

AGENDA

Meeting: **Cabinet**
Place: **Online meeting**
Date: **Tuesday 13 October 2020**
Time: **10.00 am**

[Online meeting](#)

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Stuart Figini, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718221 or email stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225)713114/713115.

All public reports referred to on this agenda are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Membership:

Cllr Philip Whitehead	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications
Cllr Richard Clewer	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities
Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling	Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries
Cllr Pauline Church	Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment
Cllr Simon Jacobs	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection
Cllr Laura Mayes	Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills
Cllr Toby Sturgis	Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property
Cllr Bridget Wayman	Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste

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Part I

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

Key Decisions Matters defined as 'Key' Decisions and included in the Council's Forward Work Plan are shown as 

1 **Apologies**

2 **Minutes of the previous meeting** (*Pages 7 - 14*)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 September 2020, previously circulated.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4 **Leader's announcements**

5 **Public participation and Questions from Councillors**

During the coronavirus emergency, this meeting will be held virtually/online [here](#) for the public to view.

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public. This meeting is open to the public, who may ask a question or make a statement. Questions may also be asked by members of the Council. Written notice of questions or statements should be given to Stuart Figini of Democratic Services stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 718221 by 12.00 noon on Wednesday 7 October 2020. Anyone wishing to ask a question or make a statement should contact the officer named above.


6 **COVID-19 Update** (*Pages 15 - 34*)

Report of the Chief Executive


7 **Financial Year 2020/2021 - Month 5 Budget Monitoring** (*Pages 35 - 60*)

Report of the Chief Executive.

8 **A350 Melksham Bypass** (*Pages 61 - 72*)

 Report of the Chief Executive.

9 **Consultation on scope of Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document** (*Pages 73 - 102*)

 Report of the Chief Executive

10 **Chippenham Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)** (*Pages 103 - 134*)

🔑 Report of the Chief Executive.

11 Urgent Items

Any other items of business, which the Leader agrees to consider as a matter of urgency.

Part II

Items during consideration of which it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed

12 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This is to give further notice in accordance with paragraph 5 (4) and 5 (5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of the intention to take the following item in private.

To consider passing the following resolution:

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Number 13 and 14 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Reason for taking item in private:

Paragraph 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Paragraph 4 - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.


13 Chippenham Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) *(Pages 135 - 140)*

🔑 Report of the Chief Executive.

Reason for taking the item in private:

Paragraph 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

14 **City Hall Salisbury** (*Pages 141 - 150*)

 Report of the Chief Executive.

Reason for taking the item in private:

Paragraph 4 - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

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Cabinet

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

Cllr Philip Whitehead (Chairman), Cllr Richard Clewer (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Toby Sturgis and Cllr Bridget Wayman

Also Present:

Cllr Phil Alford, Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Jane Davies, Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jerry Kunkler, Cllr Steve Oldrieve, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Christopher Williams and Cllr Robert Yuill

97 **Apologies**

There were no apologies.

98 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2020 were presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2020.

99 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

100 **Leader's announcements**

There were no Leader announcements.

101 **Public participation and Questions from Councillors**

Questions of a general nature were received from members of the public as detailed below:

- Andrew Nicolson (UK Cycling) about the Bradford on Avon Social Distancing Highways Scheme. Mr Nicolson asked two supplementary questions about the response received to question 3 and whether the traffic signals at the town centre bridge would be reinstated during half term and Christmas holidays.
- Kim Stuckey about the Council Local Plan.
- Chris Caswill about a number of issues including the Audit Committee and Chippenham HIF Bid.

The Chairman confirmed that the questions had received written responses which had been published on the Council's website prior to the meeting. The supplementary questions asked by Mr Nicolson received a verbal response during the meeting.

The Chairman also reported that late questions about the pedestrian barriers across the bridge in Bradford on Avon and the highway scheme in Bradford on Avon were received from Louise Weissel and Simon Hetzel. The Chairman confirmed that these questions would receive a written response after the meeting.

Questions were also asked by the following Councillors:

- Cllr Ian Thorn about member invitations to Cabinet meetings, Chippenham HIF Bid and the Westbury incinerator.
- Cllr Clare Cape about the Chippenham HIF Bid
- Cllr Steve Oldrieve about a meeting with Cllr Clewer, update on swimming pool provision in Trowbridge and a recent Panorama TV broadcast.

