



# Q1 2018 Results

## Conference call

### FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This transcript includes certain statements regarding our assumptions, projections, expectations, intentions or beliefs about future events. These statements constitute “forward-looking statements” for purposes of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. We caution that these statements may and often do vary materially from actual results. Accordingly, we cannot assure you that actual results will not differ materially from those expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements.

You should read the section entitled “Forward-Looking Statements” in our Annual Results announcement published on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018.

**Moderator: Ross McEwan**

**27 April 2018**

**9:00 a.m. GMT**

Operator: This is Conference # 7597919.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, today's conference call will be hosted by Ross McEwan, Chief Executive of RBS. Thank you.

Please go ahead, sir.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Thanks very much, Rose. Good morning everyone.  
Thanks for joining Ewen and I.

Today, I'll give you an overview of that progress in the first quarter. And then we're happy to take questions and you're not restricted to one.

In the first 3 months of 2018, we've made a pre-tax profit of GBP £1.2 billion, that's up 70% on the same period last year. This contributed to a bottom line profit in the period of £792 million, that's exceeding the full year 2017 profit we reported back in February.

With a return on tangible equity of 9.3%, it's a good set of results showing the progress we are making despite a more competitive market. Our income is up, costs are down and we've maintained



robust capital strength. Some of our key financials for the first quarter are; income up 2.8% to £3.3 billion.

Underlying expenses are down 2.1% to £1.8 billion and this has generated positive operating JAWS of 4.9%. Our cost to income ratio is 60.5% in Q1, and this is 15.6 percentage points lower than Q1 2017.

Our capital position is stronger. CET1 ratio was 16.4% at the end of Q1 and that's up from 15.9% at the end of the year. And we continue to target end of year RWAs to be £5 billion to £10 billion lower than Q4 2017.

You have also noted the action we took earlier in this month to address the historic weakness in our Main Scheme pension fund. The pro forma impact of this on our Q1 2018 Common Equity Tier 1 capital ratio would be a reduction of 80 basis points.

This quarter's performance takes us another step closer to achieving our 2020 targets of a sub 50% cost to income ratio and 12% plus return on equity. As Q1 is usually our strongest quarter, I don't think you should extrapolate all of these trends for the full year. We also remain cautious in our outlook, continuing to de-risk the balance sheet.

Now, turning to the financial highlights of our largest franchises. The U.K. mortgage market is undergoing a period of intense competition despite the rate rise in November, average rates have actually fallen. Against this backdrop, our mortgage lending growth slowed in the first quarter as we prioritize risk and pricing discipline.

Given this our flow share reduced to 9.8% in the first quarter, down from 11.7% in Q4 2017. Despite the challenging conditions, our Personal and Business Banking franchise delivered £698 million in operating profit in the quarter and the mortgage approvals in the first quarter are stronger with a flow share of around 12%.



Commercial Banking continues to re-focus its lending on those areas where we see longer term sustainable returns within our average risk appetite and as you look at the Commercial business, please remember that we have moved assets across to both RBSI and NatWest markets.

The impact of this on the Q4 2017 balance sheet would have been to reduce net loans and advances by about £4.8 billion. And then the first quarter, the Commercial business witnessed lower impairments helping the business more than double its return on equity when compared with the first quarter of 2017.

Customer activity was down on Q1 2017 in NatWest markets. Despite this, the business generated total income of £437 million and continues to work towards a lower cost base. These results include legacy capital resolution assets. In the quarter, we reduced legacy risk weighted assets to £17.5 billion compared to £30.5 billion in Q1 2017.

Q1 also saw our customers continue to migrate from physical to digital channels at pace. Some of the trends we're seeing include cheque usage is down 17% on Q1 2017. ATM transactions are down 17% on Q1 2017. Branch counter transactions are down 7% on Q1 2017.

And at the same time customers sent 10.7 million more mobile payments in Q1 2018, that's up 36% on Q1 2017 volumes. 356,000 customers have downloaded our mobile app in Q1 2018 alone, bringing the total mobile users to 5.75 million users.

Volumes of calls to our contact centers reduced 7% on Q1 2017. And finally, Cora AI chatbot held close to 360,000 conversations in the quarter, of which 35% required no hand over to a colleague. This shift reflects a change in customer behavior to digital channels and we are responding to this by building our business model around how customers want to bank with us in the future.



Turning briefly to our legacy issues, we know many of you'll be looking for an update on our DOJ investigation. Unfortunately, we have no further update to provide today. You will have seen that we took action last week to substantially address a historical funding weakness in our main pension fund.

This is an important moment for the bank. There's also good news for the trustees and members of the scheme as it facilitates a material reduction on the level of investment risk in the Main Fund. Importantly though for shareholders, it gives certainty and brings the prospect of dividend payments another step closer.

We also continue to make strong progress towards meeting the 2019 ring-fencing deadline. Today, we have announced a number of board appointments in preparation for this. And with that, Ewen and I are now happy to take any of your questions.

Operator: Thank you, Ross. Ladies and gentlemen if you would like to ask a question please press star followed by the digit one on your telephone keypad. We will pause for a moment to give everyone an opportunity to signal for questions. We will take our first question comes from the line of Michael Helsby at Bank of America.

Michael Francis Helsby: So I want to focus on the mortgage book, if that's OK? Obviously you mentioned the increased competition impact in your flow in Q1. So there's 3 areas I'd love to explore.

