CYNGOR SIR *POWYS* COUNTY COUNCIL.

AUDIT COMMITTEE
3rd February 2017

CABINET
28th February 2017

REPORT AUTHOR: **County Councillor Wynne Jones**
Portfolio Holder for Finance

SUBJECT: **Treasury Management Qtr 3 Report**

REPORT FOR: **Information**

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1. Summary

1.1 CIPFA's 2009 Treasury Management Bulletin suggested:

"In order to enshrine best practice it is suggested that authorities report formally on treasury management activities at least twice a year and preferably quarterly."

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management emphasises a number of key areas including the following:-

xi. Treasury management performance and policy setting should be subject to scrutiny prior to implementation.

1.2 In line with the above this report is providing information on the activities for the quarter ending 31st December 2016.

2. Economic Background and Forecasts

2.1 The economic background is attached at Appendix B.

2.2 The most recent forecast of interest rates by the Authority's advisor is as follows:

	Mar 17	Jun 17	Sep 17	Dec 17	Mar 18	Jun 18	Sep 18
Bank rate	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%
5yr PWLB	1.60%	1.60%	1.60%	1.60%	1.70%	1.70%	1.70%
10yr PWLB	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%
25yr PWLB	2.90%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%
50yr PWLB	2.70%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.80%	2.80%	2.90%

3. Treasury Management Strategy

3.1 The Treasury Management Strategy approved by Full Council on 9th March 2016 is at Appendix A.

3.2 The Authority's investment priorities within the Strategy are: -

(a) the security of capital and
(b) the liquidity of its investments.

3.3 The Authority aims to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. The risk appetite has been low in order to give priority to security of investments.

4. Current Investments

4.1 The current investment market is difficult in respect of earning the level of interest rates commonly seen in previous years as rates are very low and in line with the 0.25% Bank Rate.

4.2 The Authority's investment position as at 31st December 2016 is as shown below:-

Invested with:	Principal £000's	Interest Rate	Start Date	Maturity Date
Santander	8,730	0.25%	N/A	Deposit A/c
BOS	3,835	0.15%	N/A	Deposit A/c
HSBC	30	0.00%	N/A	Deposit A/c
Total	**12,595**			
Lloyds TSB - LAMS	1,000	3.20%	13.08.12	14.08.17

4.3 Interest rates on the deposit accounts decreased, as expected, following the bank rate cut in August. Although the HSBC account returns Nil interest, the account is still utilised in order to report on the investments position correctly; to ensure emergency funds are available as withdrawals from other accounts have an earlier cut-off point; and to manage costs where relevant as there is no CHAPS fee in respect of transfers to the HSBC account as it is an internal transaction.

4.4 Higher return rates are difficult to achieve as the Authority is not in a position to invest its cash for more than a short period of time.

4.5 There have been no credit rating changes in the last few months in respect of the banks that the Authority utilises for deposits.

UK Sovereign Rating Action:
The following took place following Brexit:

Fitch:

- Sovereign rating downgraded by one notch, from AA+ to AA
- Outlook lowered to Negative, from Stable

Moody's:

- Sovereign rating affirmed, at Aa1 (equivalent to AA+ from Fitch / S&P)

- Outlook lowered to Negative, from Stable

Standard & Poor's (S&P):

- Sovereign rating downgraded by two notches, from AAA to AA
- Remains on Negative Outlook

4.6 Local Authority Mortgage Scheme:

In August 2012, following a Cabinet report, the Authority entered the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme with an allocation to Lloyds TSB of £1M. Under the scheme this was deemed as Capital Expenditure. However, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) opinion differed from this in that they suggested it should be treated as an investment. Unfortunately, despite meetings and extensive correspondence by Capita Treasury with the Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and the Wales Audit Office, agreement on the accounting treatment for Welsh authorities has not been reached despite the provision of 3 separate legal opinions supporting the Capital Expenditure position. As such, Capita have said that they are not sure there is much more they can do in Wales. This Authority has concurred with WAO's requirement to treat this as an investment and, as such, the amount is included in the table above and is being accounted for as an investment. Council approved this investment following a retrospective report on 16th May 2013.

