Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17

Introduction

In April 2002 the Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management Code (the "CIPFA TM Code") which requires the Authority to approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) before the start of each financial year.

In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued revised Guidance on Local Authority Investments in March 2010 that requires the Authority to approve an Investment Strategy before the start of each financial year.

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

The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are therefore central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.

External Context

Economic background: The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) through its recent forward guidance is committed to keeping policy rates low for an extended period using the Labour Force Survey unemployment rate of 7% as a threshold for when it would consider whether or not to raise interest rates, subject to certain other conditions. Unemployment was 7.7% in August 2013, but is not forecast to fall below the threshold until 2016, due to the UK's flexible workforce.

The flow of credit to households and businesses is slowly improving but is still below pre-crisis levels. The fall in consumer price inflation from the high of 5.2% in September 2011 to 2.7% in September 2013 will allow real wage increases (i.e. after inflation) to slowly turn positive and aid consumer spending.

Stronger growth data in 2013 (0.4% in Q1, 0.7% in Q2 and 0.8% in Q3) alongside a pick-up in property prices mainly stoked by government initiatives to boost mortgage lending have led markets to price in an earlier rise in rates than warranted under Forward Guidance and the broader economic backdrop. However, with jobs growth picking up slowly, many employees working shorter hours than they would like and benefit cuts set to gather pace, growth is likely to only be gradual. Arlingclose forecasts the MPC will maintain its resolve to keep interest rates low until the recovery is convincing and sustainable.

In the US expectations for the slowing in the pace of asset purchases ('tapering') by the Federal Reserve and the end of further asset purchases will remain predominant drivers of the financial markets. The Fed did not taper in September and has talked down potential tapering in the near term. It now looks more likely to occur in early 2014 which will be supportive of bond and equity markets in the interim.

Credit outlook: The credit risk of banking failures has diminished, but not dissipated altogether. Regulatory changes are afoot in the UK, US and Europe to move away from the bank bail-outs of previous years to bank resolution regimes in which shareholders, bond holders and unsecured creditors are 'bailed in' to participate in any recovery process. This is already manifest in relation to holders of subordinated debt issued by the Co-op which will suffer a haircut on its conversion bail-in to alternative securities and/or equity. There are also proposals for EU regulatory reforms to Money Market Funds which will, in all probability, result in these funds moving to a VNAV (variable net asset value) basis and losing their 'triple-A' credit rating wrapper. Diversification of investments between creditworthy counterparties to mitigate bail-in risk will become even more important in the light of these developments.

Interest rate forecast: Arlingclose's forecast is for the Bank Rate to remain flat until late 2016, the risk to the upside (i.e. rates being higher) are weighted more heavily towards the end of the forecast horizon, as the table below shows. Gilt yields are expected to rise over the forecast period with medium- and long-dated gilts expected to rise by between 0.7% and 1.1%.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by the Authority's treasury management advisor is attached at ***Appendix A***.

For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new investments will be made at an average rate of 0.8%.

Local Context

The Authority currently has £185m of borrowing and £61m of investments. This is set out in further detail at ***Appendix B***. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary and Forecast

	31.3.13 Actual £m	**31.3.14 Estimate £m**	**31.3.15 Estimate £m**	**31.3.16 Estimate £m**	**31.3.17 Estimate £m**
General Fund CFR	33.6	38.6	48.6	63.6	63.6
HRA CFR	155.1	155.1	155.1	155.1	155.1
Total CFR	**188.7**	**193.7**	**203.7**	**218.7**	**218.7**
Less: Other long-term liabilities *	0	0	0	0	0
Borrowing CFR	**188.7**	**193.7**	**203.7**	**218.7**	**218.7**
Less: External borrowing **	185.5	185.5	200.5	215.5	215.5
Internal borrowing	**3.2**	**8.2**	**3.2**	**3.2**	**3.2**
Less: Usable reserves	49.1	45.4	44.6	45.8	45.0
Less: Working capital	14.8	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
Resources Available for Investment	**60.7**	**52.2**	**56.4**	**57.6**	**56.8**

* finance leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's debt
** shows loans which the Authority may make and excludes optional refinancing

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, subject to holding a minimum investment balance of £50m. Borrowing is anticipated in future for Land Purchase or development and the Waste Management Contract, but these are not yet certain.

