Dacorum Borough Council

Treasury Management Strategy Statement

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy

2019/20

Index

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. A primary function of the Treasury Management service 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.

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. The 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.

The contribution the treasury management function makes to the authority is critical, as the balance of debt and investment operations ensure liquidity or the ability to meet spending commitments as they fall due, either on day-to-day revenue or for larger capital projects. The treasury operations will see a balance of the interest costs of debt and the investment income arising from cash deposits affecting the available budget. Since cash balances generally result from reserves and balances, it is paramount to ensure adequate security of the sums invested, as a loss of principal will in effect result in a loss to the General Fund Balance.

1.2 Clauses to be formally adopted

1. Dacorum Borough Council will create and maintain the following for effective treasury management:

    - a treasury management policy statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities;
    - suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the organisation will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities

2. Full Council will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities, including, as a minimum, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in its TMPs.

3. Responsibility is delegated to the Section 151 Officer for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions. They will act in accordance with the policy statement and TMPs and, if he/she is a CIPFA member, CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

4. This organisation nominates Cabinet to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy, policies and monitoring before recommendation to Full Council.

1.3 Treasury Management Policy Statement

The Council defines its treasury management activities as:

> *The management of the organisation's borrowing, investments, cash flows, 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.*

The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

The Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of the Council's business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

Revised reporting is required for the 2019/20 reporting cycle due to revisions of the MHCLG Investment Guidance, the MHCLG Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Guidance, the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code. The primary reporting changes include the introduction of a capital strategy, to provide a longer-term focus to the capital plans, and greater reporting requirements surrounding any commercial activity undertaken under the Localism Act 2011. The capital strategy is being reported separately.

1.4 Reporting requirements

1.4.1 Capital Strategy

The CIPFA revised **201** Prudential and Treasury Management Codes require, for 2019-20, all local authorities to prepare an additional report, a capital strategy report, which will provide the following:

- a high-level long term overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed
- the implications for future financial sustainability

The aim of this capital strategy is to ensure that all elected members on the full council fully understand the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

1.4.2 Treasury Management reporting

The Council is currently required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement (this report) - The first, and most important report, covers:

- the capital plans (including prudential indicators);
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);
- the treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).

A mid year treasury management report – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether the treasury strategy is meeting the strategy or whether any policies require revision.

An annual treasury report – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Scrutiny – The above reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to the Council. This role is undertaken by the Cabinet.

1.5 Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20

The strategy for 2019/20 covers two main areas:

Capital issues:

- the capital plans and the prudential indicators;
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy.

Treasury management issues:

- the current treasury position;
- treasury indicators which 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.

These elements cover the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, MHCLG MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and MHCLG Investment Guidance.

1.6 Training

The CIPFA Code requires the responsible officer to ensure that members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management. The training needs of treasury management officers are periodically reviewed.

1.7 Treasury management consultants

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

The Council recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire 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.

The Council also recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers.

2. The Capital Prudential Indicators 2019/20 – 2021/22

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

2.1 Capital expenditure

The first prudential indicator is a summary of the Council's capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. The table below summarises the capital expenditure plans and how these plans are being financed by capital or revenue resources. Any shortfall of resources results in a funding borrowing need. Members are asked to approve the capital expenditure forecasts:

Capital expenditure	2017/18 Actual £m	2018/19 Forecast £m	2019/20 Estimate £m	2020/21 Estimate £m	2021/22 Estimate £m

Non-HRA	9.511	17.006	16.743	7.924	5.719
HRA	24.591	26.287	42.289	29.232	36.423
Total	**34.102**	**43.293**	**59.032**	**37.156**	**42.142**
Financed by:					
Capital grants & S106	1.494	2.077	1.394	0.937	0.807
Capital receipts & reserves	28.376	30.391	31.714	26.616	26.327
Revenue contribution to Capital	3.124	9.300	5.480	5.597	6.407
Borrowing	1.108	1.525	20.444	4.006	8.601
Net financing need for the year	**34.102**	**43.293**	**59.032**	**37.156**	**42.142**

Other long-term liabilities - The above financing need excludes other long-term liabilities, such as leasing arrangements.

2.2 The Council's borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement)

The second prudential indicator is the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is simply the total 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, which is not immediately paid for, will increase the CFR.

The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which broadly reduces the borrowing need in line with each assets life.

The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. 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 currently has £0.188m of such schemes within the CFR.

