

Office of the Police and
Crime Commissioner
STAFFORDSHIRE

2018/19
RESERVES STRATEGY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner aims to establish reserves which provide a cushion in times of hardship and a source of pump priming in times of development, thereby motivating innovation in service delivery.
- 1.2 By maintaining a reasonable level of reserves the Police and Crime Commissioner aims to ensure that:
 - Policing responses to emergency situations can be managed without cutting back other vital services;
 - Today's taxpayers do not solely fund services and investments which will deliver returns long into the future;
 - Cash can be retained at a reasonable level to underpin good treasury management practices.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner maintains reserves to protect against risk, ensure contingencies are in place and to support investment in future projects which contribute to meeting the aims of the Policing Plan.
- 2.2 The OPCC manages risk by assessing the potential impacts of future events, based on the likelihood that they may occur and the severity of any impact. Mitigating actions are then identified to reduce the exposure and appropriate plans are put in place.
- 2.3 The cash advantage of holding reserves allows short term borrowing for capital investment to be reduced, which is a cost effective way of managing treasury needs.
- 2.4 Reserves can only be spent once and they are therefore not to be used to fund ongoing revenue expenditure.

3 REGULATIONS RELATING TO RESERVES

- 3.1 The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in statute: sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require precepting bodies such as the OPCC to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure or revenue account deficits from previous years when calculating and balancing the budget requirement.
- 3.2 The Local Government Act 2003 Section 25 makes it the head of finance's duty to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when the Police and Crime Panel is considering the budget requirement.
- 3.3 CIPFA's Prudential Code requires the Head of Finance to have full regard to affordability when making recommendations about the Council's Capital Programme. In considering the affordability of the Council's capital plans, the Head of Finance is required to consider all of the resources available to the Council, estimated for the future, together with the totality of its capital plans and revenue forecasts for the forthcoming year and the following two years. There is a requirement for three year revenue forecasts across the public sector and this is achieved through the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 3.4 These requirements are reinforced by section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, which requires the Head of Finance to report if there is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted and it is forecast that the OPCC will not have the resources to meet its expenditure in a particular financial year.

4 CURRENT FUNDING CLIMATE

- 4.1 The pressures on public finances currently and for the medium term are consistently high. Whilst the recent draft settlement recognises the pressure on police forces and maintains but does not extend the funding challenge, the long term prospects of having rising need and rising cost met by central government as they were sometimes in the past, are not our current expectation. Therefore, the ability to retain reserves for unforeseen events and circumstances in order to provide for locally led financial resilience becomes more important.
- 4.2 The MTFS identifies risks in achieving the required savings to ensure balanced budgets over future years. Holding reserves at a reasonable level will allow risks to be met without cutting back on existing service provision, should those risks arise.

5 TYPES OF RESERVES

- 5.1 The Statement of Accounts fully explains the nature and makeup of the reserves of the OPCC. These break down into usable and unusable reserves and this strategy relates solely to the usable reserves.
- 5.2 Unusable reserves are those which have been created as a result of the difference between accounting under IFRS and the need to make statutory provision for meeting expenditure which is classified as General Fund expenditure. They are described in Appendix 1.

5.3 General Fund, Unrestricted and Earmarked Reserves are the only reserves which the OPCC may use in order to fund past, current or future year service levels above the revenue and grant funding available in year. For 2018/19 the reserves held are as follows:

- The General Fund is the first place that any deficit or surplus for the year is posted and it holds the accumulation of revenue account (CIES) deficits and surpluses across previous years.
- Unrestricted reserves are those which can be used for any purpose deemed fit by the OPCC:
 - Reshaping the Future Reserves – this reserve has been created to help fund the transformation currently taking place in order to achieve the required savings to balance future budgets
 - Seized vehicle Fund – where a car is seized as a result of an infringement such as failure to insure the vehicle, the Force is entitled to the sale or scrap value of the vehicle after a period of 12 months has passed.
 - MDA Forfeiture Fund – the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 allowed courts to award assets forfeited by those found guilty to whomever the court decides. The CPS can request that it is the Police Force.
 - POCA Reserve – the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 determined that the Police Force can recover 50% of cash seized and assets confiscated under this Act.
 - PCC Development Fund – the PCC has an intention to establish a new reserve in Year 2, which depends on the decision to increase precept in Year 2 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This will be used to fund investments proposed by the Chief Constable.
- Earmarked reserves are those which can only be used for the purpose for which they were established:
 - Insurance Reserve - provides for the self-funding of certain uninsurable risks, and also to cover the excess (£100,000) for any unknown claims before the insurance cover is applied and the aggregate stop loss for each year. The reserve covers amounts falling outside the definition of the insurance provision as they are unknown claims which could occur from past or future events.
 - Crash Course – working within the Safer Roads Partnership, the Force supports the delivery of crash course training and the proceeds are placed in this fund which is administered jointly with the other partners.
 - Early Adopter Income – this is the remains of a specific grant for early adoption of a different approach to medical assessment of those held in custody and must be retained and spent only for that purpose.
 - Bikesafe grant and admin reserve – during 2017/18 ACC Adderley became the national lead for Bikesafe, a training initiative supported by the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA). There are two reserves – one is a residual grant from Highways England and the other is the proceeds from events run by Bikesafe. Both are ringfenced for specific purposes.

- 5.4 In addition the PCC can use capital receipts flexibly to support expenditure. The sale of certain types of assets (net of the cost of sale) can be applied to the purchase of new assets, or in extraordinary circumstances, costs which would otherwise be met from the General Fund. During the MTFS period the Police and Crime Commissioner intends to promote the sale of surplus assets across his estate¹.

