##### APPENDIX A

##### OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

##### Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 to 2027/28

1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Treasury Management is the management of cash flows, banking, money market and capital market transactions; the management of the associated risks, and the pursuit of the optimum performance or return consistent with those risks. The treasury management service is an important part of the overall financial management of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (Commissioner) affairs. The Commissioner is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Commissioner’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 Commissioner’s capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Commissioner, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the Commissioner can meet their capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses. On occasion, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet the Commissioner’s risk or cost objectives.
   2. The Commissioner’s treasury activities are strictly regulated by statutory requirements and a professional code of practice, the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. Under the Code, the Commissioner is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.
   3. The Prudential Code 2017 introduced a new requirement for local authorities (including Commissioners) to produce a Capital Strategy. It is for local authorities to decide whether to include their treasury management strategy and annual investment strategy as part of a Capital Strategy or to complete separately. Since the first year of operation, the Commissioner has elected to complete a separate four-year Capital Strategy which was completed at the conclusion of the budget setting process in February 2022 and approved before the commencement of the 2022/23 financial year. The Capital Strategy will next be updated for the commencement of the 2025/26 financial year.
   4. The adoption of a Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26, prior to the start of the financial year, is the first of the three reporting requirements in respect of that year. This will be followed in due course by a mid-year Treasury Management report and an Annual Treasury Management Report before 30th September 2026, providing a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators.
   5. The Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 covers two main areas:

**Capital Issues**

1. The capital plans and the prudential indicators; and
2. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) strategy.

**Treasury Management Issues**

1. Debt and investment projections;
2. Limits on borrowing activity;
3. The expected movement in interest rates;
4. Borrowing and investment strategies;
5. Treasury performance indicators; and
6. Specific limits on treasury activities.
7. **CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2025/26 to 2027/28**
   1. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Commissioner to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code, which was updated in 2021, and produce prudential indicators. Each indicator either summarises the expected capital activity or introduces limits upon that activity, and reflects the outcome of the underlying capital appraisal systems. This document updates currently approved indicators.
   2. Within this overall prudential framework there is an impact on the Commissioner’s treasury management activity, as it will directly impact on borrowing or investment activity.
   3. **Capital Expenditure Plans**
      1. The capital expenditure plans are summarised below and this forms the first of the prudential indicators. Currently, there is no grant available from the Government for capital expenditure, so any decisions by the Commissioner will be considered unsupported capital expenditure.
      2. This unsupported capital expenditure needs to have regard to:
8. Service objectives (e.g. strategic planning);
9. Stewardship of assets (e.g. asset management planning);
10. Value for money (e.g. option appraisal);
11. Prudence and sustainability (e.g. implications for external borrowing and whole life costing);
12. Affordability (e.g. implications for the council tax); and
13. Practicality (e.g. the achievability of longer term plans).
    * 1. The revenue consequences of capital expenditure, particularly the unsupported capital expenditure, will need to be paid for from the Commissioner’s own resources.
      2. This capital expenditure can be paid for immediately (by applying capital resources such as capital receipts, capital grants, earmarked reserves (known as committed funds) or revenue resources), but if these resources are insufficient any residual capital expenditure will add to the Commissioner’s borrowing need.
      3. A key risk to the plans, are that the level of Government support has been estimated and could therefore be subject to change.
      4. The Commissioner is asked to approve the following summary capital expenditure projections which is the first prudential indicator:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **First Prudential Indicator - Estimates of Capital Expenditure** | | | | | |
|  | **2024/25** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
|  | **Original** | **Revised** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** |
|  | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Capital Expenditure** | **19,751** | **17,496** | **22,458** | **8,885** | **7,810** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Financed by: |  |  |  |  |  |
| Capital Receipts | 0 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Capital Grants and PIF Grants | 178 | 93 | 178 | 0 | 0 |
| Reserves | 0 | 0 | 72 | 0 | 660 |
| Revenue | 7,573 | 10,379 | 7,208 | 7,385 | 7,150 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Net Financing Need for the Year** | **12,000** | **7,000** | **15,000** | **1,500** | **0** |

2.3.7 The above financing need excludes other long-term liabilities, leasing arrangements which already include borrowing instruments. The table above identifies the financial requirements for the delivery of the Commissioner’s current Estate Strategy, which includes the continued development of a new Joint Firearms Range in collaboration with South Wales Police and Dyfed Powys Police, and investment in the current estate. During 2025/26, the Capital Programme will be funded from a combination of grant, revenue contributions to capital, and committed funds in addition to borrowing.