102 **COVID-19 Update**

The Leader presented the report which provided an update on Wiltshire Council's plans and activities to promote recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, building on previous reports to Cabinet between May to August 2020.

The Leader referred to the level of outbreaks in Wiltshire, the reopening of libraries and leisure centres and other venues, how the Council continues to work with neighbours, reopening of schools and recovery of the economy.

Terence Herbert, Chief Executive, advised that the Council was working in a systems approach to recovery, sharing learning with partners and other authorities to deliver this work successfully in a rapidly changing environment. Other key updates included details about the work of the Recovery Coordinating Group and a reminder of the main themes, support for business and allocation of grants to over 8,000 businesses, schools returning from the first week in September and the guidance provided by the Council, the ongoing support provided to care homes, and employees returning to the workplace.

Cllr Alan Hill, Vice-Chair of the Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group indicated that the Task Group had not met since the last Cabinet meeting, and it was anticipated that Select Committees would return to their activities during November 2020, with a limited amount of support provided by Scrutiny Officers, who were currently supporting the recovery process.

Comments arising from the discussions included:

- The closure of businesses during the last 5 months, the impact on unemployment figures and the support provided by the Council via hubs, who would be offering guidance and advice to those experiencing unemployment, maybe for the first time.
- The criteria for the Emergency Active Travel fund, would include the use of existing bus routes to encourage people to walk or cycle in preference to the use of public transport during the Covid-19 period.
- The positive response of parents in relation to the preparations undertaken for schools returning from 1 September 2020.
- The adoption by the Council of Government guidance on home to school transport for children to wear face masks was only a recommendation and not enforceable.
- The number of businesses unable to access Government grants during the Covid-19 situation was difficult to determine, and the Council was working with a number of organisations to establish this. The Council would be re-opening access to the discretionary growth grant for small businesses who were previously outside the scope of the business grant fund scheme.
- The Council's support for residents who have received an eviction notice from their home in order to avoid homelessness.
- The DfE's new programme to establish the gap for access to technology for those children working at home due to infections at their school.
- The close working arrangements between Directors of Public Health in the south west during Covid-19 and daily information on infection rates for Wiltshire compared to other Councils in the south west.
- The assessment of risk and impact on parents of staggered pick up times for children from primary schools where parents had more than one child attending the school to make the pick up time as efficient as possible for all.
- The support systems in place to aid children 'catch-up' on school work missed due to the Covid-19 situation.
- The use of cycleway separators for new cycle lanes implemented across a number of locations in the county to increase the safety of cyclists as part of the Emergency Active Travel fund.
- The work of the third sector and charities and the impact on them of Covid-19.
- That family visits to Care Homes were key for the mental health of all parties.

- That the Kick Start Programme is a scheme that the Council were looking to be involved with especially as it would positively impact many young people in search of employment in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Resolved: To note

- 1. the current impact of COVID-19 in Wiltshire**
- 2. changes in national policy**
- 3. the work underway within the four Recovery Coordinating Group themes and on Organisation Recovery**

Reason for Decision:

Implementation of the multi-agency Recovery Coordinating Group's Recovery Plan is successfully underway. Wiltshire Council continues to work closely with partners to deliver this in a rapidly changing environment.

103 **Budget 2021/22 & Medium Term Financial Strategy**

Cllr Pauline Church presented the proposed approach and context to the setting of the 2021/22 budget and the updating of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the key dates in setting the budget and the activity that will be undertaken in proposing a balanced budget.

Cllr Church referred to table 10 in the report and highlighted that the current MTFS base assumptions would need a complete review and be refined for their appropriateness in the current and anticipated circumstances. The Cabinet noted that the right balance must be struck in relation to General Fund reserves, as substantially building up reserves in a time of recovery would not be the right approach or timing for delivering essential services to Wiltshire communities, residents and businesses. It was therefore proposed that a reserve strategy be developed for the 2021/22 budget.

Cllr Alan Hill, Vice-Chair of Wiltshire Covid-19 Response Task Group, provided feedback from the Task Group and indicated that the Task Group had been involved in the process of the Council's current financial position.

In response to questions in relation to estimated Council Tax income for 2021/22 and the future level of reserves, Cllr Church and the Interim Corporate Director Resources (Section 151 Officer) confirmed that a review of assumptions would be undertaken to determine the level of Council Tax income for 2021/22. The level of future reserves would be based on an assessment of risk of Council operations and will be considered further over the coming months.

