

## Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

**Meeting Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Subject:** Key financial Strategies – Reserve, Capital and Treasury Management

**Contact details:** Sara Ansell, Jeff Carruthers and Wendy Knox

### Purpose of the report:

The Warwickshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (WOPCC) is required to produce a separate Reserves, Capital and Treasury Management strategy which will all ultimately be approved by the PCC. They are totally separate documents but are presented here as one agenda item because they represent a package of financial strategies for 2022/23, and having a number of interdependencies between them all. They should all also be read in conjunction with the annual budget report which is published on the OPCC website.

### Recommendation:

The Committee are asked to consider the three separate strategies that have been updated and reviewed for 2022/23 and feedback any comments, prior to them being finalised and formally approved by the PCC.

### Background:

The issues relating to each of the strategies are outlined in more detail below:

#### Reserves strategy 2022-23

Each year the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (WOPCC) reviews his reserve strategy in line with the budget.

In January 2018, guidance was issued to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) by the Minister for Policing & the Fire Service that set out the Government's expectations around the information to be published by Police & Crime Commissioners on their financial reserves strategies.

The guidance stipulated that "each PCC should publish their reserves strategy on their website, either as part of their medium term financial plan or in a separate reserves strategy document. The reserves strategy should include details of current and future planned reserve levels, setting out a total amount of reserves and the amount of each specific reserve held for each year. The reserves strategy should

cover revenue and capital reserves and provide information for the period of the medium term financial plan. Sufficient information should be provided to enable understanding of the purpose(s) for which each reserve is held and how holding each reserve supports the PCC's medium term financial plan.

The strategy should be set out in a way that is clear and understandable for members of the public, and should include a number of key pieces of information as outlined in the attached document. The document contains information from the recently approved budget report and Medium term financial plan, but it also includes more comprehensive details on the types of reserves and to comply fully with the government requirements and CIPFA guidance

#### Capital Strategy 2022-23:

This is the third annual review of the capital strategy that has been undertaken. It's purpose is to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are taken in line with desired outcomes and take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.

The Capital Strategy is a key document for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Warwickshire Police and forms part of the revenue and capital planning process. It provides a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the delivery of desired outcomes. It also provides an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It also includes an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure.

The capital strategy links in with the treasury management strategy in terms of funding strategies particularly borrowing for the capital programme. It is therefore suggested that the two documents are read in tandem.

#### Treasury management strategy 2022-23:

The Treasury Management Strategy is a more long standing document. Warwickshire must operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Police and Crime Commissioner's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Commissioner's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to borrowing need, and longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the WOPCC can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans.

The responsible officer for treasury management is the Chief Finance Officer to the Police & Crime Commissioner (CFO) and the day to day responsibilities for treasury management are delegated to the force in accordance with the corporate governance framework.

CIPFA defines treasury management as:

*“The management of the local authority’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”*

The Commissioner receives as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals. These reports are also shared with the Joint Audit and Standards Committee for scrutiny and consideration.

**Treasury management strategy** (attached), which includes the prudential limits and prudential indicators.

The report covers:

- ☐ the prudential indicators and borrowing strategy in accordance with the capital programme as included within the budget report, and the capital strategy.
- ☐ The minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time)
- ☐ The treasury limits and overall strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised)
- ☐ The investment strategy (the parameters for managing investments)
- ☐ Information regarding the economic and local context and debt rescheduling.

**A mid-year treasury management report** – This will update the Commissioner with the position regarding capital spending and financing, including investment and borrowing implications, and the amendment of any prudential indicators as necessary. It also monitors whether the treasury activity is meeting the strategy and whether any policies require revision.

**A year end treasury report** – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

The Commissioner scrutinises and approves the reports as appropriate and relies on the feedback from the Joint Audit and Standards Committee in this endeavour.

Warwickshire OPCC uses Arlingclose as its expert external treasury management advisors, although the OPCC recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remain with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external advisors. However, it also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources.

The CIPFA Code requires that the responsible officer ensures that relevant personnel receive adequate training in treasury management. Such training will be sought during the course of the year.