

Annual Treasury Management Review

2022/23

Melton Borough Council
July 2023

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Annual Treasury Management Review 2022/23

Purpose

This Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2022/23. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2022/23 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council 24/02/2022)
- a mid-year, (minimum), treasury update report (Council 20/12/2022)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy, (this report)

The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.

This Council confirms that it has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all of the above treasury management reports by the Cabinet before they were reported to the full Council. Member training on treasury management issues was undertaken during the year in July 2022 in order to support members' scrutiny role. Further training will be undertaken in 2023/24 following the elections in 2023.

Executive Summary

During 2022/23, the Council complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements. The key actual prudential and treasury indicators detailing the impact of capital expenditure activities during the year, with comparators, are as follows:

Prudential and treasury indicators	31.3.22 Actual £'000	2022/23 Latest Approved £'000	31.3.23 Actual £'000
Capital expenditure			
• Non-HRA	559	2,615	867
• HRA	1,950	5,895	3,448
• Total	2,509	8,510	4,314
Capital Financing Requirement:			
• Non-HRA	66	304	54
• HRA (<i>if applicable</i>)	31,484	31,484	31,484
• Total	31,550	31,788	31,538
Gross borrowing	31,413	31,663	31,413
External debt	66	54	54
Investments			
• Longer than 1 year	2,000	2,000	2,000
• Under 1 year	24,500	17,500	17,620
• Total	26,500	19,500	19,620
Net borrowing	4,913	12,163	11,793

Other prudential and treasury indicators are to be found in the main body of this report. The Director for Corporate Services also confirms that borrowing was only undertaken for a capital purpose and the statutory borrowing limit, (the authorised limit), was not breached.

Introduction and Background

This report summarises the following:-

- Capital activity during the year;
- Impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness, (the Capital Financing Requirement);
- The actual prudential and treasury indicators;
- Overall treasury position identifying how the Council has borrowed in relation to this indebtedness, and the impact on investment balances;
- Summary of interest rate movements in the year;
- Detailed debt activity; and
- Detailed investment activity.

1. The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing

The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.

The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

£'000 General Fund	31.3.22 Actual	2022/23 Latest Approved Budget	31.3.23 Actual
Capital expenditure	559	2,615	867
Financed in year	559	2,365	867
Unfinanced capital expenditure	0	250	0

£'000 HRA	31.3.22 Actual	2022/23 Latest Approved Budget	31.3.23 Actual
Capital expenditure	1,950	5,895	3,448
Financed in year	1,950	5,895	3,448
Unfinanced capital expenditure	0	0	0

2. The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

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 2022/23 unfinanced capital expenditure (see above table), 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 borrowing from external bodies, (such as the Government, through the Public Works Loan Board [PWLB], or the money markets), or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.

Reducing the CFR – the Council's (non HRA) underlying borrowing need (CFR) is not allowed to rise indefinitely. Statutory controls are in place to ensure that capital assets are broadly charged to revenue over the life of the asset. The Council is required to make an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision – MRP, to reduce the CFR. This is effectively a repayment of the non-Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing need, (there is no statutory requirement to reduce the HRA CFR). This differs from the treasury management arrangements which ensure that cash is available to meet capital commitments. External debt can also be borrowed or repaid at any time, but this does not change the CFR.

The total CFR can also be reduced by:

- the application of additional capital financing resources, (such as unapplied capital receipts); or
- charging more than the statutory revenue charge (MRP) each year through a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP).

The Council's 2022/23 MRP Policy, (as required by DLUHC Guidance), was approved as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Report for 2022/23 on 24/02/2022.

The Council's CFR for the year is shown below, and represents a key prudential indicator.

CFR (£'000): General Fund	31.3.22 Actual	2022/23 Budget	31.3.23 Actual
Opening balance	77	66	66
Add unfinanced capital expenditure (as above)	0	250	0
Less PFI & finance lease repayments	(11)	(12)	(12)
Closing balance	66	304	54

CFR (£'000): HRA	31.3.22 Actual	2022/23 Budget	31.3.23 Actual
Opening balance	31,484	31,484	31,484
Closing balance	31,484	31,484	31,484

Borrowing activity is constrained by prudential indicators for gross borrowing and the CFR, and by the authorised limit.

Gross borrowing and the CFR - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2022/23) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2023/24) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. Had it been required this indicator allowed the Council some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs in 2022/23. The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

	31.3.22 Actual £'000	2022/23 Budget £'000	31.3.23 Actual £'000
Gross borrowing position	31,479	31,717	31,467
CFR	31,550	31,788	31,538
(Under) / over funding of CFR	(71)	(71)	(71)

The authorised limit - the authorised limit is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2022/23 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

The operational boundary – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary are acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream - this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.