Resolved:

To note:

- 1. The intended approach and overarching framework for setting the 2021/22 budget, with further reports coming back to Cabinet as required.**
- 2. The key dates and timescales that are required to set a balanced budget.**

Reasons for decision:

To inform effective decision making and ensure sound financial management as part of the Councils overall control environment.

To inform Cabinet on the intended process and context for setting the 2021/22 budget, even given the current levels of uncertainty, it begins the process and focus for setting plans and resources for providing the services and support that will be essential for delivering on Wiltshire's recovery from COVID-19.

104 **Short-Term Bed Restructure & Procurement**

Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection presented the report which described a model for restructuring short-term discharge beds that re-purposes existing intermediate care beds and secures additional capacity to sustain the hospital discharge to assess the model introduced in response to COVID-19. This is in line with the anticipated discharge guidance and will provide capacity for winter.

Cllr Jacobs explained that the model makes best use of existing capacity and procurement options to deliver a full service. The Wiltshire system pre-COVID had 64 intermediate care beds funded through the Better Care Fund. Health and care modelling have confirmed this capacity has to increase to 100 beds for intensive rehab and general discharge to assess plus five discrete beds for patients with delirium.

Cllr Chuck Berry, Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee reported that he and the Vice-Chair of the Health Select Committee had received a briefing on the subject matter on 3 September 2020 and they both welcomed the proposals.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrats confirmed his support for the proposals.

In response to questions Cllr Jacobs and officers explained that the proposed measures were an interim arrangement and that demand for beds would be met through the re-purposing of beds in specific areas of short fall.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the procurement of 15 intensive rehab beds in the south or west of the County and 5 discrete beds for patients with delirium to deliver sufficient capacity for modelled demand, as further described in the body of this report.**
- 2. To delegate the authority for the entering into and execution of all necessary documents to the Director Joint Commissioning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, including the award of the contract for services to the preferred provider/s when identified by the procurement process.**

Reason for Proposal:

Modelling as part of the COVID recovery process shows that 100 short-term beds are required to meet demand due to reduced capacity in community hospitals and in acute hospitals due to social distancing and anticipated demand during winter. Most of this capacity can be met through re-purposing existing intermediate care (IC) beds and by varying block contract arrangements for residential home beds with the Orders of St John (OSJ). Nevertheless, there is still a shortfall of 15 intensive rehab beds in nursing homes that will need to be procured to meet the modelled demand.

105 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

106 **Exclusion of the Public**

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Numbers 11 and 12 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

107 **Interim position of Wiltshire Leisure Sites' Cafes and Creches**

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries presented the report which progressed the decision to open Wiltshire leisure facilities in a staged way and made recommendations for an interim position for Wiltshire leisure sites cafes and creches for at least the next 12 months.

Cllr Blair-Pilling highlighted a number of options considered for the Cafes and Creches and explained the reasons for the recommended option.

Resolved:

- 1. To temporarily close Creche and Café facilities at Wiltshire in house leisure sites for 12 months, and to note the future financial viability of these services will be kept under review.**
- 2. To delegate to the Director for Communities and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries, to take all necessary steps to implement this decision.**

Reason for Decision:

To ensure continuation of financially viable leisure provision in Wiltshire and to reduce the financial risk to the Council.

108 Interim Management Arrangements for Wiltshire Contracted Leisure Sites

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries presented the report which proposed a way forward for the interim leisure centre management contract.

Resolved:

- 1. To undertake a re-procurement through the open procedure with risk sharing clauses.**
- 2. To note and endorse the following contract changes:**
 - i. Waive set management fee (currently £181k per annum) but include ability to profit share with open book accounting**
 - ii. 50/50 shared cost for COVID19 related closures agreed through open book accounting**
 - iii. Loss of Revenue for any maintenance closures, with a capped liability of 50% of costs to a maximum of £75,000 per annum (£150,000 for length of contract)**
 - iv. 50/50 shared cost for any facility closures, with a capped liability of £25,000 per facility**
 - v. Melksham Blue Pool stays in the contract for one year (2021/2022) and then removed from contract on 01 April 2022 to prepare for the Melksham Campus which will open summer/autumn 2022**
 - vi. Agree to pay the Loss of Revenue for Melksham Blue pool works when they take place in April/May 2021 at circa £80,000**

