

# POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16TH JANUARY 2018

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON RESERVES

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151

**OFFICER** 

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Scrutiny Committee with details of the usable reserves held by the Authority.
- 1.2 To present details of proposals for the use of reserves prior to consideration by Cabinet.

## 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of the usable reserves held by the Authority as at the 1st April 2017 totalling £120.576m.
- 2.2 The report also includes proposals for the use of reserves in some areas. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider these proposals prior to them being presented to Cabinet at its meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

#### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Ensuring that adequate General Fund balances are maintained to meet any unforeseen expenditure and the establishment of specific reserves to meet known future financial commitments are key elements of prudent financial management.
- 3.2 Prudent financial management contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:-
  - A prosperous Wales.
  - A resilient Wales.
  - A healthier Wales.
  - A more equal Wales.
  - A Wales of cohesive communities.
  - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
  - A globally responsible Wales.

## 4. THE REPORT

4.1 Appendix 1 provides details of the Authority's usable reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 totalling £120.576m. The following paragraphs provide a detailed commentary on the balances held.

## 4.2 General Fund

4.2.1 The opening balance on the General Fund as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 was £17.833m. After adjusting for 2017/18 in-year use of General Fund balances the projected position as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 is a balance of £13.131m. This is summarised in the table below: -

	£m	£m
General Fund Opening Balance as at 01/04/17		17.833
In-Year Use of General Fund Balance: -		
- 2016/17 Council Tax Surplus to Support 2017/18 Budget (Council 22/02/17)	(1.400)	
- Additional Provision - Senior Officer Investigation (Council 13/06/17)	(0.469)	
- Transfer to Capital Earmarked Reserve (Cabinet 05/07/17)	(2.054)	
- Adjustment for Misstatement in 2016/17 Accounts (Audit Committee 17/10/17)	(0.629)	
- Additional Provision - Senior Officer Investigation (Council 21/11/17)	(0.150)	
		(4.702)
Projected General Fund Balance as at 31/03/18		13.131

4.2.2 In line with the Council's Reserves Strategy the Section 151 Officer provides advice on the appropriate level of the General Fund Reserve annually as part of the budget setting process and this is subject to approval by Cabinet and Full Council. Typically, the Section 151 Officer has recommended in previous budget reports to Council that the minimum balance on the General Fund Reserve should be £10m i.e. circa 3% of the Council's net revenue budget. The 2018/19 budget report will be presented to Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 and this will include recommendations on the use of the General Fund balance in excess of the recommended 3% minimum.

# 4.3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

4.3.1 HRA funds must be ring-fenced and cannot be transferred into General Fund balances. The balance on the HRA usable reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 was £16.821m. Most of this funding will be utilised for the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Capital Programme.

#### 4.4 Capital Reserves

4.4.1 The total capital reserves of £37.709m as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 are ring-fenced for the Authority's Capital Programme. These reserves will be subject to a detailed review over the coming months and the outcome of this review will be reported to the Scrutiny Committee in due course.

# 4.5 Corporate Services

4.5.1 The balance on Corporate Services reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 totalled £29.633m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Trehir Reserve	0.585	Required for potential works on former landfill site.
Invest to Save Reserve	0.272	To provide repayable one-off financial support for service initiatives that deliver cashable savings. £250k of this balance is currently committed to purchase a Velocity Patcher for carriageway resurfacing works (agreed by Cabinet on the 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2014).
Insurance Earmarked Reserve	5.904	Self-insurance facility. The Authority's insurance excess is £250k. All claims

