

EARMARKED FUNDS POLICY 2017/18**General County Fund**

The level of the General County Fund will reflect the overall financial environment and the key financial risks faced by the County Council. The amount held will be reviewed at least annually. Any funds in excess of the assessed amount will in the first instance be used to fund one off/time limited expenditure (capital and revenue including invest to save and pump priming initiatives) and secondly to support recurring revenue expenditure over the medium term, subject to the key consideration of sustainability.

Holding non earmarked funds is essential in enabling the County Council to manage unforeseen financial events without the need to make immediate offsetting savings. This allows better decisions to be made and reduce the impact this could have on users of County Council services.

Based on an assessment of risk, the target level for the county fund is within the range of 4% to 5% of net expenditure (excluding schools). The forecast balance of £14.8m (4.3%), at 31st March 2017, is also within that range. In reviewing the level of the County Fund the Cabinet will take advice from the Director of Corporate Resources.

Earmarked Funds

Earmarked funds are held for six main reasons. The key factors that determine their level are set out below:-

- Insurance fund – to meet the estimated cost of future claims not covered by insurance policies.
- Renewals – to enable services to plan and finance an effective programme of vehicle and equipment replacement. These earmarked funds are a mechanism to smooth expenditure on asset replacement so that a sensible replacement programme can be achieved without the need to vary budgets. Departments which do not currently hold renewals funds will be encouraged to do so.
- Trading accounts - in some instances surpluses in excess of the budgeted level are retained by the traded service for future investment.
- Other earmarked funds will be set up from time to time to meet predicted liabilities or unforeseen issues that arise.
- To support transformational and departmental change.
- Meet commitments made that will be incurred in the future. Examples include; completion of projects, County Council contributions to partnership funding, commitments in the MTFS such as the Capital Programme.

The Director of Finance has the authority to take decisions relating to the creation and management of earmarked funds.

Schools Earmarked Funds

Schools balances are held for two main reasons. Firstly, as a contingency against financial risks and secondly, to save to meet planned commitments in future years. Decisions on these funds are taken by individual schools.

Monitoring Policy

The level of earmarked funds and balances are monitored regularly throughout the year. Reports will be taken to members as part of the MTFS, an update in the autumn and at year end.