First of all, I was wondering if you could talk about what you did to improve the share of your applications back to 12% in the quarter. Second, I was wondering if you could update us on the front book, back book gap that you're seeing at the moment. And finally, redemptions are clearly are starting to pick up as you run into the second half '15, first quarter '16 vintages which was of course when you really started to boost your share of flow in the mortgage market.



So I was wondering how we should think about your appetite for mortgages here as the share of growth flow that you need to deliver the same growth increased to above 12% to 13% or is that still the level that you're happy with? And if the mortgage pricing in the market doesn't improve, what will you do?

Will you shrink the book again or you look to protect mortgage spreads or you look to compete, get back in and look to compensate that with improved deposit spreads hopefully as rates rise? Sorry a lot in there, but I think it's all important questions.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Yes, it is Michael. I'll start and then hand over to Ewen.

With mortgage market is important for us. We've said we do want to grow in this. We've built really good distribution. Final quarter of last year, we did try to nudge up the pricing in the marketplace.

Unsuccessfully which shows that we – at a 10% market share, don't have the pricing power that probably some of the bigger players do. But it did as you're seen affect our flow into the first quarter, because what you write, affects the applications in one quarter flows into the next. We have put our pricing back into the market.

We've moved also a lot, our pricing around the 5-year and we're now seeing close to 50% of business heading into a 5-year part of the book. So there's being quite a shift there as customers themselves see interest rates going up and try to lock in. Around 12% look -- anything greater than our 10% I'd be happy with, as long as we've got the discipline on the credit and on the pricing, there's still reasonable profitability in this book, but if we do get or find ourselves as low profitability, yes, we will quietly back out of this.

Front book, back book spread is gone out to -- difference is going out to 70 to 80 basis points, so it's big. And what we have seen in this quarter is a couple of the bigger players actually start to move the pricing up a bit. We had seen that last year, actually one of them



moved the pricing down; while the curve went the other way which we found interesting.

But they have started to move the pricing up a bit in this quarter. So, we're doing OK. Back up to 12% market share, still profitable business, so you do it, be careful on the credit. Ewen, comments from you?

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, I mean I guess just a couple of other things Michael that, as you saw on U.K. PBB, NIM in the quarter, it was actually up by basis points if you strip out the one-offs, it was up about 1. I know a young lad surprised us all with his NIM forecast for the year as part of full year results. And I think if he was here on the call, he would probably tell you, he is still comfortable with his forecast for the year.

So what that implies obviously is we are getting some benefit coming through from liabilities for H2. So I will see what happens in May. But certainly part of the answer for us is we do expect there to be re-balancing between asset and liability spreads as the interest rate environment begins to improve.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: The other point you made, Michael just around redemptions, we did have a big redemption flow in the final quarter last year, beginning of this year which knocked us around a bit, but that's the workings of how much we put on the book two years prior. And we are starting to take just a little bit more action around holding on to some of this business as well. Particularly the (broker) flow business.

So I still interested in this market if we can grow greater than our stock, I am happy. 12% for this quarter on applications, but it's very competitive, but still making money out of it.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of David Lock of Deutsche Bank.



David John Lock: I've got 2 please. The first one's on costs. I think they are little bit higher than where consensus was expecting today and I just wondered if you could perhaps comment on the consensus cost figure for this year, which I think is sitting at about £6.2 billion excluding the strategic items and the litigation and conduct, I mean do you think that's a fair number to be gliding towards for this year?

And then I have a second question which is on the non-interest income. I appreciate you've moved a few things around this quarter. It looks like certainly versus my numbers that markets was a bit better. You have lower disposal losses, but I'm struggling a little bit with the final piece of non-interest income performance.

I just wonder, if you could comment on whether that element is an underlying improvement and where do you think you can sustain that kind of performance in the non-interest income ex. than NatWest markets performance this quarter?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Yes. So, on costs. So I think you were out by about a £1 billion. David, so we thought we would be delighted if our costs were on track to be £6.2 billion this year. But I think you'll see consensus is £ 7.3 billion -- £7.2 billion. That does feel a little bit low to us. We're not trying to change views on 2020. But as we talked about as part of full-year results, we don't expect cost reduction this year to be linear.

We've got substantially higher investment and innovation spend going in, in the order of about £300 million higher than last year and most of that's getting expensed through the P&L. We've got a few large legacy remediation projects ongoing, so that £7.2 billion number to us feels a little bit low based on the trajectory we're on.

But just as a reminder, the Q1 on Q1 comparison headline was about a 2% reduction, but if you back out to £50 million odd of VAT recovery we had in Q1 of last year, would have been closer to a 5% reduction. Headcount which we've always talked about is being a



good indicator of real underlying cost reduction was down 7% year-on-year.

So, it feels 2018 at the moment in consensus, a little bit low. But, we're not trying to change the 2020 views. On non-interest income, it's a bit hard to comment, because we don't really know what's sitting in your model. We were, I guess in terms of NatWest markets, we thought it was a pretty good quarter.

Obviously it was a tougher market for rates than we had a year ago. And some of the comparisons versus peers, we obviously report in sterling as opposed to dollars. But overall, the core NatWest markets income was down about £100 million on the year before, but we still feel very comfortable with the overall guidance we've been giving generally, that we're targeting at about £1.5 billion of income.

Again, over the last 3 years, we had £1.4 billion, £1.5 billion and £1.6 billion. There were very low capital resolution disposal losses in the quarter. And again, we've talked about having another £300 million or so cap res disposable losses coming through at some point. Some of which you'll see obviously coming through commercial, which has now got the shipping book sitting in it.

