

Mid-Year Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2018/19

Report by Chief Finance Officer

Executive Summary

The regulatory framework for treasury management requires the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to receive a mid-year monitoring report on treasury activities.

This report provides information on the treasury management activities of the PCC for the period 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018.

The first half of 2018/19 has seen UK economic growth post a modest performance, but sufficiently robust for the Monetary Policy Committee, (MPC), to unanimously (9-0) vote to increase Bank Rate on 2nd August from 0.5% to 0.75%. Although growth looks as if it will only be modest at around 1.5% in 2018, the Bank of England's August Quarterly Inflation Report forecast that growth will pick up to 1.8% in 2019, albeit there were several caveats – mainly related to whether or not the UK achieves an orderly withdrawal from the European Union in March 2019.

At the 30th September 2018, the PCC's external debt excluding PFI was £7.9m, its investments totalled £8m and bank balances £6.2m.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector (the Code), requires that the PCC receives a mid-year review of treasury activities in addition to the forward looking annual investment and treasury strategy and

backward looking annual treasury report. The Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy for the current year (2018/19) was approved by the PCC in January 2018.

- 1.2 The PCC operates a balanced budget, which broadly means income receivable during the year will cover expenditure payable and any planned movement on reserves. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering maximising investment return.
- 1.3 The second main function of the treasury management service is the financing of the PCC's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the PCC, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure the PCC can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to the PCC's risk or cost objectives.
- 1.4 As a consequence treasury management is defined as:

“The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”
- 1.5 The PCC has delegated responsibility for treasury management decisions taken within the approved strategy to the PCC's Chief Finance Officer. Day to day execution and administration of investment and borrowing decisions are undertaken by the Constabulary.
- 1.6 The PCC recognises the importance of monitoring treasury management activities, with regular reports being presented to the Audit Committee throughout the year.
- 1.7 This mid-year review provides commentary on economic conditions produced by Link Asset Services (the PCC's external treasury consultants) and details treasury activities for the period 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018 including; cash balances and cash flow management, investment performance, counterparty management and long term borrowing/debt management.

2. Link Asset Services Economic Overview - October 2018

2.1 Economic performance year to date

UK. The first half of 2018/19 has seen UK economic growth post a modest performance, but sufficiently robust for the Monetary Policy Committee, (MPC), to unanimously (9-0) vote to increase Bank Rate on 2nd August from

0.5% to 0.75%. Although growth looks as if it will only be modest at around 1.5% in 2018, the Bank of England's August Quarterly Inflation Report forecast that growth will pick up to 1.8% in 2019, albeit there were several caveats – mainly related to whether or not the UK achieves an orderly withdrawal from the European Union in March 2019.

Some MPC members have expressed concerns about a build-up of inflationary pressures, particularly with the pound falling in value again against both the US dollar and the Euro. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation rose unexpectedly from 2.4% in June to 2.7% in August due to increases in volatile components, but is expected to fall back to the 2% inflation target over the next two years given a scenario of minimal increases in Bank Rate. The MPC has indicated Bank Rate would need to be in the region of 1.5% by March 2021 for inflation to stay on track. Financial markets are currently pricing in the next increase in Bank Rate for the second half of 2019.

As for the labour market, unemployment has continued at a 43 year low of 4% on the Independent Labour Organisation measure. A combination of job vacancies hitting an all-time high in July, 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 2.9%, (3 month average regular pay, excluding bonuses) and to a one month figure in July of 3.1%. This meant that in real terms, (i.e. wage rates higher than CPI inflation), earnings grew by about 0.4%, near to the joint high of 0.5% since 2009. (The previous high point was in July 2015.) Given the UK economy is very much services sector driven, an 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 were 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. However, the MPC will need to tread cautiously before increasing Bank Rate again, especially given all the uncertainties around Brexit.

In the political arena, there is a risk that the current Conservative minority government may be unable to muster a majority in the Commons over Brexit. However, our central position is that Prime Minister May's government will endure, despite various setbacks, along the route to Brexit in March 2019. If, however, the UK faces a general election in the next 12 months, this could result in a potential loosening of monetary policy and therefore medium to longer dated gilt yields could rise on the expectation of a weak pound and concerns around inflation picking up.

