

Council Policy – Cash Reserves

Responsible Directorate	Corporate Services
Responsible Business Unit/s	Financial Services
Responsible Officer	Manager Finance
Affected Business Units	Financial Services

Objective

This Policy provides direction to management in relation to a framework surrounding decisions to place funds into a reserve account and provides strategic support and direction for the establishment and utilisation of Cash Backed Reserves (Reserves).

Scope

This policy relates to establishment and management of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale's reserve accounts.

Policy

Reserves are accounts established and held within the municipal fund to hold cash retained by the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale (the Shire) for the purpose of:

- reducing business risk;
- improved financial management;
- improved strategic capacity;
- meeting asset renewal needs; or
- meeting statutory obligations and other external requirements.

The balance of cash held in reserve accounts are restricted to the defined purpose for which the reserve account was established.

Linkage to the Long-Term Financial Plan

Cash reserves are a mechanism to assist in achieving the strategic objectives of the Shire and the decision to allocate cash to/from a reserve account is made within the context of its implication on the long-term financial sustainability of the Shire.

Establishment of Reserve Accounts

The Shire will generally support the establishment of cash reserves in accordance with Appendix A of this policy, to achieve the following outcomes:

Purpose	Rationale for Establishment
Business Risk	<p>Reserves may be established to minimise the impact on Shire operations in any one year from unanticipated events. Unanticipated events can arise from the impact of natural disasters where the financial risks cannot be fully recouped under an insurance policy or disaster funding.</p> <p>In addition, unanticipated events may include the unanticipated failure of assets critically important to maintaining service levels.</p>
Financial Management	<p>To manage the transition from a past budget period to a future accounting period, reserves may be established to hold restricted funds for transfer to a future period to match/offset the respective expenditure.</p> <p>Reserves may also be established to be used to accumulate funds for significant operating expenses that occur on a recurrent basis but do not require an annual allocation in every budget year, for example for Elections which do not happen every year.</p>
Strategic Capacity	<p>On occasions, the Shire is offered strategic opportunities by the State/Federal government or the private sector to partner in the provision and delivery of community initiatives and programs. These are usually in the form of external grants or contributions which require a financial contribution from the Shire. Sufficient notice may not be provided to develop a specific financing strategy to take advantage of these opportunities. Strategic Reserves may be established to maintain a level of savings to access these opportunities subject to the outcomes aligning with the Shire's strategic community goals and priorities.</p>
Meeting Future Needs for Asset Management	<p>Reserves may be established to save for the future renewal of assets with the funding of anticipated future expenditure needs which provides the Shire a financing tool to manage issues of intergenerational equity, reduce reliance on borrowing to fund long lived assets and to overcome the restriction of a single budget by smoothing the funding allocation over the longer term.</p>
Statutory Obligations	<p>The <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> requires selected revenue streams to be quarantined and to only fund the purpose for which the revenue was raised. Examples are nominated service charges and specified area rates. Any revenue collected in a budget year not used for the purpose for which it was raised must be held in a reserve until it is applied to the purpose in future periods. Money held in these Reserves cannot be used for any other purpose.</p> <p>Developer contributions are collected in accordance with Community Infrastructure Plans to be used to fund specific assets in nominated areas.</p>

Interest on Investment of Reserves

Subject to the balance of the reserve being below the maximum levels as outlined in this policy, interest earned on cash in Reserve accounts shall be transferred to the reserve account as a deposit.

Monitoring and Reporting

The minimum and maximum levels of cash held in each reserve (if applicable) will be determined in accordance with Appendix A of this Policy. The level of reserves will be reported in the budget annually in accordance with minimum and maximum levels as set out in this policy.

The minimum levels as set out in this policy are to be considered as a goal and may not be able to be achieved at times due to events that impact the use of the reserve. If minimum levels are not achieved, the long-term financial plan is to include strategies to return the cash reserves to the minimum balance in accordance with the levels set out in this policy.

If the maximum levels, as set out in this policy, are achieved for the relevant reserve account, future transfers of cash to the reserve (including interest earning from the investment of the reserve) may be suspended until such time as a report is prepared to the Council to review the levels and purpose of the reserve account.

Definitions

Nil.

Relevant Policies / Council Documents

- Council Plan 2023-2033
- Long Term Financial Plan

Legislation / Local Law Requirements

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*

Amendment Record

Relevant Delegations		Nil. or Refer to Register of Delegations and Sub-delegations (as amended)	
		Date	Resolution Number
Council Adoption		18/12/2017	OCM179/12/17
Version	Date	Resolution Number	Amendment Details
2	17 March 2025	OCM068/03/25	New template and removal of intergenerational equity. Update references to long term financial plan.

Appendix A					
Category	Sub Category	Purpose	Examples	Minimum Reserve Balance	Maximum Reserve Balance
Operational	Timing Adjustments	To assist with the matching of revenue and expenditure across accounting periods.	Unspent Grants/ Committed Works	Determined by the amount of funds to be transferred across financial years. Eg Election Reserve, ICT Reserve.	
	Statutory	To achieve statutory compliance in accordance with relevant legislation	Service charges, specified area, Developer Contribution Plans rates or external restrictions.	Determined in accordance with legislation	
Strategic	Natural Disaster	To reduce the financial risk of unanticipated events	Flooding or storm damage	As per budget availability	
	Community	To provide for strategic actions in support of identified activities that cannot be funded in the one budget period	N/A	Determined by the renewal requirements of each project.	
	Opportunities	To provide for the capacity to take-up unanticipated strategic opportunities	N/A	As per budget availability	
Asset Management	Specific	To hold funds for the future renewal of identified assets	Significant asset renewal needs such as facilities	As per budget availability	

Appendix A					
Category	Sub Category	Purpose	Examples	Minimum Reserve Balance	Maximum Reserve Balance
		which cannot be managed in a single budgetary year.	of regional significance or essential services.		
	Light Fleet & Plant Acquisition	To hold funds for asset renewal for plant & vehicles to reduce the risk of a sudden loss of service potential and to assist with peak renewal demand.	Plant and Vehicles	As per adopted Long Term Financial Plan which will be informed by the Long Term Plant Replacement Plan	
	General	To hold funds for general asset renewal for each fixed asset class (excluding plant & vehicles) to reduce the risk of a sudden loss of service potential and to assist with peak renewal demand.	Waste Management, Roads, Footpaths, Drainage, Parks Infrastructure, Buildings.	As per budget availability	
Developer Contributions	Community Infrastructure Development Contribution Plans	To hold contributions to be used in accordance with the specific major plan	N/A	Matching contributions to be made in accordance with developer contribution plans eg CIDCP	