limits and sustainable in the longer term. In this regard it is important to recognise the capital investment decisions taken now have long term borrowing implications and these have the potential to place a significant burden on future tax payers".

The draft revenue budget sets loans charges associated with capital borrowing over the next 5 years at £20.5m in 2018/19, rising to £20.7m in 2019/20.

The Council's Capital Financial Plan is the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the capital expenditure plans is reflected in prudential indicators, which are designed to assist members' overview and confirm capital expenditure plans.

3.1 Capital Expenditure (Prudential Indicator PI-1)

This prudential indicator is a summary of the Council's capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this planning cycle. The Capital Financial Plan for 2018/19 – 2027/28 includes the following capital expenditure forecasts for the first five years. 2017/18 projected outturn figures are also shown:

Capital Expenditure (PI-1) £m	Estimate					
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Assets & Infrastructure	19.6	27.4	29.3	31.8	23.3	17.6
Other Corporate Services	4.1	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.6
Children & Young People	14.3	7.1	5.8	4.4	6.1	10.3
Culture & Sport	1.1	1.8	1.4	2.1	0.5	0.6
Economic Regeneration	2.6	6.0	3.6	0.2	0.2	0.2
Housing Strategy & Services	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
Social Care Infrastructure	0.3	0.3	5.0	0.3	0.3	0.1
Emergency & Unplanned Schemes	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	42.9	43.9	46.2	40.1	31.8	30.1

It should be noted that expenditure associated with the construction of the proposed Jedburgh inter-generational school campus is not included in the above as it is funded as a 'Design, Build, Fund & Maintain (DBFM) model and therefore out-with the Councils capital programme. However, £3.7m has

been included in the Children & Young People budget above for non-grant funded expenditure in relation to the project, e.g. project management and the provision of a new 3G synthetic pitch.

3.2 Other Relevant Expenditure

The Council anticipates to have additional expenditure which, for the purposes of the Treasury and Prudential Indicators, will be treated as capital expenditure. This expenditure relates to initiatives where the Council has applied, or is planning to apply, for a Consent to Borrow from the Scottish Government. The key area not included in paragraph 3.1 is borrowing to lend in respect of an affordable house building programme in partnership with the Scottish Futures Trust (Bridge Homes LLP). The estimated amounts are as follows:

Other Relevant Expenditure £m	Estimate					
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Bridge Homes LLP (Affordable house building programme)	0.4	0.4	-	-	-	-

3.3 Capital Financing Assumptions

The table below summarises the above capital expenditure plans and how these plans are being financed by capital or revenue resources. Any shortfall of resources results in a financing need.

Capital Expenditure £m	Estimate					
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Capital Expenditure – per plan	42.9	43.9	46.2	40.1	31.8	30.1
Other Relevant Expenditure	0.4	0.4	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure	43.3	44.3	46.2	40.1	31.8	30.1
Financed by:						
Capital receipts	0.7	2.3	1.8	0.3	-	-
CFCR	0.4	-	-	-	-	-
Developer Contributions	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.1
Govt. General Capital Grants	15.4	14.4	15.4	14.0	14.0	14.0
Govt. Specific Capital Grants	3.7	4.0	10.2	13.4	6.9	0.5
Other Grants & Contributions	2.5	3.7	2.6	1.6	-	-
Plant & Vehicle / Infrastructure Fund	1.3	2.0	2.4	2.0	2.2	2.4
Net financing need for the year	17.9	17.2	13.1	8.7	8.6	13.1

3.4 The Council's Borrowing Need (the Capital Financing Requirement – Prudential Indicator PI-2)

- a) The second prudential indicator is the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is simply the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure identified above, which has not immediately been paid for (e.g. via grants), will increase the CFR. The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as prudent annual repayments from revenue need to be made which reflect the useful life of capital assets financed by borrowing.
- b) The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. PPP schemes, finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the Council's borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a borrowing facility and so the Council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes. The Council has £72.9 of liabilities relating to such schemes within the 2017/18 long term liabilities figure which includes £21.7m relating to funding arrangements for the construction of a new High School in Kelso. The CFR increases by a further £33.0m in 2020/21 as a result of the Jedburgh campus mentioned above.

c) The Council is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

Capital Financing Requirement (PI-2) £m	Actual	Estimate					
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Total CFR (PI-2) *	286.6	315.9	322.1	325.2	356.7	354.5	356.8
Movement in CFR represented by:							
Net financing need for the year (above)		17.9	17.2	13.1	8.7	8.6	13.1
Less scheduled debt amortisation and other financing movements		11.4	(11.0)	(10.0)	22.8	(10.8)	(10.8)
Movement in CFR		29.3	6.2	3.1	31.5	(2.2)	2.3

* *The CFR for this calculation includes capital expenditure to 31 March of each financial year.*

The CFR variance between 2016/17 and 2017/18 is driven by the shift in the net financing need for the year as detailed in the table in section 3.3 and also by the inclusion of Kelso High School.

4 Treasury Management Strategy

The capital expenditure plans set out in Section 3 provide details of the service activity of the Council. The treasury management function ensures that the Council's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional Codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet this service activity. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury/prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions and the annual investment strategy.

4.1 Current Portfolio Position

- a) The Council's treasury portfolio position at 31 March 2018, with forward projections, is summarised below. The table shows the actual external debt, (the treasury management operations), against the underlying capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement - CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

as at 31 March £m	Estimate				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Borrowing	204.9	215.7	222.7	222.7	229.8
Other Long Term Liabilities	73.0	70.7	68.4	98.3	94.7
Total Gross Borrowing (Prudential Indicator PI-5)	277.9	286.4	291.1	321.0	324.5
CFR – the borrowing need *	325.2	356.7	354.5	356.8	368.8
(Under) / Over Borrowing (Prudential Indicator PI-6)	(47.3)	(70.3)	(63.4)	(35.8)	(44.3)

* The CFR for this calculation includes the current and two future years projected capital expenditure see 4.1b)

- b) Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operates its activities within well-defined limits. One of these (PI-6) is that the Council needs to ensure that its gross debt figure (shown above) does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2017/18 and following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing in advance of need is not undertaken for revenue purposes.
- c) The Council has complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and no difficulties are currently envisaged for the long term future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the Financial Plans for 2018/19.

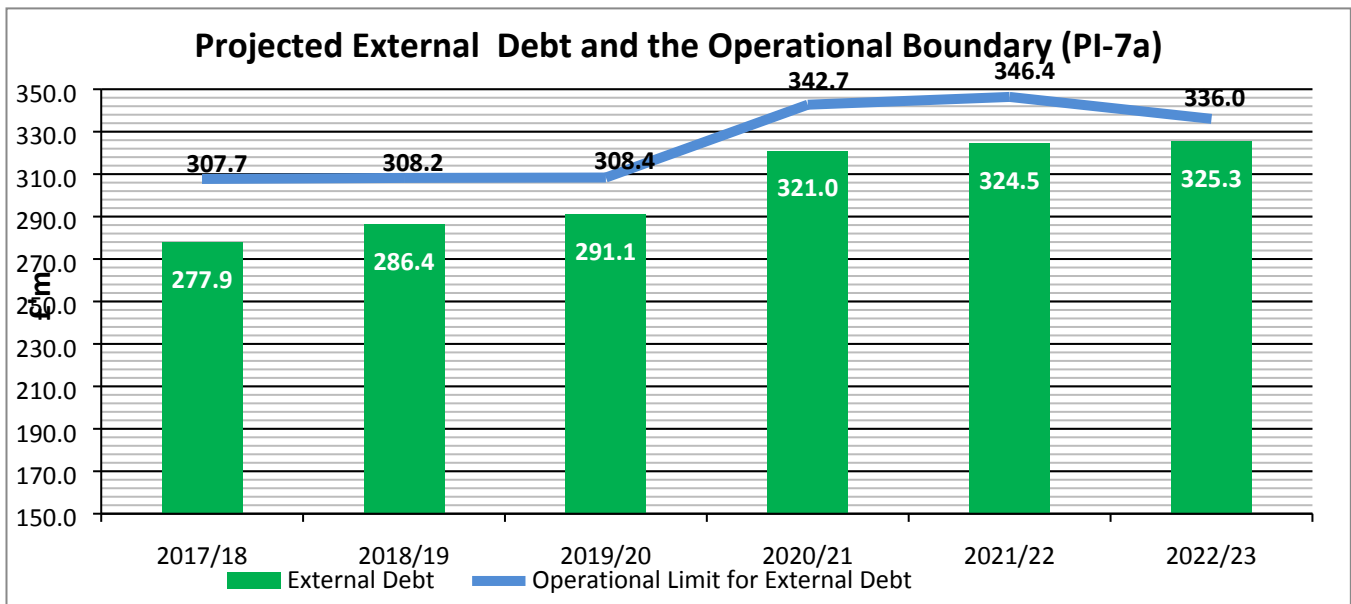
4.2 Treasury Indicators: Limits to Borrowing Activity

The Operational Boundary (Prudential Indicator PI-7)

- a) This is the limit which external borrowing is not normally expected to exceed. In most cases, this would be a similar figure to the CFR, but may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual debt.