USA. President Trump's massive easing of fiscal policy is fuelling a (temporary) boost in consumption which has generated an upturn in the rate of strong growth which rose from 2.2%, (annualised rate), in quarter 1 to 4.2% in quarter 2, but also an upturn in inflationary pressures. With inflation moving towards 3%, the Fed increased rates another 0.25% in September to between 2.00% and 2.25%, this being four increases in 2018, and indicated they expected to increase rates four more times by the end of 2019. The dilemma, however, is what to do when the temporary boost to consumption wanes, particularly as the recent imposition of tariffs on a number of countries' exports to the US, (China in particular), could see a switch to US production of some of those goods, but at higher prices. Such a scenario would invariably make any easing of monetary policy harder for the Fed in the second half of 2019.

EUROZONE. Growth was unchanged at 0.4% in quarter 2, but has undershot early forecasts for a stronger economic performance in 2018. In particular, data from Germany has been mixed and it could be negatively impacted by US tariffs on a significant part of manufacturing exports e.g. cars. For that reason, although growth is still expected to be in the region of 2% for 2018, the horizon is less clear than it seemed just a short while ago.

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

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

2.2 Interest rate forecasts

The PCC's treasury advisor, Link Asset Services, has provided the following forecast:

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View											
	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21
Bank Rate View	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%	1.50%	1.50%
3 Month LIBID	0.75%	0.80%	0.80%	0.90%	1.10%	1.10%	1.20%	1.40%	1.50%	1.60%	1.60%
6 Month LIBID	0.85%	0.90%	0.90%	1.00%	1.20%	1.20%	1.30%	1.50%	1.60%	1.70%	1.70%
12 Month LIBID	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.30%	1.30%	1.40%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%	1.80%
5yr PWLB Rate	2.00%	2.00%	2.10%	2.20%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%	2.40%	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%
10yr PWLB Rate	2.40%	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.10%
25yr PWLB Rate	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.50%	3.50%
50yr PWLB Rate	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%

The flow of generally positive economic statistics after the end of 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, to 0.75%. However, the MPC emphasised again, 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; indeed they gave a figure for this of around 2.5% in ten years' time but they declined to give a medium term forecast. We do not think that the MPC will increase Bank Rate in February 2019, ahead of the deadline in March for Brexit. We also feel that the MPC is more likely to wait until August 2019, than May 2019, before the next increase, to be followed by further increases of 0.25% in May and November 2020 to reach 1.5%. However, the cautious pace of even these limited increases is dependent on a reasonably orderly Brexit.

The balance of risks to the UK

- 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 broadly dependent on how strong GDP growth turns out, how slowly inflation pressures subside, and how quickly the Brexit negotiations move forward positively.

Downside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates currently include:

- Bank of England monetary policy takes action too quickly over the next three years to raise Bank Rate and causes UK economic growth, and increases in inflation, to be weaker than we currently anticipate.
- A resurgence of the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis, possibly Italy, due to its high level of government debt, low rate of economic growth and vulnerable banking system, and due to the election in March of a government which has made a lot of anti-austerity noise. This is likely to lead to friction with the EU when setting the target for the fiscal deficit in the national budget.

Unsurprisingly, investors have taken a dim view of this and so Italian bond yields have been rising.

- Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary now form a strongly anti-immigration bloc within the EU while Italy, this year, has also elected a strongly anti-immigration government. In the German general election of September 2017, Angela Merkel's CDU party was left in a vulnerable minority position as a result of the rise of the anti-immigration AfD party. To compound this, the result of the Swedish general election in September 2018 has left an anti-immigration party potentially holding the balance of power in forming a coalition government. The challenges from these political developments could put considerable pressure on the cohesion of the EU and could spill over into impacting the euro, EU financial policy and financial markets.
- The imposition of trade tariffs by President Trump could negatively impact world growth. President Trump's specific actions against Turkey pose a particular risk to its economy which could, in turn, negatively impact Spanish and French banks which have significant exposures to loans to Turkey.
- Weak capitalisation of some European banks.
- Rising interest rates in the US could negatively impact emerging countries which have borrowed heavily in dollar denominated debt, so causing an investor flight to safe havens e.g. UK gilts.
- Geopolitical risks, especially North Korea, but also in Europe and the Middle East, which could lead to increasing safe haven flows.