* 1. **The Commissioner’s Borrowing Need (the Capital Financing Requirement)**

2.4.1The second prudential indicator is the Commissioner’s Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) which is simply the total outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is a measure of the Commissioner’s underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure in the table in paragraph 2.3.6 above which has not immediately been paid for will increase the CFR.

2.4.2The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. lease arrangements) brought onto the balance sheet. Whilst this increases the CFR, and therefore the Commissioner’s borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a borrowing facility and so the Commissioner is not required to borrow separately for these schemes.

2.4.3 The Commissioner is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Second Prudential Indicator - the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)** | | | | | |
|  | **2024/25** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
|  | **Original** | **Revised** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** |
|  | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** |
| **Opening CFR** | 0 | 0 | 8,942 | 24,053 | 26,296 |
| Capital Spend | 19,751 | 17,496 | 22,458 | 8,885 | 7,810 |
| Movement In finance lease liability | 1,117 | 1,942 | (504) | (532) | (516) |
| Resources Used | (7,751) | (10,496) | (7,458) | (7,385) | (7,810) |
| MRP | 0 | 0 | 615 | 1,275 | 1,391 |
| **Closing CFR** | **13,117** | **8,942** | **24,053** | **26,296** | **27,171** |

2.4.4 The table above shows the impact of the implementation of IFRS 16 with a net increase in the financial lease liability of £1,942k. This represents the initial recognition of £2,411k as a finance lease liability under IFRS 16 plus a decrease due to the in-year lease payments. The above figures were estimates calculated with information available at the 15th November 2024 and may be subject to change.

2.4.5 In line with the latest MRP guidance, the Commissioner will be required to make a MRP in 2025/26. The Commissioner’s policy on this matter is therefore at section 3 below.

**3. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY**

3.1The Commissioner is required to recognise an element of outstanding capital borrowing each year through a revenue charge known as the MRP. The MRP is calculated to match the repayment of borrowing over the life of the assets, for which debt has been raised and is charged in the following year after the asset becomes operational. It is also permissible to pay an additional amount known as a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP). Under Welsh Government (WG) Regulations the Commissioner has to approve an MRP Statement in advance of each year. The Commissioner is recommended to adopt the following MRP policy for 2025/26:

(i) For all capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008 and all supported capital expenditure incurred since that date or in the future, the MRP policy will be 4% of the CFR. This is consistent with the practice in place prior to the current regulations;

(ii) For all unsupported borrowing since 1st April 2008 and in the future, the asset life method will be used, i.e., the amount borrowed will be divided by the life of the asset; and

(iii) MRP related to IFRS16 will be equivalent to the amount of principle paid against the liability in the preceding year.

**4. THE USE OF THE COMMISSIONER’S RESOURCES AND INVESTMENT POSITION**

4.1 The application of resources (capital receipts, committed funds, etc.) will have an on-going impact on investments. Detailed below are estimates of the year-end balances for each resource and anticipated day to day cash flow balances.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Investment Position - Year end Resources** | | | | | |
|  | 2024/25 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
|  | Original | Revised | Estimate | Estimate | Estimate |
|  | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Police Fund | 5,000 | 5,500 | 5,500 | 5,500 | 5,500 |
| Earmarked Reserves | 8,356 | 14,596 | 11,196 | 10,106 | 9,667 |
| Provisions | 2,206 | 1,482 | 1,482 | 1,482 | 1,482 |
| **Total Core Funds** | **15,562** | **21,578** | **18,178** | **17,088** | **16,649** |
| Working Capital | (4,730) | (2,955) | (2,955) | (2,955) | (2,955) |
| **Expected Investments** | **10,832** | **18,623** | **15,223** | **14,133** | **13,694** |

\*Working capital balances shown are estimated year end; these may be higher mid-year.