Operational boundary £m	Estimate					
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total Operational Boundary (PI-7a)	307.7	308.2	308.4	342.7	346.4	336.0
Less: Other long term liabilities	(73.0)	(70.7)	(68.4)	(98.3)	(94.7)	(91.1)
Operational Boundary exc. Other Long Term Liabilities (PI-7b)	234.7	237.5	240.0	244.4	251.7	244.9

- b) The following chart shows how the current and projected Operational Borrowing limit compare with the anticipated levels of actual debt.

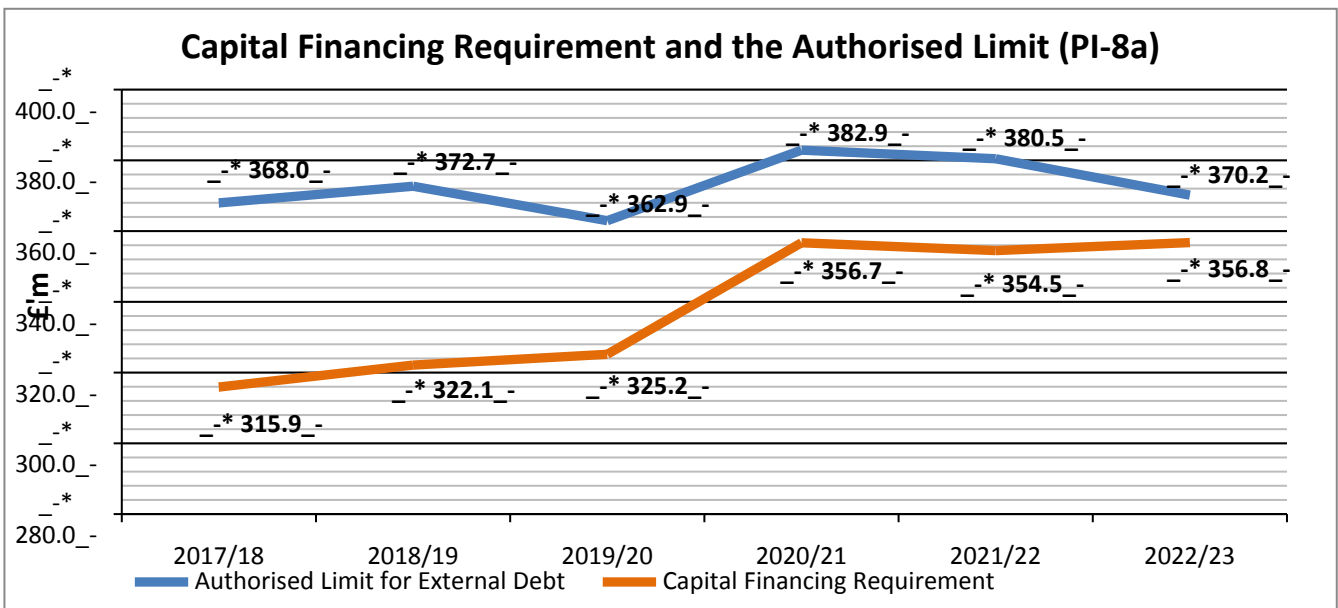


The Authorised Limit for External Debt (Prudential Indicator PI-8)

- c) A further key prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Council. It reflects the level of external borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.
- d) This is the statutory limit (Affordable Capital Expenditure Limit) determined under section 35(1) of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.
- e) The Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

Authorised Limit £m	Estimate					
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total Authorised Limit (PI-8a)	368.0	372.7	362.9	382.9	380.5	370.2
Less: Other long term liabilities	(73.0)	(70.7)	(68.4)	(98.3)	(94.7)	(91.1)
Authorised Limit exc. Other Long-Term Liabilities (PI-8b)	295.0	302.0	294.6	284.6	285.8	279.1

f) The chart on the below shows how the current and projected Capital Financing Requirement compares the Authorised Limit for External Debt



4.3 Prospects for Interest Rates

- a) The Council has appointed Link Asset Services as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The following table gives our central view.

	Dec-17	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21
Bank Rate	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%
5yr PWLB Rate	1.50%	1.60%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%	1.80%	1.90%	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%
10yr PWLB View	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%
25yr PWLB View	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.20%	3.30%	3.40%	3.50%	3.50%	3.60%	3.60%
50yr PWLB Rate	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.40%

- b) As expected, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) delivered a 0.25% increase in Bank Rate at its meeting on 2 November. This removed the emergency cut in August 2016 after the EU referendum. The MPC also gave forward guidance that they expected to increase Bank rate only twice more by 0.25% by 2020 to end at 1.00%. The Link Asset Services forecast as above includes increases in Bank Rate of 0.25% in November 2018, November 2019 and August 2020.
- c) The overall longer run trend is for gilt yields and PWLB rates to rise, albeit gently. It has long been expected, that at some point, there would be a more protracted move from bonds to equities after a historic long-term trend, over about the last 25 years, of falling bond yields. The action of central banks since the financial crash of 2008, in implementing substantial Quantitative Easing, added further impetus to this downward trend in bond yields and rising bond prices. Quantitative Easing has also directly led to a rise in equity values as investors searched for higher returns and took on riskier assets. The sharp rise in bond yields since the US Presidential election in November 2016 has called into question whether the previous trend may go into reverse, especially now the Fed. has taken the lead in reversing monetary policy by starting, in October 2017, a policy of not fully reinvesting proceeds from bonds that it holds when they mature.
- d) Until 2015, monetary policy was focused on providing stimulus to economic growth but has since started to refocus on countering the threat of rising inflationary pressures as stronger economic growth becomes more firmly established. The Fed. has started raising interest rates and this trend is expected to continue during 2018 and 2019. These increases will make holding US bonds much less attractive and cause their prices to fall, and therefore bond yields to rise. Rising bond yields in the US are likely to exert some upward pressure on bond yields in the UK and other developed economies. However, the degree of that upward pressure is likely to be dampened by how strong or weak the prospects for economic growth and rising inflation are in each country, and on the degree of progress towards the reversal of monetary policy away from quantitative easing and other credit stimulus measures.
- e) From time to time, gilt yields – and therefore PWLB rates - can be subject to exceptional levels of volatility due to geo-political, sovereign debt crisis and emerging market developments. Such volatility could occur at any time during the forecast period
- f) Economic and interest rate forecasting remains difficult with so many external influences weighing on the UK. The above forecasts (and MPC decisions) will be liable to further amendment depending on how economic data and developments in financial markets transpire over the next year. Geopolitical developments, especially in the EU, could also have a major impact. Forecasts for average investment earnings beyond the three-year time horizon will be heavily dependent on economic and political developments.

- g)** Downside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates currently include.
- Bank of England monetary policy takes action too quickly over the next three years to raise Bank Rate and causes UK economic growth, and increases in inflation, to be weaker than we currently anticipate.
 - Geopolitical risks, especially North Korea, but also in Europe and the Middle East, which could lead to increasing safe haven flows.
 - A resurgence of the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis, possibly Italy, due to its high level of government debt, low rate of economic growth and vulnerable banking system.
 - Weak capitalisation of some European banks.
 - The result of the October 2017 Austrian general election is likely to result in a strongly anti-immigrant coalition government. In addition, the new Czech prime minister is expected to be Andrej Babis who is strongly against EU migrant quotas and refugee policies. Both developments could provide major impetus to other, particularly former Communist bloc countries, to coalesce to create a major block to progress on EU integration and centralisation of EU policy. This, in turn, could spill over into impacting the Euro, EU financial policy and financial markets.
 - Rising protectionism under President Trump
 - A sharp Chinese downturn and its impact on emerging market countries
- h)** The potential for upside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates, especially for longer term PWLB rates include: -
- The Bank of England is too slow in its pace and strength of increases in Bank Rate and, therefore, allows inflation pressures to build up too strongly within the UK economy, which then necessitates a later rapid series of increases in Bank Rate faster than we currently expect.
 - UK inflation returning to sustained significantly higher levels causing an increase in the inflation premium inherent to gilt yields.
 - The Fed causing a sudden shock in financial markets through misjudging the pace and strength of increases in its Fed. Funds Rate and in the pace and strength of reversal of Quantitative Easing, which then leads to a fundamental reassessment by investors of the relative risks of holding bonds, as opposed to equities. This could lead to a major flight from bonds to equities and a sharp increase in bond yields in the US, which could then spill over into impacting bond yields around the world.
- i)** Investment returns are likely to remain low during 2018/19 but to be on a gently rising trend over the next few years;
- Borrowing interest rates increased sharply after the result of the general election in June and then also after the September MPC meeting when financial markets reacted by accelerating their expectations for the timing of Bank Rate increases. Apart from that, there has been little general trend in rates during the current financial year. The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served well over the last few years. However, this needs to be carefully reviewed to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when authorities may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure and/or the refinancing of maturing debt.
 - There will remain a cost of carry to any new long-term borrowing that causes a temporary increase in cash balances as this position will, most likely, incur a revenue cost – the difference between borrowing costs and investment returns.
- j)** **Annex C** contains a more comprehensive Economic Background narrative from Link Asset Services.