Upside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates

- President Trump's fiscal plans to stimulate economic expansion causing a significant increase in inflation in the US and causing further sell offs of government bonds in major western countries.
- The Fed causing a sudden shock in financial markets through misjudging the pace and strength of increases in its Fed. Funds Rate and in the pace and strength of reversal of QE, which then leads to a fundamental reassessment by investors of the relative risks of holding bonds, as opposed to equities. This could lead to a major flight from bonds to equities and a sharp increase in bond yields in the US, which could then spill over into impacting bond yields around the world.
- The Bank of England is too slow in its pace and strength of increases in Bank Rate and, therefore, allows inflation pressures to build up too strongly within the UK economy, which then necessitates a later rapid series of increases in Bank Rate faster than we currently expect.
- UK inflation, whether domestically generated or imported, returning to sustained significantly higher levels causing an increase in the inflation premium inherent to gilt yields.

3. Cash Balances and Cash Flow Management

- 3.1 The PCC's cash and short term investment balances comprise revenue and capital resources, such as general balances and earmarked reserves and the timing differences between the receipt and payment of monies required to meet the cost of PCC services and the capital programme. The average level of cash and short term-investment balances in the year to date totals £13.006m
- 3.2 Cash and short term investment balances are managed internally and have been invested in accordance with the PCC's approved Authorised Lending List.
- 3.3 A key objective of cash flow management is to minimise balances held in the PCC's bank accounts in order to ensure that the maximum interest is earned. However presently the interest returned on instant access accounts is similar to those earned on short term lending arrangements. These accounts are therefore frequently utilised within counterparty limits as they provide greater liquidity.
- 3.4 The PCC operates five bank accounts. Cash balances across all seven accounts are aggregated and surplus cash balances are invested on a daily basis.
- 3.5 Year to date (excluding investments and repayments), monies received amounts to £107.2m, while payments total £98.2m, resulting in an overall increase in cash balances of £9m.
- 3.6 By continuing to delay borrowing for capital purposes (Section 6) while at the same time actively managing levels of liquid cash, the PCC on occasions has required to borrow short-term from the money markets to cover daily liquidity.

4. Investment Performance

- 4.1 In accordance with the Code, it is the PCC's priority to ensure security of capital and liquidity, and to obtain an appropriate level of return which is consistent with the PCC's risk appetite. As set out in Section 3, it is a very difficult investment market in terms of earning the level of interest rates commonly seen in previous decades as rates are very low and in line with the current 0.5% Bank Rate. The continuing potential for a re-emergence of a Eurozone sovereign debt crisis together with other risks which could impact on the creditworthiness of banks, prompts a low risk strategy. Given this risk environment, investment returns are likely to remain low.
- 4.2 At the 30th September 2018, the PCC held £8m of investments. The profile of these investments is shown below.

Institutional Sector	Liquid	Up to 3 Months	Up to 6 Months	Up to 9 Months	Up to 12 Months
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Part Nationalised Banks	-	-	-	-	-
UK Banks	-	-	-	-	-
Non-UK Banks	-	-	4.0	-	-
Building Societies	-	4.0	-	-	-
Other*	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	4.0	4.0	-	-

*Includes: Other Local Authorities

- 4.3 A more detailed investment profile at 30th September 2018 is shown at Appendix 1.
- 4.4 The average interest rate earned for the year to date is 0.5496% compared with the estimated average 3 month day London Interbank Bid Rate (LIBID) of 0.6713%.
- 4.5 Gross interest earned for the period 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018 is £0.032m.