	2022/23 £'000
Authorised limit	46,000
Maximum gross borrowing position during the year	31,467
Operational boundary	34,000
Average gross borrowing position	31,467
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream:	
General Fund	-6.61%
HRA	31.02%

3. Treasury Position as at 31st March 2023

The Council's treasury management debt and investment position is organised by the treasury management service in order to ensure adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through member reporting detailed in the summary, and through officer activity detailed in the Council's Treasury Management Practices. At the end of 2022/23 the Council's treasury, (excluding borrowing by PFI and finance leases), position was as follows:

DEBT PORTFOLIO	31.3.22 Principal £'000	Rate/ Return	Average Life yrs	31.3.23 Principal £'000	Rate/ Return	Average Life yrs
Fixed rate funding:						
-PWLB	31,413	3.72%	27	31,413	3.72%	26
CFR (excluding finance lease)	31,484			31,484		
Over / (under) borrowing	(71)			(71)		
Total investments	26,500	0.47%	£24.5m under 1yr £2m over 1yr	19,620	2.19%	£17.6m under 1yr £2m over 1yr
Net debt		1.02%			2.37%	

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

	31.3.22 Actual £'000	31.3.23 Actual £'000
Up to 24 months	0	98
24 months and within 5 years	4,098	4,000
5 years and within 10 years	600	600
10 years and within 20 years	0	5,000
20 years and within 30 years	10,000	10,340
30 years and within 40 years	10,840	11,375
40 years and within 50 years	5,875	0

The maturity structure of the investment portfolio was as follows:

	31.3.22 Actual £000	2022/23 Budget £000	31.3.23 Actual £000
Investments			
Longer than 1 year	2,000	2,000	2,000
Up to 1 year	24,500	17,500	17,620
Total	26,500	19,500	19,620

4. The Strategy for 2022/23

4.1 Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk

The following commentary has been provided by the Council's Treasury Management advisors:

Investment returns picked up throughout the course of 2022/23 as central banks, including the Bank of England, realised that inflationary pressures were not transitory, and that tighter monetary policy was called for.

Starting April at 0.75%, Bank Rate moved up in stepped increases of either 0.25% or 0.5%, reaching 4.25% by the end of the financial year, with the potential for a further one or two increases in 2023/24.

The sea-change in investment rates meant local authorities were faced with the challenge of proactive investment of surplus cash for the first time in over a decade, and this emphasised the need for a detailed working knowledge of cashflow projections so that the appropriate balance between maintaining cash for liquidity purposes, and "laddering" deposits on a rolling basis to lock in the increase in investment rates as duration was extended, became an on-going feature of the investment landscape.

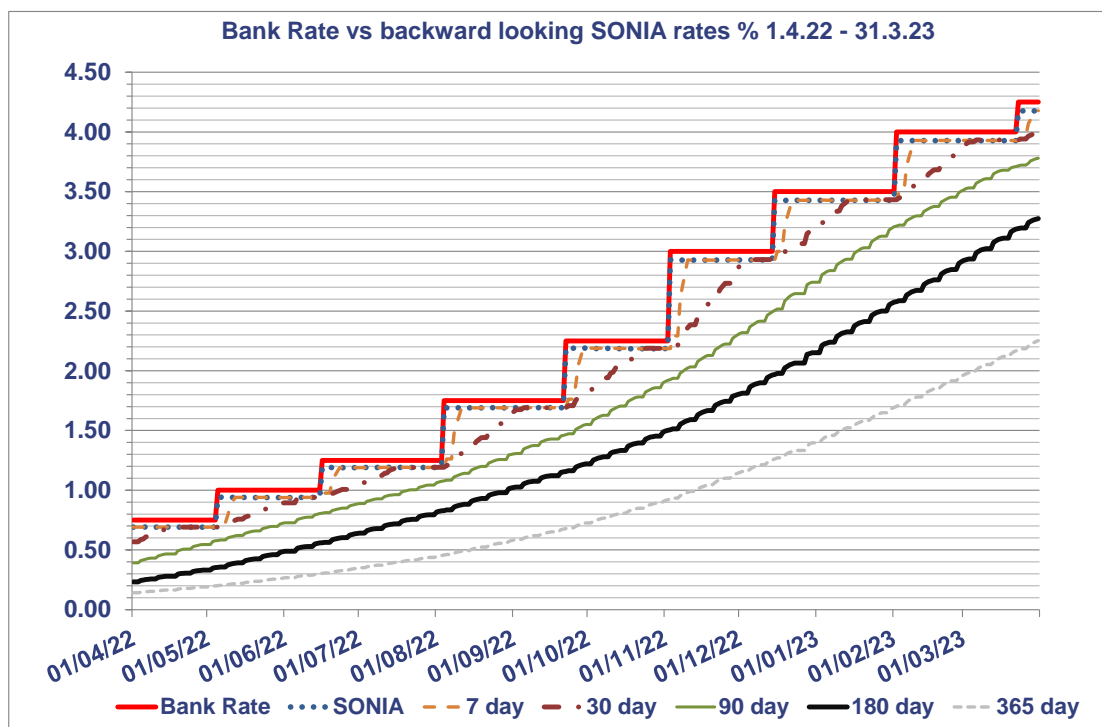
With bond markets selling off, equity valuations struggling to make progress and, latterly, property funds enduring a wretched Q4 2022, the more traditional investment options, such as specified investments (simple to understand, and less than a year in duration) became more actively used.

Meantime, through the autumn, and then in March 2023, the Bank of England maintained various monetary policy easing measures as required to ensure specific markets, the banking system and the economy had appropriate levels of liquidity at times of stress.

Nonetheless, while the Council has taken a cautious approach to investing, it is also fully appreciative of changes to regulatory requirements for financial institutions in terms of additional capital and liquidity that came about in the aftermath of the Great Financial Crisis of 2008/9. These requirements have provided a far stronger basis for financial institutions, with annual stress tests by regulators evidencing how institutions are now far more able to cope with extreme stressed market and economic conditions.