- 3. To delegate to the Director for Community and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for IT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries to take all necessary steps to implement this decision including the award of contract for the management of the sites on completion of the procurement exercise.**

Reason for Decision:

To ensure the continued provision of leisure services across Wiltshire's currently outsourced sites.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.35 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Stuart Figini of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718221, e-mail stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military Civilian Integration and Communications

Key Decision: Non-Key

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of activity to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus in Wiltshire since the last update to Cabinet in September. There is extensive work underway on local outbreak management; support for business, the new kickstart scheme and rollout of self-isolation payments; support for vulnerable groups and care homes; and close working with schools and transport providers continues.

Proposal(s)

Cabinet are asked to

- Note the current impact of COVID-19 in Wiltshire and encourage all residents to download the NHS Test and Trace app on their phone.
- Note changes in national policy and the work underway within the four Recovery Coordinating Group themes and on Organisation Recovery.
- Endorse the proposed approach of the council towards events in the county to ensure protection of population health and reduce the risk of increasing viral transmission (paras 19-22).

Reason for Proposal(s)

Wiltshire Council continues to work closely with partners to deliver in a rapidly changing environment.

While Wiltshire Council and Government have new powers to prohibit events if they present a risk to public health, it is necessary for event organisers to take responsibility. It is regrettable that the council is unable to support events at this time, but this recommendation has been made to protect the health of Wiltshire residents.

**Terence Herbert
Chief Executive**

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military Civilian Integration and Communications

Key Decision: Non-Key

Purpose of Report

1. To provide a summary of activity to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus in Wiltshire since the last update to Cabinet in September.

Background

2. As of Friday 25 September 2020, 364,280 people in the England had tested positive for COVID-19. Further information is available [online](#). The [ONS](#) suggest that as of 11 September there were 51,917 registered COVID-19 deaths across England and Wales. In Wiltshire, there have now been 1,610 people who have tested positive for COVID-19. The rate of positive cases in Wiltshire is 322 per 100,000 population which is lower than the England rate which is 647 per 100,000 population. Up to the 11 September, 368 registered deaths involving COVID-19 in all settings in Wiltshire had occurred (207 in care homes, 138 in hospital, 20 at home and 3 in hospices). Further information on weekly mortality is available from [ONS](#).

Main Considerations for the Council

3. Since the last update to Cabinet the reproduction rate of the virus (the r number) nationally has moved above 1. As a result the Prime Minister [announced](#) on 22 September a tightening of some restrictions, which are being considered in all aspects of the council's recovery work. Government also launched the new test and trace app and [announced](#) further measures from 28 September to ensure people self-isolate when required, as well as requirements for businesses which are being followed up by the council's environment health officers.
4. Alongside these new measures, those asked to self-isolate, cannot work from home and are on a low income, may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the Test and Trace Support Payment. Local authorities are required to have arrangements in place to pay this from 12 October (eligibility from 28 September) and whilst final guidance only arrived from Government on 1 October, work on this ambitious requirement is already underway in Wiltshire.
5. The new national arrangements sit alongside those [announced](#) on 9 September – including the rule of six, plans for a mass testing programme

and potential roll out of COVID secure marshals (guidance and funding from government to be confirmed at the time of writing).

6. Funding has also been announced for Emergency Departments to expand and upgrade, ensuring they have the physical space to treat patients, manage patient flow and improve infection control. £5m has been awarded to GWH, to provide a new single initial assessment area and increase waiting capacity, urgent treatment centre and same day emergency care consulting rooms by 50%.
7. The Winter Economy Plan was [announced](#) by the Chancellor on 24 September and included measures such as a new Job Support Scheme (coming into effect as furlough ends on 31 October) and an extension to the temporary 15 per cent VAT cut for the tourism and hospitality sectors to the end of March 2021. The Autumn Budget was cancelled but the Comprehensive Spending Review, which sets departmental spending limits, seems likely to continue with the local government finance settlement being announced once this is published.
8. Wiltshire Council is continuing to work with partners through the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum. Local Outbreak Management Plans are in place to deal with any localised outbreaks. There has been a national step change to address the spread of the virus with guidance in many cases being elevated to law. Restrictions could be in place for a number of months which could contribute to other pressures going into the winter period including, D20/ EU exit.
9. At this stage there are no requirements for the LRF to formally step back up into a response phase given that good preparations have been made and there is good situational awareness through existing partnership arrangements such as the Wiltshire Local Health Protection Board.
10. The Recovery Coordinating Group continues to meet in Wiltshire, with work continuing under the four themes –Health and Wellbeing; Care, Safeguarding and Education; Community Resilience and Economy. Significant developments since the last report are summarised under the sub-headings below; with additional detail in **Appendix 1**.