5. Counterparty Maintenance

- 5.1 The PCC CFO is responsible for maintaining an Approved Counterparty List in accordance with the criteria as set out in the approved Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy 2018/19. Credit rating information is supplied by our treasury consultants on all active counterparties. Any rating changes, rating watches (notification of a likely change) and rating outlooks (notification of a possible longer term change) are provided by our treasury consultants immediately they occur. A wide range of market information such as Credit Default Swap prices and share price is also taken into account. The Approved Counterparty List is therefore actively managed on a day-to-day basis and when an institution no longer meets the PCC approved counterparty criteria, it is immediately removed.
- 5.2 There have been no credit rating downgrades during the period 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018 that have resulted in counterparties being removed from the authorised counterparty list.

6. Long Term Borrowing/Debt Management

- 6.1 The PCC undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. This activity gives rise to the need to borrow. Part of the PCC's treasury management activity is to address this borrowing need, either through long term borrowing from external bodies (PWLB or commercial banks) or utilising temporary cash resources within the PCC pending long term borrowing.

- 6.2 In accordance with the approved 2018/19 Investment and Treasury Strategy, the PCC continues to delay new borrowing for capital purposes, using cash balances on a temporary basis to avoid the cost of 'carrying' debt in the short term. Delaying borrowing and running down the level of investment balances also reduces the PCC's exposure to investment counterparty risk.
- 6.3 At the 30th September 2018, the PCC's external borrowing (debt outstanding, excluding PFI) totaled £7.908m (PWLB)
- 6.4 The PCC's overall capital financing requirement (excluding PFI) at 31.3.18 was £11.8m. The projected capital financing requirement at 31.3.19 is approximately £13.6m. This represents unfunded capital expenditure for which approved borrowing can be drawn down. The PCC's CFO, under delegated powers, will take the most appropriate form of borrowing depending on the prevailing interest rates at the time, taking into account the risks identified in the economic forecast (Section 2).
- 6.5 The Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) provides a facility to restructure debt, including early repayment of loans and encourages local authorities to do so when circumstances permit. This can result in net savings in overall interest charges. Current circumstances do not suggest that refinancing existing PWLB debt would be economically prudent due to the significant repayment penalties. However prevailing PWLB interest rates continue to be monitored in order to identify repayment opportunities.

7. Other

- 7.1 In December 2017, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. As from 2019/20, all local authorities are required to prepare a Capital Strategy which is intended to provide the following: -
- a high-level 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

A report setting out our Capital Strategy will be taken to the PCC before 31st March 2019.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA) has recently consulted local authorities (and PCCs) on revising the Treasury Management Code and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes, and the Prudential Code. CIPFA will publish the revised codes shortly.

- 7.2 MiFID II (Markets in Financial Instruments Directive).
On 3 January 2018 the EU introduced regulations under MiFID II. These regulations govern the relationship that financial institutions conducting lending and borrowing transactions have with local authorities (and PCCs).

This has little effect on the PCC apart from having to fill in forms sent by each institution dealing with the PCC and for each type of investment instrument in use apart from for cash deposits with banks and building societies.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The Mid-Year Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2018/19 provides information on the Treasury Management activities of the PCC for the period 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018.

9 Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Audit Committee endorses the Mid-Year Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2018/19.

Appendix 1

Outstanding Deposit Profile @ 30th September 2018				
Counterparty	Deal Date	Maturity Date	Rate	Principal (£m)
Goldman Sachs Intl	05/07/2018	05/12/2018	0.80%	2.00
Goldman Sachs Intl	05/07/2018	05/11/2018	0.74%	4.00
Nationwide BS	05/07/2018	05/10/2018	0.57%	4.00
Barclays Bank	07/09/2018	Instant Access	0.60%	2.25
Barclays Bank	10/09/2018	Instant Access	0.60%	2.00
Barclays Bank	19/09/2018	Instant Access	0.60%	1.00
Lloyds Bank	13/08/2018	Instant Access	0.50%	0.50
Lloyds Bank	19/09/2018	Instant Access	0.50%	5.00
Lloyds Bank	24/09/2018	Instant Access	0.50%	1.25
Barclays Bank (Current A/C)				0.30
Total				22.30