

Broad benefits of co-location

Wiltshire Council is proposing significant investment into the improvement of public services across Wiltshire, with the intention of providing enhanced and extended services whilst securing long term savings in terms of operational costs and environmental efficiencies.

Investment is proposed through the development of community campus facilities. A community campus is a building, or buildings, in a community area which provides the services the local community need in an accessible location.

Fundamental to the successful implementation of the programme is the commitment to empower local people to have a direct influence on the delivery of public services in their area. This supports the concepts of Localism and the decentralisation of decision making to local communities and underpins the development of the Shadow Community Operations Boards.

In general terms, the key benefits of co-locating services are broadly:

- Accessible facilities that accurately reflect the specific needs of the local area being served.
- Combining point of contact arrangements and improving accessibility to services.
- Exploring and developing the synergies between how individual services are managed at a community level to maximise availability and customer access.
- Working with communities to develop a coherent and effective volunteering policy.
- Working with partners.
- Being able to ensure long-term flexibility in terms of use of the building space is fundamental to the design.
- Reducing the present overall risk to the Council of providing aging, disparate and inefficient buildings.
- Developing and providing efficient buildings that are designed for the purposes identified
- Reducing the Council's estate where appropriate, will produce an estimated 40% reduction in operational costs across all estate (*this is an estimation based upon an initial assessment of the impact across Wiltshire*).

There are a number of challenges associated with the provision of some frontline services outside a campus facility:

- Those services excluded from the campus will not benefit from the opportunity for cross-service use, e.g. in a single campus customers may use services they would not ordinarily use as they are on a single site and more accessible.

- Those services not included within a campus would need to continue to meet all service specific costs such as staffing for reception and office administration whereas in a campus these costs and resources could be spread across services.
- Those services excluded from a single site campus are unlikely to benefit from the suggested co-ordination of management and points of contact arrangements, e.g. some services such as the library service would benefit from extended opening hours within a campus scenario without having to find the additional resource to improve the service on an alternative site.
- Services remaining in their current location may suffer from an inability to further develop the service due to constraints of the current building
- In the long term there will be a need to balance investment priorities and those facilities that house more services will be more likely to be considered a priority, e.g. where resources are stretched investment into a single site campus requiring maintenance would be likely to take priority over investment into an outdated single service building in the same locality.
- In a time of significant budget pressures, services which cannot benefit from efficiencies resulting from co-location would find it more difficult to offer reductions in operational costs without adversely impacting front-line services, e.g. financial cuts, if necessary, could be considered in the context of a number of services together rather than single services identifying potential ways in which to reduce the cost of operating.
- Current buildings are broadly outdated and inefficient and do not offer the same operational or environmental efficiencies or long term savings that a new campus building would create, e.g. the development of a new building allows for modern design ensuring the building is cost effective, efficient and sustainable.
- The Council is proposing significant investment into services across Wiltshire and as such it has a duty to provide high-quality accessible facilities and services across all functions. It would be difficult to justify excluding a single service from the campus and continuing to provide it in a lower quality building where the option of extended use and opening hours would be significantly more costly to provide.