

<b>OPCC FINANCE MEETING</b>	<b>27 MARCH 2025</b>
<b>TREASURY POLICY STATEMENT &amp; TREASURY STRATEGY 2025/26 TO 2028/29</b>	
<b>REPORT OF: T/HEAD OF FINANCE (CFO)</b>	

## **I PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To review and adopt the attached four-year Treasury Management Policy Statement and Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29.
- 1.2 The Treasury Management Policy Statement and Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29 was considered and scrutinised by the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) at its meeting on 24 February 2025. At the meeting JIAC recommended the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Strategy to be presented to the Police and Crime Commissioner for adoption.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Commissioner is recommended to:
  - I. Adopt the attached four-year Treasury Policy Statement and Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has produced the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services (the Code) which represents best practice in Treasury Management. By adopting the attached Treasury Policy Statement and Strategy for 2025/26 to 2028/29 the Commissioner contributes towards achieving best practice.
- 3.2 Part I of the Local Government Act 2003 specifies the powers of local authorities to borrow for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment or for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs. For the purpose of the Local Government Act 2003 Police and Crime Commissioners are classified as local authorities. The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities sets out a range of prudential and treasury indicators that must be calculated to ensure borrowing is affordable, prudent, and sustainable. The Prudential Code also refers to the need for a clear and integrated Treasury Strategy.
- 3.3 In addition, under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2003, local authorities are required to have regard to the DLUHC's Guidance on Local Government Investments. This document stipulates the requirement for an annual investment strategy to be integrated into the Commissioner's Treasury Strategy.

## **4. TREASURY POLICY AND TREASURY STRATEGY**

- 4.1 The Treasury Policy 2025/26 to 2028/29 is set out in Appendix I and details the overarching approach to the provision of Treasury Management which includes the Treasury Strategy, Investment Strategy, and appropriate delegations.

- 4.2 The Treasury Strategy for 2025/26 to 2028/29 covers the specific activities proposed for the next four years in relation to both borrowing and investments and ensures a wide range of advice is taken to maintain and preserve all principal sums, whilst obtaining a reasonable rate of return, and that the most appropriate borrowing is undertaken. The primary objective of the investment strategy is to maintain the security of investments at all times. The Strategy is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 4.3 The Treasury Strategy complies with the requirements of the Code, the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 4.4 The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and CIPFA have extended the meaning of ‘investments’ to include both financial and non-financial investments. This report deals solely with treasury (financial) investments, (as managed by the treasury management team). Non-financial investments are essentially the purchase of income yielding assets. The Commissioner has no non-financial investments.
- 4.5 In addition, there are further Appendices 3 to 8, which set out the current interest rate forecasts, Prudential Treasury Indicators, Specified Investments, Maximum Maturity Periods, and details of foreign countries that could be invested with, all of which underpin the core approach detailed in the Strategy.

## 5 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 5.1 The following documents have been used in preparation of the report:
- Local Government Act 2003.
  - DLUHC Guidance on Local Government Investments.
  - CIPFA’s Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2021.
  - CIPFA’s Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services 2021.
  - The approved Treasury Management Practice Statements as used for day-to-day management purposes.
  - Link Group Treasury Management Strategy update 2024/25.

## 6 CONSIDERATIONS

<b>Freedom of Information</b>	NON-EXEMPT
<b>Consultation</b>	Yes
Consultation has taken place with external treasury advisers MUFG.	
<b>Resource</b>	Yes
There are no financial implications directly arising from the contents of this report. Any income and expenditure within the scope of the report is already included in the agreed revenue budget.	
<b>Equality</b>	No
<b>Legal</b>	No
<b>Risk</b>	Yes

The Treasury Policy and Strategy recommended for approval have been prepared with the aim of maintaining the security and liquidity of investments to ensure that the Commissioner's principal sums are safeguarded. Maximising income is considered secondary to this main aim.

<b>Communication</b>	No
<b>Evaluation</b>	No

## Treasury Policy 2025/26 to 2028/29

### I. Introduction

1.1 The Commissioner has adopted the key recommendations of CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the Code) and maintains:

- A Treasury Management Policy Statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of our treasury management activities.
- Suitable Treasury Management Practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the policies and objectives are carried out, and prescribing how the activities will be managed and controlled.

1.2 CIPFA defines Treasury Management as:

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

1.3 In 2021/22 CIPFA issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes (2021 Editions). Following the soft introduction of the Codes for 2022/23, Local Authorities were expected to fully implement the required reporting changes within their TMSS/AIS reports from 2023/24.

1.4 The main objective of the 2021 Code changes (and the previous 2017 Codes) was to respond to the major expansion of local authority investment activity over recent years into commercial activity and the purchase of non-financial investments, particularly property.

1.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria has not engaged in any commercial investments and has no non-treasury investments.

1.6 The Commissioner's Treasury Policy Statement and Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29 is fully compliant with the 2021 Code editions.

1.7 The CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management Codes require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy report. The Capital Strategy will be approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2028/29 approval process and will include the approval of prudential indicators set for 2025/26.

1.8 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria has delegated responsibility to the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) for the treasury management function and the undertaking of investment and borrowing on behalf of the Commissioner, ensuring that all activities comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.

### 2. Treasury Strategy

2.1 The Commissioner regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the primary 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 the risk implications for the Commissioner.

2.2 The Treasury Strategy encompasses the requirements of CIPFA's Treasury Management Code of Practice, CIPFA's Prudential Code and the DLUHC's Guidance on Local Government

Investments. This document stipulates the requirement for an annual investment strategy to be integrated into the Commissioner's Treasury Strategy Statement.

2.3 The Treasury Strategy covers the following:

- a) Treasury limits in force which will limit the treasury risk and activities of the Commissioner, including prudential and treasury indicators.
- b) Prospects for interest rates.
- c) The borrowing strategy.
- d) Debt rescheduling.
- e) Policy on borrowing in advance of need.
- f) Management of interest rate exposure.
- g) The investment strategy.
- h) Creditworthiness policy.
- i) The policy on the use of external service providers.

2.4 The strategy for 2025/26 to 2028/29 is attached at Appendix 2.

### **3. Prudential and Treasury Indicators**

3.1 Under Part I of the Local Government Act 2003 the Commissioner may borrow money:

- a) For any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment; or
- b) For the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs.

3.2 Under the requirements of the Prudential Code and Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services the following indicators have been adopted for 2025/26:

- Compliance with the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- Calculations of:
  - Authorised limit.
  - Operational boundary.
  - Actual external debt.
  - Maturity structure of borrowing.
  - Upper limits for principal sums invested for periods of over 365 days.
  - Gross debt and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).
  - Debt liability benchmark.

3.3 The prudential indicators are attached to the Treasury Strategy at Appendix 4. These indicators have been finalised and approved by the Commissioner as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2028/29 and Capital Strategy approval process.

3.4 Under the Prudential Framework (the "Framework"), in place since 2004, local authorities have wide freedoms to borrow and invest without seeking the government's prior approval. The Framework includes four statutory codes that set out best practice and the behaviours the government expects local authorities to demonstrate to meet the objectives of the Framework. Under statute, the Commissioner must have regard to these codes.