Risk Management Reserve  0.690 To support risk management initiatives that mitigate insurance earmarked reserve. Initiatives that mitigate insurance claims. Annual contributions to this reserve from Directorate revenue budgets have been reduced from 2016/17 onwards as part of approved savings to support the MTFP.  Corporate Property Service Initiatives Reserve  0.461 Cumulative balance on funding set aside annually for local elections.  Health & Safety Initiatives  0.262 To meet unavoidable cost pressures in Council establishments.  PC Replacement Reserve  1.081 This reserve funds the ongoing replacement of essential IT hardware and software across the Authority.  Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Equalisation Reserves  6.738  1.090 Committed to funding approved PFI Schemes.  Corporate Services Service Initiatives Reserves  6.738  • Careline (E226k) — Retained underspends on the Care First budget.  • Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£2.251m) — Retained underspends on the Consel Fees revenue budget.  • Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£2.251m) — Retained underspends on the CTRS budget.  • Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£2.251m) — Retained underspends on the CTRS budget.  • Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£2.251m) — Retained underspends on the CTRS budget.  • Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£2.528h) — Committed to a fully funded scheme until the end of 2018/19. Options for the use of this reserve may need to be considered in future years in the event of funding reductions.  • Apprenticeship Scheme (£852k) — Retained underspends on the Grants to twork project.  • Member Services (£6536k) — Ring-fenced retained underspends on the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel.  • Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) Levy (£564k) — Funding set aside to meet future liabilities arising from the MMI Scheme of Arrangement.  • Senior Officer Investigation (£245k) — Previously approved funding in respect of the ongoing investigation.  • Replacement of IDOX Document Management System for Council Tax/Housing Benefits (£150k).			below this level are funded through the
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staffing reductions (£381k).			• •
			staffing reductions (£381k).

		<ul> <li>Schools PV Panels (£14k).</li> <li>Contingency for cost pressures in Waste Management (£800k).</li> </ul>
Salix Finance	0.224	To support energy saving initiatives.
Retained Underspends Reserves	1.359	Accumulated service underspends.
Total: -	29.633	

4.5.2 Members will note from the above that £1.359m is held in 'Retained Underspends Reserves'. Cabinet has previously agreed a policy whereby service areas retain 50% of reported underspends at the financial year-end. Conversely, any service based overspends are carried forward by the service areas responsible for generating the overspends. This approach has worked well as there is full ownership and accountability by budget holders in respect of delivering a balanced budget. At its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Cabinet agreed a Reserves Strategy which included the introduction of a cap on the cumulative amount that can be held by Directorates in service underspend reserves. This will be covered in more detail in section 4.9 of this report.

#### 4.6 **Communities**

4.6.1 The balance on Communities reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 totalled £3.285m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount	Description
DLO Surplus/Deficit	<b>£m</b> 0.301	Retained cash surplus for Network Contracting Services (NCS) work arising from the Sirhowy Enterprise Way PFI contract.
Planning - Community Infrastructure Levy	0.251	Revenue generated from the Community Infrastructure Levy.
Planning - LDP Related Expenditure	0.131	Ring-fenced reserve for the Local Development Plan.
Highways – Service Specific Reserve.	0.500	Ring-fenced winter maintenance reserve.
Community Regeneration Fund	0.136	Approved grants to be drawn down.
Economic Development – Service Initiative Reserve.	0.013	£2k relates to footfall counters and £11k is ring-fenced for capital works to the Hafod Deg building.
Area Forum Reserve	0.070	This is being utilised to support agreed MTFP savings in this area.
Cemeteries Reserve	0.932	Funds set-aside to meet the capital cost of future land acquisition for Cemeteries.
General Fund Housing Service Initiatives Reserve	0.329	<ul> <li>Renewal Fund for future building costs at Ty Croeso single persons' accommodation (£128k).</li> <li>Renewal fund for the replacement of white goods and internal decoration at Ty Fesen family accommodation (£160k).</li> <li>Shortfall in Shelter contract payments for 2017/18 to 2019/20 (£21k).</li> <li>Homelessness prevention (£20k).</li> </ul>
Retained Underspends Reserves	0.622	Accumulated service underspends.
·		
Total: -	3.285	

# 4.7 Education & Lifelong Learning

4.7.1 The balance on Education & Lifelong Learning reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 totalled £8.284m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Service Initiatives Reserve	1.056	<ul> <li>ESF Bridges into Work (£374k) –         Match-funding contribution (agreed by Cabinet 27/07/15).</li> <li>ESF Working Skills for Adults (£169k)         - Match-funding contribution (agreed by Cabinet 27/07/15).</li> <li>Voluntary Early Release (VER) costs (£499k) – Required to meet ongoing liabilities in schools.</li> <li>Fire Safety (£14k) – Earmarked reserve to fund fire alarm upgrades.</li> </ul>
Schools PFI Earmarked Reserves	0.870	Contingent sum for unforeseen cost pressures for 2 PFI schools.
School Balances	2.332	Net overall retained underspends ring- fenced to schools.
Local Management of Schools (LMS) Contingency.	2.657	Accumulated underspends on LMS revenue budget. This reserve is maintained to support potential redundancy costs in schools, statutory maintenance costs and other unforeseen unavoidable cost pressures.
Accumulated Service Underspends	1.369	As per agreed policy (see paragraph 4.5.2).
Takala	0.004	
Total: -	8.284	