Operator: Next question comes from the line of Raul Sinha of JP Morgan.

Raul Sinha: Can I have 2 please? Pretty straightforward ones and then maybe just an invite for Ross to talk about the digital bank as well. So, in terms of the straightforward ones, I was wondering if you could give us an update on your residual shipping exposure. I couldn't quite spot it, I don't know if that's available and if you could give us on that.

And then secondly, I was wondering if you could talk a little about continuing from your comments in GBM -- currencies. If I look at the supplement and the product disclosures that you have provided, I





agree that rates obviously is down, but I was surprised to see currencies as well.

Any particular comment, is there on FX? I was not assuming that there will be an FX impact, but I would have hoped that you would have done better this quarter in some of those product lines. Is there anything else you should be reading into that? And then lastly, let's say, if Ross can give us some thoughts on the digital bank that we read a lot about that would be quite useful.

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, so, on the first question on shipping where you'll find that if you look on Page 26 of the financial supplement, we've actually provided a different breakdown now of commercial, which will be the same breakdown we'll provide going forward, very much centered around customer groupings which we thought was more helpful in the way that we look at the business.

But in the other line, you'll see that jumped up from £0.5 billion to £3.4 billion in exposure in Q4 of last year, which was shipping and some project finance plans that came across from cap res. So -- and that numbers now down to £3 billion.

So we would expect that just to continue to roll off over the coming years. But overall, I think when you look at the transfers in and the transfers out with commercial transfers out in the context of ring-fencing into Private, into RBS International. It has overall about a 2% drag on the returns in Commercial.

On the question on GBM, I don't think we were surprised, disappointed at all by the performance of currencies. Overall, in terms of the income for the quarter of £412 million, is an overall mix of business. We thought it was an OK quarter. January started out very well. February was OK, March was weaker.

I think the other thing to call out as you will see that market risk RWAs, I think similar to what we seen with others spiked up a bit in



March. We would expect those to roll off during Q2. I think substantially. So, one of the reasons RWAs were up in the quarter was about £2.6 billion of higher market risk RWAs overall, slightly higher than that in NatWest markets and we also had some modeling changes in commercial, which had about a £4 billion uplift.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Just a commentary on the digital activity inside the bank. We are doing quite a bit; we signaled that in February that we would spend more money this year and next on digital technology across the bank. It's not specifically related to one part of the bank. And we've got a number of activities going on there.

We see that the investment in this area will be good from some activities that will get into the market, but also the learning across the entire bank. So we're doing lots of work, not just in the businesses, but in HR, we have an artificial intelligence shape up that our staff use now to get answers through the bank. We're doing a lot of work in the finance team and area around, good move into the cloud.

We signaled we're going to move to the cloud on some of our core banking activities. But we are looking at other opportunities in this marketplace that as we choose to launch them, we'll let the market know. But I think it'd be fair to say we are doing a lot of quite innovative activity inside the bank, some of which you are seeing, others, we may choose not to actually put into the marketplace.

Raul Sinha: The speculation, Ross about this new digital bank in Q3 though, is that something that is totally separate or is that add on to the current systems or is this an enhancement in terms of the mobile bank?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Can I say bit of all things, things that we're doing, we are learning across the bank. We're doing outside the bank, but learning for the bank and other things that we may consider doing quite



separately and as I said, will have you to chat about them when we decide to launch them.

But I think people are getting fixated about a digital bank when we are actually thinking more broadly than that across a number of areas that would be really good for our customer groupings.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Claire Kane of Credit Suisse.

Claire Kane: Good morning and so could I have a follow-up on your -- the mortgage margin point you made, and also then one on impairments. You mentioned that the front-book: back-book differential is 70 to 80 bps.

Do you think that's going to improve given the commentary around the 5-year becoming more the popular product and also the recent rate hikes in the market? And also given that's kind of double the 40 bps, I think you previously said, are you just a bit more comforting on the deposit spread outlook, particularly with some higher rates coming, so just a bit more clarity there please around the stable NIM outlook for UKPBB.

And then secondly on impairments, I think it was, obviously low impairments across the board, all divisions. So, could you maybe just talk through some of the trends or if there's any impacts from IFRS 9 and how that's impacted the charge this quarter?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: First on the mortgage market, I mean, as I said, we are a price tag from this marketplace, we can only respond to what's going on in the market. It has been very, very competitive, but where as I said, we've seen a couple of the larger players, endeavor to push the pricing back up again, because I think we all suffer from the same issue, if I am down 70 to 80 bps on the front book, pretty much everybody else will be exactly the same, some slightly better and some slightly worse.



So, I think you've just got a number of people with lots of liquidity wanting to get it into the marketplace it's a supply and demand situation. And everyone sees mortgages as a great place to be at the moment. So I think it will get back to a more normal level, but not too sure where, we're just is going to be competitive, but only right, we believe we can actually make some money out of it and be careful on the credit side of it as well.

So no other comments on that, we're a price taker, not a price maker on this part of the market. On impairments, look we did have a good quarter compared to the same quarter last year. We weren't involved in a number of larger businesses that had some difficulty, I'll go with one or two but not across the board, but you've got to expect us to be there when we are 25% to 30% of the SME and mid-market business.

But some of these we didn't end up catching on our book this quarter, which was good. It would probably stay with our sort of more normalized in payment outlook longer term of 30 to 40 bps, but we've had a good quarter.