4.4 Borrowing Strategy

- a) The Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and counterparty risk is still an issue to be considered.
- b) Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2018/19 treasury operations. The Chief Financial Officer will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances:
 - *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long and short term rates than that currently forecast*, perhaps arising from an acceleration in the start date and in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are lower than they are projected to be in the next few years.
- c) Any decisions will be reported to Members at the next available opportunity.

4.5 Policy on borrowing in advance of need

- a) Borrowing in advance is defined as any borrowing undertaken by the local authority which will result in the total external debt of the local authority exceeding the capital financing requirement (CFR) of the local authority for the following twelve month period. This twelve month period is on a rolling twelve month basis.
- b) The Council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed.
- c) Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement estimates and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.
- d) The Chief Financial Officer has the authority to borrow in advance of need under delegated power where, for instance, a sharp rise in interest rates is expected, and so borrowing early at fixed interest rates will be economically beneficial or meet budgetary constraints. The Chief Financial Officer will adopt a cautious approach to any such borrowing and a business case to support the decision making process must consider:
 - the benefits of borrowing in advance,
 - the risks created by additional levels of borrowing and investment, and
 - how far in advance it is reasonable to borrow considering the risks identified
- e) Any such advance borrowing should be reported through the mid-year or annual Treasury Management reporting mechanism.

4.6 Debt Rescheduling

- a) As short term borrowing rates will be considerably cheaper than longer term fixed interest rates, there may be potential opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. However, these savings will need to be considered in the light of the current treasury position and the size of the cost of debt repayment (premiums incurred).
- b) The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include:
 - the generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings
 - helping to fulfil the treasury strategy
 - enhance the balance of the portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).
- c) Consideration will also be given to identify if there is any residual potential for making savings by running down investment balances to repay debt prematurely as short term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on current debt.
- d) All rescheduling will be reported to the **Executive** at the earliest meeting following its action.

5 Investment Strategy

5.1 Investment Objectives and Policy

- a) The Council's investment policy has regard to the Scottish Government's Investment (Scotland) Regulations (and accompanying Finance Circular) and the 2017 revised CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectorial Guidance Notes ("the CIPFA TM Code").
- b) The Council's primary investment objectives are as follows, in order of importance:
 - (i) The safeguarding or **security** of the re-payment of principal and interest of investments on a timely basis; and
 - (ii) The **liquidity** of its investments
 - (iii) The **returns on investments** that can be realised

The Council will therefore aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments corresponding with proper levels of security and liquidity. The risk appetite of this Council is low in order to give priority to security of its investments.

- c) In accordance with guidance from the Scottish Government and CIPFA, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Council applies minimum acceptable credit criteria in order to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which also enables diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk. The key ratings used to monitor counterparties are the Short Term and Long Term ratings.
- d) Ratings will not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution; it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To this end the Council will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as "credit default swaps" and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.
- e) Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.
- f) Investment instruments identified for use in the financial year are listed in Annex D. Counterparty limits will be as set through the Council's treasury management practices.

- g)** Scottish Borders Council's classification with financial institutions has been reviewed with regard to the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive II (MiFID II). Professional client status has been granted for all relevant investment and cash deposits.

5.2 Council Permitted Investments

The proposed criteria for permitted investments are shown in annex D approval.

5.3 Creditworthiness Policy

- a)** This Council applies the creditworthiness service provided by Link Asset Services. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:
- credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies
 - Credit Default Swaps (CDS) spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings
 - sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries
- b)** This modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit watches and credit outlooks in a weighted scoring system which is then combined with an overlay of CDS spreads for which the end product is a series of colour coded bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes are used by the Council to determine the suggested duration for investments. The Council will therefore use counterparties within the following durational bands:

Creditworthiness Colour Banding	Maximum Investment Duration
Yellow	5 years
Dark pink	5 years for Ultra short dated bond funds with a credit score of 1.25
Light pink	5 years for Ultra short dated bond funds with a credit score of 1.5
Purple	2 years
Blue	1 year (only applies to nationalised or semi-nationalised UK Banks)
Orange	1 year
Red	6 months
Green	100 days
No colour	not to be used (ie don't invest)

Y	Pi1	Pi2	P	B	O	R	G	N/C
1	1.25	1.5	2	3	4	5	6	7
Up to 5yrs	Up to 5yrs	Up to 5yrs	Up to 2yrs	Up to 1yr	Up to 1yr	Up to 6mths	Up to 100days	No Colour

- c)** The Link Asset Services' creditworthiness service uses a wider array of information than just primary ratings. Furthermore, by using a risk weighted scoring system, it does not give undue preponderance to just one agency's ratings.
- d)** Typically the minimum credit ratings criteria the Council use will be a Short Term rating (Fitch or equivalents) of F1 and a Long Term rating of A-. There may be occasions when the counterparty ratings from one rating agency are marginally lower than these ratings but may still be used. In these instances consideration will be given to the whole range of ratings available, or other topical market information, to support their use.
- e)** All credit ratings will be monitored on a real time basis. The Council is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of a creditworthiness service provided by Link Asset Services.
- if a downgrade results in the counterparty / investment scheme no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.

- in addition to the use of credit ratings the Council will be advised of information in movements in credit default swap spreads against the iTraxx benchmark and other market data on a daily basis via its Passport website, provided exclusively to it by Link Asset Services. Extreme market movements may result in downgrade of an institution or removal from the Council's lending list.
- f) Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition this Council will also use market data and market information, information on sovereign support for banks and the credit ratings of that supporting government.

5.4 Country and Sector Considerations

- a) Due care will be taken to consider the country and sector exposure of the Council's investments.

Country Limits

- b) If the institution is non-UK, then the country in which it is domiciled must have a minimum Sovereign long term rating of AAA.
- c) No more than **10%** will be placed with any non-UK country at any time.

Institutional Sector Limits

- d) These institutions must either be UK Local Authorities or UK Incorporated Institutions, UK Banks and Building Societies incorporated in the European Economic Area entitled to accept deposits through a branch in the UK. The Council may also use the UK Government including in the form of gilts and the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF).
- e) Limits will be applied to the overall amount lent out to any one sector at any one time in order to limit sector specific exposure risk, as follows:

UK Building Societies	£25 m
Banks	£35 m
UK Local Authorities	£40 m
UK Government Debt Management Office	£unlimited
UK Gilts and Treasury Bills	£20 m
Institutions covered by Government Guarantee	£10 m
Part Nationalised Banks	£35 m
Money Market Funds (AAA)	£20 m

These limits will be monitored regularly for appropriateness.

Group Limits

- g) Limits will be applied to the overall amount lent out to institutions within the same group at any one time in order to limit group specific exposure risk, as follows, and subject to the parent company appearing on Capita Asset Services' creditworthiness list:

Group of Banks	£10m
-----------------------	-------------

Council's Own Banker

- h) The Council's own banker (Bank of Scotland – part of Lloyds) will be maintained on the Council's counterparty list in situations where rating changes may mean this is below the above criteria. This is to allow the Council to continue to operate normal current account banking facilities and overnight and short-term investment facilities. However, in the event that the rating does change below the criteria, officers will review the situation carefully and identify any appropriate action required to manage the risk that this change creates for the Council.

5.5 Individual Institution Monetary Limits

a) The monetary limits for institutions on the Council's Counterparty List are as follows:

	Money Limit
UK Building Societies	£5m
Banks	£5m
UK Local Authorities (i)	£40m
UK Government Debt Management Office	Unlimited
UK Gilts & Treasury Bills	£20m
Government Guaranteed Institutions	£2m
AAA rated Money Market Funds	£5m
Council's Own Banker (ii)	£5m

- (i) No individual limit will be applied on lending to a UK local authority, other than it must not exceed the relevant sector limit of £40m.
- (ii) Further to Sections 5.4 and 5.5, in the event that the rating of the Council's own banker falls below the criteria, the time limit on money deposited with the bank will be reduced to an overnight basis.

b) As mentioned earlier, the treasury function manages the funds of the Council, any subsidiary organisations, the Pension Fund and the Common Good and Trust Funds. When applying the limits set out in the table above, these limits will apply to the cumulative investment with an institution from the Council, the Pension Fund and the Common Good Funds and Trust Funds.

5.6 Types of Investments

- a) For institutions on the approved counterparty list, investments will be restricted to safer instruments (such as deposits). Currently this involves the use of money market funds, the DMADF and institutions with higher credit ratings than the minimum permissible rating outlined in the investment strategy, as well as the Council's own bank.
- b) Where appropriate, investments will be made through approved brokers. The current list of approved brokers comprises:
- ICAP Securities Limited
 - Sterling International Brokers Limited
 - Tradition (UK) Limited

5.7 Investment Strategy and bank rate projections

In-house funds

- a) Investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (i.e. rates for investments up to 12 months).

