

Swanage Town Council



RESERVES POLICY

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1. Introduction

The Council is required, under statute, to maintain adequate financial reserves in order to meet the needs of the organisation. Section 49A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, requires that local precepting authorities in England have regard to the level of reserves needed to meet estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. Consideration should also be given to the Joint Panel on Accountability & Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide.

The Council's policy on the establishment, maintenance and adequacy of reserves and balances will be considered during the annual review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and preparation of the annual budget.

The Council will hold reserves for these three main purposes:

- a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing - this forms part of general reserves;
- a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies - this also forms part of general reserves;
- a means of building up funds, often referred to as earmarked reserves, to meet known or predicted requirements; earmarked reserves are accounted for separately but remain legally part of the General Fund.

An authority has no legal powers to hold reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs, or for specifically earmarked purposes. The general reserve should not be significantly higher than the annual precept.

2. General Reserves – The General Fund Balance

The General Fund Balance, commonly termed the “working balance”, is a balance on the Council's revenue account which is not held for any specific purpose other than to cushion the Council's finances against any unexpected short-term problems in the council's cash flow.

3. **Policy:** JPAG recommends that a General Reserve between three and twelve months of Net Revenue Expenditure is maintained, with larger authorities holding nearer to three months. However, an authority may adopt a General Reserve Policy to set a level appropriate to their size and situation. For this authority, a General Reserve is to be maintained at a level based upon a risk assessment carried out annually by the Responsible Finance Officer when setting the budget for the forthcoming year. Any surplus on the general reserve above the required balance may be used to fund capital expenditure, be appropriated to earmarked reserves or used to limit any increase in the precept requirement.

4. Financial Risk Management

In order to assess the adequacy of the general fund when setting the annual budget, the Responsible Finance Officer will take account of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the Council. The requirement of the level of the general fund balance for the

forthcoming year will therefore be based upon a risk assessment of the Council's main areas of income and expenditure and take into account any provisions and contingencies that may be required. This financial risk assessment will be based upon the main financial risks identified in the Council's Corporate Risk Register

The main items to be considered are:

Financial Risk	Analysis of Risk
Pay inflation is greater than budgeted	The cost of living increase is above the level allowed for in the estimates.
Contractual inflation is greater than budgeted	A general assumption is made when estimating the percentage increase on rates & utilities. This may increase above budgeted inflation. Professional and other services costs increase above estimate.
Treasury management income is not achieved	The actual interest rate realised is below the rate predicted at budget setting.
Car park revenue is below forecast	That a decrease in revenue is realised from estimate.
Seasonal and rental income is lower than budgeted/shortfall in income from fees and charges	That a decrease in revenue is realised from estimate.
Insurance Cover	That events occur resulting in losses that are not covered by insurance.

5. **Earmarked Reserves**

Earmarked reserves represent amounts that are generally built up over a period of time which are earmarked for specific items of expenditure to meet known or anticipated liabilities or projects, and will naturally decrease as they are spent on their intended purpose. The 'setting aside' of funds to meet known future expenditure reduces the impact of meeting the full expenditure in one year. The Council, when establishing an earmarked reserve, will set out:

- the reason/purpose of the reserve;
- how and when the reserve can be used;
- procedures for the management and control of the reserve;
- a process and timescale for review of the reserve to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy.

The following earmarked reserves will be held by the Council:

Reserve	Use	Policy for Use
Vehicle & Plant Replacement	To build up funds to replace vehicles and plant	That the purchase of vehicles and plant, as agreed by Council, be met from this reserve.

King Georges Play Area and Skate Park	To build up funds to replace play & skate park equipment	That the purchase of equipment, as agreed by Council, be met from this reserve.
Play Equipment-General Areas	To build up funds to replace play equipment	That the purchase of equipment, as agreed by Council, be met from this reserve.
Car Park Machines	To build up funds to replace car park ticket machines	That the purchase of equipment, as agreed by Council, be met from this reserve.
Tennis Courts Refurbishment	To build up funds to resurface the tennis courts	That a contribution of up to £3,600 be made by the Council with an equal contribution to be met by the Tennis Club.
Seafront Enhancement Reserve	To build up funds to meet the costs of improvements to the Spa, Weather Station Field and Sandpit Field	That expenditure to be met from the reserve is agreed by full council.
Sea Defence Project Reserve	To hold the funds provided by Wessex Water following an Enforcement Undertaking	To help fund a sea defence project
Public Conveniences Fund	To build up funds to meet future capital expenditure	To fund future capital projects as agreed by full council.
Beach Huts Reserve	To build up funds to meet future capital expenditure	To fund future capital projects as agreed by full council.
Football Club Facilities	To build up funds to meet future costs	To fund future capital expenditure at the Football Club.
De Moulham Back Roads	To fund the repair and maintenance of the De Moulham Estate Back Roads	That the surplus/(deficit) on the revenue account be appropriated to/(from) the reserve.
Insurance & Contingency Reserve	To hold funds to cover one-off costs that may result from devolved services	That any expenditure to be met from the reserve is agreed by Council.
Community Infrastructure Levy	To hold funds for the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area	This money must be spent in accordance with Regulation 59 C, within 5 years of receipt from the Unitary Authority.
IT Equipment	To hold funds to meet future expenditure for IT equipment replacement	That the purchase of equipment, as agreed by Council, be met from this reserve.
Environmental Projects	To build up funds to meet future capital expenditure	To fund future capital projects as agreed by full council.
Committed revenue expenditure C fwd	To hold funds committed to revenue expenditure which have been deferred to the next financial year	To fund deferred revenue expenditure as recommended by the Town Clerk and agreed by full Council.