3.5 The duty to make Minimum Revenue Provision (“MRP”) is an important component of the Framework. Where local authorities finance capital expenditure with debt, they must set aside an amount of money each year, through a charge to their revenue budget, to ensure that debt can be repaid. Therefore, in deciding whether any capital expenditure is affordable, an authority must consider whether it can meet the cost of the associated MRP charged within an affordable budget. The amount of MRP is determined with respect to a local authority’s Capital Financing Requirement (“CFR”). Local authorities have flexibility in how they calculate MRP, providing the amount is ‘prudent’.

3.6 The Annual MRP statement for 2025/26 is included at Appendix 5.

#### **4. Annual Investment Strategy**

4.1 Part I of the Local Government Act 2003 relaxed the investment constraints for local authorities.

4.2 The DLUHC has issued guidance to supplement the investment regulations contained within the Local Government Act 2003. It is also referred to under Section 15 (1) of the 2003 Local Government Act which requires authorities to “have regard (a) to such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue and (b) to such other guidance as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify”. The guidance encourages authorities to invest prudently but without burdening them with the detailed prescriptive regulation of the previous regime.

4.3 Central to the guidance and the Code is the need to produce an annual investment strategy. This is included as Section 6 of the Treasury Strategy in Appendix 2.

4.4 The annual investment strategy document will include:

- The Commissioner’s risk appetite in respect of security, liquidity and return.
- The definition of ‘high’ and ‘non-high’ credit quality to determine what are specified investments and non-specified investments.
- Which specified and non-specified instruments the Commissioner will use, dealing in more detail with non-specified investments given the greater potential risk.
- The categories of counterparties that may be used during the course of the year e.g. foreign banks, nationalised/part nationalised banks, building societies.
- The types of investments that may be used during the course of the year.
- The limit to the total amount that may be held in each investment type.
- The Commissioner’s policy on the use of credit ratings, credit rating agencies and other credit risk analysis techniques to determine creditworthy counterparties for its approved lending list and how the Commissioner will deal with changes in ratings, rating watches and rating outlooks.
- Limits for individual counterparties, groups and countries.
- Guidelines for making decisions on investments and borrowing.

#### **5. Policy on Interest Rates Exposure**

5.1 The Commissioner's approach to managing interest rate exposure is described at section 4.10 of the Treasury Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29.

5.2 The use of any financial instruments, such as derivatives, to mitigate interest rate risks will be considered on an individual basis and the CFO will require approval from the Commissioner prior to entering into any arrangement of this nature.

## **6. Policy on External Managers**

6.1 The Commissioner has used Link Group as its external treasury management advisers over the past few years. On 16 May 2024, Link Group was acquired by Mitsubishi UFJ Trust & Banking, a consolidated subsidiary of Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc. (MUFG). As a result, Link Group is now known as MUFG Pension & Market Services. As of 20 January 2025, their treasury services will form part of MUFG Corporate Markets (a division of MUFG Pension and Market Services). We have been assured that there will be no changes to the way they operate, the teams we work with, or the products and solutions we use. Our Procurement Department have arranged for the change of name on the current contract. For treasury documents and reports, our advisors shall now be referred to as MUFG Corporate Markets going forward.

6.2 The CFO has not appointed external investment fund managers to directly invest the Commissioner's cash.

## **7. Policy on Delegation, Review Requirements and Reporting Arrangements**

7.1 It is the Commissioner's responsibility under the Code to approve a Treasury Policy Statement.

7.2 The Commissioner delegates the review and scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and Policies, along with monitoring performance by receiving the mid-year review and annual report, to the Joint Independent Audit Committee, and the execution and administration of Treasury Management decisions to the CFO. Any proposals to approve, adopt or amend policy require the consent of the Commissioner and are matters for the Commissioner to determine.

7.3 The Commissioner will receive:

- a) A four-year Treasury Strategy report, including the annual Investment Strategy, before the commencement of each financial year.
- b) A mid-year report on borrowing and investment activity.
- c) An annual report on borrowing and investment activity by 30 September of each year.
- d) A Capital Strategy report providing 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.

## Treasury Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29

### I. Introduction

- I.1 The Treasury Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the Treasury Management Code of Practice (the Code). The Code emphasises a number of key areas including the following:
- a) The Code must be formally adopted.
  - b) The strategy report will affirm that the effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Commissioner's treasury management activities.
  - c) The Commissioner's appetite for risk, including the appetite for any use of financial instruments in the prudent management of those risks, must be clearly identified within the strategy report and will affirm that priority is given to security of capital and liquidity when investing funds and explain how that will be carried out.
  - d) Responsibility for risk management and control lies within the organisation and cannot be delegated to any outside organisation.
  - e) Credit ratings should only be used as a starting point when considering risk. Use should also be made of market data and information, the quality financial press, information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that government support.
  - f) A sound diversification policy with high credit quality counterparties which considers setting country, sector and group limits.
  - g) Borrowing in advance of need is only to be permissible when there is a clear business case for doing so and only for the current capital programme or to finance future debt maturities.
  - h) The main annual treasury management reports must be approved by the Commissioner.
  - i) There needs to be a mid-year review of treasury management strategy and performance. This is intended to highlight any areas of concern that have arisen since the original strategy was approved.
  - j) Each Commissioner must delegate the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body.
  - k) Treasury management performance and policy setting should be subjected to prior scrutiny.
  - l) Commissioner's and scrutiny members dealing with treasury management activities should be provided with access to relevant training as those charged with governance are also personally responsible for ensuring they have the necessary skills and training.
  - m) Responsibility for these activities must be clearly defined within the organisation.
  - n) Officers involved in treasury management must be explicitly required to follow treasury management policies and procedures when making investment and borrowing decisions on behalf of the Commissioner.
- I.2 The management of day to day working capital (cash flow) including the requirement for temporary borrowing and/or investment will be monitored along with the limits noted below.

The Commissioner will adopt the following reporting arrangements in accordance with the requirements of the Code:

Area of Responsibility	Commissioner/ Committee/ Officer	Frequency
Treasury Management Policy & Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy	Commissioner with review delegated to Joint Independent Audit Committee	Annually before the start of the year
Annual Report	Commissioner with review delegated to Joint Independent Audit Committee	Annually by 30 September after the end of the year
Scrutiny of treasury management performance via mid-year report	Commissioner with review delegated to Joint Independent Audit Committee	Mid-Year
Scrutiny of treasury management strategy, policies and procedures	Joint Independent Audit Committee	Annually before the start of the year
Treasury Management Monitoring Reports, including any amendments to Treasury Management Practices	CFO	Monthly report, quarterly TM monitoring meeting

1.3 The Treasury Management Code covers the following prudential indicators:

- Authorised limit for external debt.
- Operational boundary for external debt.
- Actual external debt.
- Upper and lower limits to the maturity structure of borrowing.
- Upper limits to the total principal sums invested longer than 365 days.
- Gross debt and Capital Finance Requirement.
- Debt liability benchmark.

1.4 The prudential indicators are attached to the Treasury Strategy at Appendix 4. These indicators were approved by the Commissioner as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2028/29 and Capital Strategy approval process.

1.5 In addition to the above indicators, where there is a significant difference between the net and the gross borrowing position the risk and benefits associated with this strategy will be clearly stated in the annual strategy.

1.6 The strategy covers:

- a) Prospects for interest rates.