4.7 Redemption Penalties:
There are no current fixed investments to redeem.

4.8 Investment returns in future years:
Our advisors' current suggested earning rates for investments for budgeting purposes are as follows:-

	Suggested Rate
2016/17	0.25%
2017/18	0.25%
2018/19	0.25%

These are based on investments for up to three months duration.

5. Credit Rating Changes

5.1 There have been no credit rating changes relevant to this Authority's position during the last quarter.

5.2 The credit rating list for end of December is attached as a separate file to this report.

6. Borrowing / Re-scheduling

6.1 Effective management of the Authority's debt is essential to ensure that the impact of interest payable is minimised against our revenue accounts whilst maintaining prudent borrowing policies.

6.2 The Authority's Capital Position:

The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This figure is a gauge of the Council's indebtedness. The CFR results from the capital activity of the Council and resources used to pay for the capital spend. It represents the current year's unfinanced capital expenditure and prior years' net or unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.

Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the capital expenditure programme, the treasury service organises the Council's cash position to ensure that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. This may be sourced through external borrowing or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.

Net external borrowing (borrowings less investments) should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for the current year and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

CFR Position:

	As at 31.03.16 Actual	2016/17 Original Estimate	2017/18 Original Estimate	2018/19 Original Estimate
	£M	£M	£M	£M
Capital Financing Requirement	302,363	307,313	326,288	354,093

6.3 The Authority had outstanding long-term external debt of £226.4M at 31st March 2016. In relation to the CFR figure for 31st March 2016, this equated to the Authority being under borrowed by £76M. This is a prudent and cost effective approach in the current economic climate. However, internal borrowing is only a temporary situation and, based on capital estimates, it will be necessary for the Authority to borrow at stages over the next few years. As such, the Authority needs to be mindful that it may be prudent to borrow whilst interest rates are at their low levels and carry the cost of this borrowing as opposed to borrowing at a future date at increased rates.