The Council is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

	2017/18 Actual £m	2018/19 Estimate £m	2019/20 Estimate £m	2020/21 Estimate £m	2021/22 Estimate £m
Capital Financing Requirement					
CFR – non housing	8.802	9.924	16.237	19.018	18.508
CFR – housing	346.739	344.104	354.261	350.514	355.635
Total CFR	355.541	354.028	370.498	369.532	374.143
Movement in CFR		**(1.514)**	**16.470**	**(0.966)**	**4.611**

Movement in CFR is represented by					
Net financing need for the year		(1.514)	16.470	(0.966)	4.611
Use of set aside capital receipts		0	0	0	0
Movement in CFR		**(1.514)**	**16.470**	**(0.966)**	**4.611**

2.3 Minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy statement

The Council is required to pay off an element of the accumulated General Fund capital spend each year (the CFR) through a revenue charge (the minimum revenue provision - MRP), although it is also allowed to undertake additional voluntary payments if required (voluntary revenue provision - VRP).

MHCLG regulations have been issued which require the full Council to approve an MRP Statement in advance of each year. A variety of options are provided to councils, so long as there is a prudent provision. The Council is recommended to approve the following MRP Statement:

The MRP policy will be:
Asset life method – MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, in accordance with the regulations;
This option provides for a reduction in the borrowing need over approximately the asset's life.

There is no requirement on the HRA to make a minimum revenue provision but there is a requirement for a charge for depreciation to be made (although there are transitional arrangements in place).

Repayments included in finance leases are applied as MRP.

MRP Overpayments - A change introduced by the revised MHCLG MRP Guidance was the allowance that any charges made over the statutory minimum revenue provision (MRP), voluntary revenue provision or overpayments, can, if needed, be reclaimed in later years if deemed necessary or prudent. In order for these sums to be reclaimed for use in the budget, this policy must disclose the cumulative

overpayment made each year. Up until the 31 March 2019 the total VRP overpayments were £0.6m.

2.4 Core funds and expected investment balances

The use of funds to either finance capital expenditure or to support the revenue budget will have an ongoing impact on investments, unless resources are supplemented each year from new sources (asset sales etc.). Detailed below are estimates of the year end balances and anticipated day to day cash flow balances.

Year End Resources	2017/18 Actual £m	2018/19 Estimate £m	2019/20 Estimate £m	2020/21 Estimate £m	2021/22 Estimate £m
Fund balances / reserves	44.253	35.399	34.568	28.207	21.400
Capital receipts	22.384	19.136	10.269	9.461	7.254
Provisions	4.777	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500
Other	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total core funds	**71.414**	**59.035**	**49.337**	**42.168**	**33.154**
Working capital		5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000
(Under)/over borrowing		-1.525	-20.444	-4.006	-8.601
Expected investments		**62.510**	**33.893**	**43.161**	**29.553**

2.5 Affordability prudential indicators

The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators, but within this framework 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 Council is asked to approve the following indicators:

2.6 Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

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

	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Estimate	2019/20 Estimate	2020/21 Estimate	2021/22 Estimate

Non-HRA	0.87%	1.23%	1.20%	1.17%	1.33%
HRA	20.09%	25.09%	27.95%	30.38%	29.58%

2.7 HRA ratios

	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Estimate	2019/20 Estimate	2020/21 Estimate	2021/22 Estimate
HRA debt £m	346.172	344.104	340.518	335.928	332.448
HRA revenues £m	57.036	55.573	54.936	56.729	58.744
Ratio of debt to revenues %	607%	619%	620%	592%	566%
Number of HRA dwellings	10,079	10,115	10,089	10,149	10,187
Debt per dwelling £	34,346	34,019	33,751	33,100	32,634

3. Borrowing

The capital expenditure plans set out in Section 2 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 and the Councils capital strategy. 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.

3.1 Current portfolio position

The overall treasury management portfolio as at 31 March 2018 and for the position as at 31 December 2018 are shown below for both borrowing and investments.