The Authority has an increasing CFR due to the capital expenditure described above, retaining considerable investments and may therefore be seeking to borrow up to £30m over the forecast period. £15m in each financial year 2014/15 and 2015/16 is possible depending on the many potential development opportunities.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation during 2014/15.

Borrowing Strategy

The Authority currently holds £185 million of loans, the same as the previous year, as part of its strategy for funding Housing Self-Financing. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Authority may increase borrowing up to £200.5m in 2014/15. The Authority may also borrow additional sums to pre or post-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £230 million.

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

Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.

The benefits of internal borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2014/15 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

In addition, the Authority may borrow short-term loans (normally for up to one month) to cover unexpected cash flow shortages.

The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- Internal
- Public Works Loan Board (effectively part of HM Treasury)
- UK local authorities
- European Investment Bank
- Leasing
- any institution approved for investments (see below)
- any other bank or building society authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority to operate in the UK
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Essex Pension Fund)
- capital market bond investors
- special purpose companies created to enable joint local authority bond issues.

The Authority has previously raised all of its long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board, but it continues to investigate other sources of finance, such as local authority loans and bank loans, that may be available at more favourable rates.

Short-term and variable rate loans leave the Authority exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the limit on the net exposure to variable interest rates in the treasury management indicators below.

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

Investment Strategy

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Authority's investment balance has ranged between £54.0 and £61.5 million, and similar levels are expected to be maintained or reduced in the forthcoming year dependent on capital spending and borrowing decisions.

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

The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparties in table 2 below, subject to the cash and time limits shown. The detailed list of counterparties is in Appendix C.

Table 2: Approved Investment Counterparties

Counterparty		Cash limit	Time limit †
Banks and other organisations and securities whose lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's is:	AAA	£10m each	10 years*
	AA+		5 years*
	AA		4 years*
	AA-		3 years*
	A+		2 years
	A		1 year
	A-		
The Authority's current account bank (National Westminster Bank plc) if it fails to meet the above criteria		£10m	next day
UK Central Government (irrespective of credit rating)		unlimited	50 years**
UK Local Authorities (irrespective of credit rating)		£10m each	50 years**
UK Registered Providers of Social Housing whose lowest published long-term credit rating is A- or higher, or who are recommended by Treasury Advisor		£1m each	10 years**
UK Registered Providers of Social Housing whose lowest published long-term credit rating is BBB- or higher and those without credit ratings or who are recommended by Treasury Advisor		£1m each	5 years
UK Building Societies with credit rating A- or above		£10m each	1 year
UK Building Societies without credit ratings – seeking to add at A-		£1m each	1 year

or above or equivalent as recommended by Treasury Advisor		
Money market funds and other pooled funds	£5m each	n/a

† the time limit is doubled for investments that are secured on the borrower's assets
* but no longer than 2 years in fixed-term deposits and other illiquid instruments
** but no longer than 5 years in fixed-term deposits and other illiquid instruments

Current Account Bank: Following a competitive tender exercise held in 2012, the Authority's current accounts are held with National Westminster Bank plc which is currently rated A-/A-2 the minimum being A- rating in table 2. The credit ratings fell below A- in November 2013. the Authority continues to deposit surplus cash with National Westminster Bank plc providing that the investments can be withdrawn on the next working day, and that the bank maintains a credit rating no lower than BBB- (the lowest investment grade rating). In line with Arlingclose's recommendations.

Registered Providers: Formerly known as Housing Associations, Registered Providers of Social Housing are tightly regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency and retain a high likelihood of receiving government support if needed. The Authority will consider investing with unrated Registered Providers with adequate credit safeguards, subject to receiving independent advice.

Building Societies: The Council takes additional comfort from the building societies' regulatory framework and insolvency regime where, in the unlikely event of a building society liquidation, the Authority's deposits would be paid out in preference to retail depositors. The Authority will therefore consider investing with un-rated building societies where independent credit analysis shows them to be suitably creditworthy. The Government has announced plans to amend the building society insolvency regime alongside its plans for wide ranging banking reform, and investments in lower rated and unrated building societies will therefore be kept under continuous review.

Money Market Funds: These funds are pooled investment vehicles consisting of money market deposits and similar instruments. They have the advantage of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager. Fees of between 0.10% and 0.20% per annum are deducted from the interest paid to the Authority. Funds that offer same-day liquidity and aim for a constant net asset value will be used as an alternative to instant access bank accounts, while funds whose value changes with market prices and/or have a notice period will be used for longer investment periods. Arlingclose have removed the requirement for AAA ratings following EU proposals to stop money market funds from having credit ratings.