Test and Trace

11. Local residents have raised concerns over difficulties in booking a test, some being given a slot in another part of the country or not being able to get one at all. Schools have also expressed concerns over the availability of testing slots.
12. Testing for current COVID-19 infection takes place in hospitals (known as Pillar 1) and the community (known as Pillar 2). Pillar 1 testing is led by the NHS and Public Health England. Pillar 2 testing is led by the Department of Health and Social Care and is not run by local councils or local NHS services. On the ground, it is provided and run by independent contractors. A number of fixed sites and mobile units operate around the country taking swabs from people who have reported symptoms.

13. In Wiltshire, the contractor, Mitie, runs one fixed site in Beehive Park and Ride, Salisbury (known as a 'regional testing site') and three mobile units which are currently operating from Trowbridge, Chippenham and Warminster. Home tests can also be ordered which are sent in the post for people to use themselves and then returned via post for processing. Once the swabs have been taken, either at home or at testing sites, they are sent to laboratories across the country, specifically equipped to process them.
14. There is currently a limit to the number of tests these laboratories can process; around 245,000 per day for the whole of the UK. This includes both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 tests and capacity can be flexible between the two types of test. A recent increase in the demand for testing has meant that these laboratories are running beyond full capacity and generating a backlog. As a result of this, laboratory capacity has been prioritised for processing of tests taken in areas with higher infection rates, such as the north west.
15. In practice, this means that areas with lower rates of COVID-19, such as Wiltshire, are only able to test as many people as they have been given laboratory capacity for, despite having the ability to do more tests. This has led to people being offered a test a long distance away or the inability to book a test at all. Home tests have been similarly prioritised, i.e. they are only sent out to people where there is laboratory capacity to process them. The council is making representations about this situation to the Department of Health and Social Care.
16. The channel capacity bookings total as at 21 September was at 91%, (including regional and local test sites and mobile test units). Two new Lighthouse labs have been announced in Newcastle and Bracknell, which will help to increase lab capacity in the coming months. There have also been announcements for new laboratory facilities - including in Newport and in Charnwood - along with new technology to process results faster. Work is ongoing to identify LTS (Local Testing Sites) across more specific local settings within communities that allow for walk-in testing and are housed inside, usually at community centres and local halls.
17. A technical issue was identified overnight on Friday 2 October in the data load process that transfers COVID-19 positive lab results into reporting dashboards. It was identified that 15,841 cases between 25 September and 2 October were not included in the reported daily COVID-19 cases nationally. NHS Test and Trace and PHE have worked to resolve the issue and transfer the cases as soon as the issue was identified. Locally we will see the backlog of cases added to the Wiltshire case numbers from Monday 5 October onwards which will impact on our 7-day case rate in the short term. Positive cases have received their results as normal and will have been advised to self-isolate along with their household in accordance with government guidance.

Outbreak Management

18. Due to the nature of the outbreaks and to help with continuity we have identified Consultants in Public Health as leads for schools, businesses and care homes. We are continuing to exercise the Local Outbreak Management Plan, and to date have exercised three scenarios with partners, with the next

taking place in October. Following the feedback and learning from these, the plan will be updated accordingly.

19. We are continuing to develop opportunities to encourage community engagement to support the delivery of the Local Engagement Plan. Information is being provided to key settings such as schools and businesses to help address common queries around symptoms, testing and isolation.