The graph and table below provides a summary of the movement in interest rates and the associated change in investment returns over the twelve months. i.e as bank rate has increased the rate of return has also increased for investments.

Investment Benchmarking Data – Sterling Overnight Index Averages (Backward-looking) 2022/23



FINANCIAL YEAR TO QUARTER ENDED 31/03/2023							
	Bank Rate	SONIA	7 day	30 day	90 day	180 day	365 day
High	4.25	4.18	4.18	4.00	3.78	3.27	2.25
High Date	23/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023
Low	0.75	0.69	0.69	0.57	0.39	0.23	0.14
Low Date	01/04/2022	28/04/2022	29/04/2022	01/04/2022	01/04/2022	01/04/2022	01/04/2022
Average	2.30	2.24	2.20	2.09	1.81	1.42	0.90
Spread	3.50	3.49	3.49	3.43	3.39	3.04	2.11

4.2 Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk

During 2022/23, the Council maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as investment returns were initially low and minimising counterparty risk on placing investments also needed to be considered.

A cost of carry generally remained in place during the year on any new long-term borrowing that was not immediately used to finance capital expenditure, as it would have caused a temporary increase in cash balances; this would have incurred a revenue cost – the difference between (higher) borrowing costs and (lower) investment returns. The Council didn't have any requirements to borrow in year but if it had it would have sought to avoid taking on long-term borrowing at elevated levels of which were great than 4% in year and has focused on a policy of internal or short term borrowing.

The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served well over the last few years. However, this has been kept under review to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when this Authority may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure and/or the refinancing of maturing debt.

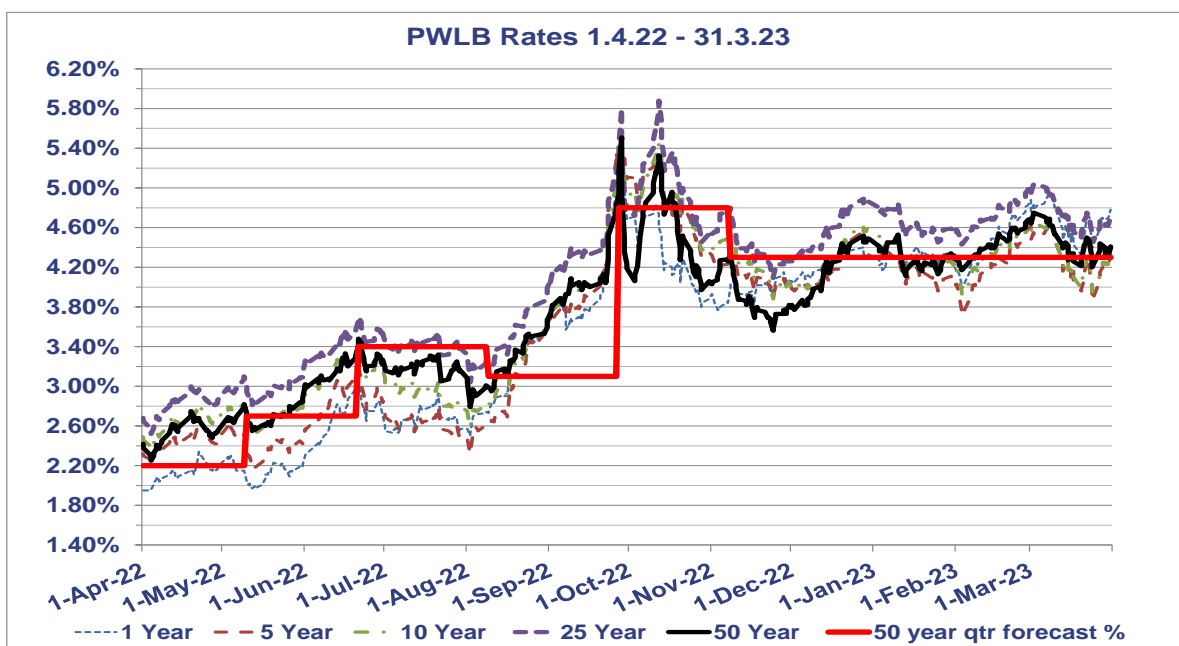
Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution was adopted with the treasury operations. The Director for Corporate Services therefore monitored interest rates in financial markets and adopted a pragmatic strategy based upon the following principles to manage interest rate risks.

