



| <u>Committee and Date</u>            | <u>Item</u>   |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Cabinet<br>07 September 2020         |               |
| Audit Committee<br>17 September 2020 |               |
| Council<br>24 September 2020         |               |
|                                      | <u>Public</u> |

## **ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2019/20**

**Responsible Officer** James Walton

e-mail: James.Walton@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: (01743) 258915

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The report informs members of treasury activities for Shropshire Council for 2019/20, including the investment performance of the internal treasury team to 31 March 2020. The internal treasury team outperformed their investment benchmark by 0.42% in 2019/20 and performance for the last three years is 0.32% per annum above benchmark. Treasury activities during the year have been within approved prudential and treasury indicators set and have complied with the Treasury Strategy.
- 1.2. During 2019/20 the performance of the Treasury Team delivered an under spend of £3.75 million compared to budget as highlighted in paragraph 11.4 of this report. This was mainly due to Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) savings following the Council's review of the policy and interest earned being higher and debt charges lower than budgeted.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Members are asked to accept the position as set out in the report.

## **REPORT**

### **3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

- 3.1. The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 3.2. There are no direct environmental, equalities or climate change consequences arising from this report.
- 3.3. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council's Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance together with the rigorous

internal controls will enable the Council to manage the risk associated with Treasury Management activities and the potential for financial loss.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1. The Council makes assumptions about the levels of borrowing and investment income over the financial year. Reduced borrowing as a result of capital receipt generation or delays in delivery of the capital programme will both have a positive impact of the council's cash position. Similarly, higher than benchmarked returns on available cash will also help the Council's financial position. For monitoring purposes, assumptions are made early in year about borrowing and returns based on the strategies agreed by Council in the preceding February. Performance outside of these assumptions results in increased or reduced income for the Council.
- 4.2. The 2019/20 performance is above benchmark for the reasons outlined in paragraph 10.4 of this report and has delivered additional income of £3.75 million which has been reflected in the final Revenue Monitor report for 2019/20.

#### **5. Climate Change Appraisal**

- 5.1. The Council's Financial Strategy includes proposals to deliver a reduced carbon footprint for the Council therefore the Treasury Team is working with the Council in order to achieve this. There are no climate change impacts arising from this report.

#### **6. Background**

- 6.1. The Council defines its treasury management activities as "the management of the 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".
- 6.2. The Council is required through regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury report reviewing treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2019/20. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- 6.3. Changes in the regulatory environment place a much greater onus on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. Minimum reporting requirements are that the Council should receive the following reports:
- An annual treasury strategy in advance of the year.
  - A mid-year treasury update report.
  - An annual report following the year describing the activity compared to

the strategy.

