

**MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL
Reserves Policy**

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council will determine and review the level of reserves.
- 1.2 Melbourn Parish Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation, but has no legal powers to hold reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs or for specifically earmarked purposes.
- 1.3 Reserves can be used for long term planned or exceptional (unbudgeted or higher than expected) expenditure on the following conditions:-
 - the expenditure must not be recurring
 - Income in reserves from the sale of fixed assets ('capital receipts') such as the sale of land, can only be used for capital projects, such as the acquisition and enhancement of land, building, vehicles, plant and equipment.
- 1.4 Budget allocations can be moved from one budget line to another during the course of a financial year, with approval from the Council, so long as the total expenditure for the financial year is not exceeded.

2. TYPES OF RESERVES

- 2.1 Reserves can be categorised as earmarked, ring fenced or general.

3. EARMARKED RESERVES

- 3.1 Earmarked reserves are a means of building up funds over several years to deliver a defined project, predicted liabilities or for known significant expenditure. They are not to be used for emergency operations.
- 3.2 Earmarked reserves must be reviewed and/or established by the Council at the annual budget setting meeting. Every earmarked reserve proposal must include a costed project plan.
- 3.3 Earmarked reserves are to be administered by the relevant committee in consultation with the RFO. Any changes to the proposed use of reserves must be agreed by Council.
- 3.4 The RFO will note earmarked reserves movements at the end of the financial year.
- 3.5 Earmarked reserves can be held for:-
 - Renewals – to enable services to plan and finance an effective programme of equipment replacement and planned property maintenance. These reserves are a mechanism to smooth expenditure so that a sensible replacement programme can be achieved without the need to vary budgets.
 - Carry forward of under spend - some services commit expenditure to projects, but cannot spend the budget in year. Reserves are used as a mechanism to carry forward these resources.

4. RING FENCED

- 4.1 Ring fenced reserves are money or grants allocated for a specific project only.