- b) Treasury limits in force which will limit the treasury risk and activities of the Commissioner, including prudential and treasury indicators.
- c) The borrowing strategy.
- d) Sensitivity forecast.
- e) External and internal borrowing.
- f) Debt rescheduling.
- g) Policy on borrowing in advance of need.
- h) The investment strategy.
- i) The policy on the use of external service providers.

## 2. Prospects for Interest Rates

2.1 The table shown below outlines the Commissioner’s view of anticipated movements in interest rates, based on guidance received from the Commissioner’s treasury management advisers MUFG (as at 11/02/2025). A more detailed interest rate forecast is shown in Appendix 3.

*(The PWLB rates shown below include a 20 basis point ‘certainty rate’ discount effective 01/11/2012)*

Rate %	Mar 2025	Jun 2025	Sept 2025	Dec 2025	March 2026	Jun 2026	Sept 2026	Dec 2026	March 2027	Jun 2027	Sept 2027	Dec 2027	Mar 2028
Bank Rate	4.50	4.25	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
5 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.00
10yr PWLB	5.30	5.20	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.40
25yr PWLB	5.80	5.70	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.20	5.10	5.00	5.00	4.90	4.90	4.80
50yr PWLB	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.20	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60	4.50

**PWLB** - Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is a statutory body operating within the UK Debt Management Office, which is an executive agency of HM Treasury. The PWLB’s function is to lend money to other prescribed public bodies.

The MUFG forecast for interest rates was updated on 11 February 2025.

### 2.2 Forecasts for Bank Rate

In Summary MUFG expect the MPC will gradually reduce Bank Rate from 4.50% to 3.50% by the end of 2026. As there are so many variables at this time, caution must be exercised in respect of all interest rate forecasts.

### 2.3 MUFG Commentary on Interest Rates

Following the 30 October Budget, the outcome of the US Presidential election on 6 November, and the 25bps Bank Rate cut undertaken by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on 7 November, we have significantly revised our central forecasts for the first time since May. In summary, our Bank Rate forecast is now 50bps – 75bps higher than was previously the case, whilst our PWLB forecasts have been materially lifted to not only reflect our increased concerns around the future path of inflation, but also the increased level of Government borrowing over the term of the current Parliament.

If we reflect on the 30 October Budget, our central case is that those policy announcements will be inflationary, at least in the near-term. The Office for Budgetary Responsibility and the

Bank of England concur with that view. The latter have the CPI measure of inflation hitting 2.5% y/y by the end of 2024 and staying sticky until at least 2026. The Bank forecasts CPI to be 2.7% y/y (Q4 2025) and 2.2% (Q4 2026) before dropping back in 2027 to 1.8% y/y.

The anticipated major investment in the public sector, according to the Bank, is expected to lift UK real GDP to 1.7% in 2025 before growth moderates in 2026 and 2027. The debate around whether the Government's policies lead to a material uptick in growth primarily focus on the logistics of fast-tracking planning permissions, identifying sufficient skilled labour to undertake a resurgence in building, and an increase in the employee participation rate within the economy.

There are inherent risks to all the above. The worst-case scenario would see systemic blockages of planning permissions and the inability to identify and resource the additional workforce required to deliver large-scale IT, housing and infrastructure projects. This would lead to upside risks to inflation, an increased prospect of further Government borrowing & tax rises, and a tepid GDP performance.

Our central view is that monetary policy is sufficiently tight at present to cater for some further moderate loosening, the extent of which, however, will continue to be data dependent. We forecast the next reduction in Bank Rate to be made in February and for a pattern to evolve whereby rate cuts are made quarterly and in keeping with the release of the Bank's Quarterly Monetary Policy Reports (February, May, August and November).

Any movement below a 4% Bank Rate will, nonetheless, be very much dependent on inflation data in the second half of 2025. The fact that the November MPC rate cut decision saw a split vote of 8-1 confirms that there are already some concerns around inflation's stickiness, and with recent public sector wage increases beginning to funnel their way into headline average earnings data, the market will be looking very closely at those releases.

Regarding our PWLB forecast, the short to medium part of the curve is forecast to remain elevated over the course of the next year, and the degree to which rates moderate will be tied to the arguments for further Bank Rate loosening or otherwise. The longer part of the curve will also be impacted by inflation factors, but there is also the additional concern that with other major developed economies such as the US and France looking to run large budget deficits there could be a glut of government debt issuance that investors will only agree to digest if the interest rates paid provide sufficient reward for that scenario. Throughout the last quarter of 2024 gilt yields have risen. The 10-year gilt yield increased from 3.94% at the start of October to 4.57% by the year end (and has subsequently risen to 4.64% early in 2025). As recently as mid-September 10-year gilt yields were at their low for the financial year, but since then, and specifically after the Budget at the end of October, yields have soared. Overall, the reaction to the UK Budget highlights how bond markets are both fragile and highly attentive to news about the fiscal outlook.

So far, we have made little mention of the US President election. Nonetheless, Donald Trump's victory paves the way for the introduction/extension of tariffs that could prove inflationary whilst the same could be said of further tax cuts and an expansion of the current US budget deficit. Invariably the direction of US Treasury yields in reaction to his core policies will, in all probability, impact UK gilt yields. So, there are domestic and international factors that could impact PWLB rates whilst, as a general comment, geo-political risks abound in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

## **Investment and Borrowing Rates**

- 2.4 Investment rates have gradually reduced during 2024/25 as the MPC has begun reducing Bank Rate.
- 2.5 Borrowing rates had also been reducing as the Bank Rates have been reducing. However, they have slightly gone up following the October 2024 Budget and are still significantly higher than two years ago.
- 2.6 On 25 November 2020 the Chancellor announced the conclusion to the review of margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates which had been increased by 100 bps in October 2019. The standard and certainty margins were reduced by 100 bps, but a prohibition was introduced to deny access to borrowing from the PWLB for any local authority/Commissioner which had purchase of assets for yield in its three-year capital programme. The current margins over gilt yields are as follows:
- PWLB Standard Rate is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
  - PWLB Certainty Rate is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)
- 2.7 The policy of avoiding new borrowing by maximising the use of internal borrowing through reserves, has served the Commissioner well in recent years. However, this is subject to continuous review in order to avoid the risk of incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when new long-term borrowing to finance capital expenditure or refinance maturities is required. MUFG's advice is that as it's long-term (beyond 10 years) forecast for Bank Rate has recently increased from 3.00% to 3.25%, and as all PWLB certainty rates are currently significantly above this level, borrowing strategies will need to be reviewed in that context. Overall, better value can be obtained at the shorter end of the curve and short-dated fixed LA to LA monies should be considered. Temporary borrowing rates will remain elevated for some time to come but may prove the best option whilst the market continues to factor in Bank Rate reductions for 2025 and later.

## **3. Treasury Limits for 2025/26 to 2028/29 including Prudential Indicators**

- 3.1 It is a statutory requirement of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for the Commissioner to produce a balanced budget. In particular, Section 31(a), as amended by the Localism Act 2011, requires the Commissioner to calculate the budget requirement for each financial year to include the revenue costs that flow from capital financing decisions. This means that increases in capital expenditure must be limited to a level whereby increases in charges to revenue from increases in interest charges and increases in running costs from new capital projects are limited to a level, which is affordable within the projected income of the Commissioner for the foreseeable future.
- 3.2 It is a statutory duty under Section 3 of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003, and supporting regulations, for the Commissioner to determine and keep under review how much it can afford to borrow. The amount so determined is termed the Affordable Borrowing Limit. The Authorised Limit represents the legislative limit specified in the Act.
- 3.3 The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities is a professional code that sets out a framework for self-regulation of capital spending, in effect allowing Commissioners to invest in capital projects without any limit as long as they are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
- 3.4 The Commissioner must have regard to the Prudential Code when setting the Authorised Limit, which essentially requires the Commissioner to ensure that total capital investment

remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, that the impact upon its future council tax levels is affordable.