Other Pooled Funds (Collective Investment Schemes): Table 1 above indicates that the Authority will have substantial cash balances available for investment over the medium term. It will therefore consider using pooled bond, equity and property funds that offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are potentially more volatile in the shorter term. These allow the Authority to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly. Investments in Pooled Funds will be undertaken with advice from Arlingclose Ltd. The Council currently has none of these investments.

Risk Assessment and Credit Ratings: The Authority uses long-term credit ratings from the three main rating agencies Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's Financial Services to assess the risk of investment default. The lowest available counterparty credit rating will be used to determine credit quality, unless an investment-specific rating is available. Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a A- rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "rating watch negative" or "credit watch negative") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

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

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

Specified Investments: The CLG Guidance defines specified investments as those:

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

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

Non-specified Investments: Any investment not meeting the definition of a specified investment is classed as non-specified. The Authority does not intend to make any investments denominated in foreign currencies, nor any that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation, such as company shares. Non-specified investments will therefore be limited to long-term investments, i.e. those that are due to mature 12 months or longer from the date of arrangement, and investments with bodies and schemes not meeting the definition on high credit quality. Limits on non-specified investments are shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Non-Specified Investment Limits

	Cash limit

Total long-term investments	£30m
Total investments without credit ratings or rated below A-	£5m
Total investments in foreign countries rated below AA+	£5m
Total maximum non-specified investments	£40m

Investment Limits: The Authority's total useable reserves theoretically available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £30 million on 31st March 2014. In order that no more than 25% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £10 million. A group of banks under the same ownership or a group of funds under the same management will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits will also be placed on investments in brokers' nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors. Arlingclose Ltd. Will aslo advise on individual investment links.

Table 4: Investment Limits

	Cash limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£10m each
UK Central Government	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£10m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£5m per manager
Foreign countries	£10m per group
Registered Providers	£5m in total

Approved Instruments: The Authority may lend or invest money using any of the following instruments:

- interest-bearing bank accounts,
- fixed term deposits and loans,
- callable deposits and loans where the Authority may demand repayment at any time (with or without notice),
- callable deposits and loans where the borrower may repay before maturity, but subject to a maximum of £10 million in total,
- certificates of deposit,
- bonds, notes, bills, commercial paper and other marketable instruments, and
- shares in money market funds and other pooled funds.

Investments may be made at either a fixed rate of interest, or at a variable rate linked to a market interest rate, such as LIBOR, subject to the limits on interest rate exposures below.

Liquidity management: The Authority uses cash flow forecasting calculations to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a pessimistic basis, with receipts under-estimated and payments over-estimated to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium term financial plan and cash flow forecast calculations.

Treasury Management Indicators

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

Security: The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2,A-=7 etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment.

	Target
Portfolio average credit rating	A-

Liquidity: The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three month period, without additional borrowing.

	Target
Total cash available within 3 months	£5m

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

	2014/15	**2015/16**	**2016/17**
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposure	25%	25%	25%

(Investments count as negative borrowing.)

Fixed rate investments and borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for the whole financial year. Instruments that mature during the financial year are classed as variable rate.

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

	Lower	**Upper**
Under 12 months	0%	100%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	100%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	100%
5 years and within 10 years	0%	100%
10 years and within 20 years	0%	100%
20 years and within 30 years	0%	100%

30 years and within 40 years	0%	100%
40 years and within 50 years	0%	100%
50 years and above	0%	100%

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 364 days: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the total principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Upper Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£30m	£30m	£30m

Other Items

There are a number of additional items that the Authority is obliged by CIPFA or CLG to include in its Treasury Management Strategy.

Policy on Use of Financial Derivatives: Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the *Localism Act 2011* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

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

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

The Council will only use derivatives after seeking expertise, a legal opinion and ensuring officers have the appropriate training for their use.

Policy on Apportioning Interest to the HRA: From 1st April 2012, the Council can notionally split each of its existing long-term loans into General Fund and HRA pools. In the future, new long-term loans borrowed will probably be assignable in their entirety to one pool or the other. Interest payable and other costs/income arising from long-term loans (e.g. premiums and discounts on early redemption) can be identified/ credited to the respective account. Differences between the value of the HRA loans pool and the HRA's underlying need to borrow (adjusted for HRA balance sheet resources available for investment) will result in a notional cash balance which may be positive or negative. This balance will be measured and interest transferred between the General Fund and HRA at the Authority's average interest rate on investments, adjusted for credit risk.