TREASURY PORTFOLIO				
	actual	actual	current	current
	Mar-18	**Mar-18**	**Dec-18**	**Dec-18**
Treasury investments	£000	%	£000	%
banks	46,000	50%	47,573	43%
building societies - rated	13,000	14%	25,000	23%
local authorities	16,500	18%	18,000	16%
DMADF (H.M.Treasury)	0	0%	6,500	6%
money market funds	17,250	19%	14,000	13%
Total managed in house	**92,750**	**100%**	**111,073**	**100%**
Total managed externally	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**
Total treasury investments	**92,750**	**100%**	**111,073**	**100%**
Treasury external borrowing				
local authorities	0	0%	0	0%
PWLB	365,187	100%	362,747	100%
Total external borrowing	**365,187**	**100%**	**362,747**	**100%**
Net treasury investments / (borrowing)	**-272,437**	**0**	**-251,674**	**0**

The Council's forward projections for borrowing are summarised below. The table shows the actual external debt, against the underlying capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement - CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

	2017/18 Actual £m	**2018/19 Estimate £m**	**2019/20 Estimate £m**	**2020/21 Estimate £m**	**2021/22 Estimate £m**
External Debt					
Debt at 1 April	365.754	365.187	362.747	358.441	353.502
Expected change in Debt	(0.567)	(2.440)	(4.306)	(4.939)	(3.822)
Other long-term liabilities	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188
Actual gross debt at 31 March	**365.375**	**362.935**	**358.629**	**353.690**	**349.868**
The Capital Financing Requirement	355.541	354.028	370.498	369.532	374.143
Under / (over) borrowing*	**(9.833)**	**(8.907)**	**11.869**	**15.842**	**24.276**

There are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operates its activities within well-defined limits.

One of these is that the Council needs to ensure that its gross debt 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 2018/19 and the following two financial years.

This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes. The Council complies with this indicator.

3.2 Treasury Indicators: Limits to borrowing activity

The operational boundary. This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed.

Operational boundary	2018/19 Estimate £m	2019/20 Estimate £m	2020/21 Estimate £m	2021/22 Estimate £m
Debt	362.747	358.441	353.502	349.680
Other long term liabilities	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188
Total	**362.935**	**358.629**	**353.690**	**349.868**

1. **The authorised limit for external debt**. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government 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.

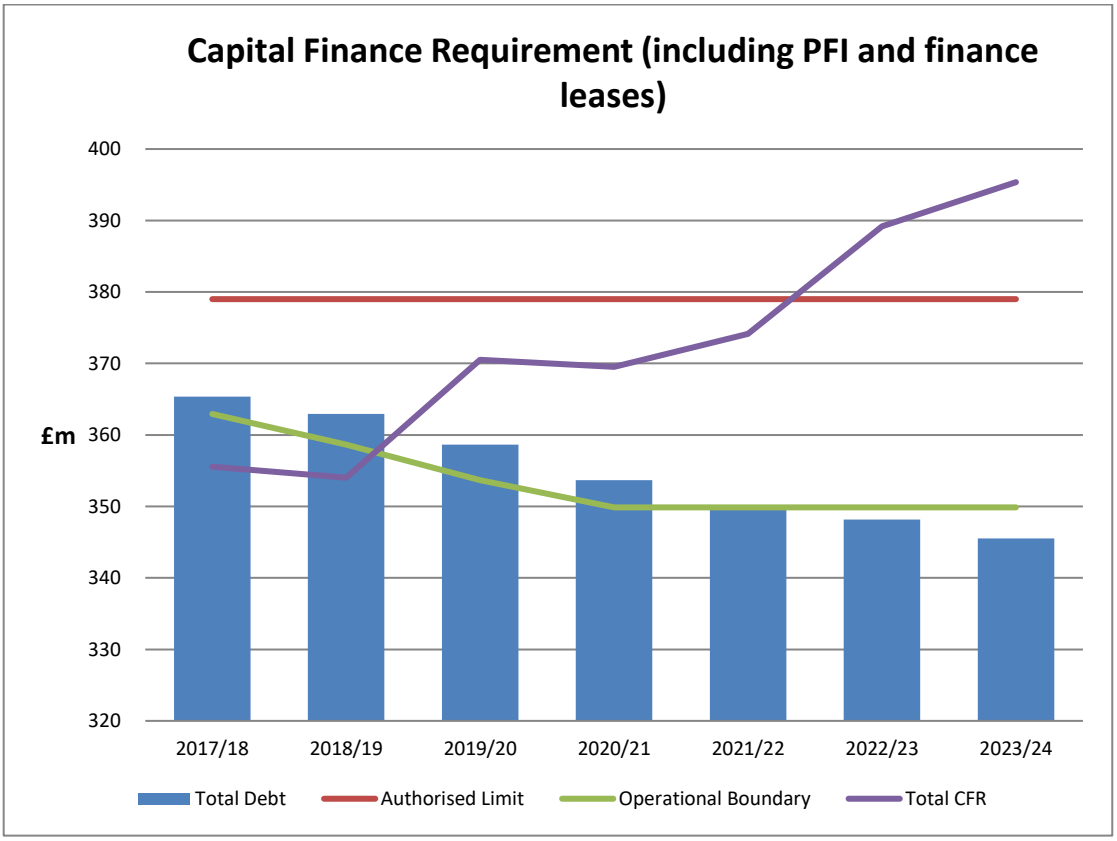
2. The Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