Events

20. As we continue to see outbreaks of Coronavirus across the country, we must continue to ensure the health of Wiltshire residents is protected as much as possible and that Wiltshire does not end up in local lockdown, as we have seen in other areas. As we start to see an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases being confirmed daily, it is important to act quickly to limit gatherings or events that may increase the risk of transmission across the population.
21. While the "Rule of 6" brings some clarity, there are a number of exemptions to the new regulations on events which include work, voluntary or charitable work, weddings, funerals and organised sports activities among others. These are detailed in Government [guidance](#).
22. Any events or gatherings of more than six people, other than those which are exempt, risk increasing the number of infections in the county. However, it is not possible for Wiltshire Council to risk assess every planned event which meets the exemption criteria. Therefore, it is proposed that in response to the current situation that Wiltshire Council will be strongly recommending local businesses and event organisers postpone or cancel events that are planned to take place in the county for the remainder of 2020. This recommendation is in response to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the country and the additional measures and restrictions introduced by the Government.
23. This advice will be regularly reviewed, and it is hoped that the number of cases will reduce as a result of the "Rule of 6" in which case we will be able to review this recommendation.

Safe Spaces

24. Whilst awaiting the full guidance and funding for marshals (or another suitable local approach for encouraging compliance), we continue to work closely with our partners in town councils to evaluate the effectiveness of social distancing schemes that have been implemented and have a clear structure in place with weekly meetings overseeing all schemes for creating safe space for walking and cycling. This covers all Covid-19 related schemes such as: Safe Reopening of High Street; Emergency Active Travel; and Pavement Licencing. Area Board funding has supported implementation of schemes and, while the council is awaiting receipt of the grant offer letter and associated conditions for the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund, other funding sources are being explored.

25. At the end of September Wiltshire Police launched 'Operation Adamo', which focuses on the dedicated deployment of proactive units (increase Police Community Support Officers) to engage with members of the public and encourage them to comply with the COVID-19 Health Protection Regulations and, where appropriate, take enforcement action. This enhanced resourcing has been established in response to increasing national scrutiny and public expectation in terms of the role of the police in enforcing the regulations and is being put in place to enhance the 4Es approach (Engage. Explain. Encourage. Enforce) that has already been underway. Wiltshire Council is contributing to the partnership plan for Operation Adamo with input from relevant tactical leads such as the Public Protection Team.

Care Homes

26. We continue to provide ongoing support to care homes via a dedicated helpline and webinars with providers. £6.3 million of Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Funding has been allocated to care providers (75% went to care homes and the remainder to home care and supported living providers). The Government has recently announced the extension of the IPC Fund. Wiltshire has been allocated £5,353,622, unlike the previous fund, 71% is allocated on the basis of the number of care home beds, and 29% is allocated on the basis of users supported by community care providers. The allocated is a reduction on previous allocations.
27. The Council has also supported providers with additional costs they have faced due to COVID-19 e.g. PPE, technology aids to enable contact between care home residents and family and additional agency staff costs etc. To date the Council has provided £3 million to secure improved infection control and financial resilience since the end of March.
28. Wiltshire had witnessed an increase in care homes reporting positive COVID-19 tests for staff and residents in the early part of September 2020. In a two-week period 24 out of 179 homes reported a positive case, although over half of these were due to a member of staff being tested positive. However, in the last week there has been a reduction in the number of positive cases, down to 5 homes reporting a new case in w/e 24th September. In most cases, there were not multiple positive test results, and from analysis of the data, there does not appear to be any correlation with hospital discharges due to the stringent testing arrangements adopted across the county for admissions into care homes. The weekly testing of staff is enabling early detection of any asymptomatic staff due to transmission in the community. The Council continues to work closely with Wiltshire Care Partnership, Public Health England, CQC and BSW CCG to ensure action is taken in a timely manner.

Social Care

29. The Council is seeing an increase in the number of people waiting in hospital for longer periods who require support and has been working with the CCG to model the likely demand across the different hospital discharge pathways for this winter. This indicates a potential gap in the support required within pathway 1 (return home) and pathway 3 Discharge to Assess (people who

require their Care Act assessment to take place in a specialist care home bed). The Council is taking steps to meet this capacity gap, including new ways of working within social care and with community health partners.

30. The Adult Social Care Winter Plan has been published with the aim of curbing the spread of COVID-19 infections in care settings. It outlines the actions every local area (Local Authorities and NHS partners) and every care provider must take in order to manage the challenges the sector will face this winter. The Council is reviewing its plans to ensure that they meet these requirements and identifying any areas requiring further development.
31. The Adult Social Care Winter Plan includes a focus on PPE distribution methods until end of March 2021. MHCLG PPE drops have now ceased and Wiltshire Council have received a final 'stockpile delivery' which will assist with any spikes/second waves of COVID-19. A Government PPE portal has been set up and a number of settings, including Adult and Children Social Care, schools, primary care etc have been invited to register. This portal is to provide 'emergency top up' supplies if a commercial source fails or is delayed. The Council has registered on the portal.