6. Statutory Reserves

Local Authorities also hold reserves that arise out of the interaction of legislation and proper accounting practices. At Swanage Town Council this is:

- Capital Receipts Reserve - this reserve holds the proceeds from the sale of assets, and can only be used for capital purposes in accordance with regulations.

7. Review of the Adequacy of Balances and Reserves

As the Council's level of reserves are related to its precept requirement it is important that these reserves are not excessive. In assessing the adequacy of reserves the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the authority will be taken into account. The level of general and earmarked reserves will be reviewed as part of the annual budget preparation.

Table 1: Estimate of Reserves and Balances 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Forecast Outturn 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23	Estimate 2023/24	Estimate 2024/25
The General Fund Balance (GFB)				
<i>Movements on the General Fund:</i>				
Net Operating Expenditure	605,100	875,110	868,160	921,025
Transfers to/(from) Reserves	262,890	37,000	75,000	75,000
Capital Expenditure charged to the GFB	0	0	0	0
	867,990	912,110	943,160	996,025
<i>To be financed by:</i>				
Precept	747,040	840,000	860,000	880,000
Grants/Donations	66,840	3,000	3,000	3,000
	813,880	843,000	863,000	883,000
Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	(54,110)	(69,110)	(80,160)	(113,025)
General Fund Balance B f'd	818,090	763,980	694,870	614,710
Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	(54,110)	(69,110)	(80,160)	(113,025)
General Fund Balance C f'd	763,980	694,870	614,710	501,685

Earmarked Reserves				
Vehicle & Plant Replacement	10,000	20,000	30,000	40,000
King Georges Play Area & Skate Park	53,017	38,017	33,017	43,017
Play Equipment-General Areas	21,206	31,206	41,206	51,206
Car Park Machines	34,248	39,248	44,250	49,250
Tennis Courts Refurbishment	7,967	10,967	13,967	16,967
Seafront Enhancement Scheme	1,304,557	1,004,557	419,555	0
Sea Defence Project	450,000	450,000	0	0
Public Conveniences	70,000	85,000	100,000	30,000
Beach Huts Reserve	65,000	75,000	85,000	14,555
Football Club Facilities	6,958	6,958	6,958	6,958
De Moulham Back Roads	20,815	22,815	24,815	26,815
Insurance & Contingency Reserve	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Community Infrastructure Levy	112,701	101,701	101,701	101,701
IT Equipment Reserves	18,164	23,164	28,164	33,164
Environmental Projects	5,000	10,000	15,000	20,000
Committed expenditure c fwd	38,000	0	0	0
Reserves C f'd	2,257,633	1,958,633	983,633	473,633

Usable Capital Receipts Reserve

UCRR Balance B f'd	2,498,786	2,021,186	1,678,186	1,658,186
Capital expenditure	(477,600)	(343,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0
UCRR Balance C f'd	2,021,186	1,678,186	1,658,186	1,638,186

Total Useable Reserves

The General Fund	763,980	694,870	614,710	501,685
Earmarked Reserves	2,257,633	1,958,633	983,633	473,633
Useable Capital Receipts Reserve	2,021,186	1,678,186	1,658,186	1,638,186
Total of Reserves held by the Council	5,042,799	4,331,689	3,256,529	2,613,504

Table 2: Estimate of Additions to and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves 2022/23

Earmarked Reserves	Actual 31/03/2021 £	Additions	Expenditure	Forecast 31/03/2022 £
Vehicle & Plant Replacement	0	10,000	0	10,000
King Georges Play Area & Skate Park	93,017	0	40,000	53,017
Play Equipment-General Areas	11,206	10,000	0	21,206
Car Park Machines	26,748	7,500	0	34,248
Tennis Courts Refurbishment	4,967	3,000	0	7,967
Seafront Enhancement Scheme	1,134,557	200,000	30,000	1,304,557
Sea Defence Project	450,000	0	0	450,000
Public Conveniences	50,000	20,000	0	70,000
Beach Huts Reserve	55,000	10,000	0	65,000
Football Club Facilities	6,958		0	6,958
De Moulham Back Roads	27,815	2,000	9,000	20,815
Insurance & Contingency Reserve	40,000	0	0	40,000
Community Infrastructure Levy	191,161	47,840	126,300	112,701
IT Equipment Reserves	13,164	5,000	0	18,164
Environmental Projects	0	5,000	0	5,000
Committed revenue expenditure c fwd	86,450	0	48,450	38,000
Total	2,191,043	320,340	253,750	2,257,633

Transfers from the General Fund to EMR: £320,340, (including £47,840 CIL)

less transfers to the General Fund to finance revenue expenditure: £57,450

Net movement to Earmarked Reserves from the General Fund: **£262,890**

less Financing Capital Expenditure from EMR: **(£196,300)**

Total increase/(decrease) in Earmarked Reserves: £66,590