Authorised limit	2018/19 Estimate £m	2019/20 Estimate £m	2020/21 Estimate £m	2021/22 Estimate £m
Debt	378.00	378.00	378.00	378.00
Other long term liabilities	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total	379.00	379.00	379.00	379.00

The graph below shows projections of CFR and borrowing:

CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT including PFI and finance leases							
	Actual	**Est**	**Est**	**Est**	**Est**	**Est**	**Est**
	2017/18	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**
	£m	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
HRA CFR	346.7	344.1	354.3	350.5	355.6	368.7	375.4
GF CFR	8.8	9.9	16.2	19.0	18.5	20.5	20.0
Total CFR	**355.5**	**354.0**	**370.5**	**369.5**	**374.1**	**389.2**	**395.4**
External Borrowing	365.2	362.7	358.4	353.5	349.7	348.0	345.3

Other long term liabilities	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188
Total Debt	**365.4**	**362.9**	**358.6**	**353.7**	**349.9**	**348.2**	**345.5**
Authorised Limit	379.0	379.0	379.0	379.0	379.0	379.0	379.0
Operational Boundary	362.9	358.6	353.7	349.9	349.9	349.9	349.9



3.3 Maturity Structure of borrowing

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.

The Council is asked to approve the following treasury indicators and limits:

Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2019/20		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	1%
12 months to 2 years	0%	1%
2 years to 5 years	0%	3%
5 years to 10 years	2%	5%
10 years and above	5%	90%
Maturity structure of variable interest rate borrowing 2019/20		
	Lower	Upper

Under 12 months	0%	1%
12 months to 2 years	0%	2%
2 years to 5 years	0%	2%
5 years to 10 years	0%	0%
10 years and above	0%	0%

3.4 Borrowing strategy

The Council is currently in an over-borrowed position as described in 3.1. This means that the CFR, has been over funded with loan debt. This was to secure preferential self-financing borrowing rates and maintain General Fund capital balances.

The Corporate Director (Finance & Operations) will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances, specifically in relation to refinancing, delaying capital expenditure and taking on new borrowings.

Any decisions will be reported to the appropriate decision making body at the next available opportunity.

3.5 Policy on borrowing in advance of need

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. 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.

Borrowing in advance will be made within the constraints that the Council would not look to borrow more than 36 months in advance of need. Risks associated with any borrowing in advance activity will be subject to prior appraisal and subsequent reporting through the mid-year or annual reporting mechanism.

3.6 Prospects for Interest Rates

The Councils Treasury Advisors provided the following as their view for interest rates.

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22
Bank Rate View	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%	1.50%	1.50%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	2.00%
3 Month LIBID	0.90%	1.00%	1.10%	1.20%	1.30%	1.40%	1.50%	1.50%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%	1.90%	2.00%
6 Month LIBID	1.00%	1.20%	1.30%	1.40%	1.50%	1.60%	1.70%	1.70%	1.80%	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.20%
12 Month LIBID	1.20%	1.30%	1.40%	1.50%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.40%
5yr PWLB Rate	2.10%	2.20%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%	2.40%	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.80%
10yr PWLB Rate	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.20%
25yr PWLB Rate	2.90%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.40%	3.50%	3.50%	3.60%	3.60%
50yr PWLB Rate	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.40%

The flow of generally positive economic statistics after the quarter ended 30 June meant that it came as no surprise that the MPC came to a decision on 2 August to make the first increase in Bank Rate above 0.5% since the financial crash, from 0.5% to 0.75%. Growth became increasingly strong during 2018 until slowing significantly during the last quarter. At the November quarterly Inflation Report meeting, the MPC left Bank Rate unchanged, but expressed some concern at the Chancellor's fiscal stimulus in his Budget, which could increase inflationary pressures. However, it is unlikely that the MPC would increase Bank Rate in February 2019, ahead of the deadline in March for Brexit. On a major assumption that Parliament and the EU agree a Brexit deal in the first quarter of 2019, then the next increase in Bank Rate is forecast to be in May 2019, followed by increases in February and November 2020, before ending up at 2.0% in February 2022.