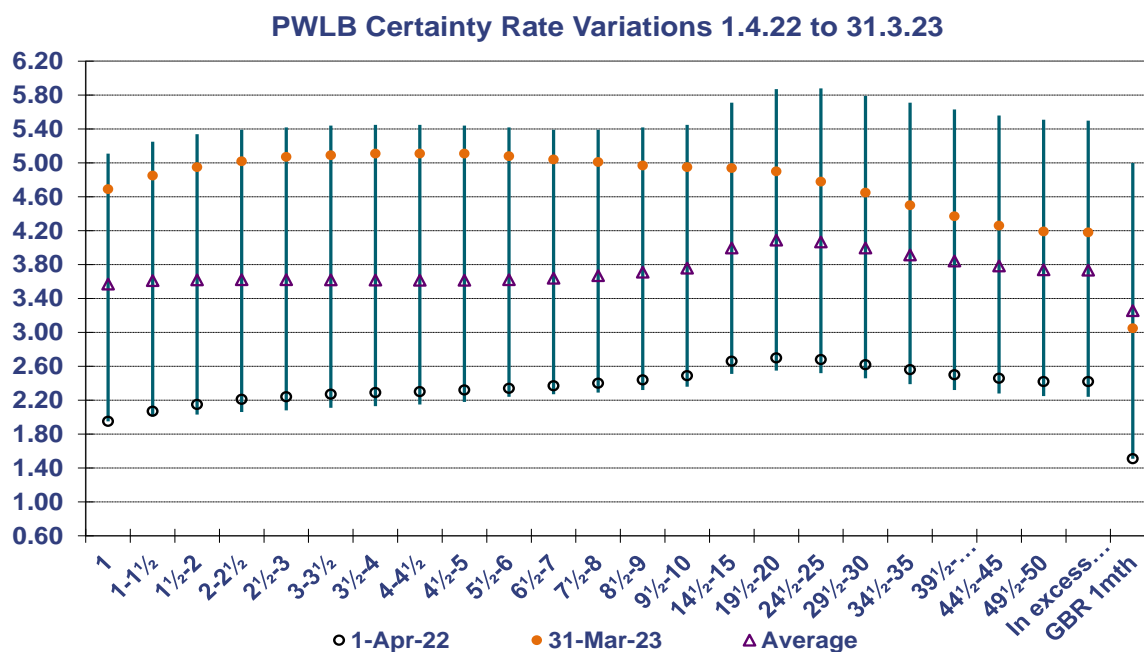
Forecasts at the time of approval of the treasury management strategy report for 2022/23 were as follows: -

Link Group Interest Rate View 20.12.21														
	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25
BANK RATE	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25
3 month ave earnings	0.20	0.30	0.50	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
6 month ave earnings	0.40	0.50	0.60	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10
12 month ave earnings	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
5 yr PWLB	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00
10 yr PWLB	1.60	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.30
25 yr PWLB	1.80	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50
50 yr PWLB	1.50	1.70	1.80	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30

Throughout the course of the last twelve months there has been a dramatic change in interest rates. Appendix 3 provides a schedule of the indicative rates provided by LINK throughout the year which outlines the sharp change from bank rate being 0.25% when the strategy was set to now being at 4.5%.

PWLB RATES 2022/23





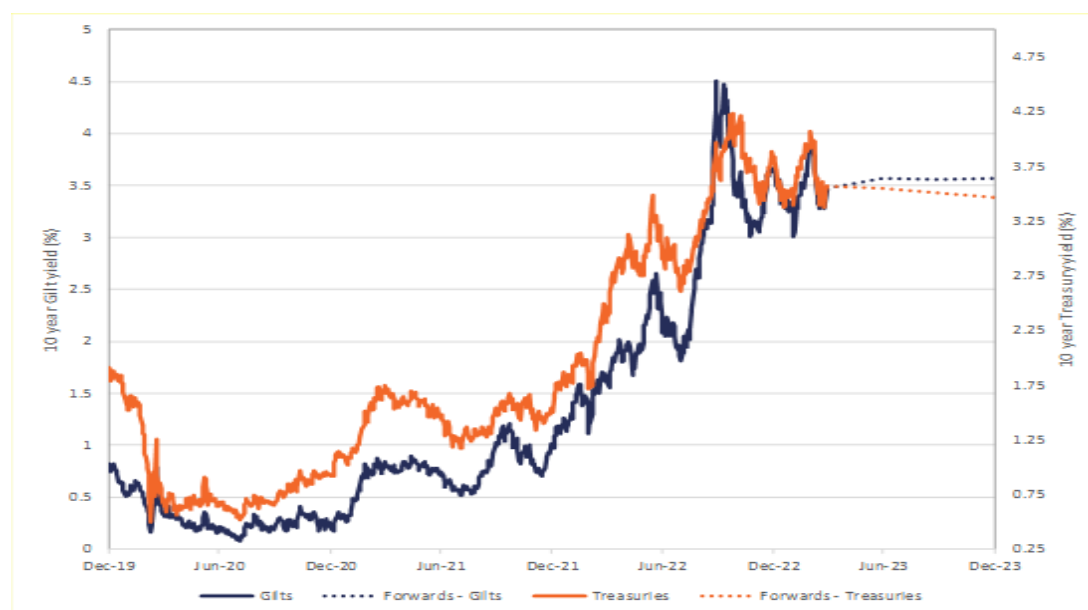
HIGH/LOW/AVERAGE PWLB RATES FOR 2022/23

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Low	1.95%	2.18%	2.36%	2.52%	2.25%
Date	01/04/2022	13/05/2022	04/04/2022	04/04/2022	04/04/2022
High	5.11%	5.44%	5.45%	5.88%	5.51%
Date	28/09/2022	28/09/2022	12/10/2022	12/10/2022	28/09/2022
Average	3.57%	3.62%	3.76%	4.07%	3.74%
Spread	3.16%	3.26%	3.09%	3.36%	3.26%

PWLB rates are based on gilt (UK Government bonds) yields through HM Treasury determining a specified margin to add to gilt yields. The main influences on gilt yields are Bank Rate, inflation expectations and movements in US treasury yields. Inflation targeting by the major central banks has been successful over the last 30 years in lowering inflation and the real equilibrium rate for central rates has fallen considerably due to the high level of borrowing by consumers: this means that central banks do not need to raise rates as much now to have a major impact on consumer spending, inflation, etc. This has pulled down the overall level of interest rates and bond yields in financial markets over the last 30 years. Indeed, in recent years many bond yields up to 10 years in the Eurozone turned negative on expectations that the EU would struggle to get growth rates and inflation up from low levels. In addition, there has, at times, been an inversion of bond yields in the US whereby 10-year yields have fallen below shorter-term yields. In the past, this has been a precursor of a recession.

