



Leeds Diocesan Learning Trust (LDLT)

Company Number 13687278

Reserves & Investment Policy

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Vision Statement

Serving and celebrating our unique schools and communities, we will love, live and learn together. Valuing our pupils, staff, governors and team as people of God, we will deliver transformational learning and the flourishing of all.

Other Related Policies

- Finance Policy
- Anti-Fraud & Anti-Corruption Policy

1. Reserves Statement

Leeds Diocesan Learning Trust (LDLT) (the 'Trust') has established a reserves policy to protect its activities by providing a financial comfort zone against an unpredictable environment and to make sufficient provision for future cash flow requirements and capital procurement. The policy also provides the framework for future strategic planning and decision-making. The development of an effective reserves policy will restrict the impact of any risk upon the continuing operations of LDLT.

The Trust's Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register are actively used to make informed judgements about the appropriate level of reserves to hold for future activities undertaken by LDLT for its beneficiaries.

2. Types of Reserves

2.1. Unrestricted Reserves

Unrestricted Reserves are derived from income funds, grants or donations that can be spent at the discretion of the Directors and in furtherance of any of LDLT's objectives.

If part of an unrestricted income fund is earmarked for a particular project it may be designated as a separate fund, but the designation has an administrative purpose only, and does not legally restrict the Directors' discretion to spend the fund. Unrestricted Reserves will be achieved through operational efficiencies and any trading activities undertaken by LDLT.

Unrestricted Reserves are generally defined as funds held after excluding:

- Endowment funds (permanent & expendable);
- Restricted funds; and
- Funds that can only be generated on the sale of fixed assets used for charitable purposes.

2.2. Restricted Reserves

Restricted Reserves may be restricted income funds, grants or donations that are spent at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of some aspect(s) of the objects of LDLT; or where the nature of expenditure has been defined by the donor; or they may be endowment funds, where the funds or assets are required to be invested or retained for actual use, rather than spent.

Restricted Reserves are only available for expenditure once LDLT has met its commitments and other planned expenditure and is in accordance with the limitations outlined in the original funding.

Restricted Reserves also are inclusive of capital items and are defined as Restricted Fixed Asset Reserves. This reserve is specifically held for capital purposes in furtherance of some aspect of the objectives of LDLT.

All Restricted Reserves will be generated through improved operational efficiencies and effective manpower planning and resourcing in addition to a proactive programme to identify relevant sources of grant funding.

2.3. Designated Reserves

Designated Reserves are reserves that have been set aside at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of any of LDLT's objectives. Where a designation has been identified, the purpose and timing of any expenditure must be explained.

The target range for any Designated Reserve will be determined by the nature of the designation itself; the reserves will be derived from unrestricted and restricted funds where applicable.

2.4. Pension Reserve

The risks surrounding LDLT's pension liability have been taken into consideration when calculating the target ranges. The presence of a pension surplus or deficit does not constitute an immediate liability or realisable asset and does not mean that the equivalent amount is already committed or no longer available to LDLT.

The presence of a pension surplus or deficit will generally result in a cash flow effect for LDLT in the form of an increase or decrease in employers' pension contributions over a period of years. LDLT is confident that it can meet the required pension contributions from projected future income without significantly impacting upon its planned level of activities.

3. Management of Reserves

All reserves will be reviewed by LDLT on a regular basis and an appropriate range of options will be considered which might include releasing the funds into the revenue budget in furtherance of LDLT's objectives, assigning funds to appropriate designated reserves as may be determined by LDLT, or investing the funds to generate further income to allow expansion of LDLT's work.

If reserves are required to support a school through a large capital project, then the Directors must agree to this in the first instance and then the LAC's of all involved schools agree to the internal loan. There will be a fixed term repayment agreed at the point of acceptance and both schools must be able to show that this agreement is affordable within a three-year budget plan.

LDLT has a responsibility to hold reserves that mitigate potential risks against short-term reductions in funding and/or income which would financially impact the cash flow of the Trust. The level of reserves that will be held by the trust will be a minimum of 5% of total annual expenditure by 2026/27.