6 RESERVE POLICIES AND TARGETS

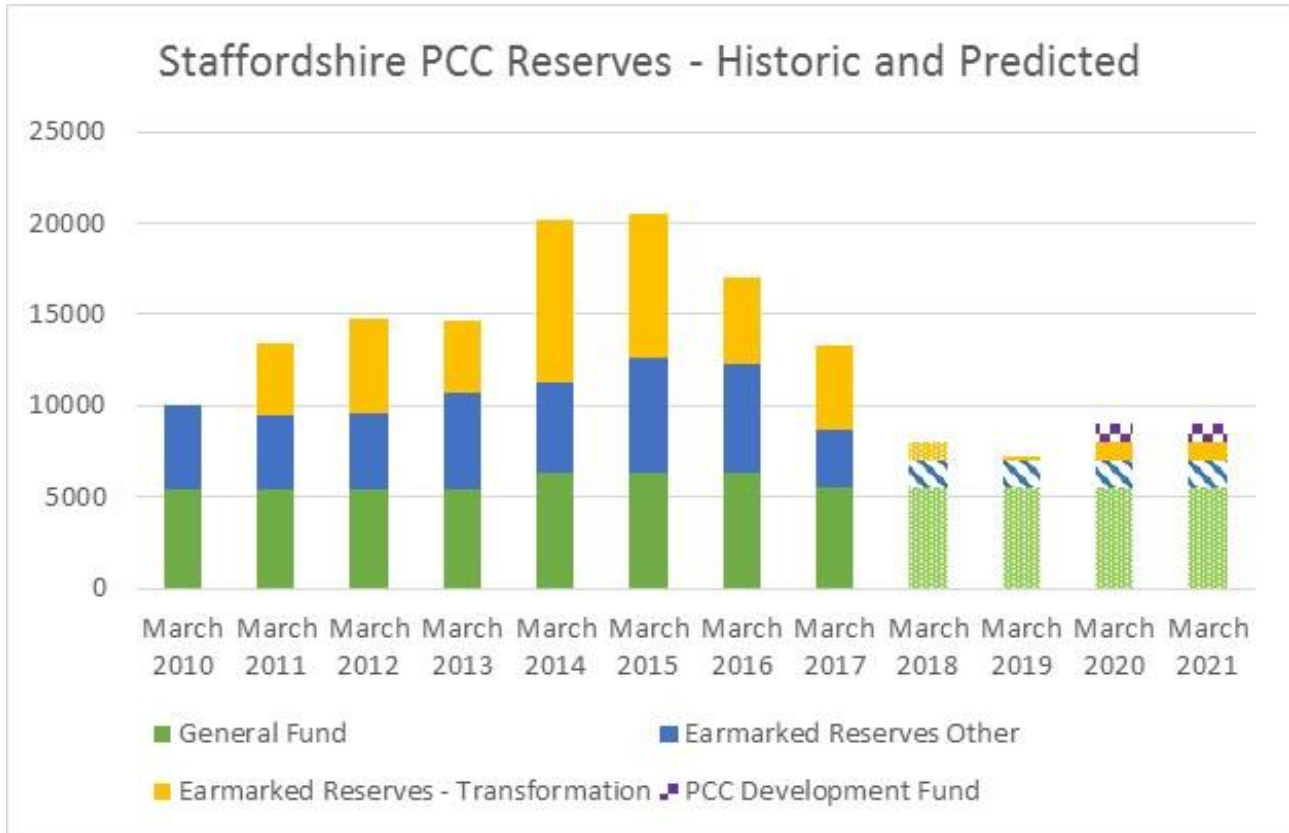
- 6.1 The policy for the General Fund is for it to hold 3% of the budget of the total of the OPCC and Force, as this is the maximum exposure to loss in any one year which must be able to be met before a Special Grant from the Home Office would be provided. This guidance was reissued in November 2017 and we expect it to continue to be in place during the period of the MTFS.
- 6.2 The insurance reserve level will be assessed when the insurance fund valuer completes their biennial assessment. The next review is due in September 2018.
- 6.3 The use of capital receipts will be considered during the closure of the accounts and will be applied in order to:
- ensure that reserves levels are maintained according to other policies in this section;
 - reduce as much as possible the drain on the revenue account in future years by funding high cost, short life assets from receipts instead of borrowing or revenue provision;
 - provide a future fund for capital investment
- 6.4 From 2019/20 the Police and Crime Commissioner expects to be able to increase the level of reserves which will in turn increase the financial and operational resilience of the Force. These reserves would also allow the General Fund reserve to be topped up back to 3% should an emergency event require it. As we continue to be on high alert, the Police and Crime Commissioner assesses the risk of this occurring as medium to high with the impact as high.
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7 RESERVE FORECASTS

- 7.1 The current MTFS assumes that reserves will be used in line with this policy and also that the Police and Crime Commissioner will create a Development Fund reserve in order to pump prime future developments. Further detail is given in Appendix 2.

	2017/18 Opening Balance £'000	2018/19 Opening Balance £'000	2019/20 Opening Balance £'000	2020/21 Opening Balance £'000
General Fund	5,536	5,536	5,536	5,536
Unrestricted Funds				
Subtotal	4,817	1,359	574	2,324
Earmarked Funds				
Subtotal	2,936	1,156	1,111	1,111
Capital Receipts				
Received		1,800		
Applied to capital		-		
Applied to other purposes		(1,799)		
Subtotal	-	1	4,340	-
TOTAL	13,289	8,052	11,561	8,971

7.2 If this reserve policy is successful then by 2021 Staffordshire reserve levels will have risen back to 80% of the historic average level from March 2010 to March 2017. That is a prudent level and establishes a position from which future innovation can be ensured to be in line with the Policing Plans.



8 PROCEDURE FOR USE OF RESERVES

- 8.1 A reserve can only be established with the approval of SEG and the support of the OPCC CFO. New reserves will only be established for specific and appropriate purposes or in response to funding received which must be ringfenced.
- 8.2 As part of the annual budget process the OPCC CFO will consider and make recommendation to SEG whether there is a need to include a contribution to the general fund balance or any earmarked reserve.
- 8.3 A reserve contribution or drawdown approved as part of the annual budgeting cycle can be made with no further approvals.
- 8.4 Any transfers to and from earmarked reserves are reported to SEG.
- 8.5 Approval of the statement of accounts by the relevant CFO and Chief Constable or Police and Crime Commissioner is sufficient approval for any further drawdowns from earmarked reserves in-year.