- 3.5 To facilitate the decision-making process and support capital investment decisions the Prudential Code and the Treasury Management Code requires the Commissioner to agree and monitor a minimum number of prudential indicators. The purpose of these are to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive, they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance.
- 3.6 The following indicator provides a debt related activity limit:
- Maturity structure of borrowing. These gross limits are set to reduce the Commissioner's exposure to large, fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits.
- 3.7 In addition to the prudential indicators noted above a debt liability benchmark treasury indicator has been adopted since 2023/24 to support the financing risk management of the capital financing requirement (CFR).
- 3.8 The treasury limits and draft prudential indicators have been reviewed and updated and are attached at Appendix 4.
- 3.9 The CFO has systems in place to monitor the treasury limits and will report to the Commissioner instances where limits are breached, with the exception of short-term breaches of the Operational Boundary. The Operational Boundary is set so that if breached it acts as an early warning of the potential to exceed the higher Authorised Limit and as such temporary breaches due to debt restructuring and temporary borrowing are acceptable, providing they are not sustained.
- 3.10 Minimum revenue provision (MRP): Where local authorities finance capital expenditure with debt, they must set aside an amount of money each year, through a charge to their revenue budget, to ensure that debt can be repaid. This charge is known as MRP. There are no proposed changes to the method used to calculate MRP and the Annual MRP statement for 2025/26 is included at Appendix 5.

#### **4. Borrowing Strategy**

- 4.1 The Local Government Act 2003 does not prescribe approved sources of finance, only that borrowing may not, without the consent of HM Treasury, be in other than Sterling.
- 4.2 The main options available for the borrowing strategy for 2025/26 are PWLB loans and market loans. The interest rate applicable to either PWLB or markets loans can be fixed or variable.
- 4.3 The Commissioner is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Commissioner's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy has been prudent as investment returns have been historically low and counterparty risk is still an issue that needs to be considered.
- 4.4 There are different types of market loans available, including variable and fixed interest rate loans. These loans are usually offered at an interest rate lower than the corresponding PWLB

loan rate to try to encourage local authorities and other public sector bodies to use as an alternative to PWLB. They may only be attractive if they are forward starting i.e. to secure the rate at an earlier point than actually drawing down the funds to mitigate interest rate risk and avoid the cost of carry.

- 4.5 To mitigate variable interest rate risk a limit is placed on the total level of borrowing that can be taken as variable interest rate loans. To provide scope to utilise new market products should they become available as well as minimise the cost of borrowing and increase the diversification of the debt portfolio it is proposed that the limit on variable rate loans should be 40% of total borrowing 2025/26.
- 4.6 The main strategy is therefore:
- Consider the use of short-term borrowing as a bridge until receipts are received.
  - Consideration will be given to borrowing market loans which are at least 20 basis points below the PWLB target rate, where they become available.
  - When PWLB rates fall back to or below MUFG trigger rates borrowing should be considered, with preference given to terms which ensure a balanced profile of debt maturity.
  - Consider the use of short-term borrowings as a bridge whilst the market waits for inflation, and therein gilt yields, to drop back later in 2025.
- 4.7 In addition, reserve and fund balances may be utilised to limit the new external borrowing requirement, or to make early debt repayments, as an alternative to investing these resources. Reducing investment balances rather than increasing external borrowing could reduce interest payable, as short-term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on external borrowing, and limit exposure to investment risk.

### **Sensitivity of the Forecast**

- 4.8 The Commissioner, in conjunction with MUFG, will continually monitor both the prevailing interest rates and the market forecasts, adopting the following responses to any changes. The main sensitivities of the forecast are likely to be the two scenarios below:
- *If it was felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in long- and short-term rates (e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long term borrowings will be postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing will be considered.*
  - *If it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long- and short-term rates than that currently forecast, perhaps arising from an acceleration in the start date and in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are lower than they are projected to be in the next few years.*
- 4.9 Against this background, caution will be adopted in the management of the 2025/26 treasury operations. The CFO will monitor the interest rate market and adopt a pragmatic approach to any changing circumstances having delegated powers to invest and manage the funds and monies of the Commissioner.

## **Interest Rate Exposure**

- 4.10 Interest rate exposure is managed and monitored through the use of forward balance sheet analysis. This approach requires consideration of the level of the Commissioner's underlying borrowing requirement (CFR) compared to its actual external borrowing position, to ensure the Commissioner remains comfortable with the level of interest payable budget subject to movements in interest rates. Borrowing decisions will be made with reference to the capital plans and core cash position of the Commissioner in association with both the interest rate forecast (section 2.1), and maturity profile of the current portfolio. Investment decisions will be made with reference to the core cash balances, cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates.

## **External and Internal Borrowing**

- 4.11 As at 31 January 2025 the Commissioner has net debt of £49.124m; this means that borrowing is currently higher than investments with total borrowing of £71,969m and investments of £22.845m.
- 4.12 The Commissioner is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Authority's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as medium and longer dated borrowing rates are expected to fall from their current levels once prevailing inflation concerns are addressed by tighter near-term monetary policy. The Commissioner has set trigger rates for long term borrowing and when these rates are attained consideration will be given to long term borrowing. Any short-term savings gained by deferring long term borrowing will be weighed against the potential for incurring additional long term costs by delaying unavoidable new external borrowing until later years.
- 4.14 The CFO has examined the potential for undertaking early repayment of some external debt to the PWLB in order to benefit from lower interest rates that may be currently available. The significant difference between early redemption rates and interest rates payable on PWLB debt means that large premiums are likely to be incurred by such action. This situation will be monitored in case the differential is narrowed by the PWLB.

## **Borrowing in advance of need**

- 4.15 The Commissioner 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 considered carefully to ensure value for money. Specifically, there will be a clear link to the capital investment programme, which supports the decision to take funding in advance of need.

## **New financial institutions as a source of borrowing and / or types of borrowing**

- 4.16 Currently the PWLB Certainty Rate is set at gilts + 80 basis points. However, consideration may still need to be given to sourcing funding from the following sources for the following reasons:
- Local authorities (primarily shorter dated maturities)

- Financial institutions (primarily insurance companies and pension funds but also some banks, out of spot or forward dates where the objective is to avoid a “cost of carry” or to achieve refinancing certainty over the next few years).
- Municipal Bonds Agency (possibly still a viable alternative depending on market circumstances prevailing at the time).

4.17 Treasury advisors, MUFG, will continue to provide advice as to the relative merits of each of these alternative funding sources.

## **5. Debt Rescheduling**

5.1 Rescheduling of current borrowing in our debt portfolio is unlikely to occur as there is still a very large difference between premature redemption rates and new borrowing rates. Any rescheduling opportunities will be considered in line with procedures approved under the Treasury Management Practice Statements and will include a full cost/benefit analysis of any proposed variations. Any positions taken via rescheduling will be in accordance with the strategy position outlined in Section 4 above and will also take into account the prudential and treasury limits.