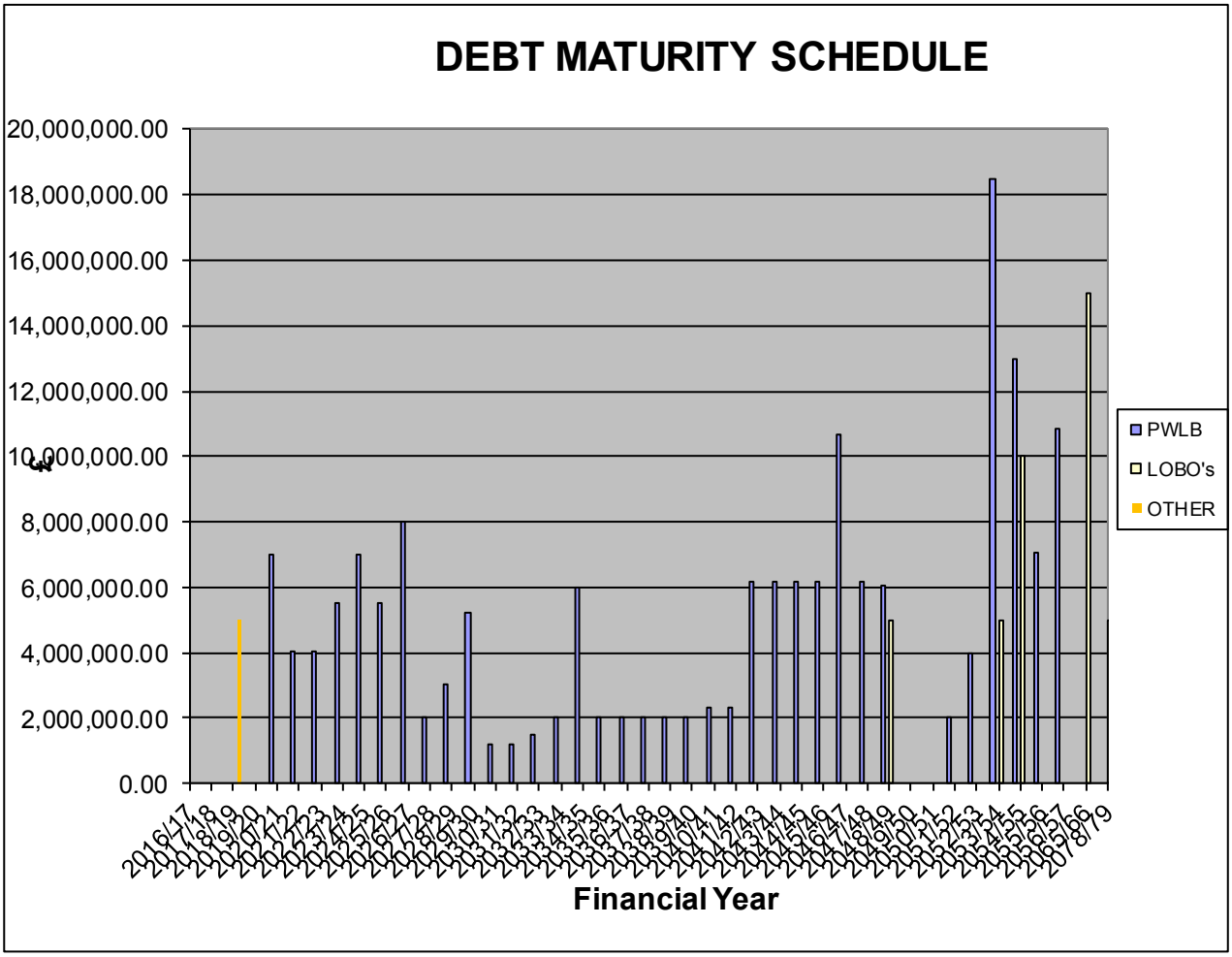
6.4 Capital Budget/Spend per efinancials:

Capital:	**Approved Budget**	**Working budget**	**Actual Capital Spend *(not including commitments)***	**%age spend**
	45,069,066			
June		52,381,477	3,087,768	5.89%
Sept		55,298,113	9,782,827	17.69%
Dec		58,855,874	17,515,538	29.80%
March				

The financing of the approved capital budget included £20.4M of Prudential borrowing in total.

6.5 *Debt Maturity Profile as at 31.12.16:*

(please click on the graph below and increase the percentage in the toolbar above for an enhanced view)



6.6 Rescheduling:

The Public Works Loans Board released a circular regarding rates on 20th October 2010. As a result of this, rates immediately increased by 0.87-0.88 basis points across the board. The overall impact of this circular was that it is far more difficult for authorities to reschedule debt

Members are aware that officers continue to look for interest savings on a daily basis by monitoring rates that may mean the Authority can re-schedule some of its debt or prematurely repay debt if applicable. However, PWLB interest rates have not been conducive towards rescheduling.

7. <u>Prudential Indicators</u>

7.1 All TM Prudential Indicators were complied with in the quarter ending 31st December 2016.

8. VAT

8.1 The Treasury Manager acts as the authority's VAT officer. VAT can pose a risk to the authority hence the TM has been asked to include VAT information in these quarterly reports.

8.2 The monthly VAT returns were submitted within the required deadlines during the quarter ending 31st December 2016.

8.3 Key Performance Indicators:

The VAT KPI's for 2016/17 are attached at Appendix C.

Proposal

It is proposed that the Treasury Management quarterly report is received.

Statutory Officers

The Strategic Director – Resources (s151 officer) notes the content of the report and supports the recommendation. It is important that Cabinet continues to be informed about this key activity.

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has made the following comment: "I have nothing to add to the report".