Investment returns expectations

- b) Bank Rate is forecast to stay flat at 0.50% until quarter 4, 2018 and not to rise above 1.25% by quarter 1, 2021. Bank rate forecasts for financial year-ends (March) are:

2017/2018	0.50%
2018/2019	0.75%
2019/2020	1.00%
2020/2021	1.25%

- c) The suggested budgeted investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to about three months during each financial year are as follows

2017/2018	0.40%
2018/2019	0.60%
2019/2020	0.90%
2020/2021	1.25%

- d) The overall balance of risks to these forecasts is currently skewed to the upside and are dependent on how strong GDP growth turns out, how quickly inflation pressures rise and how quickly the Brexit negotiations move forward positively.

Investment Treasury Indicator and Limit (Treasury Indicator TI-5)

- e) Total principal funds invested for greater than 365 days. These limits are set with regard to the Council's liquidity requirements and to reduce the need for early sale of investment, and are based on the availability of funds after each year end.

The Council is asked to approve the treasury indicator and limit:

Maximum principal sums invested > 364 days (TI-5)					
£m	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Principal sums invested > 364 days	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

- f) For positive cash balances and in order to maintain liquidity, the Council will seek to use overnight investment accounts, short term (< 1 month) notice accounts, money market funds and short-dated deposits (overnight to three months).

5.8 Investment Risk Benchmarking

These benchmarks are simple guides to maximum risk, so they may be breached from time to time, depending on movements in interest rates and counterparty criteria. The purpose of the benchmark is that officers will monitor the current and trend position and amend the operational strategy to manage risk as conditions change. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported, with supporting reasons in the mid-year or Annual Report.

Security - The Council's maximum security risk benchmark for the current portfolio, when compared to these historic default tables, is.

- a) **Security**

The Council's **maximum** security risk benchmark for the current portfolio, when compared to historic default tables, is:

0.04% historic risk of default when compared to the whole portfolio.

b) Liquidity

In respect of this area the Council seeks to maintain:

- Bank Overdraft: £250,000
- Liquid short term deposits of at least £3,000,000 available with a week's notice.
- Weighted Average Life benchmark is **expected to be 0.5 years** (equivalent to an weighted average life of 6 months), with a **maximum of 1.00 years**

c) Yield

Local measures of yield benchmarks are:

Investments – **Internal returns above the 7 day LIBID rate**

- d)** At the end of the financial year, the Chief Financial Officer will report on its investment activity as part of the annual treasury report.

6 Performance Indicators

6.1 The CIPFA Code requires the Council to set performance indicators to assess the adequacy of the treasury function over the year. These are distinct historic indicators, as opposed to the prudential indicators, which are predominantly forward looking.

6.2 Debt Performance Indicators

- (i) Average “Pool Rate” charged by the Loans Fund compared to Scottish Local Authority average Pool Rate.

Target is to be at or below the Scottish Average for 2017/18.

- (ii) Average borrowing rate movement year on year

Target is to maintain or reduce the average borrowing rate for the Council versus 2017/18.

6.3 Investment Risk Benchmark Indicators for Security, Liquidity and Yield, as set out in paragraph 5.9.

6.4 Loan Charges

- a) Loan Charges for 2017/18 are expected to be at or below the Revenue Budget estimate contained in the Council’s Financial Plans to be approved in February 2018, which are estimated as follows:

£m	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Interest on Borrowing	11.7	11.8	12.1	11.6	11.3
Investment income	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Capital Repayments	8.9	8.9	8.7	9.2	9.5
Total Loan Charges *	20.5	20.6	20.7	20.7	20.7

**The Loan Charges exclude the capital element of PPP repayments.*

- b) The above budget excludes the revenue impact of funding the cost of the NHT and the lending to RSLs and lending in respect of the Council-led house building programme with the Scottish Futures Trust, as these are assumed to be revenue neutral overall.

6.5 The indicators, based on actual performance for the year, will be included in the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2018/19.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A SUMMARY OF PRUDENTIAL AND TREASURY INDICATORS

Indicator Ref.	Indicator	Page Ref.	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS							
Capital Expenditure Indicator							
PI-1	Capital Expenditure Limits (£m)	5	42.9	43.9	46.2	40.1	31.8
PI-2	Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (£m)	7	315.9	322.1	325.2	356.7	354.5
Affordability Indicator							
PI-3	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue (inc. PPP repayment costs)	23	9.6%	9.5%	9.9%	10.6%	10.8%
PI-4	Incremental (Saving)/Cost Impact of Capital Investment Decisions on Council Tax	23	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£(0.01)
External Debt Indicators							
PI-5	Actual Debt (£m)	8	277.9	286.4	291.1	321.0	324.5
PI-7a	Operational Boundary (inc. Other Long Term Liabilities) (£m)	9	307.7	308.2	308.4	342.7	346.4
PI-7b	Operational Boundary (exc. Other Long Term Liabilities) (£m)	9	234.7	237.5	240.0	244.4	251.7
PI-8a	Authorised Limit (inc. Other Long Term Liabilities) (£m)	9	368.0	372.7	362.9	382.9	380.5
PI-8b	Authorised Limit (exc. Other Long Term Liabilities) (£m)	9	295.0	302.0	294.6	284.6	285.8
Indicators of Prudence							
PI-6	(Under)/Over Gross Borrowing against the CFR (£m)	8	(47.3)	(70.3)	(63.4)	(35.8)	(44.3)
TREASURY INDICATORS							
TI-1	Upper Limit to Fixed Interest Rates based on Net Debt (£m)	24	307.7	308.2	308.4	342.7	346.4
TI-2	Upper Limit to Variable Interest Rates based on Net Debt (£m)	24	107.7	107.9	107.9	119.9	121.2
TI-3	Maturity Structure of Fixed Interest Rate Borrowing 2018/19	24	Lower		Upper		
	Under 12 months		0%		20%		
	12 months to 2 years		0%		20%		
	2 years to 5 years		0%		20%		
	5 years to 10 years		0%		20%		
	10 years and above		20%		100%		
TI-4	Maximum Principal Sum invested greater than 364 days	18	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

Further prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances. The updated indicators are as follows:

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream (Prudential Indicator PI-3)

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs, net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

%	Actual	Estimate				
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (PI-3) <i>(inc. PPP repayment costs)</i>	9.6%	9.5%	9.9%	10.6%	10.8%	10.8

The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in the Financial Plans for 2018/19. The movements in the above ratio from 2016/17 onwards reflect a reduction in overall financial resources available to the Council.

Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on council tax (Prudential Indicator PI-4)

This indicator identifies the revenue costs associated the operational three year capital programme detailed in this budget report compared to the Council's existing approved commitments and current plans. The assumptions are based on the budget, but will invariably include some estimates, such as the level of Government support, which are not published over a three year period.

£	Estimate				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Incremental (Saving)/Cost Impact of Capital Investment Decisions on the Band D Council Tax (PI-4)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.01)

Treasury Management Limits on Activity

There are three debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these are to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive, they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. The indicators are:

(i) Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure (Treasury Indicator TI-1)

This identifies a maximum limit for borrowing exposure to fixed interest rates, based on the debt position net of investments.

(ii) Upper limits on variable interest rate exposure (Treasury Indicator TI-2)

This identifies a maximum limit for borrowing exposure to variable interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments.

(iii) Maturity structure of borrowing (Treasury Indicator TI-3)

These gross limits are set to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits.

(iv) The following table highlights the proposed treasury indicators and limits:

£m	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2022/23
Interest rate exposures					
	Upper	Upper	Upper	Upper	Upper
Limits on fixed interest rates based on net debt (TI-1)	307.7	308.2	308.4	342.7	346.4
Limits on variable interest rates based on net debt (TI-2)	107.7	107.9	107.9	119.9	121.2
Maturity Structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2018/19 (TI-3)					
		Lower		Upper	
Under 12 months		0%		20%	
12 months to 2 years		0%		20%	
2 years to 5 years		0%		20%	
5 years to 10 years		0%		20%	
10 years and above		20%		100%	

ANNEX B: INTEREST RATE FORECASTS 2018-21

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View														
	Dec-17	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21
Bank Rate View	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%
3 Month LIBID	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.70%	0.90%	0.90%	1.00%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%
6 Month LIBID	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.60%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.90%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.30%	1.30%	1.40%
12 Month LIBID	0.70%	0.80%	0.80%	0.90%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.10%	1.30%	1.30%	1.40%	1.50%	1.50%	1.60%
5yr PWLB Rate	1.50%	1.60%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%	1.80%	1.90%	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%
10yr PWLB Rate	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%
25yr PWLB Rate	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.20%	3.30%	3.40%	3.50%	3.50%	3.60%	3.60%
50yr PWLB Rate	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.40%
Bank Rate														
Link Asset Services	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%
Capital Economics	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%	1.50%	1.50%	1.75%	-	-	-	-	-
5yr PWLB Rate														
Link Asset Services	1.50%	1.60%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%	1.80%	1.90%	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%
Capital Economics	1.70%	1.90%	2.30%	2.60%	2.90%	2.90%	2.90%	2.90%	2.90%	-	-	-	-	-
10yr PWLB Rate														
Link Asset Services	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%
Capital Economics	2.30%	2.60%	2.80%	3.10%	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%	-	-	-	-	-
25yr PWLB Rate														
Link Asset Services	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.20%	3.30%	3.40%	3.50%	3.50%	3.60%	3.60%
Capital Economics	2.95%	3.15%	3.45%	3.65%	3.90%	3.90%	3.90%	3.90%	3.90%	-	-	-	-	-
50yr PWLB Rate														
Link Asset Services	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.40%
Capital Economics	2.80%	3.10%	3.30%	3.60%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Link Asset Services, December 2018

ANNEX C Economic Background

GLOBAL OUTLOOK. World growth looks to be on an encouraging trend of stronger performance, rising earnings and falling levels of unemployment. In October, the IMF upgraded its forecast for world growth from 3.2% to 3.6% for 2017 and 3.7% for 2018.