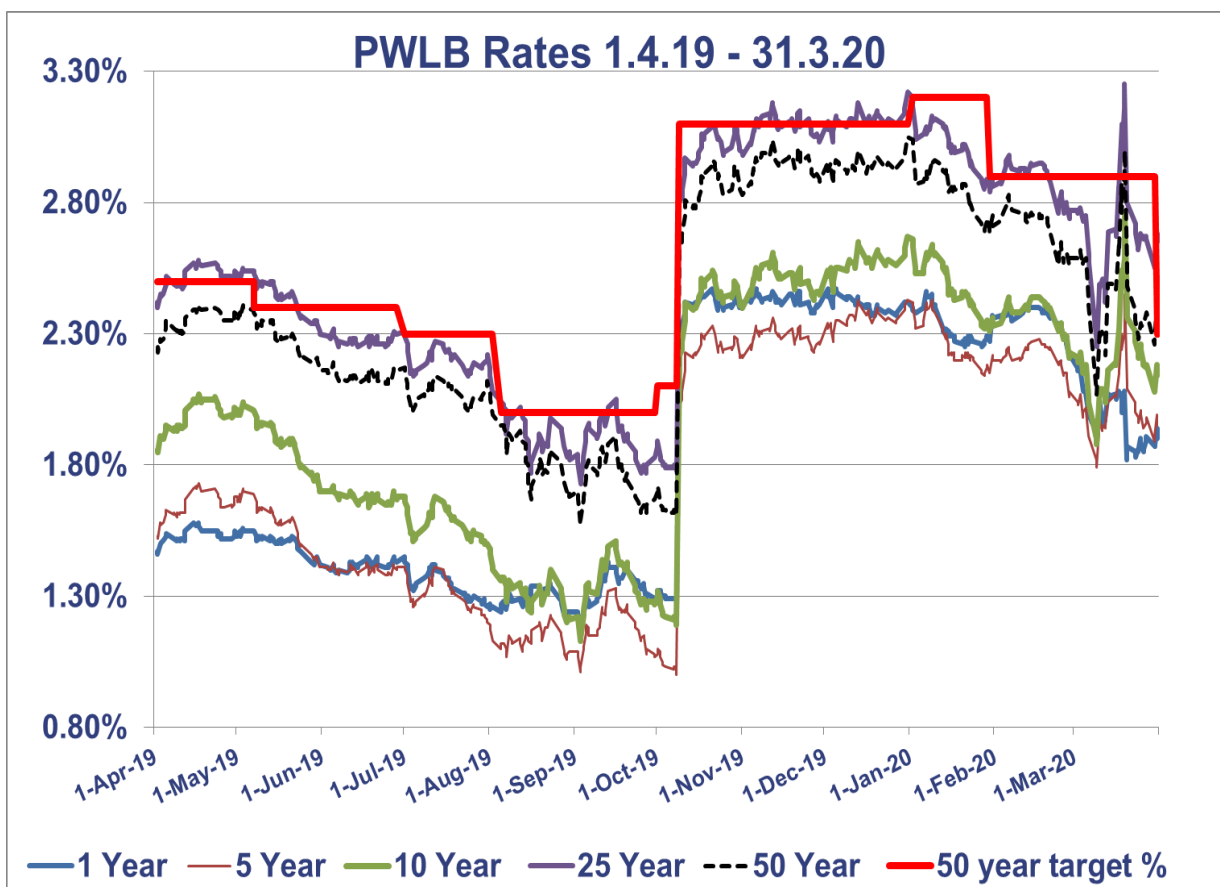
- 6.4. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management states that these reports should be scrutinised by a nominated committee. These reports were scrutinised by the Audit Committee before they were reported to full Council for approval.
- 6.5. In addition to the minimum reporting requirements, the Director's and Cabinet also receive quarterly treasury management update reports for information.
- 6.6. The Treasury Strategy for 2019/20 was approved by Council in February 2019, the mid-year treasury update report was approved by Council in December 2019. This Annual Report sets out our actual treasury performance for the year and shows how the actual treasury performance varied from our estimates and planning assumptions.

## **7. Borrowing Strategy for 2019/20**

- 7.1. The Council's only borrowing requirement identified within the Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2020/21 was self-financing prudential borrowing of £8.197m therefore no external borrowing was required but based on the prospects for interest rates outlined in the Treasury Strategy, the Council would adopt a pragmatic approach if circumstances changed when considering any new borrowing.
- 7.2. Short term Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates were expected to be significantly cheaper than longer term borrowing rates during the year therefore borrowing in the under 10 year period early on in the financial year when rates were expected to be at their lowest would be considered. Variable rate borrowing was also expected to be cheaper than long term fixed rate borrowing throughout the year.
- 7.3. An alternative strategy was to defer any new borrowing as long term borrowing rates were expected to be higher than investment rates during the year. This would maximise savings in the short term and also have the added benefit of running down investments which would reduce credit risk.

## **8. Borrowing outturn for 2019/20**

- 8.1. The Treasury Team take advice from its external treasury advisor, Link Asset Services, on the most opportune time to borrow. Movements in rates during 2019/20 are shown in the graph below.