Future Status of the Report

Not applicable

Recommendation:		**Reason for Recommendation:**	
That the Treasury Management Quarterly Report be received		**To ensure Cabinet remains informed about current Treasury Management performance**	
Relevant Policy (ies):		Treasury Management Policy	
Within Policy:	**Y**	**Within Budget:**	**N/A**
Person(s) To Implement Decision:		**N/A**	
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:		**N/A**	

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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes
Treasury Management Policy Statement
Advisors' Information
WAG Guidance on Local Government Investments 2010
PWLB circulars

Appendix A:

Approved Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17:

7.5 "High" credit quality:

7.5.1 It is proposed that the Authority continue with the following in respect of defining a "high" credit quality. If a rating is not available from any of the rating agencies then the available ratings will be used. Members will note that this proposal excludes investments with some banks off the advisors' suggested list:-

Long Term Ratings (in respect of long-term investments):

Permitted Fitch Ratings	Permitted Moodys Ratings	Permitted S&P Ratings
AAA	Aaa	AAA
AA+	Aa1	AA+
AA	Aa2	AA
AA-	Aa3	AA-

Short Term Ratings (in respect of short-term investments):

Permitted Fitch Ratings	Permitted Moodys Ratings	Permitted S&P Ratings
F1+	N/A	A-1+
F1	P-1	A-1

7.6 Country limits:

7.6.1 It is proposed that the Authority will use approved counterparties from the UK and approved counterparties from other countries with the following sovereign credit ratings:-

Permitted Fitch Ratings	Permitted Moodys Ratings	Permitted S&P Ratings
AAA	Aaa	AAA

Country	**Maximum Investment per Country**	**Credit Rating/Other Assessment of Risk**
AAA countries	£20M (held in call accounts)	As per rating list
UK	No Maximum Investment	As per rating list

7.7 Group/Institutions - Counterparty Criteria/Limits:

Specified Investments:

Institution	Maximum Investment per Group/Institution £M	Maximum Length	Credit Rating/Other Assessment of Risk
UK Banks	20 (a maximum £10M to be held in fixed term investments)	Up to 364 days	As per Capita's matrices and the Authority's definition of a high credit rating
Foreign Banks	5	Up to 364 days	As per Capita's matrices and the Authority's definition of a high credit rating
Other Local Authorities	25	Up to 364 days	N/A

Non-Specified Investments:

Institution	Maximum Investment per Group/Institution £M	Maximum Length	Credit Rating/Other Assessment of Risk
UK Banks	10 (£2M limit with any one institution)	Up to 2 years	As per Capita's matrices and the Authority's definition of a high credit rating
Lloyds Bank (as a mortgage lender in the LAMS scheme)	5	Up to 5 years	N/A
Foreign Banks	2	Up to 2 years	As per Sector's matrices and the Authority's definition of a high credit rating
Money Market Funds (max. of 5)	10	N/A	All are AAA rated plus the parents/owners must meet the Authority's short term investment criteria
Other Local Authorities	10	Up to 2 years	N/A
European Investment Bank Bonds	3	2-3 years	N/A
Note: Limits for Specified and Non-Specified are combined limits. The maximum limit will also apply to a banking group as a whole.			

Appendix B

Economic Background

US:
Tax cuts, increased government spending and deregulation are a few economic tools that President Donald Trump will look to use in order to boost US economic growth. Therefore, the unanimous decision in December by the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates for the first time since December 2015 to 0.5% - 0.75%, was universally expected. This rate increase was just the second since the onset of the Financial Crisis which saw the Federal Reserve cut rates to almost zero in order to stabilise the economy. The accompanying economic forecasts from the central bank were altered to reflect a faster pace of tightening in the coming year. These now suggest three rate hikes in 2017, up from two previously anticipated. Fed Chair, Janet Yellen, announced that the rate hike was in response to the "expected labour market conditions and inflation", as the unemployment rate fell to a 9 year low in November at 4.6% and non-farm payrolls rose 156,000 from the revised figure of 135,000 in October. Moreover, Q3 GDP was finalised at its best rate in two years, at 3.5% annually, as consumer expenditure continued to perform strongly. Both pieces of data supported the decision to increase interest rates. Meanwhile, the potential impact of "Trumponomics" bolstered the view on a more aggressive rate outlook, despite an uncertain global economic outlook.