Investment Training: The needs of the Authority's treasury management staff for training in investment management are assessed every month as part of the Treasury Management meetings, and additionally when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change.

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

Investment Advisers: The Authority has appointed Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers and receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues. The quality of this service is controlled by Officers experienced in these matters.

Investment of Money Borrowed in Advance of Need: The Authority may, from time to time, borrow in advance of need, where this is expected to provide the best long term value for money. Since amounts borrowed will be invested until spent, the Authority is aware that it will be exposed to the risk of loss of the borrowed sums, and the risk that investment and borrowing interest rates may change in the intervening period. These risks will be managed as part of the Authority's overall management of its treasury risks.

The total amount borrowed will not exceed the authorised borrowing limit of £230 million. The maximum period between borrowing and expenditure is expected to be two years, although the Authority is not required to link particular loans with particular items of expenditure.

Financial Implications

The budget for investment income in 2014/15 is £399.0 thousand, based on an average investment portfolio of £57 million at an interest rate of 0.8%. The budget for debt interest paid in 2014/15 is £5.5 million, based on an average debt portfolio of £185 million at an average interest rate of 3%. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, and actual interest rates differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

Other Options Considered

The CLG Guidance and the CIPFA Code do not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Director of Finance and ICT, having consulted the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Technology, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Reduced risk of losses from credit related defaults
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults
Borrow additional sums at long-	Debt interest costs will rise;	Higher investment balance

term fixed interest rates	this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs will be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long term costs will be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs will be less certain

Appendix A – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast December 2013

Underlying assumptions:

- Growth continues to strengthen with the second estimate for Q3 growth coming in at an unrevised 0.8%. The service sector remains the main driver of growth, boosted by a contribution from construction.
- The unemployment rate has fallen to 7.6%. The pace of decline in this measure will be dependent on a slower expansion of the workforce than the acceleration in the economy, alongside the extent of productivity.
- The CPI for December has fallen to 2.0%, a much more comfortable position for the MPC. Utility price increases are expected to keep CPI above the 2% target in 2014, before falling back again.
- The principal measure in the MPC's Forward Guidance on interest rates is the Labour Force Survey (LFS) unemployment rate. The MPC intends not to raise the Bank Rate from its current level of 0.5% at least until this rate has fallen to a threshold of 7%.
- The reduction in uncertainty and easing of credit conditions have begun to unlock demand, much of which has fed through to the housing market. In response to concerns over a house price bubble, the Bank of England announced a curtailment of the Funding for Lending Scheme, which will henceforth concentrate on business lending only.
- The MPC will not hesitate to use macro prudential and regulatory tools to deal with emerging risks (such as curtailing the FLS). Absent risks to either price stability or financial stability, the MPC will only tighten policy when it is convinced about the sustained durability of economic growth.
- Federal Reserve monetary policy expectations - the slowing in the pace of asset purchases ('tapering') and the end of further asset purchases - will remain predominant drivers of the financial markets. Tapering of asset purchases will begin in Q1 2014. The US political deadlock over the debt ceiling will need resolving in Q1 2014.
- The European backstop mechanisms have lowered the risks of catastrophic meltdown. The slightly more stable economic environment at the aggregate Eurozone level could be undone by political risks and uncertainty in Italy, Spain and Portugal (doubts over longevity of their coalitions). The ECB has discussed a third LTRO, as credit conditions remain challenging for European banks.
- China data has seen an improvement, easing markets fears. Chinese leaders have signalled possible monetary policy tightening.
- On-going regulatory reform and a focus on bail-in debt restructuring is likely to prolong banking sector deleveraging and maintain the corporate credit bottleneck.

Forecast:

- Our projected path for short term interest rates remains flat. Markets are still pricing in an earlier rise in rates than warranted under Forward Guidance and the broader economic backdrop. The MPC will not raise rates until there is a sustained period of strong growth. However, upside risks weight more heavily at the end of our forecast horizon.

- We continue to project gilt yields on an upward path through the medium term. The recent climb in yields was overdone given the soft fundamental global outlook and risks surrounding the Eurozone, China and US.