However, since early 2022, yields have risen dramatically in all the major developed economies, first as economies opened post-Covid; then because of the inflationary impact of the war in Ukraine in respect of the supply side of many goods. In particular, rising cost pressures emanating from shortages of energy and some food categories have been central to inflation rising rapidly. Furthermore, at present the FOMC, ECB and Bank of England are all being challenged by persistent inflation that is exacerbated by very tight labour markets and high wage increases relative to what central banks believe to be sustainable.

Graph of UK gilt yields v. US treasury yields



Gilt yields have been on a continual rise since the start of 2021, peaking in the autumn of 2022. Currently, yields are broadly range bound between 3% and 4.25%.

At the close of the day on 31 March 2023, all gilt yields from 1 to 50 years were between 3.64% and 4.18%, with the 1 year being the highest and 6-7.5 years being the lowest yield.

Regarding PWLB borrowing rates, the various margins attributed to their pricing 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)
- **Local Infrastructure Rate** is gilt plus 60bps (G+60bps)

There is likely to be a fall in gilt yields and PWLB rates across the whole curve over the next one to two years as Bank Rate first rises to dampen inflationary pressures and a tight labour market, and is then cut as the economy slows, unemployment rises, and inflation (on the Consumer Price Index measure) moves closer to the Bank of England's 2% target.

As a general rule, short-dated gilt yields will reflect expected movements in Bank Rate, whilst medium to long-dated yields are driven primarily by the inflation outlook.

The Bank of England is also embarking on a process of Quantitative Tightening, but the scale and pace of this has already been affected by the Truss/Kwarteng "fiscal experiment" in the autumn of 2022 and more recently by the financial market unease with some US (e.g., Silicon Valley Bank) and European banks (e.g., Credit Suisse). The gradual reduction of the Bank's original £895bn stock of gilt and corporate bonds will be sold back into the market over several years. The impact this policy will have on the market pricing of gilts, while issuance is markedly increasing, is an unknown at the time of writing.

5. Borrowing Outturn

There were no borrowing requirements during 2022/23.

The Council has not borrowed more than, or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed.

No rescheduling was done during the year as the average 1% differential between PWLB new borrowing rates and premature repayment rates made rescheduling unviable.

6. Investment Outturn

Investment Policy – the Council’s investment policy is governed by DLUHC investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Council on 24/02/2022. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data, (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.

Resources – the Council’s cash balances comprise revenue and capital resources and cash flow monies. The Council’s core cash resources comprised as follows:

Balance Sheet Resources (£'000)	31.3.22	31.3.23
Balances	1,542	1,651
Earmarked reserves	14,150	13,942
Provisions	298	317
Usable capital receipts	4,751	4,279
Total	20,741	20,189

Investments held by the Council

- The Council maintained an average balance of £27.7m of internally managed funds.
- The internally managed funds earned an average rate of return of 2.19%.
- The comparable performance indicator is the average 7-day SONIA rate, which was 2.1893%.
- This compares with a budget assumption of £19.5m investment balances earning an average rate of 0.74%.
- Total investment income was £641k compared to a budget of £222k

7. The Economy and Interest Rates

The following commentary has been provided by the Council's Treasury Management advisors:

UK. Economy.

Against a backdrop of stubborn inflationary pressures, the easing of Covid restrictions in most developed economies, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and a range of different UK Government policies, it is no surprise that UK interest rates have been volatile right across the curve, from Bank Rate through to 50-year gilt yields, for all of 2022/23.

Market commentators' misplaced optimism around inflation has been the root cause of the rout in the bond markets with, for example, UK, EZ and US 10-year yields all rising by over 200bps in 2022. The table below provides a snapshot of the conundrum facing central banks: inflation is elevated but labour markets are extra-ordinarily tight, making it an issue of fine judgment as to how far monetary policy needs to tighten.

	UK	Eurozone	US
Bank Rate	4.25%	3%	4.75%-5%
GDP	0.1%q/q Q4 (4.1%y/y)	+0.1%q/q Q4 (1.9%y/y)	2.6% Q4 Annualised
Inflation	10.4%y/y (Feb)	6.9%y/y (Mar)	6.0%y/y (Feb)
Unemployment Rate	3.7% (Jan)	6.6% (Feb)	3.6% (Feb)

Q2 of 2022 saw UK GDP deliver growth of +0.1% q/q, but this was quickly reversed in the third quarter, albeit some of the fall in GDP can be placed at the foot of the extra Bank Holiday in the wake of the Queen's passing. Q4 GDP was positive at 0.1% q/q. Most recently, January saw a 0.3% m/m increase in GDP as the number of strikes reduced compared to December. In addition, the resilience in activity at the end of 2022 was, in part, due to a 1.3% q/q rise in real household disposable incomes. A big part of that reflected the £5.7bn payments received by households from the government under the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

Nevertheless, CPI inflation picked up to what should be a peak reading of 11.1% in October, although hopes for significant falls from this level will very much rest on the movements in the gas and electricity markets, as well as the supply-side factors impacting food prices. On balance, most commentators expect the CPI measure of inflation to drop back towards 4% by the end of 2023. As of February 2023, CPI was 10.4%.