5.2 The reasons for any proposed rescheduling will include:

- The generation of cash savings at minimum risk.
- In order to amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility in the Commissioner’s borrowing portfolio.

5.3 The CFO in-line with delegated powers outlined in the approved Treasury Management Practice Statement will approve all debt rescheduling.

5.4 Consideration will also be given to the potential for making savings by running down investment balances by repaying debt prematurely as short-term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on currently held debt. However, this will need careful consideration in the light of premiums that may be incurred by such a course of action and other financial considerations.

5.5 All rescheduling will be reported to Commissioner in the mid-year and annual reports.

## **6. Investment Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29**

### **Introduction**

6.1 The Commissioner has regard to the DLUHC’s Guidance on Local Government Investments and CIPFA’s Code of Practice. The Commissioner must produce a strategy on an annual basis which covers the subsequent four-year period.

6.2 This annual strategy maintains a policy covering both the categories of investment types it will invest in, criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security. This is set out in the specified and non-specified investment sections below and in Appendix 6. The policy also ensures that it has sufficient liquidity in its investments. For this purpose, it will set out procedures for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These are detailed in Appendix 7.

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). Greater returns are usually obtainable by investing for longer periods. The current shape of the yield curve suggests that the risks are relatively balanced between Bank Rate staying higher for longer, if inflation picks up markedly through 2025 post the 30 October 2024 Budget, or it may be cut quicker than expected if the economy stagnates. The economy only grew 0.1% in Q3 2024, but the CPI measure of inflation is now markedly above the 2% target rate set by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee two to three years forward.

Accordingly, while most cash balances are required in order to manage the ups and downs of cash flow, where cash sums can be identified that could be invested for longer periods, the value to be obtained from longer-term investments will be carefully assessed.

- 6.3 The Commissioner will maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the following criteria and will revise the criteria and submit them for approval as necessary. These criteria are separate to that which determines which types of investment instrument are either specified or non-specified as it provides an overall pool of counterparties considered high quality which the Commissioner may use, rather than defining what types of investment instruments are to be used.
- 6.4 Specified investments are denominated in Sterling, are for periods of 365 days or less and do not involve the acquisition of share or loan capital in any body corporate. Such an investment will be with either:
- The UK Government or a local authority, parish or community council, or
  - A body or investment scheme which has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency.
- 6.5 Non-specified investments are deemed higher risk and guidance on local government investments requires more detailed procedures. Such procedures are required in order to regulate prudent use and establish maximum amounts which may be invested in each category.
- 6.6 Both specified and non-specified investment types currently utilised by the Commissioner are detailed in Appendix 6, along with approved limits. In addition to these numerous other investment options are available for use and these may be considered suitable for use in the future. Should this be the case then the options will be evaluated in line with the procedures contained within the approved Treasury Management Practice Statement.

### **Investment Objectives**

- 6.7 All investments will be in Sterling.
- 6.8 The Commissioner's primary investment objective is the security of the capital investment. The Commissioner will also manage the investments to meet cash flow demands and to achieve a reasonable return commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity. The risk appetite of the Commissioner is low in order to give priority to security of its investments.
- 6.9 The borrowing of monies purely to invest is unlawful and the Commissioner will not engage in such activity.

### **Other Limits**

- 6.11 The Police and Crime Commissioner will continue to use UK banks irrespective of the UK sovereign rating and will specify a minimum sovereign rating of AA+ for non-UK banks, as

recommended by our advisors. The list of countries that qualify using this credit criteria as at the date of this report are shown in Appendix 8. This list will be added to, or deducted from, should ratings change in accordance with this policy.

### Creditworthiness Policy

- 6.12 The creditworthiness service provided by MUFG is used to assess the creditworthiness of counterparties. The service provided by MUFG uses a sophisticated modelling approach with credit ratings from the three main rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's, forming the core element. However, it does not rely solely on the current credit ratings of counterparties but also uses the following information as overlays which are combined in a weighted scoring system:
- Credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies.
  - Credit Default Swap spreads, financial agreements that compensate the buyer in the event of a default, which give an early warning of likely changes in credit ratings.
  - Sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.
- 6.13 The end product of this modelling system is a series of colour code bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes are also used by the Commissioner to determine the duration for investments and are therefore referred to as durational bands. The Commissioner is satisfied that this service gives the required level of security for its investments. It is also a service which the Commissioner would not be able to replicate using in-house resources.
- 6.14 Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition, the Commissioner will also use market data and information, information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of the government support.
- 6.15 The Commissioner has also determined the minimum long-term, short-term and other credit ratings it deems to be "high" for each category of investment. These "high" ratings allow investments to be classified as **specified investments**, where they are sterling denominated and of 365 days or less. The Commissioner's approved limits for the "high" credit rating for deposit takers are as follows:

High Rated	Fitch	Moody's	Standard & Poor's
Short term (ability to repay short term debt)	F1+	P-1	A-1+
Long term (ability to repay long term debt)	AA-	Aa3	AA-
MMF Rating	AAAmf	AAA-mf	AAAm

- 6.16 To ensure consistency in monitoring credit ratings throughout 2025/26 the Commissioner will not use the approach suggested by CIPFA of using the lowest rating from all three rating agencies to determine creditworthy counterparties, as the credit rating agency issuing the lowest rating could change throughout the year as agencies review the ratings that they have applied to countries, financial institutions and financial products. The ratings of all three agencies will be considered, with Fitch being used as a basis for inclusion on the lending list. In addition to this, the MUFG creditworthiness service will be used to determine the duration that deposits

can be placed for. This service uses the ratings from all three agencies, but by using a scoring system, does not give undue consideration to just one agency's ratings.

- 6.17 The selection of counterparties with a high level of creditworthiness will be achieved by selection of institutions down to a minimum durational band within MUFG weekly credit list of worldwide potential counterparties. The maximum maturity periods and amounts to be placed in different types of investment instruments are detailed in Appendix 7.
- 6.18 UK Government nationalised/part nationalised banks will have a maximum limit of 25% or £20m of total investment, all other counterparties will not exceed a maximum limit equal to 20% of total investments or £20m. Unless there are major changes in the level of investment balances throughout the year this limit will be reviewed prior to the commencement of each financial year.
- 6.19 Where more than one counterpart, from a group, is included on the counterparty list the group in total will be controlled by the above limits with the maximum limit being that of the parent company. Within the group each counterparty/subsidiary will have individual limits based on their creditworthiness although the total placed with the subsidiaries will not exceed the limit of the parent company. Subsidiaries that do not satisfy the minimum credit criteria will not be included.
- 6.20 A number of counterparties are also approved by the CFO for direct dealing. These counterparties are included on the approved list and dealing will be within agreed limits. Direct dealing with individual counterparties must be approved by the CFO prior to investments being placed.

#### **Nationalised/Part Nationalised Banks**

- 6.22 Where the bank has not been fully nationalised but receives substantial support from the UK Government (greater than 40% ownership) the individual rating of the bank will not be taken into consideration and the relevant banks will be included on the Commissioner's lending list as prescribed by the MUFG creditworthiness list as detailed in 6.12.