# 4.8 Social Services/Public Protection/Corporate Policy

4.8.1 The balance on Social Services, Public Protection and Corporate Policy reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 totalled £7.011m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Community Activities Reserve	0.066	To support trading activities in Day Centres.
Service Initiatives Reserve	1.906	<ul> <li>Therapeutic Fostering Service (£875k). Approved by Cabinet 13/04/16.</li> <li>Operation Jasmine (£86k).</li> <li>Finance IT System (£26k) – Required to deal with any unforeseen costs arising from the implementation of the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS).</li> <li>Gwent Frailty Programme (£268k) – To meet future Invest to Save loan repayments to the Welsh Government.</li> <li>Immediate Response Team (£343k) – See paragraph 4.8.2 below.</li> </ul>

		<ul> <li>Gwent Safeguarding Partnership (£143k) – Contribution to partnership to 2018/19.</li> <li>Temporary Staff in Adult Services (£8k) – See paragraph 4.8.2 below.</li> <li>Demographic Pressures Contingency (£157k) – Underspends from previous years set aside to meet increasing demand for services. See paragraph 4.8.2 below.</li> </ul>
Reserves Held for Partnerships	2.121	<ul> <li>Reserves held on behalf of partnerships led by Caerphilly CBC: -</li> <li>North Resource Centre (£38k).</li> <li>SE Wales Shared Lives Scheme (£145k).</li> <li>Youth Offending Service (£539k).</li> <li>SE Wales Safeguarding Children Board (£182k).</li> <li>SE Wales Emergency Duty Team (£47k Deficit).</li> <li>I.T. Consortium (£178k).</li> <li>Gwent Frailty Programme (£1.086m).</li> </ul>
Accumulated Service Underspends	2.918	As per agreed policy (see paragraph 4.5.2)
Total: -	7.011	,

4.8.2 £343k of the Service Initiatives Reserve was originally set aside to fund a pilot Immediate Response Team within Children's Services to deal with situations were children are at risk of becoming 'looked after' by the Authority. Due to revenue budget underspends across the Social Services Directorate in recent years the Team has been funded from core revenue budget and there has been no requirement to draw on the reserve. Furthermore, the Team is now funded through a new grant. In paragraph 4.9.3 of this report it is proposed to utilise the funding of £343k to partially offset a projected overspend on the wider Social Services budget for 2017/18. To assist with offsetting the projected overspend it is also proposed to utilise the reserves of £8k for temporary staff in Adult Services and the £157k Demographic Pressures Contingency.

## 4.9 Cap on Retained Underspend Reserves

4.9.1 As mentioned in paragraph 4.5.2, at its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016 Cabinet agreed a Reserves Strategy which included the introduction of a cap on the cumulative amount that can be held by Directorates in service underspend reserves. This cap is set at 3% of the net revenue budget for each Directorate and where this is exceeded then proposals must be presented to utilise the excess or a justification must be made to hold the reserves above the 3% level. The following table summarises the 2017/18 net budget for each Directorate, the balance on underspend reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and whether the cap has been exceeded:-

Directorate	2017/18	Reserve	3% Cap	Excess
	Net Budget £m	Balance £m	£m	Above Cap £m
Corporate Services	19.665	1.359	0.590	0.769
Communities	35.980	0.622	1.079	-
Education & Lifelong Learning	32.933	1.369	0.988	0.381
Social Services etc.	91.172	2.918	2.735	0.183

4.9.2 The following table summarises proposals to utilise or retain the excess accumulated underspend reserves for Corporate Services and Education & Lifelong Learning (Social Services is considered separately in paragraphs 4.93 and 4.94): -