Ewen James Stevenson: Other thing, Claire, I mean let's go back to what I said earlier, I mean overall on margins, I think we are comfortable with the fact that we're going to be able to continue to sort of preserve NIM around these sort of levels through a combination of both liability spreads and some of the spreads we're getting on other product.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: IFRS 9, Ewen?

Ewen James Stevenson: IFRS 9 -- I mean I think IFRS 9 impairments were probably slightly higher than they would have been, had they been under IAS 39, but no real things to call out in relation to IFRS 9 at this point. 10 bps is lower than what we would have expected as a trend at this point.



As Ross said, we weren't involved in any of the large single name defaults that happened in the quarter. But we certainly wouldn't see that as a consistent trend given our market shares in both Commercial at 25% and Businesses at 30%.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Chris Cant of Autonomous. Go ahead.

Christopher Cant: I have 2, please? One just a follow up. I didn't catch what you said on further non-core losses this year, could you repeat the figure you gave in terms of the further non-core losses still to come through the operating divisions this year? And then my other question was on RWAs.

You've got this £191 billion to £196 billion guided range which you've reiterated from full year obviously, RWAs were up in the quarter. What's determining where you land in that £191 billion to £196 billion range, I know consensus is towards the bottom end of that and your RWAs were, a negative surprise on the quarter.

If there are any more to come on these commercial model uplifts? Or is that's it for the year? And with your loans coming down as well, was that factored in when you gave that RWA guidance like were you expecting your loan book to be shrinking when you gave that RWA guidance or does that actually push you towards the bottom end of the range, if your loan book is going backwards slightly.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Yes, on the non-core losses, I didn't actually give a figure for this year. I just said that capital resolution what we wound that up at the end of last year, still had about £300 million of losses to go to get to the £2 billion, a decent amount of that should come through this year, but some of it will depend on timing of disposals.



So if it's not in this year, it will be in next year. But I have a figure of around £300 million of additional losses that come through in your models.

Christopher Cant: But you did have a couple of business losses, I think in the first -- disposal losses in the first quarter. I'm not sure whether those are separate to or part of that £300 million?

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, that was relatively minimal and --

Ross Maxwell McEwan: £16 million in the first quarter Chris.

Ewen James Stevenson: So, put in £284 million payment into your models for the remainder of the disposal losses. On RWAs, so we obviously knew when we came out with that guidance of full year that we were going to see some uplift in Commercial and we actually flagged it as part of full-year results.

Be the only surprise, I think, we have 2 surprises in Q1 where, firstly the market risk RWA uplift that we saw, as I said, we expect that to sort of largely back out and hopefully back out in Q2. And because of the weakness in flow share and mortgages and the high redemptions we saw that loans were weaker, but remember the average RWA risk weighting is about 7% on mortgages.

So I'm not sure that we'll have a huge impact on RWAs. In terms of the delta between sort of 5 and 10 down off 201, I think big swing item in that is Alawwal Bank. Alawwal is still in major discussions and the outcome of those discussions, I think, will determine whether you're at the top or bottom end of that range. We know consensus is currently sitting at about £192 billion, I think it is for the full year. So I guess, within that number is an assumption that Alawwal happens and is deemed consolidated.

Operator: Next question comes from the line of Joseph Dickerson of Jefferies. Please go ahead.



Joseph Dickerson: Firstly loving the 15 page IMS early in the morning. It's fantastic. I guess, second, just following on from Michael's question at the beginning around the mortgage growth and then also what's happening on the Commercial book, can you give us some colour on, I know it's early in the year.

But what we can think about for loan growth or lack there of. I think it's quite an important dynamic now so you become a more normal bank. So, any colour there would be appreciated. Particularly in the Business Banking segment where when I was looking at your NPS scores in the NatWest branded business, it seem like we turned a corner in Q4 and they've notched back down again. So any colour on what you're doing there?

There must be a link to loan growth and NPS scores in Business Banking unlike Personal. And then also Ross, you mentioned a couple of times be careful on the credit side, with reference to Retail, is that a general comment, just around risk-based pricing or is there anything in the underlying environment that you're seeing that makes you make those comments?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Yes, look. Just a quickie on the NPS and Commercial, they dropped off one. It's a 12-month rolling average, so they dropped off a very large month, which did pull down their average; they're still sitting at #1 in the market place on net promoter score in the Commercial space.

The net promoter score for our Business Banking has been getting knocked around, because we've been changing the model quite dramatically, and also branch closures does impact that, but we've got some plans in place to start, so I think by the end of this year, you'll start seeing that, NPS starting to come back much more positively than it sits at the moment, but a good, good connectivity point chosen between service delivery and outcome of growth.



In the Commercial book, I would say, it will be reasonably static this year, Joseph. So we are going to -- we have moved some business out to RBSI that needed to be outside the ring fence. You'll see some drop-off and what characterised other, because the shipping book coming off and we made a sale I think in the first quarter of a bit of a book that we thought was probably better off in somebody else's hands than our own.

And caution, we have been picking and choosing where we have been risk on versus risk off on that portfolio and I think as you've seen in our first quarter NIM, chosen quite rightly so far. But we won't get it all right. But we do want to see growth longer term in the Commercial book as we do in the mortgage book.

Mortgages was chatted about, it is severe competition, we will be there, if we can grow greater than our normal stock, I'd be happy. Will it be -- it's 12% in the first quarter, will it stay that way? Look it depends on how desperate others want to be in that market. But again, I've just said to the team, I don't want growth for growth sake thanks.