Education

32. From the start of September all education establishments opened to all pupils. In preparation for this, risk assessments were developed and agreed by governing bodies or trust boards. For all community and voluntary controlled schools, and those which buy services from the Council's health and safety (H&S) service, these risk assessments were approved by the H&S team. The risk assessments take full account of government guidance and reflect the individual characteristics of each establishment.
33. Attendance is being monitored daily via the DfE register. Schools are supported to achieve full attendance through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and a 'team around the school' approach. A multi-team approach is used to ensure pupils with social workers and/or an Education Health and Care Plan EHCP attend. The numbers of families opting to home-educate (elective home education - EHE) increased at the start of the new term. Guidance has been reissued to schools and early years settings to ensure that families are fully informed of this process. Follow-up visits to families are conducted by the EWS to monitor the quality of education being provided. Where this is judged to be unsatisfactory and a suitable education is not being provided, a school attendance order is issued which requires parents to register their child at a school and for them to attend.
34. A robust process has been developed to support education establishments in the event of a member of the school community being confirmed to have Covid-19. Public health and education officers support the establishment to risk assess the situation and agree next steps for the establishment ensuring that the following areas are considered:
 - Communications
 - Home-learning
 - Safeguarding
 - Transport

35. All schools will be receiving £650 million of universal catch-up premium funding in addition to their usual pupil premium funding. This covers all state-funded schools who receive £80 per pupil and special schools receive £240 per pupil. In addition to this, there is a fund of £350 million to be used for the most disadvantaged learners to receive 1:1 tuition through the national tutoring programme or national coaching programme. All schools have in place a 'catch up' plan which details their strategy for focusing on missed learning for pupils through the use of this funding and through adapted curriculum which focus on key concepts that have been missed. These catch up plans focus on contingency plans to address an outbreak with tier 1 for full return to school, tier 2 for a part time rota where some pupils are taught via online learning due to self-isolation with other pupils in school, tier 3 for where all secondary pupils are again learning at home (other than key worker children and vulnerable learners) and tier 4 in which all types of school switch to learning at home (other than key worker children and vulnerable learners).
36. All school transport resumed at the start of the school term. Through a government grant, Wiltshire Council has procured an additional 20 buses to ensure that peak journeys are able to either maintain appropriate social distancing on public transport or provide additional dedicated transport for school pupils. There have been a further 40 changes to bus timetables to support the same outcome.
37. Extensive [guidance](#) has been provided to parents, schools and transport providers outlining expectations for transport to ensure young people are kept as safe as possible. There is no requirement for social distancing on home to school transport as per government guidance, but the Council has introduced the following measures:
- Additional cleaning of vehicles
 - Good ventilation to be maintained at all times
 - Face coverings to be worn, where pupils can wear them (Government guidance is only a recommendation to wear them)
 - A process to follow should a school bubble be closed down.
38. The Council is working with schools, parents and the bus companies to increase awareness of the importance of wearing face-coverings and will review continually. All taxi drivers and passenger assistants are now required to wear a face covering.

Economy

39. There were 66,800 employees furloughed in Wiltshire in August. The primary sectors that have furloughed staff are arts, accommodation and food, and construction. There has been a total of 361 business closures, and 94 business openings notified to the Council since 1st April 2020. There were 12,850 claimants of universal credit in August. This has risen from approximately 5000 at the end of 2019.
40. The Business Grants schemes closed at the end of August. There has been a total of £94m awarded to 8000 Wiltshire businesses, including £4m paid to

600 businesses from over 900 discretionary grant applications. The last grant applications and appeals are now being considered prior to the last date for payments on 31st September. The Task and Finish Group that was set up to oversee this work has now been de-commissioned. Ongoing support is being provided to Wiltshire's larger businesses through the Wiltshire 100 programme, especially on providing support for redundancy and training where there are redundancies being planned and announced.