In addition, **inflation prospects are generally muted** and it is particularly notable that **wage inflation** has been subdued despite unemployment falling to historically very low levels in the UK and US. This has led to many comments by economists that there appears to have been a fundamental shift downwards in the Phillips curve (this plots the correlation between levels of unemployment and inflation e.g. if the former is low the latter tends to be high). In turn, this raises the question of what has caused this? The likely answers probably lay in a combination of a shift towards flexible working, self-employment, falling union membership and a consequent reduction in union power and influence in the economy, and increasing globalisation and specialisation of individual countries, which has meant that labour in one country is in competition with labour in other countries which may be offering lower wage rates, increased productivity or a combination of the two. In addition, technology is probably also exerting downward pressure on wage rates and this is likely to grow with an accelerating movement towards automation, robots and artificial intelligence, leading to many repetitive tasks being taken over by machines or computers. Indeed, this is now being labelled as being the start of the **fourth industrial revolution**.

KEY RISKS - central bank monetary policy measures

Looking back on nearly ten years since the financial crash of 2008 when liquidity suddenly dried up in financial markets, it can be assessed that central banks' monetary policy measures to counter the sharp world recession were successful. The key monetary policy measures they used were a combination of lowering central interest rates and flooding financial markets with liquidity, particularly through unconventional means such as Quantitative Easing (QE), where central banks bought large amounts of central government debt and smaller sums of other debt.

The key issue now is that that period of stimulating economic recovery and warding off the threat of deflation is coming towards its close and a new period has already started in the US, and more recently in the UK, on reversing those measures i.e. by raising central rates and (for the US) reducing central banks' holdings of government and other debt. These measures are now required in order to stop the trend of an on-going reduction in spare capacity in the economy, and of unemployment falling to such low levels that the re-emergence of inflation is viewed as a major risk. It is, therefore, crucial that central banks get their timing right and do not cause shocks to market expectations that could destabilise financial markets. In particular, a key risk is that because QE-driven purchases of bonds drove up the price of government debt, and therefore caused a sharp drop in income yields, this then also encouraged investors into a search for yield and into investing in riskier assets such as equities. This resulted in bond markets and equity market prices both rising to historically high valuation levels simultaneously. This, therefore, makes both asset categories vulnerable to a sharp correction. It is important, therefore, that central banks only gradually unwind their holdings of bonds in order to prevent destabilising the financial markets. It is also likely that the timeframe for central banks unwinding their holdings of QE debt purchases will be over several years. They need to balance their timing to neither squash economic recovery by taking too rapid and too strong action, or alternatively, let inflation run away by taking action that was too slow and/or too weak. **The potential for central banks to get this timing and strength of action wrong are now key risks.**

There is also a potential key question over whether economic growth has become too dependent on strong central bank stimulus and whether it will maintain its momentum against a backdrop of rising interest rates and the reversal of QE. In the UK, a key vulnerability is the **low level of productivity growth**, which may be the main driver for increases in wages; and **decreasing consumer disposable income**, which is important in the context of consumer expenditure primarily underpinning UK GDP growth.

A further question that has come to the fore is whether **an inflation target for central banks of 2%**, is now realistic given the shift down in inflation pressures from internally generated inflation, (i.e. wage inflation feeding through into the national economy), given the above mentioned shift down in the Phillips curve.

- Some economists favour a shift to a **lower inflation target of 1%** to emphasise the need to keep the lid on inflation. Alternatively, it is possible that a central bank could simply 'look through' tepid wage inflation, (i.e. ignore the overall 2% inflation target), in order to take action in raising rates sooner than might otherwise be expected.
- However, other economists would argue for a **shift UP in the inflation target to 3%** in order to ensure that central banks place the emphasis on maintaining economic growth through adopting a slower pace of withdrawal of stimulus.
- In addition, there is a strong argument that central banks should **target financial market stability**. As mentioned previously, bond markets and equity markets could be vulnerable to a sharp correction. There has been much commentary, that since 2008, QE has caused massive distortions, imbalances and bubbles in asset prices, both financial and non-financial. Consequently, there are widespread concerns at the potential for such bubbles to be burst by exuberant central bank action. On the other hand, too slow or weak action would allow these imbalances and distortions to continue or to even inflate them further.
- Consumer debt levels are also at historically high levels due to the prolonged period of low cost of borrowing since the financial crash. In turn, this cheap borrowing has meant that **other non-financial asset prices**, particularly house prices, have been driven up to very high levels, especially compared to income levels. Any sharp downturn in the availability of credit, or increase in the cost of credit, could potentially destabilise the housing market and generate a sharp downturn in house prices. This could then have a destabilising effect on consumer confidence, consumer expenditure and GDP growth. However, no central bank would accept that it ought to have responsibility for specifically targeting house prices.

UK. After the UK surprised on the upside with strong economic growth in 2016, **growth in 2017 has been disappointingly weak**; quarter 1 came in at only +0.3% (+1.8% y/y), quarter 2 was +0.3% (+1.5% y/y) and quarter 3 was +0.4% (+1.5% y/y). The main reason for this has been the sharp increase in inflation, caused by the devaluation of sterling after the EU 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 80% 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 while robust world growth has also been supportive. However, this sector only accounts for around 10% of GDP so expansion in this sector will have a much more muted effect on the overall GDP growth figure for the UK economy as a whole.

While the Bank of England is expected to give forward guidance to prepare financial markets for gradual changes in policy, the **Monetary Policy Committee, (MPC), meeting of 14 September 2017** managed to shock financial markets and forecasters by suddenly switching to a much more aggressive tone in terms of its words around warning that Bank Rate will need to rise soon. The Bank of England Inflation Reports during 2017 have clearly flagged up that it 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. The Bank revised its forecast for the peak to just over 3% at the 14 September meeting. (Inflation actually came in at 3.0% in both September and October so that might prove now to be the peak.) This marginal revision in the Bank's forecast can hardly justify why the MPC became so aggressive with its wording; rather, the focus was on an emerging view that with unemployment having already fallen 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 automation and globalisation. 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 this would cause additional inflationary pressure over the next few years.

At Its 2 November meeting, the MPC duly delivered a 0.25% increase in Bank Rate. It also gave forward guidance that they expected to increase Bank Rate only twice more in the next three years to reach 1.0% by 2020. This is, therefore, not quite the 'one and done' scenario but is, nevertheless, a very relaxed rate of increase prediction in Bank Rate in line with previous statements that Bank Rate would only go up very gradually and to a limited extent.

However, some forecasters are flagging up that they expect growth to accelerate significantly towards the end of 2017 and then into 2018. This view is based primarily on the coming fall in inflation, (as the effect of the effective devaluation of sterling after the EU referendum drops out of the CPI statistics), which will bring to an end the negative impact on consumer spending power. In addition, a strong export performance will compensate for weak services sector growth. If this scenario was indeed to materialise, then the MPC would be likely to accelerate its pace of increases in Bank Rate during 2018 and onwards.

It is also worth noting the **contradiction within the Bank of England** between action in 2016 and in 2017 **by two of its committees**. After the shock result of the EU referendum, the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** voted in August 2016 for emergency action to cut Bank Rate from 0.50% to 0.25%, restarting £70bn of QE purchases, and also providing UK banks with £100bn of cheap financing. The aim of this was to lower borrowing costs, stimulate demand for borrowing and thereby increase expenditure and demand in the economy. The MPC felt this was necessary in order to ward off their expectation that there would be a sharp slowdown in economic growth. Instead, the economy grew robustly, although the Governor of the Bank of England strongly maintained that this was *because* the MPC took that action. However, other commentators regard this emergency action by the MPC as being proven by events to be a mistake. Then in 2017, we had the **Financial Policy Committee (FPC)** of the Bank of England taking action in June and September over its concerns that cheap borrowing rates, and easy availability of consumer credit, had resulted in too rapid a rate of growth in consumer borrowing and in the size of total borrowing, especially of unsecured borrowing. It, therefore, took punitive action to clamp down on the ability of the main banks to extend such credit! Indeed, a PWC report in October 2017 warned that credit card, car and personal loans and student debt will hit the equivalent of an average of £12,500 per household by 2020. However, averages belie wide variations in levels of debt with much higher exposure being biased towards younger people, especially the 25 -34 year old band, reflecting their lower levels of real income and asset ownership.