8.2. Members have previously been advised of the unexpected change of policy on PWLB lending arrangements in October 2010 following the Comprehensive Spending Review. In addition, in October 2019, the Treasury and PWLB announced an increase in rates of 1% across all borrowing periods. This made new borrowing more expensive and repayment relatively less attractive.

8.3. The table below shows PWLB borrowing rates for a selection of maturity periods. The table also shows the high and low points in rates during the year, average rates during the year and individual rates at the start and the end of the financial year.

|            | 1 Year     | 5 Year     | 10 Year    | 25 Year    | 50 Year    |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 01/04/2019 | 1.46%      | 1.52%      | 1.84%      | 2.41%      | 2.24%      |
| 31/03/2020 | 1.90%      | 1.95%      | 2.14%      | 2.65%      | 2.39%      |
| Low        | 1.17%      | 1.00%      | 1.13%      | 1.73%      | 1.57%      |
| Date       | 03/09/2019 | 08/10/2019 | 03/09/2019 | 03/09/2019 | 03/09/2019 |
| High       | 2.47%      | 2.45%      | 2.76%      | 3.25%      | 3.05%      |
| Date       | 21/10/2019 | 19/03/2020 | 19/03/2020 | 19/03/2020 | 31/12/2019 |
| Average    | 1.83%      | 1.77%      | 2.00%      | 2.56%      | 2.40%      |

8.4. Following discussions with Link, as general fund borrowing rates were significantly higher than investment rates during the year it was agreed that if any new borrowing was required during the year it would be deferred in order to maximise savings in the short term and reduce credit risk by reducing investments. No new external borrowing was required in 2019/20.

8.5. The Council's total debt portfolio at 31 March 2020 is set out below:-

| Type of Debt                      | Balance<br>£m | Average Borrowing<br>Rate 2019/2020 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| General Fund Fixed rate –<br>PWLB | 175.02        | 5.05%                               |
| HRA Fixed rate - PWLB             | 83.35         | 3.51%                               |
| Fixed rate – Market               | 49.20         | 4.10%                               |
| Variable rate                     | 0             | N/A                                 |

8.6. The maturity profile of the debt is evenly spread to avoid large repayments in any one financial year. The average debt period for PWLB loans is 20 years, market loans have an average debt period of 51 years. The total debt portfolio has a maturity range from 1 year to 59 years.

8.7. The Treasury Strategy allows up to 15% of the total outstanding debt to mature in any one year. It is prudent to have the Council's debt maturing over many years so as to minimise the risk of having to re-finance when interest rates may be high. The actual debt maturity profile is within these limits (Appendix A).

## 9. Debt rescheduling

9.1. No debt restructuring was undertaken during 2019/20. The introduction of a differential in PWLB rates on the 1 November 2007, which was compounded further following a policy change in October 2010 as outlined above has meant that large premiums would be incurred if debt restructuring was undertaken, which cannot be justified on value for money grounds.

9.2. Although these changes have restricted debt restructuring, the current debt portfolio is continually monitored in conjunction with external advisers in the light of changing economic and market conditions to identify opportunities for debt rescheduling. Debt rescheduling will only be undertaken:

- To generate cash savings at minimum risk.
- To help fulfil the Treasury Strategy.
- To enhance the balance of the long term portfolio by amending the maturity profile and/or volatility of the portfolio.

## 10. Investment Strategy for 2019/20

10.1. Our treasury advisor originally felt when the strategy was approved by Council in February 2019 that the bank rate would remain at 0.75% during 2019/20 as it was not expected the MPC would be able to deliver on an increase in Bank Rate until the Brexit issue was finally settled. However, there was an expectation that Bank Rate would rise after that issue was settled but would only rise to 1.0% during 2020. Consequently, our treasury advisor's interest rate forecast was reviewed and their updated forecast was approved by Council in December 2019 as part of the mid-year report. Their revised forecast took account of the expectation that Bank Rate would stay

at 0.75% during 2019/20.