The overall longer run future trend is for gilt yields, and consequently PWLB rates, to rise, albeit gently. However, over about the last 25 years, we have been through a period of falling bond yields as inflation subsided to, and then stabilised at, much lower levels than before, and supported by central banks implementing substantial quantitative easing purchases of government and other debt after the financial crash of 2008. Quantitative easing, conversely, also caused a rise in equity values as investors searched for higher returns and purchased riskier assets. In 2016, we saw the start of a reversal of this trend with a sharp rise in bond yields after the US Presidential election in November 2016, with yields then rising further as a result of the big increase in the US government deficit aimed at stimulating even stronger economic growth. That policy change also created concerns around a significant rise in inflationary pressures in an economy which was already running at remarkably low levels of unemployment. Unsurprisingly, the Fed has continued on its series of robust responses to combat its perception of rising inflationary pressures by repeatedly increasing the Fed rate to reach 2.25 – 2.50% in December 2018. It has also continued its policy of not fully reinvesting proceeds from bonds that it holds as a result of quantitative easing, when they mature. We therefore saw US 10 year bond Treasury yields rise above 3.2% during October 2018 and also investors causing a sharp fall in equity prices as they sold out of holding riskier assets. However, by early January 2019, US 10 year bond yields had fallen back considerably on fears that the Fed was being too aggressive in raising interest rates and was going to cause a recession. Equity prices have been very volatile on alternating good and bad news during this period.

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, emerging market developments and sharp changes in investor sentiment. Such volatility could occur at any time during the forecast period.

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.

3.7 Investment and borrowing rates

- Investment returns are likely to remain low during 2019/20 but to be on a gently rising trend over the next few years.

- Borrowing interest rates have been volatile so far in 2018-19 and while they were on a rising trend during the first half of the year, they have backtracked since then until early January. 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, (the difference between higher borrowing costs and lower investment returns), to any new long-term borrowing that causes a temporary increase in cash balances as this position will, most likely, incur a revenue cost

3.8 Debt rescheduling

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).

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).

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.

All rescheduling and early repayment of debt will be reported to Cabinet, at the earliest meeting following its action.

3.9 Municipal Bond Agency

It is possible that the Municipal Bond Agency will be offering loans to local authorities in the future. The Agency hopes that the borrowing rates will be lower than those offered by the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). This Authority may make use of this new source of borrowing as and when appropriate.

4. Annual Investment Strategy

4.1 Investment policy

The Council's investment policy has regard to the following: -

MHCLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance")

CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes 2017 ("the Code")

CIPFA Treasury Management Guidance Notes 2018

The Council's investment priorities will be security first, portfolio liquidity second and then yield.

The above guidance from the MHCLG and CIPFA place a high priority on the management of risk. This authority has adopted a prudent approach to managing risk and defines its risk appetite by the following means: -

- Minimum acceptable **credit criteria** are applied in order to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties. This also enables diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk. The key ratings used to monitor counterparties are the short term and long-term ratings.

- **Other information**: 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 achieve this consideration the Council will engage with its Treasury advisors Link Asset Services to maintain a monitor on

market pricing such as "**credit default swaps**" and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.

- 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.

- Dacorum Borough Council has defined the list of **types of investment instruments** that the treasury management team are authorised to use. There are two lists in appendix 2 under the categories of 'specified' and 'non-specified' investments.

  - **Specified investments** are those with a high level of credit quality and subject to a maturity limit of one year.

  - **Non-specified investments** are those with less high credit quality, may be for periods in excess of one year, and/or are more complex instruments which require greater consideration by members and officers before being authorised for use.

- **Non-specified investments limit**. The Council has determined that it will limit the maximum total exposure to non-specified investments as being X% of the total investment portfolio, (see paragraph 4.3).

- **Lending limits,** (amounts and maturity), for each counterparty will be set through applying the matrix table in paragraph 4.2.

- **Transaction limits** are set for each type of investment in appendix 2.

- Dacorum Borough Council will set a limit for the amount of its investments which are invested for longer than 365 days, (see paragraph 4.3).

- Investments will only be placed with counterparties from countries with a specified minimum sovereign rating, (see paragraph 4.2).