We did that sometime ago and blew up. And banks have a terrible way of forgetting their history. So we are being a wee bit cautious, still want to do business, but we are at -- if it's not within our credit criteria, relating it to somebody else. Like the comment on 15 pages, do you want it shorter or longer is the question from the finance team, because we have that debate internally. Should I ...

Joseph Dickerson: I think it's like Goldilocks, just right.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Right, I'll tell the finance team that, but what we are trying to do on the first and third quarters are just making the conversation as opposed to a big, thick document. So, I thought we had it about right at this time around as well. But look, I think just cautious, yet there are uncertain times in this country.





We're going through Brexit, lot of uncertainty around that, that's impacted more of the top end of business than it had the smaller, medium-size, they're still borrowing. We're doing quite well on the Business Banking SME unsecured, one we're very good at it and we've got big market shares, but we are doing quite well there.

Net market we're holding market share. GDP, you see coming out today, it's low, you'd expected given the whether we had in the first quarter of the year. But you know, it's 1.5 odd percent. We'd hope to grow the bank by about that, as where our long term aim would be, to be around GDP.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Andrew Coombs of Citi. Please go ahead.

Andrew Philip Coombs: Two questions please. First, I was interested in your comment about almost 50% of new mortgage flow being on 5-year fixed, could you give the same number of the outstanding balance?

And then more broadly, what do you think that means for the industry in terms of rate sensitivity, given that more of the industry is now on 5-year, do you think that means the industry will be more disciplined around deposit pricing as well? And then secondly, I appreciate your capital return statements are linked to the outstanding litigation issues.

Perhaps I could just ask you a few thoughts on your preference for dividends, whether it's for a quarterly, a half yearly, an annual dividend, and can you just talk us through the process you go through with the PRA about reinstating that dividend as and when you have more colour.

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, maybe I can start out on capital distributions. Yes, we've talked about in the past. Getting pensions solved a couple of weeks ago, I think; don't underestimate the importance of that. It provides -- we think a substantial amount of clarity -- additional



clarity to our roll forward capital position and because we're taking two this year and linking three to dividends.

I think relative to some other peers too. It will be in our numbers rather than dragging against us for the next decade. Secondly, we have to resolve RMBS, Ross and I -- given that every single call we do externally get asked about this, understand the importance of that.

Andrew Philip Coombs: Not too sure, we'll chat about that when it is resolved.

Ewen James Stevenson: And then, on the back of that, I think we have to demonstrate the fact that we can pass the stress test, but obviously getting RMBS and pensions resolved go hand in hand. We're doing much better in stress testing. Then will be a period of engagement with the PRA, they obviously have quite a high degree of familiarity with our capital plan.

We talk regularly to them about, but you can see with today's results, the core tier 1 up to 16.4%. You take about 80 bps off that for the £2 billion pension settlement, it's still sitting at 15.6%. I think every additional billion dollars of RMBS provisions is about 35 bps of core Tier 1.

So you can, I know you all have your own numbers on that. In terms of dividend payments, when we do get back, I mean I guess, it's still a theoretical discussion at this point, but I think our thinking would be a combination of interim and final dividends when we get to that point that we would seek to set a dividend payout ratio that we would have a degree of confidence in; that we could meet through most parts of the cycle.

I think the one thing we're having to give some consideration to is the impact of IFRS 9 and whether that introduces a higher degree of earnings volatility over time and therefore we should set a sort of lower regular payout ratio as a result of that. And then on top of



that, we would expect to do specials and buybacks to continue to optimize our capital base.

Remember that, I did say at full year results that we intend to run our core Tier 1 ratio for the time being above 13%, so please bear that in mind as you think about capital returns. But I think once we get RMBS resolved, we will pretty quickly be back engaging with the PRA at that point, but it may take some time from that point to get to a point before we can agree capital distributions.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Just on the other question you had, just look at, we were doing about 65% to 75% of the book on 2-year, it swung more towards 50% on the 5-year, the impact on deposit pricing - I think it'll have very little, given the structural hedging we do, and the also behavioral pricing of deposits so.

I don't see much impact at all on that, Andy, but you are just seeing customers wanting longer-term, security about the pricing of their mortgage given the talk of price hikes.

Andrew Philip Coombs: I guess the issue for you is most of your rate sensitivity comes though your liability spreads, because you have a much bigger current account franchise. With the peers which are more savings funded; if they are not seeing the same churn on the asset side, does that mean, they have to have lower deposit betas in order to justify the economics and therefore is that benefit for you as well?

Ewen James Stevenson: Well, I guess that's a question that you should ask them Andy, but from our perspective, we do think obviously in a rising rate environment, we do disproportionately benefit relative to peers because of the structure of our funding branches you pointed out.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Jason Napier of UBS.

Jason Clive Napier: Two quick ones, never missing an opportunity to flog the net interest margin dead horse. I appreciate we are dividing results into



a very short period of time, but just looking at the breakdown you provide on gross yield, funding costs and return on free funds.

I just noticed the free funds number somewhat volatile in the last quarter, and I'm just wondering within the sort of broadly stable margin that you've delivered and that you're guiding towards what role the hedge might have in that, whether there is any changes in what that's returning and how you see those pieces evolving in future?

And then secondly, I wonder whether you wouldn't mind just giving us a sense of your current thinking on the timing of Williams & Glyn and the attrition there, and just reminding us of what revenues are at stake as far as that process is concerned?

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, on the Williams & Glyn, there's -- just as a reminder. There's about £200 million of revenue that is at risk, from a sort of modeling perspective because -- we're continuing obviously to keep that revenue for the time being.