UK:
Moving on to the UK economy, the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) figures released for December showed strong increases. Despite this strength in current conditions, the continued rise in inflation forecasted over the coming months is likely to raise input prices which will be fed through to consumers in the form of higher prices. Consumer-level inflation figures hit a 2-year high of 1.6% in December (up from 1.2% in November) as the falling pound started to feed through to consumer prices. Air fares, petrol and food were the key components of the increase. Looking ahead, the cost of imports will continue to upwardly impact on prices with the Bank of England forecasting consumer level prices to rise to 2.8% by mid-2018. Mark Carney had previously stated that the Bank will tolerate some overshoot of its inflation target hence why the MPC stuck to the status quo in its December meeting. However a recent speech by the Bank's governor hinted that the Bank's tolerance for higher inflation was falling. He said price stability was the "primary objective for monetary policy". Mr Carney said that he was also concerned about how much of recent UK economic growth depended on consumer spending and that the BoE needed to balance the risks from inflation against the risks to incomes and jobs. Economists are concerned that, as inflation accelerates, it could reduce this spending.
In terms of growth, the final reading of Q3 GDP came in higher than the forecasted 0.5%, at 0.6%, while the annual rate was lowered due to revisions to growth figures in the first half of the year. Overall, while growth may have moderated from the first half of the year, it has not been as negatively affected by Brexit as some had feared.
Elsewhere, figures showed that the number of people in the labour force fell for the first time in more than a year. The drop of 6,000 came despite the unemployment rate falling to 4.8% in the three months to October, from 4.9% previously. Average weekly earnings excluding bonuses rose by 2.5% on an annual basis, from 2.4% in the three months to September. This rise was the joint strongest in more than a year. However, as Britain's relationship with the EU creates uncertainty, it is widely expected that the unemployment rate will rise over the coming months as companies hold off from hiring until solid foundations about Britain's future outside the EU have been made.
Discounts on 'Black Friday' saw the majority of consumer expenditure occurring in the last week of November, damaging sales for retailers such as clothing stores who did not take part as much as department stores. Higher fuel prices also impacted last month as the

annual rate of retail sales fell to 5.9% in November from 7.2% in October. Nevertheless, the October rate was always seen as unsustainable. Furthermore, the BoE has warned that despite retail sales growth being relatively robust, even after the Brexit vote, the depreciation in Sterling will increasingly feed through into the economy in the form of higher prices next year, causing growth to slow.
Public Finances seemed to be on track when compared with the new deficit reduction goals set out by Chancellor Philip Hammond. The deficit for November was the lowest for a month since 2007 coming in at £12.6 billion, 4.4% lower than the deficit for the same month in 2015. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) stated that the recent deterioration in public finances is a reflection of weaker tax revenue for this financial year as tax revenue growth for November of 3.6%, was some way below the average 4.4% seen so far in 2016.

Eurozone:
The European Central Bank (ECB) altered its policy. While it left the Asset Purchase Programme at its current monthly pace of €80 billion until the end of March 2017, new policy purchases thereafter will be at €60 billion per month until the end of December 2017, or beyond, if necessary. While ECB President Draghi insisted this was not policy tapering, market participants were not convinced, pushing up bond yields across the currency bloc. Elsewhere, data for the Eurozone showed growth had remained steady in the third quarter at 0.3%, with the year-on-year growth figure being revised to 1.7% from 1.6%. The latter figure matched that recorded in the second quarter. The unemployment rate for October was the lowest rate recorded in the Euro area since July 2009, as it fell to 9.8% from 9.9% in September.