- Dacorum Borough Council has engaged external consultants, (see paragraph 1.7), to provide expert advice on how to optimise an appropriate balance of security, liquidity and yield, given the risk appetite of this authority in the context of the expected level of cash balances and need for liquidity throughout the year.

  - All investments will be denominated in sterling.

  - As a result of the change in accounting standards for 2018/19 under IFRS 9, this authority will consider the implications of investment instruments which could result in an adverse movement in the value of the amount invested and resultant charges at the end of the year

to the General Fund. In November 2018, the MHCLG concluded a consultation for a temporary override to allow English local authorities time to adjust their portfolio of all pooled investments by announcing a statutory override to delay implementation of IFRS 9 for five years commencing from April 2018.

However, Dacoroum Borough Council will also pursue value for money in treasury management and will monitor the yield from investment income against appropriate benchmarks for investment performance, (see paragraph 4.5). Regular monitoring of investment performance will be carried out during the year.

4.2 Creditworthiness policy

Dacorum uses the creditworthiness service provided by Link Asset Services. This service employs a modelling approach using credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies.

The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:

- credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies;
- CDS spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

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 :

- Yellow 5 years
- Purple 2 years
- Blue 1 year (Nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks only)
- Orange 1 year
- Red 6 months
- Green 100 days
- No colour not to be used

The Link Asset Services' creditworthiness service uses a wider array of information other than just primary ratings. Furthermore, by using a risk weighted scoring system, it does not give undue preponderance to just one agency's ratings.

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.

All credit ratings will be monitored weekly. The Council is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of Link's creditworthiness service. 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.

Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition the Council will also use market data and market information, information on any external support for banks to help support its decision making process.

UK banks – ring fencing

The largest UK banks, (those with more than £25bn of retail / Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) deposits), are required, by UK law, to separate core retail banking services from their investment and international banking activities by 1st January 2019. This is known as "ring-fencing". Whilst smaller banks with less than £25bn in deposits are exempt, they can choose to opt up. Several banks are very close to the threshold already and so may come into scope in the future regardless. Ring-fencing is a regulatory initiative created in response to the global financial crisis. It mandates the separation of retail and SME deposits from investment banking, in order to improve the resilience and resolvability of banks by changing their structure. In general, simpler, activities offered from within a ring-fenced bank, (RFB), will be focused on lower risk, day-to-day core transactions, whilst more complex and "riskier" activities are required to be housed in a separate entity, a non-ring-fenced bank, (NRFB). This is intended to ensure that an entity's core activities are not adversely affected by the acts or omissions of other members of its group.
While the structure of the banks included within this process may have changed, the fundamentals of credit assessment have not. The Council will continue to assess the new-formed entities in the same way that it does others and those with sufficiently high ratings, (and any other metrics considered), will be considered for investment purposes.

Country limits

Due care will be taken to consider the exposure of the Council's total investment portfolio to non-specified investments, countries, groups and sectors. The Section 151 Officer will determine approved counterparties from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- from Fitch (or equivalent) as appropriate, with

durations following the same colour coded criteria, details of which are set out in 4.2. Officers will remove counterparties from this list should ratings change in accordance with this policy, and counterparties will only be added with approval from the Section 151 Officer.

Local Authority Counterparties

In light of some recent cases of Local Authorities issuing s114 notices (issued an authority's s151 office is of the view that expenditure of the authority is likely to exceed the resources available to meet that expenditure), the Council has taken advice in respect to Local Authority counterparties. This states that local authorities continue to represent a low risk investment. The Council will continue to include Local Authority counterparties in its list of potential investment counterparties.

4.3 Investment strategy

In-house funds: 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: Bank Rate is forecast to increase steadily but slowly over the next few years to reach 2.00% by quarter 1 2022. Bank Rate forecasts for financial year ends (March) are:

- 2018/19 0.75%
- 2019/20 1.25%
- 2020/21 1.50%
- 2021/22 2.00%

The suggested budgeted investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to 100 days during each financial year are as follows:

	Now
2018/19	0.75%
2019/20	1.00%
2020/21	1.50%
2021/22	1.75%
2022/23	1.75%
2023/24	2.00%
Later years	2.50%

The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is probably neutral. The balance of risks to increases in Bank Rate and shorter term PWLB rates, are probably also even and are dependent on how strong GDP growth turns out, how slowly inflation pressures subside, and how quickly the Brexit negotiations move forward positively.