### 5. AFFORDABILITY PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

5.1 The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators. Prudential indicators are also required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. The Commissioner is asked to approve the third and fourth prudential indicators, which assess affordability in terms of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Commissioner’s overall finances.

5.2 The third prudential indicator is the ratio of net financing costs (financing income less finance interest expense) to net revenue stream. This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Third Prudential Indicator - Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream** | | | | | |
|  | **2024/25** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
|  | **Original** | **Revised** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** |
|  | **%** | **%** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| Ratio | (0.05%) | (0.91%) | 0.11% | 0.51% | 0.51% |

* 1. The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in the budget report. The ratio turns positive in 2025/26 as interest and MRP expense will be payable on newly and existing borrowed debt, at this point forecast interest expense will be greater than interest income.
  2. The fourth prudential indicator identifies the increased revenue costs associated with the approved three year Capital Programme and expresses these in terms of the increase in Band D Council Tax Precept. The assumptions are based on the budget, but will invariably include some estimates, such as the level of Government support, which is not published over a three year period.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Fourth Prudential Indicator - Incremental Increase in Council Tax Precept** | | | |
|  | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
|  | **Estimate** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** |
|  | **£** | **£** | **£** |
| Increase | **4.20** | **5.98** | **6.14** |

**6. BORROWING**

6.1 The capital expenditure plans are set out in Section 2.3.6. The treasury management function ensures that the cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital expenditure requirements. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of approporiate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions and the annual investment strategy.

* 1. Current borrowing portfolio position

The current treasury borrowing position at 31st October 2024, with forward projections, are summarised below. The below table shows the actual and forecasted external debt (the treasury management operations), against the future underlying capital borrowing need (the CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Borrowing Position** | | | | | |
|  | 2024/25 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
|  | Original | Revised | Estimate | Estimate | Estimate |
|  | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **External Debt** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Debt at 1st April | 0 | 0 | 7,000 | 15,000 | 6,500 |
| New borrowing for Capital Spend | 12,000 | 7,000 | 15,000 | 1,500 |  |
| Repayment of existing Debt |  |  | (7,000) | (10,000) | (6,500) |
| Other Long Term Liabilities (Finance Lease Liability - IFRS16) at 1st April | 1,116 | 2,411 | 1,942 | 1,438 | 906 |
| Expected Change in OLTL | (267) | (469) | (504) | (532) | (516) |
| **Gross Debt at 31st March** | **12,849** | **8,942** | **16,438** | **7,406** | **390** |
| Capital Financing Requirement at 31st March | 12,849 | 8,942 | 24,053 | 26,296 | 27,171 |
| **Under/(Over) Borrowing** | **0** | **0** | **7,615** | **18,890** | **26,781** |

* 1. The related impact of the above movements on the revenue budget is shown below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Impact on Revenue Budgets** | | | | | |
|  | **2024/25** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
|  | **Original** | **Revised** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** |
|  | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** |
| **Revenue Budget Heading** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interest on Borrowing | 668 | 73 | 339 | 92 | 0 |
| Investment Income | (750) | (1,646) | (750) | (424) | (411) |
| **Net Police Fund Borrowing Cost** | **(82)** | **(1,573)** | **(411)** | **(332)** | **(411)** |

**7. LIMITS ON BORROWING ACTIVITY**

7.1 Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Commissioner operates activities within well-defined limits. For the first of these the Commissioner needs to ensure that 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 2025/26 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 following table is relevant for this indicator.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Limits on Borrowing Activity - Year End Position** | | | | | |
|  | **2024/25** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
|  | **Original** | **Revised** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** |
|  | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Gross Debt** | **12,849** | **8,942** | **16,438** | **7,406** | **390** |
| Investments | (10,832) | (18,623) | (15,223) | (14,133) | (13,694) |
| Net Borrowing | 2,017 | (9,681) | 1,215 | (6,727) | (13,304) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Capital Financing Requirement** | **12,849** | **8,942** | **24,053** | **26,296** | **27,171** |
| **Gross Debt <= CFR** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **Yes** |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Operational Boundary for Debt at 1st April** | | | | | |
|  | **2024/25** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
|  | **Original** | **Revised** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** |
|  | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Debt | 12,000 | 7,000 | 15,000 | 6,500 | 0 |
| Other Long Term Liabilities | 1,116 | 1,942 | 1,438 | 906 | 390 |
| **Net Borrowing** | 13,116 | 8,942 | 16,438 | 7,406 | 390 |