	Mar-14	Jun-14	Sep-14	Dec-14	Mar-15	Jun-15	Sep-15	Dec-15	Mar-16	Jun-16	Sep-16	Dec-16	Mar-17
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk		0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**	**0.50**
Downside risk													
3-month LIBID rate													
Upside risk	0.20	0.25	0.30	0.35	0.40	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.75	0.90	0.95
Arlingclose Central Case	**0.45**	**0.45**	**0.50**	**0.55**	**0.65**	**0.75**	**0.75**	**0.75**	**0.75**	**0.75**	**0.80**	**0.80**	**0.80**
Downside risk			0.05	0.10	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35
1-yr LIBID rate													
Upside risk	0.35	0.30	0.35	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.80	0.80
Arlingclose Central Case	**0.90**	**0.95**	**0.95**	**0.95**	**1.00**	**1.05**	**1.10**	**1.15**	**1.20**	**1.25**	**1.30**	**1.40**	**1.40**
Downside risk	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.45	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
5-yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.85	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	**1.45**	**1.50**	**1.55**	**1.60**	**1.65**	**1.70**	**1.75**	**1.85**	**1.95**	**2.10**	**2.30**	**2.50**	**2.50**
Downside risk	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.55	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.65	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80
10-yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.65	0.75	0.85	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	**2.55**	**2.60**	**2.65**	**2.70**	**2.75**	**2.80**	**2.85**	**2.90**	**3.00**	**3.10**	**3.30**	**3.50**	**3.50**
Downside risk	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.55	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.65	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80
20-yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.85	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	**3.25**	**3.30**	**3.35**	**3.40**	**3.45**	**3.50**	**3.55**	**3.65**	**3.75**	**3.85**	**4.05**	**4.15**	**4.15**
Downside risk	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.55	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.65	-0.70	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80
50-yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	**3.45**	**3.50**	**3.55**	**3.60**	**3.65**	**3.70**	**3.75**	**3.80**	**3.85**	**3.95**	**4.05**	**4.15**	**4.15**
Downside risk	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.55	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60	-0.65	-0.70	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80

Appendix B – Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

	31.12.13 **Actual Portfolio** **£m**	31.12.13 **Average Rate** **%**
External Borrowing:		
PWLB – Fixed Rate	**153.656**	**3.000**
PWLB – Variable Rate	**31.800**	**0.620**
Local Authorities	**0**	**0**
LOBO Loans	**0**	**0**
Total External Borrowing	**185.456**	
Other Long Term Liabilities:		
PFI	0	
Finance Leases	0	
Total Gross External Debt	185.456	
Investments:		
Managed in-house		
Short-term investments	43.06	0.632
Long-term investments	10.0	1.15
Managed externally		
Fund Managers	0	0
Pooled Funds *(please list)*	7.0	0.4
Total Investments	60.06	
Net Debt	125.396	

Appendix B
Prudential Indicators 2014/15 – 2016/17

1. Background:

There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing their Prudential Indicators.

2. Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement:

This is a key indicator of prudence. In order to ensure that over the medium term debt will only be for a capital purpose, the local authority should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years.

If in any of these years there is a reduction in the capital financing requirement, this reduction is ignored in estimating the cumulative increase in the capital financing requirement which is used for comparison with **gross** external debt.

The Director of Finance reports that the Authority had no difficulty meeting this requirement in 2013/14, nor are there any difficulties envisaged for future years. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans and the proposals in the approved budget.

3. Estimates of Capital Expenditure:

3.1 This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, to consider the impact on Council Tax and in the case of the HRA, housing rent levels.

Capital Expenditure	**2013/14 Approved £m**	**2013/14 Revised £m**	**2014/15 Estimate £m**	**2015/16 Estimate £m**	**2016/17 Estimate £m**
Non-HRA	4.293	4.555	8.629	1.417	1.397
HRA*	13.918	11.130	17.823	15.490	15.187
Total	**18.211**	**15.685**	**26.452**	**16.907**	**16.584**

3.2 Capital expenditure will be financed or funded as follows:

Capital Financing	2013/14 Approved £m	2013/14 Revised £m	2014/15 Estimate £m	2015/16 Estimate £m	2016/17 Estimate £m
Capital receipts	4.315	3.402	7.895	2.040	1.938
Government Grants	0.987	1.254	2.346	0.549	0.495
Major Repairs Allowance	8.709	6.679	10.511	8.618	8.451
Revenue contributions	4.200	4.350	5.700	5.700	5.700
Total Financing	**18.211**	**15.685**	**26.452**	**16.907**	**16.584**

Table 1 shows that the capital expenditure plans of the Authority can be funded entirely from sources other than external borrowing.

4. Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream:

4.1 This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs. The definition of financing costs is set out in the Prudential Code.

4.2 The ratio is based on costs net of investment income.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	2013/14 Approved %	2013/14 Revised %	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %
Non-HRA	-3.28	-0.25	-0.05	-0.06	-0.83
HRA	16.97	16.30	16.05	15.81	15.03

5. Capital Financing Requirement:

5.1 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Authority's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. The calculation of the CFR is taken from the amounts held in the Balance Sheet relating to capital expenditure and financing.

Capital Financing Requirement	2012/13 Actual £m	2013/14 Revised £m	2014/15 Estimate £m	2015/16 Estimate £m	2016/17 Estimate £m
HRA	155.1	155.1	155.1	155.1	155.1
Non-HRA	33.6	38.6	48.6	63.6	63.6
Total CFR	**188.7**	**193.7**	**203.7**	**218.7**	**218.7**

5.2 The Council is to embark on a house building programme. The preliminary work started during 2012/13 with the works themselves having started in 2013/14. Whilst the business plan includes a very modest allocation for this, it is expected that the programme will be expanded in years beyond 2014/15 once the first schemes have been completed successfully and following the Government announcement with regards to "Reinvigorating Right to Buy and One for One Replacement" where the Government desire is at a national level every additional home sold under Right to Buy will be replaced by a new home for affordable rent. Given the need to borrow for any additional house building the Council took advantage of the competitive borrowing rates whilst it could, rather than borrowing in a few years time when those rates will be unavailable. In the meantime this will allow the General Fund to continue (as it has done for a number of years) to internally borrow from the Housing Revenue Account at an appropriate rate, resulting in no detrimental impact on the General Fund from self-financing and would be fair to the HRA as it will still broadly receive the same level of income that it would have had if it had invested the money, rather than loaned internally to the GF.

6. Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions:

6.1 This is an indicator of affordability that shows the impact of capital investment decisions on Council Tax and Housing Rent levels. The incremental impact is calculated by comparing the total revenue budget requirement of the current approved capital programme with an equivalent calculation of the revenue budget requirement arising from the proposed capital programme.

Incremental Impact of Capital Investment	2013/14 Estimate	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate	2016/17 Estimate

Decisions	£	£	£	£
Increase in Band D Council Tax	2.69	-0.45	-0.28	0.15
Increase in Average Weekly Housing Rents	-2.84	-0.48	0.02	0.01

7. Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt:

7.1 The Authority has an integrated treasury management strategy and manages its treasury position in accordance with its approved strategy and practice. Overall borrowing will therefore arise as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Authority and not just those arising from capital spending reflected in the CFR.

7.2 The **Authorised Limit** sets the maximum level of external debt on a gross basis (i.e. excluding investments) for the Authority. It is measured on a daily basis against all external debt items on the Balance Sheet (i.e. long and short term borrowing, overdrawn bank balances and long term liabilities). This Prudential Indicator separately identifies borrowing from other long term liabilities such as finance leases. It is consistent with the Authority's existing commitments, its proposals for capital expenditure and financing and its approved treasury management policy statement and practices.

7.3 The Authorised Limit is the statutory limit determined under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (referred to in the legislation as the Affordable Limit).

7.4 The Operational Boundary has been set on the estimate of the most likely, i.e. prudent but not worst case scenario with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for unusual cash movements.

7.5 The Operational Boundary links directly to the Authority's estimates of the CFR and estimates of other cashflow requirements. This indicator is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit reflecting the most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario but without the additional headroom included within the Authorised Limit.

	2013/14 **Approved £m**	**2013/14** **Revised £m**	**2014/15** **Estimate £m**	**2015/16** **Estimate £m**	**2016/17** **Estimate £m**

Authorised Limit for Borrowing	200.00	200.00	230.00	230.00	230.00
Authorised Limit for External Debt	**200.00**	**200.00**	**230.00**	**230.00**	**230.00**
Operational Boundary for Borrowing	188.00	188.00	204.00	219.00	219.00
Operational Boundary for External Debt	**188.00**	**188.00**	**204.00**	**219.00**	**219.00**

8. Adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code:

8.1 This indicator demonstrates that the Authority has adopted the principles of best practice.

Adoption of the CIPFA Code of Practice in Treasury Management
The Council approved the adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code at its meeting on 22 April 2002.