Directorate/Proposal	£m
1) Corporate Services Excess	0.769
Proposals: -	
- Relocation of IT staff from Ty Penallta to Ty Tredomen	(0.050)
- 2 year fixed-term Grade 6 post in HR for sickness absence monitoring	(0.060)
- 1 year fixed-term Grade 7 post in Corporate Property (Electrician)	(0.035)
- 1 year fixed-term Grade 10 post in Corporate Property (Land Sales)	(0.048)
- IT Systems: -	
- Upgrade of General Ledger system	(0.189)
- AP Forensics Software (fraud monitoring)	(0.034)
- Upgrade of Income Management System	(0.101)
- Access Rights Management Solutions (to aid GDPR)	(0.080)
- SQL Server licences	(0.060)
- Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) maintenance	(0.025)
- Balance to be transferred to the General Fund	(0.087)
	0.000
2) Education & Lifelong Learning Excess	0.381
Proposals: -	
- Contribution to fixed-term Grade 9 Fire Officer post (to 31/03/18)	(0.023)
- Traffic calming works at Islwyn High School	(0.111)
- School condition surveys (rolling programme)	(0.074)
- Contribution to budget pressures in Behaviour Support & Mental Health	(0.173)
	0.000

- 4.9.3 For Social Services/Public Protection and Corporate Property there is currently a projected net overspend of £1.780m for the 2017/18 financial year. To assist with this situation moving forward it is proposed to establish the following specific reserves totalling £711k (to be funded from the Retained Underspend Reserve): -
  - £50k to fund Caerphilly CBC's contribution to the cost of a Joint Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) Co-ordinator post to 2021/22.
  - £205k to cover Caerphilly CBC's contribution to the Gwent Safeguarding Partnership to 2021/22.
  - £206k for additional fixed-term staff to address workload pressures in Children's Services (approved by Cabinet 19/07/17).
  - £250k for Invest to Save trials to mitigate cost pressures arising from increasing demand for services.
- 4.9.4 To ensure that sufficient reserves are available to meet the projected 2017/18 overspend and to provide some headroom for 2018/19 it is proposed that the following reserves currently held in the Social Services Service Initiative Reserves should be used to partially offset the anticipated 2017/18 overspend: -
  - £343k for the Immediate Response Team.
  - £8k for temporary staff in Adult Services.
  - £157k Demographic Pressures Contingency.

#### 5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 The establishment and management of reserves are key elements of effective financial management which assists the achievement of the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

## 6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An EIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance. No potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact has been identified regarding this report; therefore a full EIA has not been carried out.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As detailed throughout the report.

#### 8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to:-
- 10.1.1 Note the content of the report.
- 10.1.2 Support a recommendation to Cabinet that accumulated underspend reserves above the 3% cap for Corporate Services and Education & Lifelong Learning be utilised as detailed in the table in paragraph 4.9.2 of this report.
- 10.1.3 Support a recommendation to Cabinet that specific reserves totalling £711k are established for Social Services as detailed in paragraph 4.9.3 of this report.
- 10.1.4 Support a recommendation to Cabinet that funding totalling £508k is released from Social Services Service Initiative Reserves to partially offset the anticipated revenue budget overspend for 2017/18 (as detailed in paragraph 4.9.4 of this report).

#### 11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee is provided with details of the usable reserves held by the Authority and is able to consider specific proposals to Cabinet.

## 12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

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Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager, Education & Lifelong Learning Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager, Social Services

Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant, Housing

Richard Harris, Internal Audit Manager & Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer

# Background Papers:

Council (22/02/17) – Budget Proposals 2017/18 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2017/2022 Cabinet (27/07/16) – Reserves Strategy

Appendices:

Appendix 1 List of Usable Reserves

List of Usable Reserves					APPENDIX 1
Directorate	Service Area	C.C.	Subj	Description	Opening Balance (01/04/17)
1) General Fund					
Corporate Services	CORPORATE BAL SHEET	9931	D781	GENERAL FUND	17,832,917
Total General Fund					17,832,917
2) Housing Revenue Account					
Housing Revenue Account	HRA			VARIOUS	16,821,209
Total HRA					16,821,209
3) Capital Reserves					
All	CAPITAL EARMARKED RESERVES			VARIOUS	16,357,993
All	USEABLE CAPITAL RECEIPTS			VARIOUS	11,538,476
All	CAPITAL GRANTS UNAPPLIED			VARIOUS	9,812,874
Total Capital Reserves					37,709,344
4) Corporate Services					
Corporate Services	CORPORATE BAL SHEET	9931	D861	TREHIR RESERVE	584,549
Corporate Services	B/S CAP - CORPORATE	9985	D857	RESERVE - INVEST TO SAVE	271,829
Corporate Services	INSURANCE FUND	9987	D911	INSURANCE EARMARKED RESERVE	5,903,893
Corporate Services	INSURANCE FUND	9987	D935	RISK MANAGEMENT RESERVE	690,285
Corporate Services	PROPERTY - CORPORATE SERVICES	9924	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	157,392
Corporate Services	POLICY AND RESOURCES BAL SHEET	9926	D948	ELECTORAL ADMIN RESERVES	460,999
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D952	HEALTH & SAFETY INITIATIVES	262,606
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D953	CORPORATE PC REPLACEMENT RESER	1,080,668
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D828	SEW PFI EQUALISATION RESERVE	2,266,095
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D850	EDUC PFI EQUALISATION RESERVE	9,634,173
Corporate Services	CORPORATE BAL SHEET	9931	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	1,609,218
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	5,128,875
Corporate Services	B/S CAP - PROPERTY	9979	D944	SALEX FINANCE	223,963
Corporate Services	BUILDING CONSULTANCY	9925	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	54,203
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	1,303,896
Total Corporate Services					29,632,644

Directorate	Service Area	C.C.	Subj	Description	Opening Balance (01/04/17)
5) Communities					
Communities	HIGHWAYS BALANCE SHEET	9908	D882	DLO SURPLUS / DEFICIT C/F	300,750
Communities	PLANNING BAL SHEET	9923	D877	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY	251,143
Communities	PLANNING BAL SHEET	9923	D899	LDP RELATED EXPENDITURE	130,527
Communities	HIGHWAYS BAL SHEET	9932	D899	SERVICE SPECIFIC RESERVE	500,000
Communities	ECON DEVT & TOURISM BAL SHEET	9927	D892	RESERVE - COMMUNITY REGEN FUND	135,693
Communities	ECON DEVT & TOURISM BAL SHEET	9927	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVE RESERVE	12,835
Communities	PLANNING BAL SHEET	9923	D891	RESERVE - AREA FORUM	70,499
Communities	COMMUNITY & LEISURE BAL SHEET	9939	D865	RESERVES - CEMETERIES	932,453
Communities	ECON DEVT & TOURISM BAL SHEET	9927	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	4,152
Communities	HOUSING NON HRA BAL SHEET	9917	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	329,208
Communities	HOUSING NON HRA BAL SHEET	9917	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	162,760
Communities	HOUSING PRIVATE BAL SHEET	9918	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	115,950
Communities	DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENT	9936	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	339,012
6) Education & Lifelong Learning					
Education	EDUCATION BAL SHEET	9919	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	1,055,595
Education	EDUCATION BAL SHEET	9919	D949	PFI SCHOOLS EARMARKED RESERVES	869,921
Education	SCHOOLS BAL SHEET	9920	D785	RESERVES - DELEGATED SCHOOLS	2,331,965
Education	EDUCATION BAL SHEET	9919	D868	RESERVES LMS EARMARKED	2,657,113
Education	EDUCATION BAL SHEET	9919	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	1,369,571
Total Education & Lifelong Learning					8,284,164
7) Social Services/Public Protection/Cor	porate Policy				
Social Services	SOCIAL SERVICES BAL SHEET	9922	D859	RESER - SOC SERV COMM ACTIVITIES	65,858
Social Services	SOCIAL SERVICES BAL SHEET	9922	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	1,906,344
Social Services	SOCIAL SERVICES BAL SHEET	9922	D951	RESERVES HELD FOR PARTNERSHIPS	2,121,413
Social Services	SOCIAL SERVICES BAL SHEET	9922	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	2,872,587
Public Protection	TRADING STANDARDS	9937	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	31,011
Public Protection	ENVIRON HEALTH BAL SHEET	9938	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	13,720
Total Social Services/Public Protection/	Corporate Policy				7,010,933
GRAND TOTALS: -					120,576,193