7.3 A further key prudential indicator representing a control on the overall level of borrowing is the Authorised Limit for External Debt. This is calculated on a 5% mark up on the operational boundary. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited and this limit needs to be set or revised by the Commissioner. 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 plans of all Local Authorities and Commissioners, or those of a specific Authority or Commissioner, although no control has yet been exercised. The Commissioner is asked to approve the following Authorised Limit:

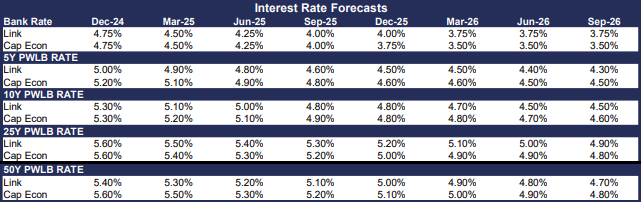
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Authorised Limit for Debt at 1st April** | | | | | |
|  | **2024/25** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
|  | **Original** | **Revised** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** | **Estimate** |
|  | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** | **£000's** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Debt | 12,600 | 7,350 | 15,750 | 6,825 | 0 |
| Other Long Term Liabilities | 1,116 | 1,942 | 1,438 | 906 | 390 |
| Working Capital Requirement | (5,491) | (2,955) | (2,955) | (2,955) | (2,955) |
| **Authorised Limit** | **8,225** | **6,337** | **14,233** | **4,776** | **(2,565)** |

7.4 Risks associated with any advance borrowing activity will be subject to appraisal in advance and subsequent reporting through the mid-year or annual reporting mechanism.

7.5 The working capital requirement for 2025/26 onwards is a snap-shot based on the 2024/25 actuals but is subject to change as cash flows from debtors and creditors come in/out, respectively, during the financial year. As such, the Commissioner will review the Authorised Limit prior to arranging any borrowing to ensure that the authorised Limit reflects current information and, if necessary, approve any amendments.

**8. PROSPECTS FOR INTEREST RATES**

8.1 The Commissioner uses Link Asset Services as treasury management advisors and part of their service is to provide a view on the prospects for interest rates and economic growth. The following table gives the Link Asset Services central view on the prospects for interest rates.



8.2 The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted (8:1) to reduce the Bank Rate from 5.00% to 4.75% during the November 2024 meeeting. In the accompanying statement, the MPC repeated the previously held position that "...a gradual approach to removing policy restraint remains appropriate." While it noted that there had been continued “…progress in disinflation”, because of the Autumn Budget, its revised forecasts added 0.75% to GDP expectations in a year’s time and due to a resulting lowering of space capacity, also added 0.5% to its inflation outlook. It also noted that it expected inflation to rise from 1.7% in September to 2.5% by the close of the year, as weaker energy prices fall out of calculations. At the subsequent press conference, Governor Bailey was quick to push back against questions on the US election, simply stating that the MPC “…respond to announced policies…” not to “…speculation…” and “…let’s see what happens.” Given the forecasts show CPI inflation to be below 2% in three years’ time, it tallies with broadly held expectations that rates will fall from here. However, the tone of the decision likely means that the pace will be gradual. Market sentiment regards the future policy path is little changed following the November decision. Participants firmly believe that December will see no change, with the next move pencilled in for the first quarter of 2025, with sentiment now more favouring a move in March. Thereafter, forecasts for cuts remain trimmed compared to where they were at the start of October, with just one move per quarter expected, which would take Bank Rate to 4.25% by next summer.