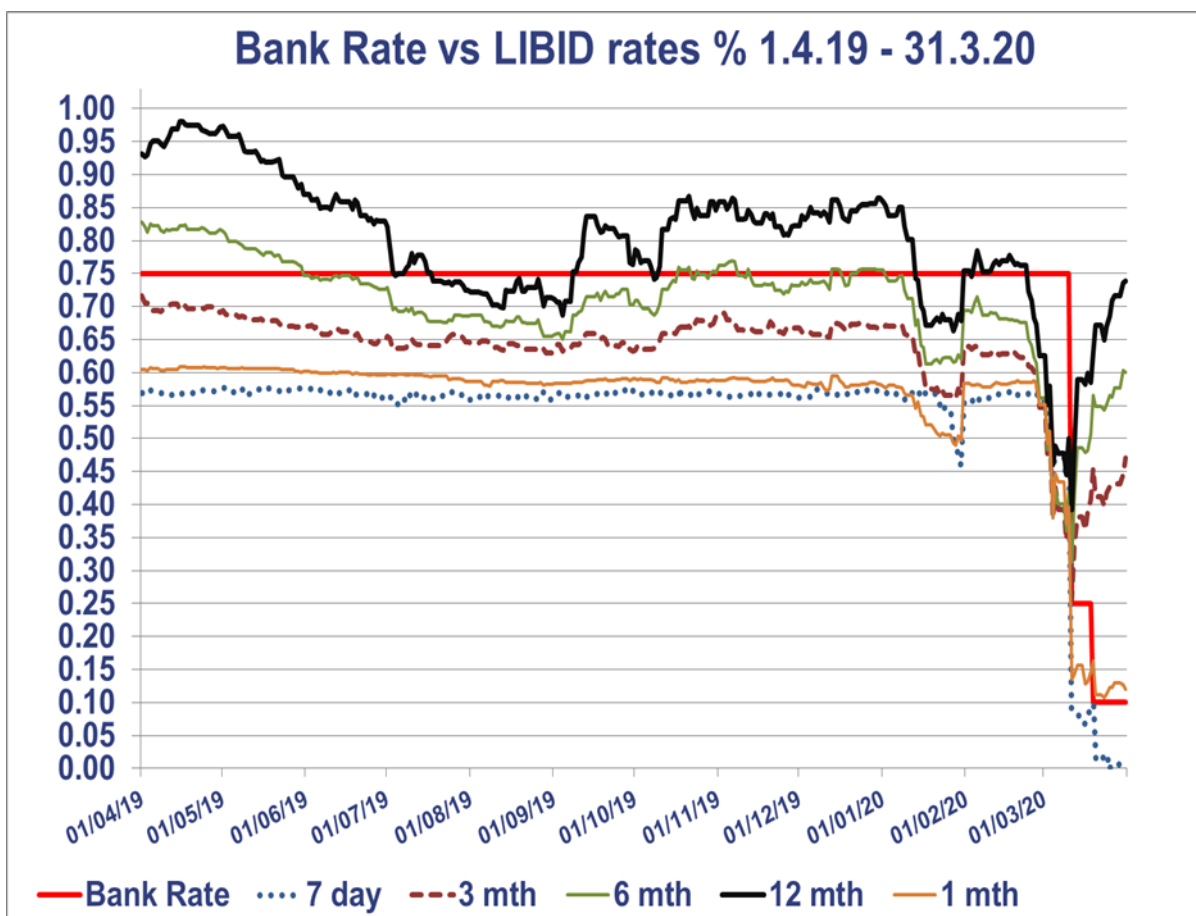
10.2. In 2019/20 investment of surplus cash was managed by the internal treasury team. The strategy for the in-house team was influenced by the need to keep funds relatively short for cash flow purposes. Lending continued to be restricted to UK banks, one overseas bank, three Building Societies, two Money Market Funds (AAA credit rating), Part Nationalised Banks, UK Government and other Local Authorities in line with the Council's policy on creditworthiness which was approved in the Annual Investment Strategy.