9 MONITORING

- 9.1 The use of reserves is reported to SEG on a monthly basis as part of the Budget Monitoring procedures.
- 9.2 The overall level and purpose of reserves is reviewed on an annual basis by the Ethics and Transparency Panel (ETAP) during the budget setting process.
- 9.3 As part of the review ETAP consider for each earmarked reserve:
 - the reason for/ purpose of the reserve
 - how and when the reserve can be used
 - its relevance and adequacy
- 9.4 During the year changes may occur in the MTFs which will affect this strategy. Such changes will be monitored by the PCC CFO and reported to the Executive Board.

10 RISK ANALYSIS

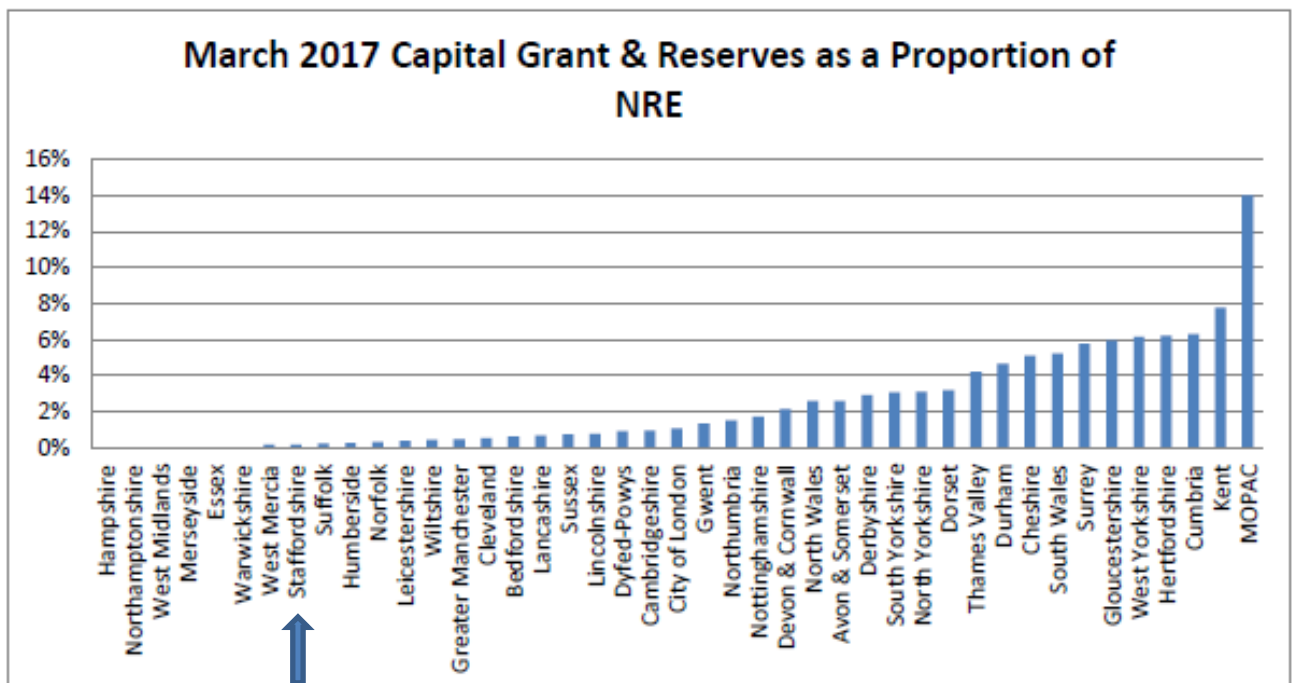
10.1 There are significant risks which affect the level of reserves to be maintained and the type of risks that have been considered, but which also be kept under review are:

- Future funding gap - the risk that due to the economic conditions, that are likely to be further real terms reductions in levels of revenue support grant and reductions in specific grants.
- Reduced capital receipts.
- Increased demand on services / emergency services giving rise to a special grant claim
- Uninsured legal liabilities – for example, personal injury claims.
- Inability to deliver planned savings.
- Organisational Restructuring – for example, redundancy and pension costs.
- Repair or replacement of assets – for example, buildings.