8.3 The UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) fell to a weaker than expected 50.3 in October from 51.5 in September. This represented a second consecutive fall in the pace of expansion, and the lowest level in six months. Details showed that new orders dropped significantly, reflecting a sharp decline in overseas orders and rising concerns about the Autumn Budget sowed doubts about near-term domestic economic growth prospects. On the price front, input elements increased at a slower pace, while output charges rose significantly. Meanwhile, the UK Services PMI dropped to 51.8 in October from 52.4 in September in its preliminary reading, missing market expectations of an unchanged reading. This marked the slowest expansion in the sector since June. Despite this, it was the sharpest growth in new export sales since March 2023. Combined, the preliminary reading of the UK Composite PMI headline rate fell to 51.7 in October from 52.6 in the previous month, below market expectations of 52.6. Separately, the UK Construction PMI jumped to 57.2 in September from 53.6 in August (it is released on a one-month lag to other sector reports), above market expectations of 53.1. Despite the more unsettled backdrop, construction demand experienced a fresh rebound in the UK, with all three major subsectors – civil engineering, commercial building, and housebuilding – all improving over the month. Activity was supported by lower interest rates, domestic economic stability, and strong pipelines of infrastructure work.

8.4 The UK economy expanded by 0.2% in August after stalling for two consecutive months, matching market expectations. Services output rose by 0.1%, industrial production grew by 0.5% (bouncing back from a downwardly revised 0.7% fall in July), and construction output also picked up by 0.4%. Elsewhere, the UK’s trade deficit narrowed to £0.96 billion in August, compared to a downwardly revised £4.71 billion in July.

8.4 The UK recorded a 373k rise in jobs in the three months to August, following the 265k increase in the previous period and surpassing market forecasts of a 250k rise. This marked the largest quarterly growth since 1971 and helped pull the unemployment rate down from 4.1% to 4%. Meanwhile, average weekly earnings (including bonuses) increased 3.8% year on year in the three months to August, compared to the upwardly revised 4.1% rise in the previous period.

8.5 Chancellor Rachel Reeves presented the Autumn Budget at the close of the month, with the accompanying Office for Budget Responsibility report noting that it would raise growth and inflation in the near-term, but that higher rates would then weigh on growth through the remainder of the current five-year Parliament. The proposals would loosen fiscal policy relative to previous plans but also included one of the largest tax raises in history, to help support day-to-day spending and the rebuilding of public services. This alongside longer-term investment plans would be supported by an additional £142bn of additional borrowing during the current Parliamentary session.

8.5 The US economy added a larger than expected 254k jobs in September, significantly higher than an upwardly revised 159k in the previous month and the strongest job growth in six months. Meanwhile, the economy expanded an annualised 2.8% in Q3, slightly below both market forecasts and the level seen in Q2. Finally, inflation fell for a sixth consecutive month to 2.4% in September, from 2.5% in August, but this was above market expectations.

8.6 Having fallen to 1.7% in September from 2.2% in August, the Eurozone’s inflation rate then bounced to 2.0% according to initial estimates released at the close of the month. This latest reading was above market forecasts as the anticipated decline in energy prices proved less than expected. Meanwhile, the core rate, excluding food and energy prices, remained at 2.7%, modestly ahead of market expectations for a slight fall. GDP in the bloc expanded 0.4% in the three months to September, the strongest growth rate in two years, following a 0.2% increase in Q2. Across the key economies France, Spain and surprisingly Germany all expanded, while Italy’s economy stalled. Away from data releases, the European Central Bank cut its three key interest rates by 25 basis points at its mid-month meeting. The dovish tone to the accompanying press conference did see market expectations push towards a 50 basis points move in December. However, these views were reined in on the back of the Q3 growth and latest inflation figures.

8.7 Q3 Japanese growth came in much as markets had expected, rising just 0.2% on the quarter, while Q2 figures were revised down from 0.7% to 0.5%. However, of some encouragement was the details showing that consumer spending rose by 0.9% on the quarter, helping to offset falls in both private and public investment, while net exports provided a 0.3% drag on a jump in imports, which were reflective of consumption strength. Although the figures suggest that the central bank's growth forecast for the current financial year (0.6%) is optimistic, analysts still expect it to hike rates again next month. In China, industrial production weakened in October, confounding forecasts of a tick higher, with underlying figures suggesting the fall back was due entirely to a drop in utilities', which could have been weather-related. On a more positive note, retail sales bounced by more than expected, and with further stimulus to bear, indications are that momentum will be regained in the final quarter of the year. The medium term outlook, however, is less certain, given the prospect of US tariff hikes on Chinese goods from the Trump administration.