The Authority has incorporated the changes from the revised CIPFA Code of Practice into its treasury policies, procedures and practices.

9. Upper Limits for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure and Variable Interest Rate Exposure:

9.1 These indicators allow the Authority to manage the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. This Authority calculates these limits on net interest paid (i.e. interest paid on fixed rate debt net of interest received on fixed rate investments)

9.2 The upper limit for variable rate exposure has been set to ensure that the Authority is not exposed to interest rate rises which could adversely impact on the revenue budget. The limit allows for the use of variable rate debt to offset exposure to changes in short-term rates on investments.

	Maximum during 2012/13	**2013/14 Approved**	**2013/14 Revised**	**2014/15 Estimate**	**2015/16 Estimate**	**2016/17 Estimate**
	%	%	%	%	%	%

Fixed						
Upper Limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure on Debt	96	100	100	100	100	100
Upper limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure on Investments	(76)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Variable						
Upper Limit for Variable Interest Rate Exposure on Debt	4	25	25	25	25	25
Upper Limit for Variable Interest Rate Exposure on Investments	(24)	(75)	(75)	(75)	(75)	(75)

9.3 The limits above provide the necessary flexibility within which decisions will be made for drawing down new loans on a fixed or variable rate basis; the decisions will ultimately be determined by expectations of anticipated interest rate movements as set out in the Authority's treasury management strategy.

10. Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate borrowing:

10.1 This indicator highlights the existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates and is designed to protect against excessive exposures to interest rate changes in any one period, in particular in the course of the next ten years.

10.2 It is calculated as the amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate maturing in each period as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate. The maturity of borrowing is determined by reference to the earliest date on which the lender can require payment.

Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing	Existing level (or Benchmark level) at 31/03/13 %	Lower Limit for 2014/15 %	Upper Limit for 2014/15 %
under 12 months	0	0	100
12 months and within 24 months	0	0	100
24 months and within 5 years	0	0	100
5 years and within 10 years	0	0	100
10 years and within 20 years	0	0	100
20 years and within 30 years	100	0	100
30 years and within 40 years	0	0	100
40 years and within 50 years	0	0	100
50 years and above	0	0	100

11. Credit Risk:

11.1 The Authority considers security, liquidity and yield, in that order, when making investment decisions.

11.2 Credit ratings remain an important element of assessing credit risk, but they are not a sole feature in the Authority's assessment of counterparty credit risk.

11.3 The Authority also considers alternative assessments of credit strength, and information on corporate developments of and market sentiment towards counterparties. The following key tools are used to assess credit risk:

– Published credit ratings of the financial institution (minimum A- or equivalent) and its sovereign (minimum AA+ or equivalent for non-UK sovereigns);
– Sovereign support mechanisms;
– Credit default swaps (where quoted);
– Share prices (where available);
– Economic fundamentals, such as a country's net debt as a percentage of its GDP);
– Corporate developments, news, articles, markets sentiment and momentum;
– Subjective overlay.

11.4 The only indicators with prescriptive values remain to be credit ratings. Other indicators of creditworthiness are considered in relative rather than absolute terms.

12. Upper Limit for total principal sums invested over 364 days:

12.1 The purpose of this limit is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Authority having to seek early repayment of the sums invested.

Upper Limit for total principal sums invested over 364 days	2013/14 Approved £m	2013/14 Revised £m	2014/15 Estimate £m	2015/16 Estimate £m	2016/17 Estimate £m
	30	30	30	30	30

Appendix C – Current Recommended Sovereign and Counterparty List as at 31/12/2013