11 SECTOR COMPARISON

11.1 Staffordshire's current level of reserves is not excessive especially when compared with the average level of reserves held by other Policing bodies.

11.2 Staffordshire's earmarked reserves have remained steady in the past few years as it has gone through a process of change. In future tighter budget management will mean that underspends are less likely that they were in the past and the possibility of overspends against budget becomes a greater risk.



Appendix One

Unusable Reserves

- Accumulated Absences Account: this holds the notional cost of absences earned but not taken in the year e.g. flexi time and annual leave.
- Revaluation Reserve: whereas in the private sector the revaluation of assets customarily goes through the revenue account (CIES), in the public sector there are circumstances where this does not occur, and in those circumstances this reserve takes the adjusting amount.
- Collection Fund Adjustment Account: this carries timing differences in the recognition of council tax as revenue.
- Capital Adjustment Account: this account carries many of the adjustments relating to depreciation, funding and writeoffs which would be charged to the revenue account (CIES) by most private sector bodies. It represents the differences between accounting for assets on a statutory funded basis and an IFRS basis.
- Pensions Reserve: the OPCC accounts for post-employment benefits in the revenue account (CIES) as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the OPCC makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the OPCC Group has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

At the end of 2016/17 the levels of unusable reserves were as follows. As the adjustments which create a change in these reserves have not yet been calculated and cannot reliably be forecast there is no change to the forecast outturn on these reserves for yearend.

	Group			
	Balance 1	Transfers		Balance 31
	April	Out	Transfer In	March
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Accumulated Absences Account	(3,522)	(302)	0	(3,824)
Revaluation Reserves	6,481	(459)	2,918	8,940
Capital Adjustment Account	18,564	(7,439)	3,201	14,326
Deferred Capital Receipts	444	0	0	444
Pension Reserve	(1,805,669)	0	(325,847)	(2,131,516)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	1,597	0	5	1,602
Total	(1,782,105)	(8,200)	(319,723)	(2,110,028)

Appendix Two – Detailed Reserves Forecast

	2017/18 Opening Balance £'000	2017/18 In yr £'000	2018/19 Opening Balance £'000	2018/19 In yr £'000	2019/20 Opening Balance £'000	2019/20 In yr £'000	2020/21 Opening Balance £'000	2020/21 In yr £'000	Total Mov't in period £'000
General Fund	5,536	-	5,536	-	5,536		5,536		-
Unrestricted Funds									
Transformation	4,182	(3,137)	1,045	(785)	260	750	1,010		(3,172)
POCA Fund	373	(373)	-	-	-	-	-		(373)
Seized Vehicle Fund	177	131	308	-	308	-	308		131
MDA Forfeiture Fund	85	(79)	6	-	6	-	6		(79)
PCC Development Fund				-	-	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
Subtotal	4,817	(3,458)	1,359	(785)	574	1,750	2,324	-	(2,493)
Earmarked Funds									
Insurance	839	-	839	-	839	-	839		-
Pension Employer Contribution	1,611	(1,611)	-	-	-	-	-		(1,611)
Early Adopter Income	190	(173)	17	-	17	-	17		(173)
Crash Course	296	(34)	262	(45)	217	-	217		(79)
Bikesafe Grant / Admin Reserves	-	38	38	-	38	-	38		38
Subtotal	2,936	(1,780)	1,156	(45)	1,111	-	1,111	-	(1,825)
Capital Receipts									
Received		1,800	1,800	13,776		2,085			17,661
Applied to capital			-	(7,880)		(5,493)			(13,373)
Applied to other purposes		(1,799)	(1,799)	(1,556)		(932)			(4,287)
Subtotal	-	1	1	4,340	4,340	(4,340)	-	-	0
TOTAL	13,289	(5,237)	8,052	3,510	11,561	(2,590)	8,971	-	(4,318)