4. Investment Policy Statement

This policy governs the investment strategy of LDLT and all establishments that constitute LDLT. The management of charitable funds and investments will comply with the requirements of the:

- Charities Act 2016; Director Act 2000.
- Financial Services and Markets Act (FSMA) 2000; and the
- Charity Commission.

The charitable funds of LDLT are derived from direct government and local authority grants and these funds are defined as restricted. Additional charitable funds are generated through the operational nature of the charity's work, such as providing education, training, and development; these funds are defined as unrestricted.

The trustee of these funds is LDLT, which is managed by its Board of Directors through the Finance and Resource Committee. Therefore, there is a sole corporate body/Director with responsibility for managing and administering the assets of the charitable funds and investments.

5. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Directors and employees of LDLT; a breach of the investment policy and procedure may result in disciplinary action.

6. Responsibilities

Finance and Resource Committee

The Finance and Resource Committee (FARC), once established, a subgroup of the LDLT Board of LDLT has the responsibility to authorise any investments that are deemed appropriate and in line with the liquidity requirements of the Trust. The FARC/Board is responsible for monitoring adherence to this policy, the appointment of investment advisors/managing agents, and for deciding changes between the proportions of funds invested in common investment funds and/or liquid investments (Cash Deposits).

Chief Finance Officer

The CFO is responsible for ensuring that fund managers and their staff are aware of the investment policy, and for ensuring that the policy is followed for all investments held. The CFO is also authorised to withdraw and deposit funds from and into liquid investments (Cash Deposits) to meet immediate working capital requirements, subject to the existing authorisation protocols.

7. Aims and Objectives

The investment objectives of LDLT are to:

Achieve a long-term real rate of return, net of inflation, to provide a source of capital to meet beneficiary and operational needs without subjecting the fund to large disinvestment that could impact the ability of the fund to meet future long-term financial commitments.

Provide an income to LDLT to help maintain its operational effectiveness in the short term.

However, a total return approach will take precedence, allowing LDLT to focus on investments providing optimal performance in terms of overall return rather than investments which would provide the right balance of capital and income return. The protection of present and future beneficiaries will be a key responsibility of LDLT.

Surplus income should only be invested if there is no requirement to spend the money within 24 months of the investment.

8. Investment & Counterparty Risk

LDLT acknowledges that, to achieve an optimal rate of return, investments will be subject to a level of risk (Risk Return Relationship). LDLT will seek to adopt a prudent appetite towards risk by:

- Investing in markets where financial services are closely regulated, and compensation schemes are in place.
- Adopting a suitably diversified portfolio and utilising hedged products to limit the impact of systematic and unsystematic risk.
- Avoiding speculative forms of investment.
- Investing in common investment and/or unitised funds.

Professional investment advice will be sought about the most suitable investments for LDLT, and investments will be placed with suitably qualified investment managing agents.

9. Ethical Investment

The LDLT is mindful of its underlying principle to further the purpose of the LDLT (provision of education and the Christian ethos); that purpose will ordinarily be best served by seeking the maximum return consistent with commercial prudence. Therefore, LDLT will seek to use a combination of positive and negative criteria to influence the investment decision making process.

Positive Criteria:

- Responsible employment practices.
- Best corporate Governance practice.
- Conscientiousness about human rights.
- Sustainable environmental practice.

Sensitivity towards the communities in which the business operates. LDLT has given due consideration to the guidance issued by the Charities Commission and has recommended against any direct investment in the following types of organisation:

- Any organisation that is directly involved in indiscriminate weaponry.
- Any organisation that produces pornography.
- Any organisation where their principal business activity or focus is tobacco, gambling, or weekly collected home credit.

10. Monitoring and Reporting Investments

LDLT will review the performance of the Investment Manager and the Investment Funds biannually by comparing their performance against that of competitors, average performance indicators, and the Investment Manager's adherence to the Investment Policy.

The CFO will report to the FARC on a regular basis how well the investments are performing as well as benchmarking against the financial marketplace.

LDLT's annual report and financial statements will describe the investment policy used to select LDLT's investments as well as reporting on the performance of investments.

11. Policy Review

LDLT board will review and publish this policy every two years, ensuring that it remains accurate and fit for purpose.