Investment treasury indicator and limit: 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 an investment, and are based on the availability of funds after each year-end.

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

Upper limit for principal sums invested for longer than 365 days			
£m	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**
Principal sums invested for longer than 365 days	20% of portfolio	20% of portfolio	20% of portfolio

For its cash flow generated balances, the Council will seek to utilise its business reserve instant access and notice accounts, money market funds and short-dated deposits (overnight to 100 days) in order to benefit from the compounding of interest.

4.4 Investment risk benchmarking

These benchmarks are simple guides to minimise 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 position and amend the operational strategy to manage risk as conditions change. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported to Cabinet, with supporting reasons in the mid-year and annual report.

Security - The Council's maximum security risk benchmark for the current portfolio, when compared to historic default tables is 0.06%.

Liquidity – in respect of this area the Council seeks to maintain:

- Maximum bank overdraft - £0.25m
- Liquid deposits of at least £5m available with a week's notice.
- Weighted average life benchmark is expected to be around 100 days

Yield - local measures of yield benchmarks for investments is to achieve internal returns above the 7 day LIBID rate.

At the end of the financial year, the Council will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Report.

4.5 External fund managers

The Council does not currently use fund managers. If deemed appropriate to use fund managers in the future, the decision will be passed through Cabinet for recommendation to Full Council.

4.6 Non- Treasury Investments

The Council recognises that investment in other financial assets and property primarily for financial return, taken for non-treasury management purposes, requires careful investment management. Such activity may include loans to support service outcomes, investment in subsidiaries and investment property portfolios.

This type of activity is covered by the Council's normal approvals processes for revenue and capital expenditure.

The Council holds a portfolio of investment properties. These are managed as part of the Council's asset management strategy.

Appendix 1: Economic Background (provided by Link Asset Services)

UK

The flow of positive economic statistics since the end of the first quarter of 2018 has shown that pessimism was overdone about the poor growth in quarter 1 when adverse weather caused a temporary downward blip. Quarter 1 at 0.1% growth in GDP was followed by a return to 0.4% in quarter 2 and by a strong performance in quarter 3 of +0.6%. However, growth in quarter 4 is expected to weaken significantly.

At their November quarterly Inflation Report meeting, the MPC repeated that future Bank Rate increases would be gradual and would rise to a much lower equilibrium rate, (where monetary policy is neither expansionary of contractionary), than before the crash; they gave a figure for this of around 2.5% in ten years time, but declined to give a medium term forecast. However, with so much uncertainty around Brexit, they warned that the next move could be up or down, even if there was a disorderly Brexit. While it would be expected that Bank Rate could be cut if there was a significant fall in GDP growth as a result of a disorderly Brexit, so as to provide a stimulus to growth, they warned they could also raise Bank Rate in the same scenario if there was a boost to inflation from a devaluation of sterling, increases in import prices and more expensive goods produced in the UK replacing cheaper goods previously imported, and so on. In addition, the Chancellor could potentially provide fiscal stimulus to support economic growth, though at the cost of increasing the budget deficit above currently projected levels.

It is unlikely that the MPC would increase Bank Rate in February 2019, ahead of the deadline in March for Brexit. Getting parliamentary approval for a Brexit agreement on both sides of the Channel will take well into spring 2019. However, in view of the hawkish stance of the MPC at their November meeting, the next increase in Bank Rate is now forecast to be in May 2019, (on the assumption that a Brexit deal is agreed by both the UK and the EU). The following increases are then forecast to be in February and November 2020 before ending up at 2.0% in February 2022.

Inflation

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation has been falling from a peak of 3.1% in November 2017 to 2.1% in December 2018. In the November Bank of England quarterly Inflation Report, inflation was forecast to still be marginally above its 2% inflation target two years ahead, (at about 2.1%), given a scenario of minimal increases in Bank Rate.

As for the labour market figures in October, unemployment at 4.1% was marginally above a 43 year low of 4% on the Independent Labour Organisation measure. A combination of job vacancies hitting an all-time high, together with negligible growth in total employment numbers, indicates that employers are now having major difficulties filling job vacancies with suitable staff. It was therefore unsurprising that wage inflation picked up to 3.3%, (3 month average regular pay, excluding bonuses). This meant that in real terms, (i.e. wage rates less CPI inflation), earnings

are currently growing by about 1.2%, the highest level since 2009. This increase in household spending power is likely to feed through into providing some support to the overall rate of economic growth in the coming months. This tends to confirm that the MPC was right to start on a cautious increase in Bank Rate in August as it views wage inflation in excess of 3% as increasing inflationary pressures within the UK economy.