But the offset to that is obviously a delay in the reintegration of Williams & Glyn, so that should broadly net each other out, I think. The good news with the delay obviously is we're a lot more prepared at this point and fully ready to start addressing the remedy as and when the independent body is announced and we're able to move forward.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: We have started writing out to Williams & Glyn SME customers, just letting them know that they're likely to get an offer this year to move across the attrition rights and that much higher than anywhere else in the banks.

So a pretty stable book, after 8 years of being told they're going all sorts of different directions, but we getting ourselves ready to make those offers, so when the independent body is up and ready, we will



certainly be ready, but it's about 120,000 SME customers that we will have to move.

And it also has a big impact on the branch network of 275 branches that haven't been rationalized for now 9 years and you've seen the decline in branch usage and then added to that 120,000 customers of SME, that won't be using them, or won't need to use them. It's quite a shift that we're going to have to take a process, take our people through this year.

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, and on that hedge, Jason, just to give everyone some comfort, we don't try and play around with it at all. We've been pretty open and transparent with what we do, which is -- it's a rolling hedge, and we roll it every month. So the current account and on-demand deposits on a 5-year basis and the equity on a 10-year basis.

So, we don't try and guess where interest rates are moving and adjust it. So I mean anything that does adjust occasionally is some changes in our views on customer behavior, characteristics, but they -- apart from that, there is everyone should just expect that there was some volatility as interest rates moved around a bit. But, we're certainly not trying to play around with that.

Operator: And your next question comes from the line of Martin Leitgeb of Goldman Sachs.

Martin Leitgeb: Could I first of all get back to the mortgage strategy and I'm just trying to understand your comments because obviously looking at the numbers, RBS has probably one of the strongest funding positions in the market, £20 billion excess deposits within U.K. PBB alone, probably a meaningful part of TFS also within that division.

On top of that, the funding costs, so the deposit funding cost are probably towards the lower end of the whole market. And the strategy or the number we see today of lower growth in the



mortgage base, is that more to do with your preference to retain margins, or do you see front book pricing at this stage such that you're getting quite close to your cost of equity, or you kind of where you decide -- that probably makes sense or we hold on to it.

And that would obviously almost imply that there is some other players out there, which would price mortgages, which was probably a bit more optimistic view on risk cost or etc. And then if the scenario would be that mortgages would not be the predominant focus for growth, would you see other areas for growth, say SME lending or other pockets of the market?

Or would you come to potentially a situation where you could say actually we could be more aggressive on the deposit side, and try to pass on a lower amount of a potential future rate hikes going forward and try to bring -- and to optimize the asset liability structure a little bit more on the deposit side there.

The second question is just looking at your divisional disclosure and the divisional return on tangibles on Slide 11, and you essentially making north of cost of equity pretty much everywhere except Ulster and NatWest markets.

In NatWest markets you clearly laid out the path of costs and how they will come down over time and that essentially addresses the profitability. I was just wondering if you could give us an update on Ulster Bank's performance this quarter and your strategy on improving returns there.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Can I just pick up on the mortgage piece, let me be quite clear, we like mortgages, right. What happened in the last quarter of last year, the team did try to balance out the pricing points with volume points and again we proved to ourselves we have no pricing power or very, very limited pricing power, nobody followed or did anything, which shows a highly competitive marketplace.



We didn't get down to a point where we didn't see that the pricing we had would not make us money, it's still did, but we just saw that longer-term we needed we thought we should see if we couldn't move the pricing back up to a better rate, it didn't work. You've seen the flow in the first quarter of 12%, that's good.

We've gone back to our normal pricing points, we're not the leaders in the market, but we— we're just competitive. So, it's nothing more or less to that, it is a balance, and I ask the team to balance it out but just don't play around with the credit side, thank you very much. There are parts of that mortgage market that we think we can do better rate and we'll have a go at, but it's just a sheer balancing act that the team were trying to work on find a quarter of last year that flow through, nothing more or less.

And on the Slide 11, you're quite right, NatWest Markets has a full year plan to get back to an 8% to 10% return on equity, they're two and a quarter years into that plan doing a very good job. We are re-platforming that business. We've said we're spending about £200 million a year on its restructuring; it all goes to the cost line, because we can't capitalise any of that and it's on plan.

So, Chris on the team I think, he is doing a very good job in markets that we have a strategic position in. Costs are too high and they are working that through with new platforms which will reduce down our cost of operating over the next couple of years as we get into 2020. Ulster Bank, it is one of the areas that we are now -- are very concentrated on.

It's quite a difficult market in Ireland to operate in from a -- there is a regulatory framework, but also the government have put a lot of pressure on banks and there's a number of reviews going across the banking sector, it doesn't matter whether it's mortgages, doesn't matter if it's SME, there is a lot of reviews were being done from a conduct perspective over there.



We also want to get that book back into appetite as far as the non-performing loans are concerned, and we said at the end of last year, we took just over £100 million charge on couple of books we want to sell. Those will be in the market in the next 6 months. So, lots of work going on. Lots of focus on Ireland at this point in time.

Front books OK. Back book, a very big tracker mortgage book that we don't make any money out of. So, work in progress and over the next 12 to 24 months, that is a business that we do see will give us better returns, but it's been slower than we'd liked. And we had a lot of other bigger issues to focus on; this is now getting our full focus.