One key area of risk is that consumers may have become used to cheap rates since 2008 for borrowing, especially for mortgages. It is a major concern that **some consumers may have over extended their borrowing** and have become complacent about interest rates going up after Bank Rate had been unchanged at 0.50% since March 2009 until falling further to 0.25% in August 2016. This is why forward guidance from the Bank of England continues to emphasise slow and gradual increases in Bank Rate in the coming years. However, consumer borrowing is a particularly vulnerable area in terms of the Monetary Policy Committee getting the pace and strength of Bank Rate increases right - without causing a sudden shock to consumer demand, confidence and thereby to the pace of economic growth.

Moreover, 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 to three years will actually pan out.

EZ. Economic growth in the eurozone (EZ), (the UK's biggest trading partner), had been lack lustre for several years after the financial crisis despite the ECB eventually cutting its main rate to -0.4% and embarking on a massive programme of QE. However, growth picked up in 2016 and has now gathered substantial strength and momentum thanks to this stimulus. GDP growth was 0.6% in quarter 1 (2.0% y/y), 0.7% in quarter 2 (2.3% y/y) and +0.6% in quarter 3 (2.5% y/y). However, despite providing massive monetary stimulus, the European Central Bank is still struggling to get inflation up to its 2% target and in October inflation was 1.4%. It is therefore unlikely to start on an upswing in rates until possibly 2019. It has, however, announced that it will slow down its monthly QE purchases of debt from €60bn to €30bn from January 2018 and continue to at least September 2018.

USA. Growth in the American economy was notably erratic and volatile in 2015 and 2016. 2017 is following that path again with quarter 1 coming in at only 1.2% but quarter 2 rebounding to 3.1% and

quarter 3 coming in at 3.0%. Unemployment in the US has also fallen to the lowest level for many years, reaching 4.1%, while wage inflation pressures, and inflationary pressures in general, have been building. The Fed has started on a gradual upswing in rates with four increases in all and three increases since December 2016; and there could be one more rate rise in 2017, which would then lift the central rate to 1.25 – 1.50%. There could then be another four increases in 2018. At its September meeting, the Fed said it would start in October to gradually unwind its \$4.5 trillion balance sheet holdings of bonds and mortgage backed securities by reducing its reinvestment of maturing holdings.

CHINA. Economic growth has been weakening over successive years, despite repeated rounds of central bank stimulus; medium term risks are increasing. Major progress still needs to be made to eliminate excess industrial capacity and the stock of unsold property, and to address the level of non-performing loans in the banking and credit systems.

JAPAN. has been struggling to stimulate consistent significant growth and to get inflation up to its target of 2%, despite huge monetary and fiscal stimulus. It is also making little progress on fundamental reform of the economy.

Brexit timetable and process

- March 2017: UK government notifies the European Council of its intention to leave under the Treaty on European Union Article 50
- March 2019: initial two-year negotiation period on the terms of exit. In her Florence speech in September 2017, the Prime Minister proposed a two year transitional period after March 2019.
- UK continues as a full EU member until March 2019 with access to the single market and tariff free trade between the EU and UK. Different sectors of the UK economy will leave the single market and tariff free trade at different times during the two year transitional period.
- The UK and EU would attempt to negotiate, among other agreements, a bi-lateral trade agreement over that period.
- The UK would aim for a negotiated agreed withdrawal from the EU, although the UK could also exit without any such agreements in the event of a breakdown of negotiations.
- If the UK exits without an agreed deal with the EU, World Trade Organisation rules and tariffs could apply to trade between the UK and EU - but this is not certain.
- On full exit from the EU: the UK parliament would repeal the 1972 European Communities Act.
- The UK will then no longer participate in matters reserved for EU members, such as changes to the EU's budget, voting allocations and policies.

Annex D

TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICE: PERMITTED INVESTMENTS, ASSOCIATED CONTROLS AND LIMITS

This Council approves the following forms of investment instrument for use as permitted investments as set out in table 1

Treasury risks

All the investment instruments in tables 1/2 are subject to the following risks: -

1. **Credit and counter-party risk:** this is the risk of failure by a counterparty (bank or building society) to meet its contractual obligations to the organisation particularly as a result of the counterparty's diminished creditworthiness, and the resulting detrimental effect on the organisation's capital or current (revenue) resources. There are no counterparties where this risk is zero although AAA rated organisations have the highest, relative, level of creditworthiness.
2. **Liquidity risk:** this is the risk that cash will not be available when it is needed. While it could be said that all counterparties are subject to at least a very small level of liquidity risk as credit risk can never be zero, in this document, liquidity risk has been treated as whether or not instant access to cash can be obtained from each form of investment instrument. However, it has to be pointed out that while some forms of investment e.g. gilts, CDs, corporate bonds can usually be sold immediately if the need arises, there are two caveats: - a. cash may not be available until a settlement date up to three days after the sale b. there is an implied assumption that markets will not freeze up and so the instrument in question will find a ready buyer.
3. **Market risk:** this is the risk that, through adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums an organisation borrows and invests, its stated treasury management policies and objectives are compromised, against which effects it has failed to protect itself adequately. However, some cash rich local authorities may positively want exposure to market risk e.g. those investing in investment instruments with a view to obtaining a long term increase in value.
4. **Interest rate risk:** this is the risk that fluctuations in the levels of interest rates create an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the organisation's finances, against which the organisation has failed to protect itself adequately. This authority has set limits for its fixed and variable rate exposure in its Treasury Indicators in this report. All types of investment instrument have interest rate risk except for the following forms of instrument which are at variable rate of interest (and the linkage for variations is also shown): - (Link Asset Services note – please specify any such instruments should you use them)
5. **Legal and regulatory risk:** this is the risk that the organisation itself, or an organisation with which it is dealing in its treasury management activities, fails to act in accordance with its legal powers or regulatory requirements, and that the organisation suffers losses accordingly.

Controls on treasury risks

1. **Credit and counter-party risk:** this authority has set minimum credit criteria to determine which counterparties and countries are of sufficiently high creditworthiness to be considered for investment purposes. See paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3.
2. **Liquidity risk:** this authority has a cash flow forecasting model to enable it to determine how long investments can be made for and how much can be invested.
3. **Market risk:** this authority does not purchase investment instruments which are subject to market risk in terms of fluctuation in their value.
4. **Interest rate risk:** this authority manages this risk by having a view of the future course of interest rates and then formulating a treasury management strategy accordingly which aims to

maximise investment earnings consistent with control of risk or alternatively, seeks to minimise expenditure on interest costs on borrowing.

- 5. Legal and regulatory risk:** this authority will not undertake any form of investing until it has ensured that it has all necessary powers and also complied with all regulations. All types of investment instruments

Unlimited investments

Regulation 24 states that an investment can be shown in tables 1 / 2 as being 'unlimited' in terms of the maximum amount or percentage of the total portfolio that can be put into that type of investment. However, it also requires that an explanation must be given for using that category. The authority has given the following types of investment an unlimited category: -

- 1. Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility.** This is considered to be the lowest risk form of investment available to local authorities as it is operated by the Debt Management Office which is part of H.M. Treasury i.e. the UK Government's sovereign rating stands behind the DMADF. It is also a deposit account and avoids the complications of buying and holding Government issued treasury bills or gilts.

Annex E

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

(i) Full board/council

- receiving and reviewing reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities;
- approval of annual strategy.

(ii) Boards/committees/council/responsible body

- approval of/amendments to the organisation's adopted clauses, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices;
- budget consideration and approval;
- approval of the division of responsibilities;
- receiving and reviewing regular monitoring reports and acting on recommendations;
- approving the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment.

(iii) Body/person(s) with responsibility for scrutiny

- reviewing the treasury management policy and procedures and making recommendations to the responsible body.