In the **political arena**, the Brexit deal put forward by the Conservative minority government was defeated on 15 January 2019. It is unclear, how this situation will move forward. However, our central position is that Prime Minister May's government will endure, despite various setbacks, along the route to reaching an orderly Brexit though the risks are increasing that it may not be possible to get full agreement by the UK and EU before 29 March 2019, in which case this withdrawal date is likely to be pushed back. If, however, the UK faces a general election in the next 12 months, this could result in a potential loosening of monetary and fiscal policy and therefore medium to longer dated gilt yields could rise on the expectation of a weak pound and concerns around inflation picking up.

Interest Rate Forecasts

The interest rate forecasts provided by Link Asset Services in paragraph 3.2 are predicated on an assumption of an agreement being reached on Brexit between the UK and the EU.

- In the event of an **orderly non-agreement exit**, it is likely that the Bank of England would take action to cut Bank Rate from 0.75% in order to help economic growth deal with the adverse effects of this situation. This is also likely to cause short to medium term gilt yields to fall.

- If there was a **disorderly Brexit**, then any cut in Bank Rate would be likely to last for a longer period and also depress short and medium gilt yields correspondingly. It is also possible that the government could act to protect economic growth by implementing fiscal stimulus.

Appendix 2: Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

A variety of investment instruments will be used, subject to the credit quality of the institution, and depending on the type of investment made it will fall into one of the above categories.

The criteria, time limits and monetary limits applying to institutions or investment vehicles are:

Specified Investments: All such investments will be sterling denominated, with maturities up to maximum of 1 year, meeting the minimum 'high' quality criteria where applicable.

	*** Minimum 'High' Credit Criteria**	**Use**
Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility	--	In-house
Term deposits – UK Government (including other local authorities)	--	In-house
Term deposits – banks and building societies	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers
UK Government Gilts	UK sovereign rating	In-house and Fund Managers
Money Market Funds (CNAV)	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers
Money Market Funds (LVNAV)	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers
Money Market Funds (VNAV)	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers
UK Government Treasury bills	UK sovereign rating	In-house and Fund Managers

Term deposits with nationalised banks and banks and building societies

	* Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	*** Max % of total investments	Max. maturity period
UK part nationalised banks	See Link's Creditworthy list	In-house	12.5M per institution	12 months

Non-specified Investments: These are any investments which do not meet the specified investment criteria. A maximum of the lower of 30% of the portfolio, or £20m will be held in aggregate in non-specified investment

	* Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	Max. maturity period
Term deposits – UK Government and Other Local Authorities	--	In-house	5 years
Term deposits – banks and building societies	See 4.2	In-house	5 years
Certificates of deposit issued by banks and building societies	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	5 years
Fixed term deposits with variable rate and variable maturities -Callable deposits -Callable range trade accounts	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	5 years
Gilt Funds and Bond Funds	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	5 years
UK Government Gilts	UK sovereign rating	In-house and Fund Managers	10 years
Bonds issued by multilateral development banks	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers	10 years
Corporate Bonds	See 4.2	In-house and Fund Managers	10 years

Accounting treatment of investments. The accounting treatment may differ from the underlying cash transactions arising from investment decisions made by this Council. To ensure that the Council is protected from any adverse revenue impact, which may arise from these differences, we will review the accounting implications of new transactions before they are undertaken.

Appendix 3: Treasury management roles and scheme of delegation

Full Council

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

Cabinet

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

The S151 (responsible) officer

- recommending clauses, treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance;
- submitting regular treasury management policy reports;
- submitting budgets and budget variations;
- receiving and reviewing management information reports;
- reviewing the performance of the treasury management function;
- ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources and skills, and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function;
- ensuring the adequacy of internal audit, and liaising with external audit;
- recommending the appointment of external service providers;
- approving the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment;
- approving the use of non-UK counterparties as appropriate;

- preparation of a capital strategy to include capital expenditure, capital financing, non-financial investments and treasury management, with a long term time frame;
- ensuring that the capital strategy is prudent, sustainable, affordable and prudent in the long term and provides value for money;
- ensuring that due diligence has been carried out on all investments and is in accordance with the risk appetite of the authority.