Ewen James Stevenson: I think, just one other thing Martin, as part of your first question was the parts I'm sorry, we are seeing good growth actually. I mean over the last year, one of the pleasing things that we've seeing in the business is growth actually starts spreading out beyond mortgages.

So, if you look at year-on-year growth rates in current accounts, savings, business banking, even for our own customers now in personal advances. One change that we've made on the mobile app in the first few months ago, is what we call an always-on feature that allows us to effectively personally credit score you as a customer. Because we know your data; has seen a decent uptick in unsecured lending to our end customers, because we know you, we can credit score you, we're very comfortable with the risk.

So overall, I think we are now seeing growth in segments we want to grow and we're comfortable that we, if we choose to, can grow about market growth rates. And just on mortgages, even at current spreads, returns on capital are comfortably above cost of capital returns. We think you should all want us to continue to grow the mortgage book, even at these spreads given where we see returns. We think it's a very sensible use of our capital.





Ross Maxwell McEwan: We fully price against all of our products. There is not a marginal pricing activity that we undertake, we fully price against all of our products and services.

Martin Leitgeb: And just one follow-up on deposits, so if the Bank of England were to hike rates again in May as anticipated, would you expect a similar personal rate as you had in the last hike or has anything changed in terms of your assessment there?

Ewen James Stevenson: I mean, I think we are always just alive to have competition responds, certainly a big chunk of our book is current accounts and on-demand deposits, there we get full pass through and on savings accounts, it's a competitive market and we will respond competitively.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of John Cronin of Goodbody.

John Cronin: Just a couple of questions, one in relation to the underlying impairment trends in the Commercial Banking book. Appreciate that the 4Q number was elevated, but the £23 million reported impairments charge in the first quarter was the lowest since I think 3rd quarter of 2016.

So any commentary you can make around the underlying trends in that book including arrears experience would be helpful. And then secondly just on a medium to longer-term point on the RWA intensity, just looking at the PRA's comment in its business plan for 2018-2019 published in early April, around the considerations pertaining to the implementation date for the Basel III reforms package.

Have you any concerns at this point that there could be a potentially swifter timetable imposed by the regulator in terms of those in terms of the risk weighting recalibrations and then thirdly just a clarification on the strategic costs that you disclosed separately.



Is it your intention to continue to report in that format? Let's suppose what I'm getting out there is how easy is it to segregate the actual costs with respect to the digital transformation program. How easy is it -- is it separate those from the overall operating cost of the business?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Just on the RWA intensity, I don't think there is any -- we haven't heard anything from the regulators that there's going to be any swifter implementation. I think they've laid out the plan and that's what we're working towards and the timing of it. So I don't think there is any changing to that.

Ewen James Stevenson: In terms of what we talked about to the market is just for planning purposes and assumption that will impact us from the end of 2021.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: On the strategic costs formatting, we just do -- put the items that are one-off items into that bucket. We are going through still some pretty big transformation of this bank as we move from physical bricks and mortar and physical distribution to much more mobile and digital distribution, and how we operate the business, that are quite big strategic cost changes. And where there of one-off nature, they will fall into a strategic costs.

Ewen James Stevenson: But I do think, philosophically as you've seen in these results, we're trying very hard going forward to move from adjusting all of our numbers to just reporting unadjusted numbers.

So we're trying not to say here's one bucket of costs and here's another bucket of costs, look at the total cost line item, 2020 cost target is not an adjusted cost target, it's to get actual cost, total cost to below 50% of our actual income.

So I think we're going to view the two sort of hand in hand increasingly. And then the last question on commercial impairments. I wouldn't look at Q1 as a trend. We do think it was low and we've



previously guided overall, 30 to 40 bps of impairment costs across the portfolio. And we don't see any reason to change that at the moment.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Jennifer Cook of Mediobanca. Please go ahead.

Jennifer Cook: Your strategic spend came in a little bit lighter I think versus consensus, is that just implying that's a bit more back-end loaded maybe this year? And then second question, you had debt sale in U.K. PBB, any guidance around debt sales for the rest of year?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Just on the strategic cost, they will be lumpy, depending upon when we activate certain things, there was only £209m in the quarter. It did have a couple of -- you had one property in there, but we've got several other things that we've clearly targeted to do this year and next.

So I would suspect it will be lumpy, but I'd stay around that guidance of £2.5 billion over 2018 and 2019. Those are still our closest estimates of the strategic cost over that period of time, but it will be lumpy.

Ewen James Stevenson: On debt sales - maybe one or two, but nothing of any particular note, I think that we're planning. The one debt sale of note is obviously we previously talked about selling a significant portion of the NPL book in Ireland, we're sort of planning to sell about a 3rd of the book this year and that process continues.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Jonathan Pierce of Exane. Please go ahead.

Jonathan Richard Kuczynski Pierce: 3 quick ones. Firstly, Could you give us an updates on the actual size of the structural hedge and the yield in Q1? The second question is the RWA's benefited from £700 million - £800 million in the quarter from pro-cyclicality.

Just checking repeat that sort of run rate moving forward is not factored into your RWA guidance, because obviously that's still £3 billion? Thirdly and may be most importantly, most of the pro-cyclicality is coming through in the mortgage books, so back of envelope, it looks like your mortgage risk rate now is actually about 6.1%, so just wanted a bit of an update on the RWA inflation expectation in 2020 when the PRA rules change on mortgages.

And also just to check, particularly on the context, you're writing an lot more 5-year business, how are you thinking about pricing now, are you capturing fully all of this this RWA step change in 2020 when you're thinking about margins today?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Yes, to the latter. You know as I said before, they have to fully price including cost of capital, and as it runs for 5 years, it's going to pick up the increase RWAs from 2021 onwards.