The UK unemployment rate fell through 2022 to a 48-year low of 3.6%, and this despite a net migration increase of c500k. The fact remains, however, that with many economic participants registered as long-term sick, the UK labour force shrunk by c500k in the year to June. Without an increase in the labour force participation rate, it is hard to see how the UK economy will be able to grow its way to prosperity, and with average wage increases running at over 6% the MPC will be concerned that wage inflation will prove just as sticky as major supply-side shocks to food (up 18.3% y/y in February 2023) and energy that have endured since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 22 February 2022.

Bank Rate increased steadily throughout 2022/23, starting at 0.75% and finishing at 4.25%.

In the interim, following a Conservative Party leadership contest, Liz Truss became Prime Minister for a tumultuous seven weeks that ran through September and October. Put simply, the markets did not like the unfunded tax-cutting and heavy spending policies put forward by her Chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, and their reign lasted barely seven weeks before being replaced by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Chancellor Jeremy Hunt. Their Autumn Statement of the 17th of November gave rise to a net £55bn fiscal tightening, although much of the “heavy lifting” has been left for the next Parliament to deliver. However, the markets liked what they heard, and UK gilt yields have reversed the increases seen under the previous tenants of No10/11 Downing Street, although they remain elevated in line with developed economies generally.

As noted above, GDP has been tepid throughout 2022/23, although the most recent composite Purchasing Manager Indices for the UK, US, EZ and China have all surprised to the upside, registering survey scores just above 50 (below suggests economies are contracting, and above suggests expansion). Whether that means a shallow recession, or worse, will be avoided is still unclear. Ultimately, the MPC will want to see material evidence of a reduction in inflationary pressures and a loosening in labour markets. Realistically, that is an unlikely outcome without unemployment rising and wage settlements falling from their current levels. At present, the bigger rise in employment kept the ILO unemployment rate unchanged at 3.7% in January. Also, while the number of job vacancies fell for the ninth consecutive month in February, they remained around 40% above pre-pandemic levels.

Our economic analysts, Capital Economics, expect real GDP to contract by around 0.2% q/q in Q1 and forecast a recession this year involving a 1.0% peak-to-trough fall in real GDP.

The £ has remained resilient of late, recovering from a record low of \$1.035, on the Monday following the Truss government’s “fiscal event”, to \$1.23. Notwithstanding the £’s better run of late, 2023 is likely to see a housing correction of some magnitude as fixed-rate mortgages have moved above 4.5% and affordability has been squeezed despite proposed Stamp Duty cuts remaining in place.

As for equity markets, the FTSE 100 started 2023 strongly, rising to a record high of 8,014 on 20th February, as resilient data and falling inflation boosted earnings. But global equities fell sharply after concerns over the health of the global banking system emerged early in March. The fall in the FTSE 100 was bigger than the drop in the US S&P 500. Indeed, at around 7,600 now, the FTSE is 5.2% below its record high on 20th February, while the S&P 500 is only 1.9% lower over the same period. That’s despite UK banks having been less exposed and equity prices in the UK’s financial sector not falling as far. It may be due to the smaller decline in UK interest rate expectations and bond yields, which raise the discounted value of future earnings, compared to the US.

USA. The flurry of comments from Fed officials over recent months suggest there is still an underlying hawkish theme to their outlook for interest rates. Markets are pricing in a further interest rate increases of 25-50bps, on top of the current interest rate range of 4.75% - 5%.

In addition, the Fed is expected to continue to run down its balance sheet once the on-going concerns about some elements of niche banking provision are in the rear-view mirror.

As for inflation, it is currently at c6% but with the economy expected to weaken during 2023, and wage data already falling back, there is the prospect that should the economy slide into a recession of any kind there will be scope for rates to be cut at the backend of 2023 or shortly after.

EU. Although the Euro-zone inflation rate has fallen below 7%, the ECB will still be mindful that it has further work to do to dampen inflation expectations and it seems destined to raise rates to 4% in order to do so. Like the UK, growth has remained more robust than anticipated but a recession in 2023 is still seen as likely by most commentators.

9. Other Issues

1. IFRS 9 fair value of investments

Following the consultation undertaken by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities [DLUHC] on IFRS 9, the Government has extended the mandatory statutory override for local authorities to reverse out all unrealised fair value movements resulting from pooled investment funds to 31st March 2025. Local authorities are required to disclose the net impact of the unrealised fair value movements in a separate unusable reserve throughout the duration of the override in order for the Government to keep the override under review and to maintain a form of transparency.

2. IFRS 16

The implementation of IFRS16 has been delayed until 2024/25. When introduced it will bring currently off-balance sheet leased assets onto the balance sheet. Work is currently being undertaken to assess the impact of these changes. The Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit may, therefore, need to be amended mid-year once the detailed impact is known for each authority.