**9. BORROWING STRATEGY 2025/26 – 2027/28**

9.1 The uncertainty over future interest rates increases the risks associated with treasury activity. Prospective investment returns have decreased in the latter part of 2024/25 due to the decreasing amount of capital to invest and a reduction in interest rates. As a result, the Commissioner will continue a cautious approach to treasury strategy.

9.2 The Chief Finance Officer (Commissioner) (Group Section 151 Officer), 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 shown in the forecast above. It is likely that shorter term fixed rates may provide lower cost opportunities in the short/medium term.

9.3 The Commissioner is currently maintaining a neutral-borrowing position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the CFR), has been fully matched with loan debt. During 2024/25 it is predicted there will be debt as the CFR exceeds the internal resources utilised funding the Capital Programme.

9.4 External debt will only be sought once the committed funds earmarked for capital expenditure have been utilised. In future years, the under-borrowing position is a direct impact of the MRP charge reducing the CFR and the timing of repayment of loans.

**10. INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2025/26 – 2027/28**

10.1 **Key Objectives** –The Commissioner’s primary investment strategy objectives are, firstly, safeguarding the re-payment of the principal and interest of their investments on time and, secondly, ensuring adequate liquidity. The investment return is an important third objective, but not as important as the first two objectives. Following the economic background outlined above, the current investment climate has one over-riding risk consideration; that of counterparty security risk. The changes to the CIFPA Treasury Management (TM) Code 2021 has incorporated environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into Treasury Management Practice 1 as follows:

“The organisation’s credit and counterparty policies should set out its policy and practices relating to ESG considerations. This is a developing area, and it is not implied that the organisation’s ESG policy will currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at individual investment level.”

To satisfy the TM Code 2021 recommendation the Police and Crime Commissioner will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues in its treasury management policies when investing. ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria will not be included until further clarification is provided by CIPFA .

10.2 **Risk Benchmarking** – A development in the revised 2011 Codes and the Welsh Government Investment Guidance is the consideration and approval of security and liquidity benchmarks. Yield benchmarks are currently widely used to assess investment performance. Discrete security and liquidity benchmarks are new requirements in the revised Code, although the application of these is more subjective in nature.

* 1. These benchmarks are simple guides (not limits) and so may be breached from time to time, depending on movements in interest rates and counterparty criteria. The purpose of the benchmark is that officers will monitor the current and trend position and amend the operational strategy to manage risk as conditions change. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported, with supporting reasons in the Mid-Year or Annual Report.
  2. **Security** – The Commissioner’s maximum security risk benchmark for the current portfolio, when compared to these historic default tables, is:

1. 0.006% historic risk of default when compared to the whole portfolio**.**
   1. **Liquidity** – In respect of this area the Commissioner seeks to maintain:
2. Liquid short term deposits of at least £2m available with a week’s notice; and
3. Weighted Average Life of investments with banks between 3 and 12 months; and
4. Note that no overdraft facility is held at Lloyds bank.
   1. **Yield** – Local measures of yield benchmarks are:
5. Investments – Internal returns compared to the average Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) rate. The transition to SONIA is due to the phasing out of LIBOR, which took place on the 31st December 2021.
   1. The security benchmark for each individual year is:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 year | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years |
| Maximum | 0.006% | 0.006% | Not applicable | Not  Applicable | Not Applicable |

Note: This benchmark is an average risk of default measure and would not constitute an expectation of loss against a particular investment.