Country/ Domicile	Counterparty	Maximum Counterparty Limit £m	Maximum Group Limit (if applicable) £m	Maximum Maturity Limit
UK	Santander UK Plc (Banco Santander Group)	10.0		6 months
UK	Bank of Scotland (Lloyds Banking Group)	10.0	10.0	6 months
UK	Lloyds TSB (Lloyds Banking Group)	10.0		6 months
UK	Barclays Bank Plc	10.0		1 year
UK	HSBC Bank Plc	10.0		1 year
UK	Nationwide Building Society	10.0		1 year
UK	NatWest (RBS Group)	10.0	10.0	Overnight
UK	Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS Group)	10.0		Overnight
UK	Standard Chartered Bank	10.0		1 year
Australia	Australia and NZ Banking Group	10.0		1 year
Australia	Commonwealth Bank of Australia	10.0		1 year
Australia	National Australia Bank Ltd (National Australia Bank Group)	10.0		1 year
Australia	Westpac Banking Corp	10.0		1 year
Canada	Bank of Montreal	10.0		1 year
Canada	Bank of Nova Scotia	10.0		1 year
Canada	Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	10.0		1 year
Canada	Royal Bank of Canada	10.0		1 year
Canada	Toronto-Dominion Bank	10.0		1 year
Finland	Nordea Bank Finland	8.0		12 months
Finland	Pohjola Bank	8.0		6 months
France	BNP Paribas	Suspended		Suspended
France	Credit Agricole CIB (Credit Agricole Group)	Suspended		Suspended

France	Credit Agricole SA (Credit Agricole Group)	Suspended		Suspended
France	Société Générale	Suspended		Suspended
Germany	Deutsche Bank AG	8.0		1 year
Germany	Landesbank Hessen-Thuringen	8.0		100 days
Netherlands	ING Bank NV	8.0		100 days
Netherlands	Rabobank	8.0		1 year
Netherlands	Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten	8.0		1 year
Sweden	Svenska Handelsbanken	8.0		1 year
Switzerland	Credit Suisse	8.0		100 days
US	JP Morgan	8.0		1 year

***Please note this list could change if, for example, a counterparty/country is upgraded, and meets our other creditworthiness tools or a new suitable counterparty comes into the market. Alternatively, if a counterparty is downgraded, this list may be shortened.*

Group Limits - For institutions within a banking group, the authority executes a limit of that of an individual limit of a single bank within that group.

The Council is not currently investing with the Euro Zone counterparties but the limits above are those recommended by Arlingclose.

Appendix D – Non-Specified Investments

Instrument	Maximum maturity	Maximum £M	Capital expenditure?	Example
Call accounts, term deposits & CDs with banks, building societies & local authorities which do not meet the specified investment criteria (on advice from TM Adviser)	5 years	20	No	
Deposits with registered providers	5 years	20	No	
Gilts	5 years	10	No	
Bonds issued by multilateral development banks	5 years	5	No	*EIB Bonds, Council of Europe Bonds etc.*
Sterling denominated bonds by non-UK sovereign governments	5 years	5	No	
Money Market Funds and Collective Investment Schemes	5 years	20	No	*Investec Target Return Fund; Elite Charteris Premium Income Fund; LAMIT; M&G Global Dividend Growth Fund*
Corporate and debt instruments issued by corporate bodies purchased from 01/04/12 onwards	5 years	5	No	
Collective Investment Schemes (pooled funds) which do not meet the definition of collective investment schemes in SI 2004 No 534 or SI 2007 No 573	These funds do not have a defined maturity date	10	Yes	*Way Charteris Gold Portfolio Fund; Lime Fund*

Appendix E – MRP Statement 2014/15

CLG's Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision (issued in 2010) places a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision has been issued by the Secretary of State and local authorities are required to "have regard" to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The four MRP options available are:

- Option 1: Regulatory Method
- Option 2: CFR Method
- Option 3: Asset Life Method
- Option 4: Depreciation Method

NB This does not preclude other prudent methods.

MRP in 2013/14: Options 1 and 2 may be used only for supported (i.e. financing costs deemed to be supported through Revenue Support Grant from Central Government) Non-HRA capital expenditure funded from borrowing. Methods of making prudent provision for unsupported Non-HRA capital expenditure include Options 3 and 4 (which may also be used for supported Non-HRA capital expenditure if the Authority chooses). There is no requirement to charge MRP in respect of HRA capital expenditure funded from borrowing.

The MRP Statement will be submitted to Council before the start of the 2014/15 financial year. If it is ever proposed to vary the terms of the original MRP Statement during the year, a revised statement should be put to Authority at that time.

The Authority's CFR at 31st March 2012 became positive as a result of the Housing Subsidy reform settlement. This would normally require the Authority to charge MRP to the General Fund in respect of Non-HRA capital expenditure funded from borrowing. CLG has produced regulations intended to mitigate this impact, and as such under Option 2 (the CFR method) there is no requirement to charge MRP for Self-financing debt.

The Authority may in 2014/15 borrow additional funds to pre or post fund future capital requirements. If this happens the MRP will not be effective until 2015/16.