5.8 THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT ROLE OF THE SECTION 95 OFFICER

The S95 (responsible) officer

- Take and/or authorise all operational decisions regarding the Council's investments and borrowing, in accordance with approved Treasury Management Policy and Strategy.
- Responsible for execution and administration of treasury management decisions in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management policy statement and Treasury Management Practice, and if (s)he is a CIPFA member, CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.
- In terms of Treasury Management, from time to time, formulate suitable criteria for assessing and monitoring the credit risk of investment counterparties and construct a lending list defining appropriate limits.
- Borrow, in advance of need, where, for instance, a sharp rise in interest rates is expected, and so borrowing early at fixed interest rates will be economically beneficial or meet budgetary constraints. Adopt a cautious approach to any such borrowing, and a business case to support the decision-making process must consider:
 - the benefits of borrowing in advance,
 - the investment risks created by the existence of investments at the same time as additional borrowing being outstanding; and
 - how far in advance it is reasonable to borrow, considering the risks identified. Any such advance borrowing shall be reported through the mid-year or annual Treasury Management reporting mechanism.
- Take the most appropriate form of borrowing depending on the prevailing interest rates at the time, taking into account the risks shown in the forecast contained in the Treasury Management Strategy.
- Maintain a counterparty list consistent with the Investment Counterparty Selection Criteria and revise the criteria and submit them to Committee for approval as necessary, and in addition, set out the types of investment to be made (Permitted Investments).

Annex F

Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

Permitted Investments, Associated Controls and Limits for Scottish Borders Council, Common Good and Trust Funds and In-house Managed Pension Fund

Type of Investment	Treasury Risks	Mitigating Controls	Council Limits	Common Good & Trust Fund Limits	Pension Fund In-House Limits
Cash type instruments					
a. Deposits with the Debt Management Account Facility (UK Government) (Very low risk)	This is a deposit with the UK Government and as such counterparty and liquidity risk is very low, and there is no risk to value. Deposits can be between overnight and 6 months.	Little mitigating controls required. As this is a UK Government investment the monetary limit is unlimited to allow for a safe haven for investments	£unlimited, maximum 6 months.	£unlimited, maximum 6 months.	£unlimited, maximum 6 months.
b. Deposits with other local authorities or public bodies (Very low risk)	These are considered quasi UK Government debt and as such counterparty risk is very low, and there is no risk to value. Liquidity may present a problem as deposits can only be broken with the agreement of the counterparty, and penalties can apply. Deposits with other non-local authority bodies will be restricted to the overall credit rating criteria.	Little mitigating controls required for local authority deposits, as this is a quasi UK Government investment. Non- local authority deposits will follow the approved credit rating criteria.	£40m, maximum 1 year.	£5m, maximum 1 year.	£40m, maximum 1 year.
c. Money Market Funds (MMFs) (Very low risk)	Pooled cash investment vehicle which provides very low counterparty, liquidity and market risk. These will primarily be used as liquidity instruments.	Funds will only be used where the MMFs has a "AAA" rated status from either Fitch, Moody's or Standard and Poor's.	£5m per fund/£20m overall	£5m per fund/£20m overall	£5m per fund/£20m overall

Type of Investment	Treasury Risks	Mitigating Controls	Council Limits	Common Good & Trust Fund Limits	Pension Fund In-House Limits
d. Ultra short dated bond funds (low risk)	Pooled cash investment vehicle which provides very low counterparty, liquidity and market risk. These will primarily be used as liquidity instruments.	Funds will only be used where they have a “AAA” rated status from either Fitch, Moody’s or Standard and Poor’s.			
e. Call account deposit accounts with financial institutions (banks and building societies) (Low risk depending on credit rating)	These tend to be low risk investments, but will exhibit higher risks than categories (a), (b) and (c) above. Whilst there is no risk to value with these types of investments, liquidity is high and investments can be returned at short notice.	The counterparty selection criteria approved above restricts lending only to high quality counterparties, measured primarily by credit ratings from Fitch, Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s. Day to day investment dealing with this criteria will be further strengthened by use of additional market intelligence.	As shown in the counterparty section criteria above.	As shown in the counterparty section criteria above.	As shown in the counterparty section criteria above.
f. Term deposits with financial institutions (banks and building societies) (Low to medium risk depending on period & credit rating)	These tend to be low risk investments, but will exhibit higher risks than categories (a), (b) and (c) above. Whilst there is no risk to value with these types of investments, liquidity is low and term deposits can only be broken with the agreement of the counterparty, and penalties may apply.	The counterparty selection criteria approved above restricts lending only to high quality counterparties, measured primarily by credit ratings from Fitch, Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s. Day to day investment dealing with this criteria will be further strengthened by use of additional market intelligence.	As shown in the counterparty section criteria above.	As shown in the counterparty section criteria above.	As shown in the counterparty section criteria above.

Type of Investment	Treasury Risks	Mitigating Controls	Council Limits	Common Good & Trust Fund Limits	Pension Fund In-House Limits
g. Government Gilts and Treasury Bills (Very low risk)	These are marketable securities issued by the UK Government and as such counterparty and liquidity risk is very low, although there is potential risk to value arising from an adverse movement in interest rates (no loss if these are held to maturity).	Little counterparty mitigating controls are required, as this is a UK Government investment. The potential for capital loss will be reduced by limiting the maximum monetary and time exposures.	£20m, maximum 1 year.	£5m, maximum 1 year	£20m, maximum 1 year.

Type of Investment	Treasury Risks	Mitigating Controls	Council Limits	Common Good & Trust Fund Limits	Pension Fund In-House Limits
Other types of investments					
a. Investment properties	These are non-service properties which are being held pending disposal or for a longer term rental income stream. These are highly illiquid assets with high risk to value (the potential for property prices to fall or for rental voids).	In larger investment portfolios some small allocation of property based investment may counterbalance/compliment the wider cash portfolio. Property holding will be re-valued regularly and reported annually with gross and net rental streams.	£30m	£25m	N/A
b. Loans to third parties, including soft loans	These are service investments either at market rates of interest or below market rates (soft loans). These types of investments may exhibit credit risk and are likely to be highly illiquid.	Each third party loan requires Member approval and each application is supported by the service rational behind the loan and the likelihood of partial or full default.	£25m	£1m	N/A
c. Loans to a local authority company	These are service investments either at market rates of interest or below market rates (soft loans). These types of investments may exhibit credit risk and are likely to be highly illiquid.	Each loan to a local authority company requires Member approval and each application is supported by the service rational behind the loan and the likelihood of partial or full default.	£25M	N/A	N/A
d. National Housing Trust (Very Low Risk due to Scottish Government Underwriting)	These are loans to a Special Purpose Vehicle to allow it to purchase new homes under the NHT umbrella. These loans represent either 65% or 70% of the purchase price, the remainder being funded by the developer. The loan is redeemed after a 5 to 10 year period when the properties	Loan redemption arises when the homes are sold. Interest payments are made to the Council by the SPV from rental payments in the intervening period. Both the loan amount and associated interest payments are underwritten by Scottish Government.	£8m	N/A	N/A

	are sold.				
e. Shareholdings in a local authority company	These are service investments which may exhibit market risk and are likely to be highly illiquid.	Each equity investment in a local authority company requires Member approval and each application will be supported by the service rational behind the investment and the likelihood of loss.	£1m	N/A	N/A
f. Investment in the Subordinated Debt of projects delivered via the 'HubCo' model (Very Low Risk)	These are investments that are exposed to the success or failure of individual projects and are highly illiquid.	The Council and Scottish Government (via the SFT) are participants in and party to the governance and controls within the project structure. As such they are well placed to influence and ensure the successful completion of the project's term. These projects are based on robust business cases with a cashflow from public sector organisations (i.e. low credit risk)	£600,000	N/A	N/A

The Monitoring of Investment Counterparties

The status of counterparties will be monitored regularly. The Council receives credit rating and market information from Link Asset Services, including when ratings change, and counterparties are checked promptly. On occasion ratings may be downgraded when an investment has already been made. The criteria used are such that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria will be removed from the list immediately by the Director of Finance, and if required new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.