* 1. **Investment Counterparty Selection Criteria** –The primary principle governing the Commissioner’s investment criteria is the security of their investments, although the yield or return on the investment is also a key consideration. The Commissioner will also consider ESG factors when considering counterparties. The Commissioner will not use non-specified investments i.e. investments exceeding 1 year 364 days. The Commissioner will ensure:

1. A policy covering types of investment, criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security. This is set out in the Specified Investment (investments not exceeding 1 year 364 days) sections below; and
2. Sufficient liquidity in investments. For this purpose procedures will be set out for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These procedures also apply to the prudential indicators covering the maximum principal sums invested.
   1. The Chief Finance Officer (Chief Constable) will maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the following criteria. This criteria is separate from that which chooses Specified and Non-Specified Investments, as it provides an overall pool of counterparties considered high quality that the Commissioner may use rather than defining what their investments are.

* 1. The rating criteria uses the lowest common denominator method of selecting counterparties and applying limits. This means that the application of the Commissioner’s minimum criteria will apply to the lowest available rating for any institution. For instance if an institution is rated by two agencies, one meets the Commissioner’s criteria, the other does not, the institution will fall outside the lending criteria. This is in compliance with a CIPFA Treasury Management Panel recommendation in March 2009 and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.
  2. Credit rating information is supplied by the Commissioner’s treasury consultants on all active counterparties that comply with the criteria below. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria would be omitted from the counterparty (dealing) list. Any rating changes, rating watches (notification of a likely change), rating outlooks (notification of a possible longer term change) are provided to officers almost immediately after they occur and this information is considered before dealing. For instance a negative rating watch applying to a counterparty at the minimum of the Commissioner’s criteria will be suspended from use, with all others being reviewed in light of market conditions.
  3. The Commissioner only uses the following high credit quality counterparties:

1. UK banks and banks domiciled in a country other than the UK which has a minimum Sovereign long term rating of AAA, which have at least the following Fitch, Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s ratings (where rated):
   * + Short Term – F1/A1/P1;
     + Long Term – A;
2. Part-nationalised UK banks – Lloyds Banking Group and Royal Bank of Scotland. These banks can be included if they continue to be part-nationalised or they meet the ratings in Banks above;
3. Building Societies which:
   * + Meet the ratings for banks outlined above; or
     + Have assets in excess of £1bn;
4. Money Market Funds – AAA;
5. UK Government (including gilts and the DMADF (see below));
6. Local Authorities;
7. Property Funds – These funds allow the Commissioner to diversify

into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments; Property Funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. Their value changes with market prices, so will be considered for longer investment periods; and

(viii) Supranational institutions.

* 1. Due care will be taken to consider the country, group and sector exposure

of the Commissioner’s investments. In part, the country selection will be chosen by the credit rating of the Sovereign state. In addition:

1. No more than £3m will be placed with any single non-UK country at any time;
2. Limits in place above will apply to Group companies; and
3. Sector limits will be monitored regularly for appropriateness.
   1. Additional requirements under the Code of Practice now require the Commissioner to supplement credit rating information. Whilst the above criteria relies primarily on the application of credit ratings to provide a pool of appropriate counterparties for officers to use, additional operational market information will be applied before making any specific investment decision from the agreed pool of counterparties. This additional market information (for example Credit Default Swaps, negative rating watches/ outlooks) will be applied to compare the relative security of differing investment counterparties.
   2. The time and monetary limits for institutions on the Commissioner’s Counterparty List are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fitch  (or equivalent) | Money Limit | Time Limit |
| UK Banks (Groups) | *P1/F1/A1* | £10m | <365days |
| Non UK Banks (Groups) | *P1/F1/A1* | £5m | <365days |
| Building Societies | *P1/F1/A1* | £5m | <365days |
| Money Market Funds | AAA | £5m | <365days |
| Local Authorities | - | £15m | <2 years |
| UK DMO | - | None | <365days |
| Property Fund |  | £5m | <5 years |
| Guaranteed Organisations | - | £3m\* | <365days |

*\*Guaranteed institutions will need to be restricted to the terms of the guarantee.*