So we are fully pricing on that, probably a good question to ask other banks. We are of the discipline and here to make sure that each product and service stands on its own, and we're not cross-subsidising across the bank, we know what we are tackling. I'll leave all those other interesting pro-cyclicality questions to my CFO, though strictly around the mortgage book.

Ewen James Stevenson: Thanks Ross. On the structural hedging Jonathan, we haven't disclosed that, I don't think it's moved to whole lot since 2 months ago, either in size or rate. So I think you can still model the assumptions you had from a couple of months ago.

On RWAs, sorry I haven't got figures in front of me, where the average risk weighting is for our mortgage book in the U.K., whether it's going from 7 to 6, but it was slightly below 7 at full year, but yes, the £12 billion of uplift I think was on an assumption that we'd get to about a 15% overall risk weight by the time we got out of the back-end of 2020.



And within that there was an assumption of 6% or 7% wherever it is at the moment would tick-up slightly ahead of that. So that pro-cyclical benefit should back out I think.

Jonathan Richard Kuczynski Pierce: OK, so for choice the sort of £2 billion odd number could be a few billion higher than that if the risk rate stays down at just north of 6 which is where it appears at the moment.

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, but then you'll get the benefit through the 6 being lower than what we would have anticipated, so the net impact going otherwise shouldn't change.

Operator: And your last question comes from the line of Chris Manners of Barclays.

Christopher Robert Manners: So just 2 questions, if I may? I was just looking at PPI, so I guess your last quarter you utilised about £100 million of provision, this quarter it stepped up about £150 million, suppose you've got around 6 quarters left until the time bar £900 million provision.

So you're sort of covered if the run rate stays stable in terms of provision utilisation. I just thought it would be helpful given that we've seen some of the other banks, and provide more -- just maybe you could give us a little bit of a colour around what you're seeing and how well provided you think you are?

And the second one was just to return on deposit beta after the GDP print this morning, that, the chance of a May rate hike's come down at 25%, but I suppose it would be interesting, if you could just tell us a little bit about how you think about deposit beta and what your pass through was on the first rate hike.

When I look to U.K. PBB, it seems that your funding cost -- the deposit cost was around 15 bps in September, stepped up to around 27 bps last quarter, so with a 25 bps rate hike. So, it looks like you



passed through about half to your customers or 12 bps. So, I just thought I'd ask you how you think about that?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Yes. So if you look at the PPI, of the £152 million cash charge that we took in Q1, about £100 million of that was real cash run rate and the residual was plevin related.

So when we look at that 100 run rate, and there's probably about another 100 of the 900 remaining provision that relates to one-offs. So, roughly we think we've got 7 plus quarters of coverage from here at the current run rate.

Yes, we appreciate that some other banks, some quite close to home Chris took some additional provisions in Q1. We obviously didn't feel that we needed to do that and we continue to think that we are reasonably, considerably provided relative to peers, but, yes, the second advertisement campaign's just started, but there wasn't anything in our model in Q1 that surprises, I guess is the point to take away. It does seem to have surprised some others.

Christopher Robert Manners: And we'll have another look into this Q2, the way you --

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, on the deposit beta, just as a reminder to everyone, when we set 2020 targets, we'd put into our IFRS 9 transitional document what our interest rate assumptions were, there were only 2 base rate rises built in and at full year when we announced our current consensus was about 5.

I assume obviously the GDP figures have come out, what we've been on the call, so we're sort of adjusting live to changes and assumptions. But we're still pretty confident that those 2 base rate rises look pretty conservative relative to even current interest rate assumptions at this point.

So we do did think that there is some upside in our income forecast, which were based on our 2020 targets. On the deposit beta, I mean



as I said earlier to martin it's going to depend very much on competitive response at the time, but certainly we'll get a full pass through to current accounts and on-demand deposits and how we react in the savings market will be both competition around base rate rises, but frankly also how people are going to respond to the roll-off of the TFS, which was a £140 billion of funding to the market.

Christopher Robert Manners: Could I ask you for the rate hike we just had what your deposit beta was?

Ross Maxwell McEwan: We retained, I think somewhere around 30% to 40% of it I think, it was the about number I think we had.

Christopher Robert Manners: It's just interesting, so that we can sit and at least try and make a judgment about whether that number should come up or down, depending on competitive environment, so that's helpful.

Ewen James Stevenson: Yes, I think definitely across different products.

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Products, yes, some of you get the whole lot and others you get nothing. But I think it was around that 30% to 40%, Chris that we retained.

Operator: Thank you, there are no further...

Ross Maxwell McEwan: Rose, thank you very much for hosting the call. I just thought I'd make just couple of comments, key takeaways. First off, we've had a good start to 2018, income is up, costs are down, and as you've again seeing our capital has strengthened. Bottom line profit for the first quarter exceeds the amount we reported for the full year 2017.

Secondly, customers continue to migrate to our digital channels. At the same time, we are investing to accelerate our transformation from high cost fixed physical assets to a lower cost more flexible and technology-led operating model.



And thirdly, we do remain cautious in our outlook, and continue to de-risk we've significantly address the deficit in our pension plan, and we now have only one significant issue left to resolve before we can be in a position to consider the resumption of dividend payments. Thanks for joining us on the call and have a great day.

Operator: Thank you. That does conclude your conference for today. Thank you for your participation.

You may now disconnect.

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