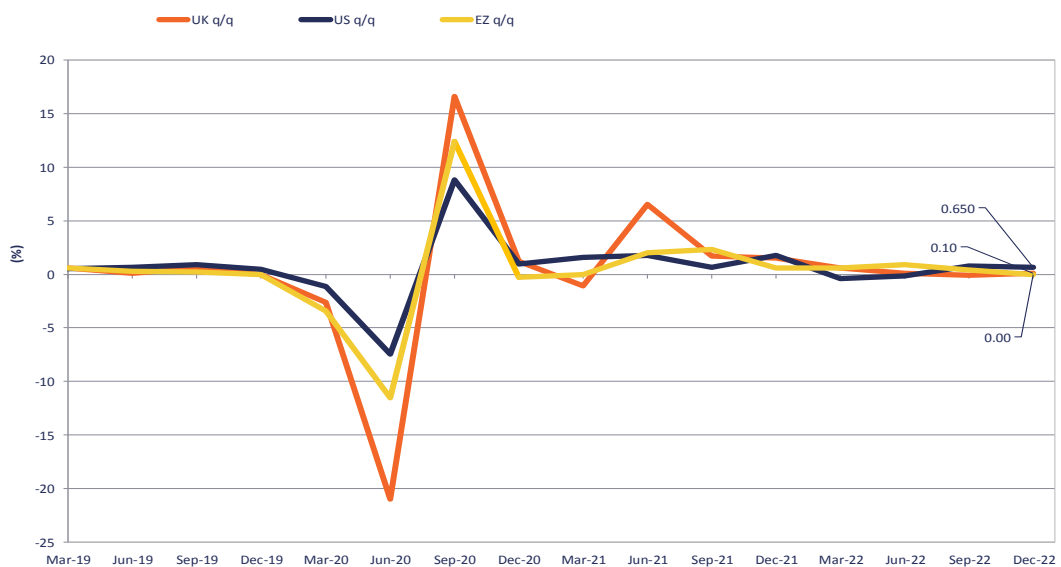
Appendix 1: Graphs

Market Expectations for Future Increases in Bank Rate (5th April 2023)

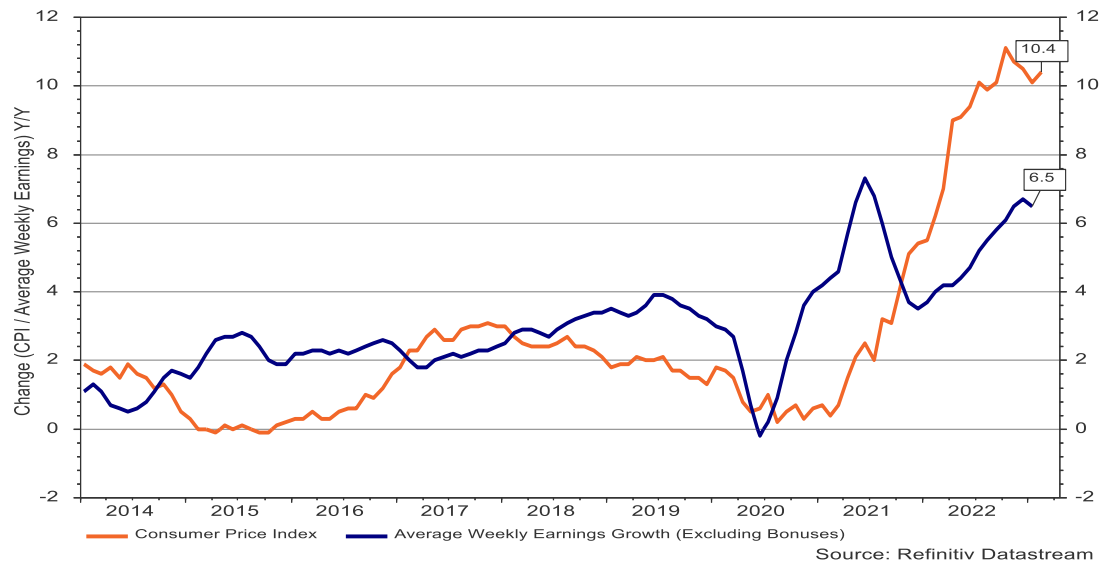


*MD0 = Change in Bank Rate expected at MPC meeting to be held May 2023, MD1 = Jun-23, MD2 = Aug-23, MD3 = Sep-23, MD4 = Nov-23, MD5 = Dec-23, MD6 = Feb-24

UK, US and EZ Quarterly GDP



CPI v Average Weekly Earnings Growth



Appendix 2: Investment Portfolio

Investments held as at 31st March 2023 compared to our counterparty list:

Melton Borough Council

Current Investment List

Borrower	Principal (£)	Interest Rate	Start Date	Maturity Date	Lowest LT / Fund Rating	Historic Risk of Default	Expected Credit Loss (£)
MMF Deutsche	2,120,000	3.95%		MMF	AAAm		
First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC	1,500,000	2.24%	05/05/2022	04/05/2023	AA-	0.002%	31
First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC	1,000,000	2.24%	05/05/2022	04/05/2023	AA-	0.002%	21
Qatar National Bank	4,000,000	2.32%	01/06/2022	31/05/2023	A	0.008%	302
First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC	1,500,000	2.80%	13/06/2022	12/06/2023	AA-	0.005%	68
National Bank of Kuwait (International) PLC	1,000,000	2.82%	28/06/2022	27/06/2023	A	0.011%	109
National Bank of Kuwait (International) PLC	1,000,000	2.82%	29/06/2022	28/06/2023	A	0.011%	110
National Bank of Kuwait (International) PLC	2,000,000	3.02%	02/08/2022	01/08/2023	A	0.015%	304
Goldman Sachs International Bank	1,500,000	4.06%	05/09/2022	04/09/2023	A+	0.019%	291
Standard Chartered Bank	1,000,000	5.14%	04/10/2022	03/10/2023	A+	0.023%	230
Qatar National Bank	1,000,000	4.75%	20/03/2023	19/03/2024	A	0.044%	438
Borrower - Funds	Principal (£)	Interest Rate	Start Date	Maturity Date			
The Local Authorities Property Fund	2,000,000	-7.70%					
Total Investments	£19,620,000	2.02%					
Total Investments - excluding Funds	£17,620,000	3.13%				0.012%	£1,904
Total Investments - Funds Only	£2,000,000	-7.70%					

Note: An historic risk of default and expected credit loss are only provided if a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and are not provided for an MMF or USDBF, for which the rating agencies provide a fund rating. The portfolio's historic risk of default and expected credit loss therefore measure the historic risk of default and expected credit loss attached only to those investments for which a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and also do not include investments which are not rated.

The Historic Risk of Default column is based on the lowest long term rating. If clients are using this % for their Expected Credit Loss calculation under IFRS 9, please be aware that the Code does not recognise a loss allowance where the counterparty is central government or a local authority since relevant statutory provisions prevent default. For these instruments, the Expected Credit Loss will be nil. Please note that we are currently using Historic Default Rates from 1990-2022 for Fitch, 1983-2022 for Moody's and 1981-2022 for S&P.

Where Link Group have provided a return for a property fund, that return covers the 12 months to December 2022, which are the latest returns currently available.

Appendix 3: Movements in Interest Rate Forecasts

The following tables show how interest rate forecasts have changed during 2022/23:-

Link Group Interest Rate View 10.5.22													
	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25
BANK RATE	1.25	1.50	1.75	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
3 month ave earnings	1.20	1.50	1.70	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70
6 month ave earnings	1.60	1.90	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.10	2.00	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90
12 month ave earnings	2.00	2.20	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.30	2.30	2.20	2.20	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10
5 yr PWLB	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
10 yr PWLB	2.80	2.80	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80
25 yr PWLB	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
50 yr PWLB	2.70	2.80	2.80	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70

Link Group Interest Rate View 21.06.22													
	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	
BANK RATE	1.75	2.25	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25
3 month ave earnings	2.00	2.50	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.50	2.30	2.30	2.20	2.20	2.20
6 month ave earnings	2.50	2.80	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.80	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.40	2.40	2.30
12 month ave earnings	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.60	2.50	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
5 yr PWLB	3.20	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.90
10 yr PWLB	3.40	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.10
25 yr PWLB	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.30
50 yr PWLB	3.40	3.40	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.00

Link Group Interest Rate View 09.08.22													
	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25
BANK RATE	2.25	2.50	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.00
3 month ave earnings	2.50	2.80	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.50	2.40	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.20	2.20	2.20
6 month ave earnings	2.90	3.10	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.50	2.40	2.30	2.30
12 month ave earnings	3.20	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.70	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
5 yr PWLB	2.80	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.70	2.70
10 yr PWLB	3.00	3.20	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.80
25 yr PWLB	3.40	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.10
50 yr PWLB	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.80

Link Group Interest Rate View 27.09.22													
	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	
BANK RATE	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.75	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	4.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.80	3.30	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	4.70	5.20	5.10	5.00	4.60	4.10	3.90	3.40	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.00	4.70	4.20	4.00	3.50	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	3.90	3.70	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.20
10 yr PWLB	4.90	4.70	4.60	4.30	4.10	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.20
25 yr PWLB	5.10	4.90	4.80	4.50	4.30	4.10	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.40
50 yr PWLB	4.80	4.60	4.50	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.10

Link Group Interest Rate View 08.11.22													
	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25
BANK RATE	3.50	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	3.60	4.30	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	4.20	4.50	4.60	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.40	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.50	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.10
10 yr PWLB	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20
25 yr PWLB	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20

Link Group Interest Rate View		19.12.22											
	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25
BANK RATE	3.50	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	3.60	4.30	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	4.20	4.50	4.60	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.40	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.50	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.10
10 yr PWLB	4.30	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30
25 yr PWLB	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.30	3.20	3.20

Link Group Interest Rate View		07.02.23											
	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26
BANK RATE	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	4.30	4.50	4.50	4.30	4.00	3.80	3.30	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.50	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	4.40	4.50	4.40	4.20	3.90	3.70	3.20	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.20	3.80	3.60	3.10	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	4.00	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.10
10 yr PWLB	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20
25 yr PWLB	4.60	4.60	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.40
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.10

Link Group Interest Rate View		27.03.23										
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26
BANK RATE	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.00	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	4.50	4.50	4.30	4.00	3.50	3.30	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.50	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	4.50	4.40	4.20	3.90	3.40	3.20	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	4.50	4.40	4.20	3.80	3.30	3.10	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	4.10	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.10
10 yr PWLB	4.20	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20
25 yr PWLB	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.40
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.10