* 1. In the normal course of the Commissioner’s cash flow operations it is expected that only Specified Investments will be utilised.
  2. **The criteria for choosing counterparties set out above provide a sound approach to investment in ‘normal’ market circumstances. However, under exceptional market conditions the Chief Finance Officer (Commissioner) may, after consulting the Commissioner, temporarily restrict further investment activity to those counterparties considered of higher credit quality than the minimum criteria set out for approval. These restrictions will remain in place until the banking system returns to ‘normal’ conditions. Similarly the time periods for investments may be restricted.** Examples of these restrictions would be the greater use of the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF – a Government body which accepts local authority deposits), Money Market Funds, guaranteed deposit facilities and strongly rated institutions offered support by the UK Government. The credit criteria have been amended to reflect these facilities.
  3. Additionally, the Commissioner reserves the right to continue to hold an investment if the institutions credit rating is down-graded during the investment period if he is satisfied that the risks associated with the institution and investment are able to be managed and/or mitigated appropriately.
  4. **Banking Arrangements**

The Commissioner’s banker is Lloyds Bank, the contract is due to expire on 31st March 2025. The contract allows three extensions, the second extension has been approved and the next extension is due on the 1st April 2025.

11. SENSITIVITY TO INTEREST RATE MOVEMENTS

* 1. The Commissioner is required to disclose in the accounts the impact of risks on treasury management activity. Whilst most of the risks facing the treasury management service are addressed elsewhere in this report (credit risk, liquidity risk, market risk, maturity profile risk), the impact of interest rate risk is discussed but not quantified. The table below highlights the estimated impact of a 1% increase/decrease in all interest rates to the estimated treasury management costs/income for next year. That element of the debt and investment portfolios which are of a longer term, fixed interest rate nature will not be affected by interest rate changes.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sensitivity to Interest Rate Movements** | | |
|  | **2025/26** | **2025/26** |
|  | **Estimated** | **Estimated** |
|  | **+1%** | **-1%** |
|  | **£000's** | **£000's** |
| Interest on Borrowing | 70 | (70) |
| Investment Income | 150 | (150) |

12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - LIMITS ON ACTIVITY

12.1 There are four further treasury activity limits, which were previously prudential indicators. The purpose of these is to contain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of an adverse movement in interest rates. The Commissioner approves these limits.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** |
| **Interest rate Exposures** | | | |
|  | **Upper** | **Upper** | **Upper** |
| **Limits on fixed interest rates based on net debt** | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| **Limits on variable interest rates based on net debt** | 35% | 35% | 35% |
| **Maturity Structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2024/25** | | | |
|  | | **Lower** | **Upper** |
| Under 12 months | | 0% | 20% |
| 12 months to 2 years | | 0% | 20% |
| 2 years to 5 years | | 0% | 20% |
| 5 years to 10 years | | 0% | 20% |
| 10 years and above | | 20% | 90% |
| **Maximum principal sums invested > 364 days** | | | |
| Principal sums invested > 364 days | £m  20 | £m  20 | £m  20 |

**13. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

* 1. The Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the Commissioner to set performance indicators to assess the adequacy of the treasury function over the year. These are distinct historic indicators, as opposed to the prudential indicators, which are predominantly forward looking. Performance indicators to be used for the treasury function are:

1. Debt – Borrowing - Average rate of borrowing for the year compared to PWLB rates; and
2. Investments – Internal returns compared with the average SONIA rate.

The results of these indicators will be reported in the Treasury Annual Report.

**14. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ADVISERS**

* 1. The Commissioner uses Link Asset Services as treasury management advisors. The company provides a range of services which include:

1. Technical support on treasury matters, capital finance issues and code compliance;
2. Economic and interest rate analysis;
3. Debt services which includes advice on the timing of borrowing;
4. Debt rescheduling advice surrounding the existing portfolio;
5. Generic investment advice on interest rates, timing and investment instruments; and
6. Credit ratings/market information service, comprising the three main credit rating agencies.
   1. Whilst the advisers provide support to the internal treasury function, under current market rules and the CIPFA Code of Practice the final decision on treasury matters remains with the Commissioner.

**15. TREASURY MANAGEMENT TRAINING**

15.1 Officer training needs are assessed on appointment, as part of the Personal Development Review (PDR) process and when legislation changes are announced. Officers attend seminars arranged by Link Asset Services and other organisations. Staff within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Joint Audit Committee members also receive periodic Treasury Management training.