Use of External Fund Managers

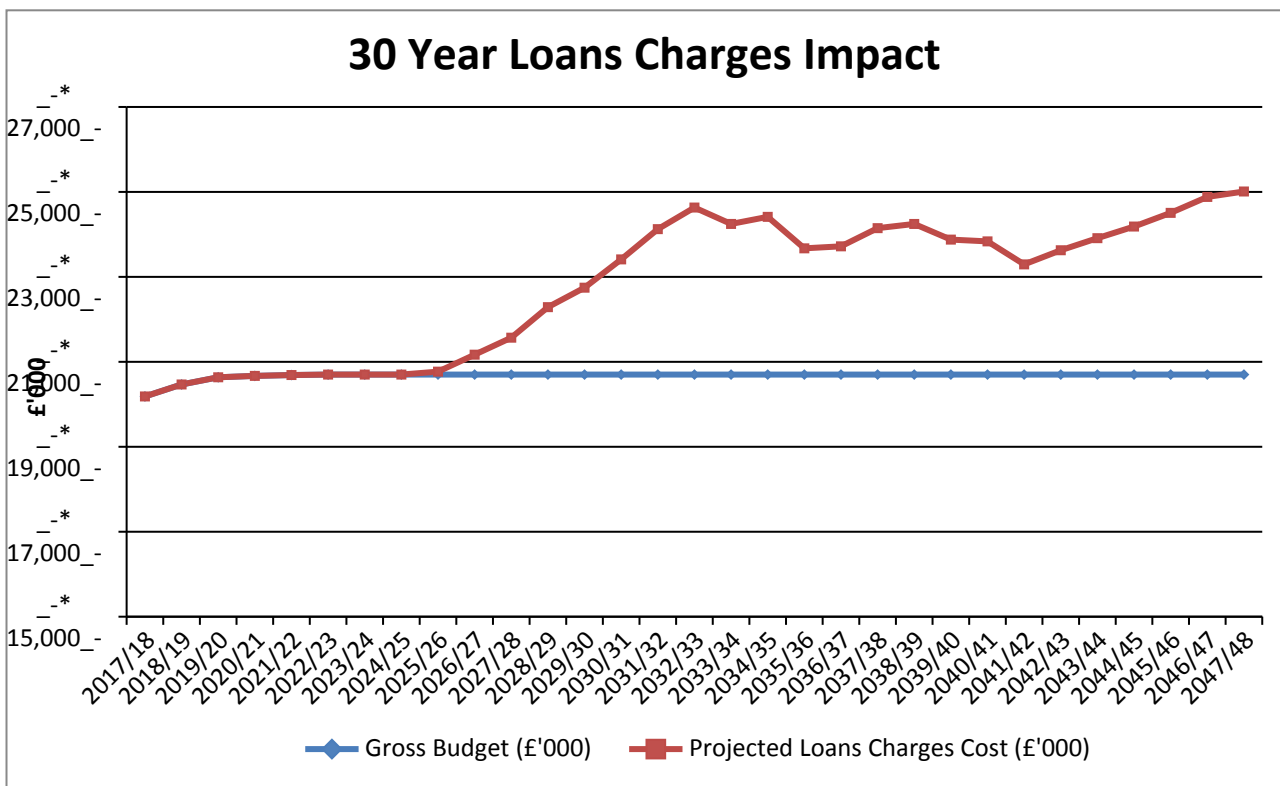
It is the Council's policy to use external fund managers to manage the investment portfolios of the Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund and the pooled investment fund of the Common Good and Trust Funds. This Annex reflects the approved policies around the Common Good and Trust Fund Investment Strategy but specifically excludes, as allowed by regulations, the work undertaken by External Fund Managers in relation to the Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund.

ANNEX G

Long Term (30 Yr) Loans Charges Analysis

Current capital and revenue plans have been extrapolated over a 30 year period in order to assess the impact on the revenue Loans Charges budget. In line with assumptions made when assessing external debt and associated limits as described in paragraph 4.5 of the covering report, long term capital planning will cause a pressure on the loans charges budget from financial year 2026/26, as detailed in the chart below. Movements in notional loans charges associated with internal borrowing also impact on these figures.

It should be noted that from 2028-29, the first year outwith the current 10 year Capital Plan, a 5 year average capital expenditure and borrowing requirement has been assumed. Work on a Capital strategy will commence in 2019-20 which will better inform the long term capital plan.



ANNEX H

Credit Ratings

Long and Short Term Credit Ratings

Audit Commission Grading#	Fitch		Moody's		Standard and Poor's	
	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term
Extremely strong grade	AAA	F1+	Aaa	P-1	AAA	A-1+
Very strong grade	AA+	F1+	Aa1	P-1	AA+	A-1+
	AA	F1+	Aa2	P-1	AA	A-1+
	AA-	F1+	Aa3	P-1	AA-	A-1+
Strong grade But susceptible to adverse conditions	A+	F1+ / F1	A1	P-1	A+	A-1+ / A-1
	A	F1	A2	P-1 / P-2	A	A-1
	A-	F1	A3	P-1 / P-2	A	A-1 / A-2
Adequate Grade	BBB+	F2	Baa1	P-2	BBB+	A-2
	BBB	F2 / F3	Baa2	P-2 / P-3	BBB	A-2 / A-3
	BBB-	F3	Baa3	P-3	BBB-	A-2
Speculative Grade	BB+	B	Ba1	NP *	BB+	B-1
	BB	B	Ba2	NP	BB	B-2
	BB-	B	Ba3	NP	BB-	B-3
Very Speculative Grade	B+	B	Ba1	NP	B+	-
	B	B	Ba2	NP	B	-
	B-	B	Ba3	NP	B-	-
Vulnerable Grade	CCC	C	Caa1	NP	CCC+	C
	CCC	C	Caa2	NP	CCC	C
	CCC	C	Caa3	NP	CCC-	C
	CC	C	-	NP	CC	C
	C	C	Ca	NP	C	C
Defaulting Grade	D	D	C	NP	D	D

for the purpose of standardisation based on Standard and Poor's credit rating definitions.

* NP – Not Prime

Source: Audit Commission adaptation of information from Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's

Viability, Financial Strength and Support Ratings

Continuing regulatory changes in the banking sector designed to see greater stability, lower risk and the removal of expectations of Government financial support should an institution fail. This withdrawal of implied sovereign support is anticipated to have an effect on ratings applied to institutions. This will result in the key rating agency information used to monitor counterparties will be the Short Term and Long Term ratings only. Viability, Financial Strength and Support Ratings previously applied will effectively become redundant. This change does not reflect deterioration in the credit environment but rather a change of method in response to regulatory changes

As a result of these rating agency changes, the credit element of creditworthiness methodology applied by Capita Asset Services will focus solely on the Short and Long Term ratings of an institution. Rating Watch and Outlook information will continue to be assessed where it relates to these categories. This is the same process for Standard & Poor's that has always taken, but a change to the use of Fitch and Moody's ratings. Furthermore, Credit Default Swap prices will continue to be used as an overlay to ratings in our new methodology.

Benchmarking and Monitoring Security, Liquidity and Yield

The consideration and approval of security and liquidity benchmarks are also part of Member reporting. These benchmarks are targets and so may be breached from time to time. Any breach will be reported, with supporting reasons, in the annual treasury report.

Yield

These benchmarks are currently widely used to assess investment performance. Local measures of yield benchmarks are:

- Investments – **Internal returns above the 7 day LIBID rate**

Security and liquidity benchmarks are already intrinsic to the approved treasury strategy through the counterparty selection criteria and some of the prudential indicators. Benchmarks for the cash type investments are below. In the other investment categories, appropriate benchmarks will be used where available.

Liquidity

This is defined as an organisation “having adequate, though not excessive, cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdrafts or standby facilities to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available to it which are necessary for the achievement of its business/service objectives” (CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice). In respect of liquidity, the Council seeks to maintain:

- Bank overdraft - £250,000
- Liquid short term deposits of at least £3,000,000 available with a week’s notice.

The availability of liquidity in the portfolio can be benchmarked by the monitoring of the Weighted Average Life (WAL) of the portfolio – shorter WAL would generally embody less risk. In this respect, the proposed benchmark to be used is:

- **WAL benchmark is expected to be 0.5 years, with a maximum of 1.00 years.**

Security of the investments

In the context of benchmarking, assessing security is a much more subjective area to assess. Security is currently evidenced by the application of minimum credit quality criteria to investment counterparties, primarily through the use of the Creditworthiness service provided by Capita Asset Services. Whilst this approach embodies security considerations, benchmarking levels of risk is more problematic. One method to benchmark security risk is to assess the historic level of default against the minimum criteria used in the Council’s investment strategy.

The Council’s maximum security risk benchmark for the whole portfolio, when compared to these historic default tables, is:

- **0.04% historic risk of default when compared to the whole portfolio.**

These benchmarks are embodied in the criteria for selecting cash investment counterparties and these will be monitored and reported to Members in the Annual Treasury Management Report. As this data is collated, trends and analysis will be collected and reported.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
CIPFA Code	Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes
CFR	Capital Financing Requirement is the estimated the level of borrowing or financing needed to fund capital expenditure.
Consent to Borrow	Para 1 (1) of Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975 (the 1975 Act) effectively restricts local authorities to borrowing only for capital expenditure. Under the legislation Scottish Ministers may provide consent for local authorities to borrow for expenditure not covered by this paragraph, where they are satisfied that the expenditure should be met by borrowing.
Gilts	A gilt is a UK Government liability in sterling, issued by HM Treasury and listed on the London Stock Exchange. The term “gilt” or “gilt-edged security” is a reference to the primary characteristic of gilts as an investment: their security. This is a reflection of the fact that the British Government has never failed to make interest or principal payments on gilts as they fall due.
LIBID	London Interbank Bid Rate The rate at which banks bid on Eurocurrency Deposits, being the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks.
MPC	Monetary Policy Committee
NHT	National Housing Trust initiative undertaken in partnership with the Scottish Futures Trust.
Other Long Term Liabilities	Balance sheet items such as Public Private Partnership (PPP), and leasing arrangements which already include borrowing instruments.
PPP	Public-Private Partnership.
Prudential Indicators	The Prudential Code sets out a basket of indicators (the Prudential Indicators) that must be prepared and used in order to demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled the objectives of the Prudential Code.
QE	Quantitative Easing
Treasury Indicators	These consist of a number of Treasury Management Indicators that local authorities are expected to ‘have regard’ to, to demonstrate compliance with the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below.

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