#### **Foreign Banks**

- 6.23 We will continue to use UK banks irrespective of the UK sovereign rating, however non-UK banks domiciled in countries with a minimum sovereign rating of AA+ will be considered for inclusion on the approved list. They must also meet the high rated lending criteria and have operations based in the UK. Limits will be prescribed by the creditworthiness list and limited to 365 days or less. Each non-UK country will be limited to the maximum investment limit of £20m or 20% of the Commissioner's total investments. A list of those countries with a minimum sovereign rating of AA+ is set out in Appendix 8.

#### **Local Authorities**

- 6.24 The Commissioner invests with other Local Authorities when deemed appropriate. Each investment is considered on an individual basis, prior to funds being placed. Limits are detailed at Appendix 7.

## Non-specified Investments

6.25 In addition to the above specified investments, the Commissioner has also fully considered the increased risk of **non-specified investments** and has set appropriate limits for non-high rated deposit takers. These are as follows:

Non High Rated	Fitch	Moody's	Standard & Poor's
Short term	FI	PI	AI
Long term	A-	A3	A-

Limits for non-high rated counterparties are detailed at Appendix 7.

6.26 The Commissioner has also set appropriate limits for non-specified investments with “high” rated deposit takers and UK Local Authorities where investments can be out to a maximum of 3 years. The Commissioner’s approved limits for the “high” credit rating for deposit takers are set out at 6.15 above and investment limits are detailed at Appendix 7.

6.27 The credit ratings will be monitored as follows:

- All credit ratings are reviewed weekly. In addition, the Commissioner has access to Fitch, Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s credit ratings and is alerted to changes through its use of the MUFG creditworthiness service. On-going monitoring of ratings also takes place in response to ad-hoc e-mail alerts from MUFG.
- If counterparty’s or deposit scheme’s rating is downgraded with the result that it no longer meets the Commissioner’s minimum criteria, the further use of that counterparty/deposit scheme as a new deposit will be withdrawn immediately.
- If a counterparty is upgraded so that it fulfils the Commissioner’s criteria, its inclusion will be considered for approval by the CFO.

6.28 Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition, the Commissioner will also use market data and information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of government support.

## Investment Balances / Liquidity of investments

6.29 The Commissioner deposits funds beyond 365 days to a maximum of three years. This will continue where the counterparty is deemed to be a low credit risk to ensure a good rate of return is maintained in the current market conditions. Deposits beyond 365 days will only be considered when there is minimal risk involved. With deposits of this nature there is an increased risk in terms of liquidity and interest rate fluctuations. To mitigate these risks a limit of £15m (20% of total investments) has been set and a prudential indicator has been calculated (See Appendix 4). Such sums will only be placed with counterparties who have the highest available credit rating or other local authorities.

6.30 Deposits for periods longer than 365 days are classed as **non-specified investments**.

## **Investments defined as capital expenditure**

- 6.31 The acquisition of share capital or loan capital in any body corporate is defined as capital expenditure under Section 16(2) of the Local Government Act 2003. Such investments will have to be funded out of capital or revenue resources and will be classified as **non-specified investments**.
- 6.32 A loan or grant by the Commissioner to another body for capital expenditure by that body is also deemed by regulation to be capital expenditure by the Commissioner. It is therefore important for the Commissioner to clearly identify if the loan was made for policy reasons or if it is an investment for treasury management purposes. The latter will be governed by the framework set by the Commissioner for 'specified' and 'non-specified' investments.

## **Internal Investment Strategy**

- 6.33 The CFO will monitor the interest rate market and react appropriately to any changing circumstances.
- 6.34 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). Greater returns are usually obtainable by investing for longer periods. While most cash balances are required in order to manage the ups and downs of cash flow, where cash sums can be identified that could be invested for longer periods, the value to be obtained from longer term investments will be carefully assessed.
- If it is thought that Bank Rate is likely to rise significantly within the time horizon being considered, then consideration will be given to keeping most investments as being short term or variable.
  - Conversely, if it is thought that Bank Rate is likely to fall within that time period, consideration will be given to locking in higher rates currently obtainable, for longer periods.
- 6.35 The Commissioner takes the view that bank rate will be 4.50% in March 2025. Bank Rate forecasts for financial year ends (March) are therefore:
- 2024/25 4.50%
  - 2025/26 3.75%
  - 2026/27 3.50%
  - 2027/28 3.50%
- 6.36 Long term deposits, beyond 365 days, will only be used where minimal risk is involved and the counterparties are considered to be supported by the UK Government.

## **Investment Risk Benchmark**

- 6.37 The Commissioner will use an investment benchmark to assess the investment performance of its investment portfolio. MUFG have advised that a suitable investment benchmark is a SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Average), which is the risk-free rate for sterling markets administered by the Bank of England. The Sonia rate advised by MUFG is 30-day Backward SONIA rate. Accordingly, the commissioner will use an investment benchmark to assess the

investment performance of its investment portfolio with reference to the SONIA. MUFG also provide a quarterly Investment Benchmarking report that assesses both the rate of return and the risk of the counterparty to calculate a weighted average rate of return, which is used for comparison across other similar Authorities.

### **End of year investment report**

- 6.38 By the end of September each year the Commissioner will receive a report on investment activity as part of its annual treasury report, following scrutiny of that report by the Joint Independent Audit Committee.

### **Policy on use of external service providers**

- 6.39 The Commissioner has used MUFG as its external treasury management advisers. On 16 May 2024, MUFG was acquired by Mitsubishi UFJ Trust & Banking, a consolidated subsidiary of Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc. (MUFG). As a result, Link Group is now known as MUFG Pension & Market Services. As of 20 January 2025, treasury services will form part of MUFG Corporate Markets (a division of MUFG Pension and Market Services). For future treasury documents and reports, our advisors shall be referred to as MUFG.
- 6.40 The Commissioner 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.
- 6.41 The Commissioner recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Commissioner will ensure that the terms of appointment of any such service provider, and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented and subjected to regular review.

### **Scheme of Delegation**

- 6.42 As required by the Guidance Notes for Local Authorities the Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation is detailed below:

#### **Commissioner**

- Set and approve treasury management policy and strategy prior to the start of each financial year.
- Approve prudential and treasury indicators and any subsequent amendments if required.
- Agree and approve annual treasury management budgets.
- Approve any proposed variations in treasury strategy or policy.
- Agree annual report.
- Monitor Prudential and Treasury Indicators.
- Receive and review monitoring reports including the annual report and act on recommendations.

### **Joint Independent Audit Committee**

- Scrutinise the treasury management strategy, policies and practices and make recommendations to the Commissioner
- Receive, scrutinise and approve mid-year monitoring report and annual report.

### **Role of the Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer)**

As required by the Guidance Notes for Local Authorities the role of the Section 151 Officer in relation to treasury management is detailed below:

- Recommending the Code of Practice to be applied, treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance.
- Submitting 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.

## Interest Rate Forecasts 2025 to 2028

## Appendix 3

PWLB rates set out in the table below have taken into account the 20 basis point certainty rate reduction.