## **11. Investment outturn 2019/20**

11.1 Rising concerns over the possibility that the UK could leave the EU at the end of October 2019 caused longer term investment rates to be on a falling trend for most of April to September. They then rose after the end of October deadline was rejected by the Commons but fell back again in January before recovering again after the 31 January departure of the UK from the EU. When the coronavirus outbreak hit the UK in February/March, rates initially plunged but then rose sharply back up again due to a shortage of liquidity in financial markets.

11.2 To counter the low investment rates and following advice from Link, use was made of direct deals with main UK banks, for various periods from three months to one year. Direct deals offered enhanced rates over the equivalent rates available through brokers. This provided opportunities to lock into higher, long term rates at times when it was thought they offered substantial enhancement over short term benchmark rates. Enhanced market rates when compared to bank rate has resulted in the total portfolio outperforming the benchmark. Use of instant access accounts with HSBC and Svenska Handelsbanken was continued, together with use of Money Market Funds with Aberdeen & Insight Investment. These accounts offered both instant access to funds and paid a rate which was higher than placing short term deposits through brokers.

11.3 Movements in short term rates through the year are shown in the below.



11.4 Throughout the year the average interest rate earned on investments was higher than budgeted. This resulted in the internal treasury team achieving a higher level of interest on revenue balances than budgeted. This surplus was in addition to an under-spend on debt charges due to no long-term general fund borrowing being undertaken in 2019/20. The total £3.75 million underspend was mainly due to MRP savings following a review of the Council's policy and interest earned being higher and debt charges lower than budgeted.

11.5 At 31 March 2020 the allocation of the cash portfolio was as follows:

|  | <b>£m</b>    |
|--|--------------|
| • In-house short dated deposits for cash flow management | 56.6         |
| • In-house long dated deposits (up to 1 year)            | 48.0         |
| • Other Local Authorities                                | 52.5         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>157.1</b> |

11.6 The following table shows the average return on cash investments for the internal treasury team during the year and for the last 3 years to 31 March 2020. Recognising the need to manage short term cash flow requirements, the target for the internal team is the 7 day LIBID rate.

|                              | <b>Return<br/>2019/20</b> | <b>Return<br/>3 years to 31 March 2020</b> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
|                              | <b>%</b>                  | <b>% p.a.</b>                              |
| Internal Treasury Team       | 0.96                      | 0.74                                       |
| Benchmark (7 Day LIBID rate) | 0.54                      | 0.42                                       |

11.7 The conclusions to be drawn from the table are:

- During 2019/20 the internal treasury team outperformed their benchmark by 0.42%.
- Over the 3 year period the internal team's performance has been 0.32% per annum above the benchmark.

## 12. Compliance with Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators

12.1 All borrowing and lending transactions undertaken through the year have complied with the procedures and limits set out in the Council's Treasury Management Practices and Treasury Strategy. In addition, all investments made have been within the limits set in the approved counterparty list. No institutions, in which investments were made, showed any difficulty in repaying investments and interest in full during the year.

12.2 Appendix B shows the Prudential Indicators approved by Council as part of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 (revised estimate) Treasury Strategies compared with the actual figures for 2019/20. In summary, during 2019/20 treasury activities have been within the prudential and treasury limits set in the Treasury Strategy.

### **List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

Council, February 2019, Treasury Strategy 2019/20.

Council, December 2019, Treasury Strategy 2019/20 Mid-Year Review.

Council, February 2020, Treasury Strategy 2020/21.

Cabinet, September 2019, Treasury Management Update Quarter 1 2019/20.

Cabinet, December 2019, Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2019/20.

Cabinet, February 2020, Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2019/20.

Cabinet, July 2020, Treasury Management Update Quarter 4 2019/20.

### **Cabinet Member:**

David Minnery, Portfolio Holder for Finance

### **Local Member**

N/A

### **Appendices**

A. Debt Maturity Profile as at 31 March 2020

B. Prudential Indicators 2019/20