Over the coming months the economic outlook for Britain remains unclear as plans for Brexit have yet to be finalised. While the threat of this and higher prices via Sterling depreciation weighed in, the GfK consumer confidence index registered a modest increase in December. In addition to Brexit progress, the spotlight will focus on the inauguration of Donald Trump on the 20th January as the effect of his administration on the US economy and that of its major trading partners in the coming years will become clearer.

Appendix C

VAT - Key Performance Indicators:

Creditor Invoices

VAT return for	No of high value Creditor invoices checked	No of Creditor invoices highlighted as requiring "proper" document for VAT recovery	%age of creditor invoices checked requiring "proper" document for VAT recovery
Apr-16	169	5	2.96%
May-16	131	3	2.29%
Jun-16	165	10	6.06%
Jul-16	156	8	5.13%
Aug-16	220	8	3.64%
Sep-16	183	4	2.19%
Oct-16	155	8	5.16%
Nov-16	188	8	4.26%
Dec-16	171	7	4.09%

Cash Receipting Entries

VAT return for	No of cash receipting entries checked by formula per the ledger account code used	No of cash receipting entries needing follow up check	%age of cash receipting entries needing follow up check
Apr-16	3,770	6	0.16%
May-16	4,059	8	0.20%
Jun-16	4,283	10	0.23%
Jul-16	3,794	7	0.18%
Aug-16	2,888	10	0.35%
Sep-16	3,994	8	0.20%
Oct-16	4,263	19	0.45%
Nov-16	4,301	28	0.65%
Dec-16	3,515	20	0.57%

Debtor Invoices

VAT return for	No of Debtor invoices checked (value >£5k)	No of checked debtor invoices with incorrect VAT code used	%age of debtor invoices with incorrect VAT code
Apr-16	52	3	5.77%
May-16	34	9	26.47%
Jun-16	38	15	39.47%
Jul-16	32	6	18.75%
Aug-16	29	6	20.69%
Sep-16	39	5	12.82%
Oct-16	65	4	6.15%
Nov-16	55	11	20.00%
Dec-16	36	6	16.67%

Voluntary Declarations

Any vat errors discovered can be adjusted in the current VAT account if they are:

- below the reporting threshold (>£10,000 or up to 1% of the VAT return Box 6 figure up to a maximum of £50,000)
- not deliberate
- for an accounting period that ended less than 4 years ago.

Any errors that do not meet these conditions have to be reported to HM Revenue and Customs and are referred to as voluntary declarations. The following have been reported during this financial year. No penalties have been applied by HMRC but interest has been charged.

Date of declaration	Value of voluntary declaration	Service Area	Interest charged by HMRC
25-Aug-16	£35,229.04	Newtown High School	£698.95
01-Dec-16	£119,560.81	Leisure	not yet known
11-Jan-17	£15,223.65	Fleet - Pool cars	not yet known

Errors adjusted for

Month/Year	Value of error	Service Area
May-16	£3,231.38	Llanbedr School - unable to reclaim as VA School capital rules apply
Sep-16	£117.06	VAT only invoices re: schools - VAT not applied to original invoice raised
Sep-16	£1,539.30	VAT only invoice re: schools - VAT not applied to original invoice raised
Sep-16	£4,800.00	VAT only invoice to BT re: ICT - VAT not applied to original invoices raised
Sep-16	£1,031.66	Incorrect invoices received from Machynlleth District Care Centre

Chargebacks to service areas

As a result of the Creditor invoice checking, Treasury Management produce a monthly list of Creditor payments for which a “proper” vat document has not been received. Any VAT amounts on these invoices are held in the vat account and are not claimed until such time as a valid invoice is received. The list is posted on the Intranet and service areas have three months to source a valid document. If this does not happen the vat amount is recharged to the service area cost centre. Going forward the three month period is being reduced to one month.

At 31st December 2016 the amount recharged in this respect for this financial year is £7,692.68.