MUFG Forecast 11/02.25

Capital Economics Forecast 05/11/24

Rate %	Mar 2025	Jun 2025	Sept 2025	Dec 2025	March 2026	Jun 2026	Sept 2026	Dec 2026	March 2027	Jun 2027	Sept 2027	Dec 2027	Mar 2028
<b>Bank Rate</b>													
MUFG	4.50	4.25	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
Capital Economics	4.50	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	-	-	-	-	-
<b>5 yr PWLB</b>													
MUFG	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.00
Capital Economics	5.10	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.60	4.50	4.50	4.40	-	-	-	-	-
<b>10yr PWLB</b>													
MUFG	5.30	5.20	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.40
Capital Economics	5.30	5.10	5.00	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.60	4.60	-	-	-	-	-
<b>25yr PWLB</b>													
MUFG	5.80	5.70	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.20	5.10	5.00	5.00	4.90	4.90	4.80
Capital Economics	5.70	5.50	5.30	5.00	4.90	4.90	4.80	4.80	-	-	-	-	-
<b>50yr PWLB</b>													
MUFG	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.20	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60	4.50
Capital Economics	5.30	5.20	5.20	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.80	-	-	-	-	-

## Prudential Indicators 2025/26 to 2028/29

### Prudential Indicators

In line with the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance, the various indicators that inform whether capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, are set out below.

#### Authorised Limit for External Debt

There are two limits on external debt: the 'Operational Boundary' and the 'Authorised Limit'. Both are consistent with the current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the budget report for capital expenditure and financing, and with approved treasury management policy statement and practices.

**Authorised Limit** - this represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited. 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.

**Operational Boundary** - this is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed. In most cases this would be a similar figure to the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) but may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual debt.

The key difference between the two limits is that the Authorised Limit cannot be breached without prior approval of the PCC. It therefore includes more headroom to take account of eventualities such as delays in generating capital receipts, forward borrowing to take advantage of attractive interest rates, use of borrowing in place of operational leasing, "invest to save" projects, occasional short-term borrowing to cover temporary revenue cash flow shortfalls, as well as an assessment of risks involved in managing cash flows. The Operational Boundary is a more realistic indicator of the likely position.

#### Authorised Limit for External Debt

Authorised Limit	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000
Borrowing	195,000	210,000	220,000	220,000
Other Long-Term Liabilities	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>195,000</b>	<b>210,000</b>	<b>220,000</b>	<b>220,000</b>

#### Operational Boundary for External Debt

Operational Boundary	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000
Borrowing	175,000	190,000	200,000	200,000
Other Long-Term Liabilities	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>175,000</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>

The latest forecast for external debt indicates that it will be within both the authorised borrowing limit and the operational boundary set to 2028/29.

## Upper and Lower Limits for the Maturity Structure of Borrowing

The upper and lower limits for the maturity structure of borrowing are calculated to provide a framework within which the Commissioner can manage the maturity of new and existing borrowing to ensure that debt repayments are affordable in coming years.

**Maturity structure of borrowing** – these gross limits are set to reduce the Commissioner’s exposure to large, fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits. The limits do however cover variable as well as fixed rate debt. The maturity structure of borrowing set out below applies to all borrowing by the Police and Crime Commissioner, both fixed and variable.

Maturity Structure	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	80%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	60%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	40%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	40%	0%
10 years and above	80%	0%

Sensitivity analysis carried out against the existing borrowing portfolio and scenario testing for planned new borrowing (short/long term) indicates that the maturity structure of borrowing will remain within the limits set.

Changes to the maturity structure limits over those adopted for 2024/25 include an increase in the upper limits for borrowing durations of up to 24 months:

- Under 12 months – increased from 60% to 80%
- 12 months and within 24 months – increased from 40% to 60%

The rationale for the change is to give flexibility for new borrowing required to support the capital programme over 2025/26 to 2028/29, providing an opportunity to take shorter term borrowing whilst rates remain high. The aim is to avoid having to lock into those higher rates for a longer duration than necessary, at a time where interest rates are set to start falling and lower rates are expected to be achievable in the next couple of years.

The approach to new borrowing durations will be balanced against the risk of interest rate exposure.

## Upper Limit on Principal Amounts Invested Beyond 365 Days

The purpose of the upper limit on principal amounts invested beyond 365 days is for the Commissioner to contain the exposure to the possibility of loss that might arise as a result of having to seek early repayment or redemption of principal sums invested.

Upper limit on principal amounts invested beyond 365 days	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000
Investments	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000

## Gross Debt and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

In order to ensure that over the medium-term debt will only be for a capital purpose, the Police and Crime Commissioner should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing in the previous year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years.

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

This is a key indicator of prudence. Where the gross debt is greater than the capital financing requirement the reasons for this should be clearly stated in the annual treasury management strategy.

Gross Debt and CFR	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000
Forecast Borrowing as at 31 March	128,969	153,969	175,969	183,969
Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 March	154,079	172,292	186,619	187,703
Amount of Borrowing over / (under) CFR	(25,110)	(18,323)	(10,650)	(3,734)

Forecast borrowing is within the CFR estimates for 2025/26 to 2028/29.

### Affordability

The impact of the capital programme on the revenue budget is shown in the table below:

Gross Debt and CFR	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000
Revenue Budget	405,444	414,600	426,500	436,400
Capital Expenditure	64,585	30,703	31,742	17,539
Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 March	154,079	172,292	186,619	187,703
Interest Cost	3,900	5,300	6,300	6,800
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	9,453	11,570	14,628	16,456
Revenue Financing Costs	13,353	16,870	20,928	23,256
Ratio of Financing Costs to Revenue Stream %	3.29%	4.07%	4.91%	5.33%

### Debt Liability Benchmark

In addition to the prudential indicators set out above a new debt liability benchmark treasury indicator was adopted from the 2023/24 financial year, to support the financing risk management of the capital financing requirement (CFR).

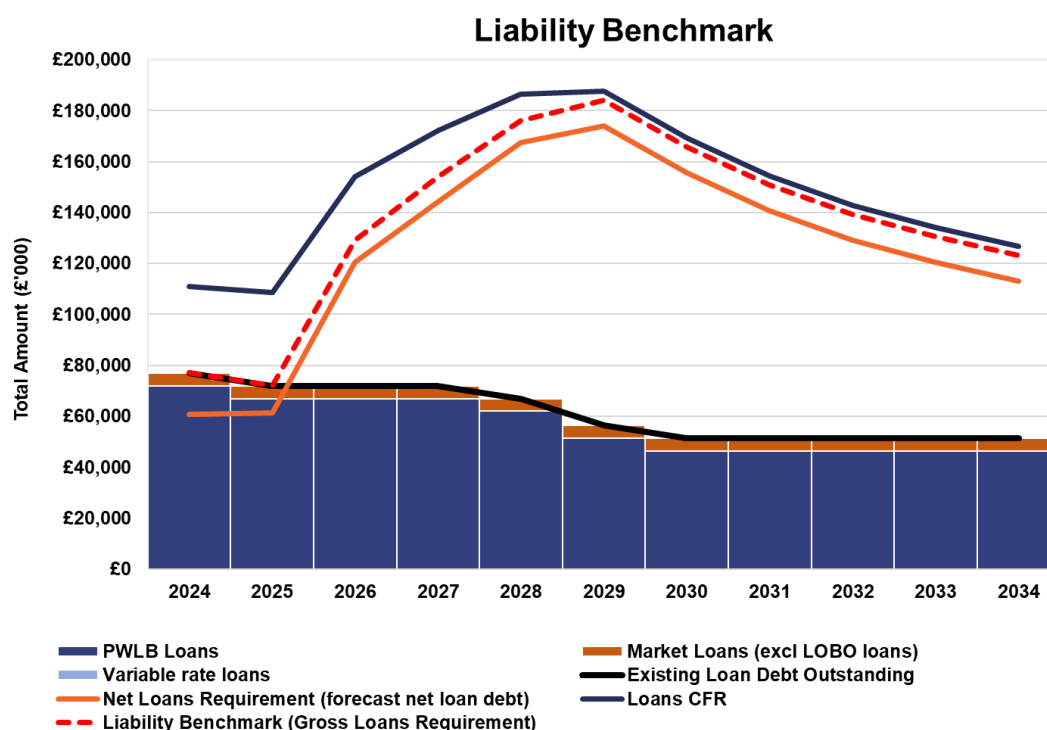
The liability benchmark is presented as a chart which sets out the following:

- **Existing Loan Debt Outstanding** – this is the profile of the Commissioners existing loans which takes into account the scheduled loan repayments due within the period.
- **The Loans CFR (Capital Financing Requirement)** – this is the total requirement that the Commissioner has for prudential borrowing to support capital expenditure. This includes the CFR as at the last year-end plus approved future borrowing for planned capital expenditure within the existing

MTFS capital programme and less those amounts due to be set aside under the MRP (Minimum Revenue Provision) policy adopted by the Commissioner.

- **Net Loans Requirement** – this is a forecast of the Commissioner’s net loan debt, i.e. net of investments for treasury management purposes.
- **Gross Loans Requirement** – this is the Liability Benchmark and represents a forecast of the level of gross loans debt the Commissioner will require in accordance with budget plans.

The Debt Liability Benchmark chart is set out below.



The chart shows that the Commissioner’s existing loan debt comprises mainly PWLB debt plus a smaller element attributable to market loans. The Commissioner has no variable rate loans.

The Liability Benchmark chart demonstrates a requirement for new borrowing to be taken over the period from the 2025/26 financial year. Whilst the approach to borrowing remains to maximise the use of internal borrowing, the chart demonstrates that the extent to which internal borrowing can be used as a temporary financing tool will reduce over the medium to longer term, as reserve balances reduce in-line with budget plans under the Commissioner’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

### IFRS 16 (Leases)

The Commissioner has adopted IFRS 16 Leases from the 2024/25 financial year. The Prudential Indicators above do not reflect the impact of IFRS 16 in terms of the CFR and MRP estimates, which are summarised separately in the table below for the MTFS and Capital Strategy 4-year period.

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
CFR and MRP (IFRS 16 Leases)	£000	£000	£000	£000
CFR Estimates	446	325	270	220
MRP Estimates	196	121	55	50

**Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement 2025/26**

The MRP charge for 2025/26 for capital expenditure incurred before 01 April 2008 (prior to the new regulations) or which has subsequently been financed by supported borrowing will be based on the previous regulatory method of Capital Financing Requirement at a minimum of 4% of the opening balance less prescribed adjustments.

For all unsupported borrowing, exercised under the Prudential Code, the MRP Policy is based on the Asset Life Method. The minimum revenue provision for capital expenditure financed through prudential borrowing, will be at equal annual instalments over the life of the asset. The first charge will not be made until the year after the asset becomes operational.

## Specified Investments (All Sterling Denominated)

Investment type	Share/ Loan Capital	Repayable/ Redeemable within 12 months	Security / Minimum Credit Rating	Capital Expenditure	Circumstance of use	Maximum period
<b>Term deposits</b> with the UK Government (DMO) or with UK local authorities (i.e. local authorities as defined under Section 23 of the 2003 Act) with maturities up to 365 days.	No	Yes	High security although LA's not credit rated. <i>See section 6</i>	No	In-house	365 days
<b>Term deposits / Certificates of Deposit</b> with credit rated deposit takers (banks and building societies), including callable deposits with maturities up to 365 days.	No	Yes	Secure Varied minimum credit rating <i>See section 6</i>	No	In-house	365 days
<b>Money Market Funds (CNAV &amp; LVNAV (not VNAV))</b> These funds are instant access and therefore do not have a maturity date.	No	Yes	Secure  AAA Money Market Fund rating with assets > £1bn	No	In-house	The investment period is subject to liquidity and cash flow requirements. It is assumed that funds are placed overnight and will be returned and reinvested the next working day (although no actual movement of cash may take place).

### Non-Specified Investments (All Sterling Denominated)

Investment type	(A) Why use it (B) Associated risks	Share/ Loan Capital	Repayable/ Redeemable within 12 months	Security / Minimum credit rating	Capital Expenditure	Circumstance of use	Max % of overall investments	Maximum maturity of investment
<b>Term deposits / Certificates of Deposit</b> with rated deposit takers (banks and building societies) which do not meet the Commissioner's "high" credit rating	(A) To improve ability to place smaller amounts (B) Greater risk than "high" credit rating counterparties but advance warning by rating agency of potential problems. The Commissioner has fully considered this investment category and set appropriate investment and maturity limits in order to minimise risk.	No	Yes	Secure Varied minimum Credit rating <i>Minimum: Fitch Long term A- Short term FI</i>	No	In-house	75%	6 months (but set on an individual counterparty basis)
<b>Term deposits with UK Government, UK Local Authorities or credit rated banks and building societies, with maturities over 1 year</b>	A) To improve the ability to "lock in" at times of high interest rates to secure a higher return over a longer period should rates be forecast to fall. B) Lower liquidity and greater risk of adverse interest rate fluctuations. The Commissioner has fully considered this investment category and set appropriate investment and maturity limits in order to minimise risk.	No	No	Secure Varied minimum credit rating	No	In-house	20%	3 years

## Maximum Maturity Periods and Amounts

Organisation	Criteria	Max Amount	Max Period	Not to Exceed Limit or %
High Rated  (Specified Investments – High rated and up to 365 days see Appendix 6)	Minimum Fitch rating of FI+ short term and AA- long term.  Consideration to be given to Moody's minimum rating of P-1 short term backed by Aa3 long term and S&P minimum rating of A-1+ short term and AA- long term.	£20m	3 years	25% (Government Backed)  20% (Non-Government Backed)
Foreign Banks	Must meet the minimum high rated criteria above and have a minimum sovereign rating of AA+	£20m country limit	365 days	20%
Non-High Rated	Minimum Fitch rating of FI short term and A- long term.  Consideration to be given to Moody's minimum rating of P-1 short term backed by A3 long term and S&P minimum rating of A-1 short term and A- long term.	£10m	6 months	20%
UK Local Authorities	(i.e. local authorities as defined under Section 23 of the 2003 Act) Each investment is considered on an individual basis	£10m	3 years	n/a
Money Market Funds	CNAV or LVNAV ( <b>not VNAV</b> ) AAA Money Market Fund rating with assets >£1bn	£10m per counter party	Overnight	£25m in total

### Approved countries for investments

This list is based on those countries which have sovereign ratings of AA+ or higher, (we show the lowest rating from Fitch, Moody's and S&P) and also, (except - at the time of writing - for Norway and Luxembourg), have banks operating in sterling markets which have credit ratings of green or above in the MUFG credit worthiness service.

MUFG currently suggests a minimum rating of AA-

Based on lowest available rating

#### AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

#### AA+

- Canada
- Finland
- U.S.A.

For information

#### AA-

- U.K.**

***THIS LIST IS AS AT 25.11.24***