41. Following the announcement of a £1bn public sector green energy scheme the Recovery Coordinating Group is working on a multi-agency bid to secure investment in Wiltshire, and also encouraging Wiltshire businesses to register with 'Trustmark' to provide the Green Home Grants Scheme.
42. The Council is working with partners through the Education, Employment and Skills Advisory Group (EESAG) in developing and rolling out redundancy support mechanisms and an approach to using data to map job vacancies with the skill sets of those seeking re-employment. Two Task and Finish Groups have also recently been set up to oversee a coordinated, multi-agency approach to the Kickstart Programme and the payment scheme to enable low income employees to self-isolate. The Kickstart Fund is a £2bn programme offering 16-24 year olds 6 month work placements from November. This could potentially assist over 4500 eligible Wiltshire residents. The self-isolation payment scheme will enable £500 one-off payments from 28th September to January 2021 to support low income families with Covid-19 symptoms needing to self-isolate. The first payments have also been made via the Wiltshire Council Tax Hardship Fund.

Safeguarding Implications

43. The Council's adult social care teams have continued to meet all statutory duties throughout this period. Advice and Contact continue to see an increase in demand for first conversations and for requests for care and support. Children's support, safeguarding and care services have been maintained throughout the pandemic with statutory requirements met and good performance maintained. A significant reduction in referrals to social care were seen from late March and continued through most of the summer. Work with partner agencies focused during this period on identifying the most vulnerable children so that support and intervention could be provided where required. The Council is now seeing an increase in demand for both children's support and safeguarding services and expects this to continue at least until the end of the financial year with a significant increase in the number of children who become subject to child protection plans or looked after.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

44. This report will be considered by the Wiltshire Covid-19 Response Task Group on 14 October 2020, with members of the Executive and senior officers in attendance to answer members' questions. Updates on the Task Group's work are brought to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, which next meets on 18 November 2020.

45. On 29 September 2020, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed that from November the other select committees will resume formal meetings, focusing on the COVID-19 response and recovery.

Procurement Implications

46. A sequential approach to supplier relief has been agreed, ensuring that suppliers access central Government support where possible first and work with us on an open book basis when necessary.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

47. Work is ongoing to understand the impact of the pandemic on those with protected characteristics. The Council continues working with partners across Wiltshire, to ensure that those most vulnerable in the community are supported through this pandemic. Equality implications are being considered in the Council's decision making and any changes to service provision. Recovery theme leads have embedded the use of a Health Equality Assessment Tool. The Community Resilience theme working with partners is leading on work to enable Wiltshire's communities to be cohesive places where difference is celebrated. This ensures inequalities in Wiltshire created or made worse by COVID-19 are addressed.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

48. A new Climate Strategy will be developed in the coming year to set out how the council is going to meet its challenging targets to become carbon neutral by 2030. The Climate Strategy will outline the steps the council needs to take to improve its resilience to climate change impacts in Wiltshire. As part of developing the strategy, each Recovery Theme will need to consider the environmental impact of its activities and identify opportunities to contribute to a green recovery. The council has held a Wiltshire Climate Alliance virtual conference in September to discuss a green recovery in Wiltshire and is carefully considering the suggestions that come out of these discussions. An informal Councillor climate working group will help to guide the work in this area.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

49. Wiltshire Council specific risks related to the management of, and recovery from, COVID-19 are owned and regularly reviewed by the Chief Executive. A new partnership risk register is being prepared for the RCG. This will comprise of some risks that transferred from the response phase as well as new risks identified by each of the themes. Risks will be managed in Themes on separate registers with an escalation procedure for significant risks to be reviewed by the RCG. The RCG will adopt Wiltshire Council's risks management processes. Wiltshire Council's Performance and Risk Management reporting will resume for quarter two 2020/21 and the Council's own strategic Risk Register will reflect, to some extent, the risks being managed by the RCG.

Financial Implications

50. An update on the financial implications for the council and latest outturn will be provided to cabinet in a separate report as part of the regular schedule of updates.

Legal Implications

51. The Council's legal team continues to provide advice on the application of new Covid-19 legislation and all aspects of recovery.

Workforce Implications

52. Government guidance about employment matters has been applied throughout the COVID-19 response and will continue to be reviewed and applied through recovery and the Council's continuing response to the pandemic. COVID-19 policy implemented in March 2020 sets out information for staff, including the application of policies and procedures to support response, and the organisation recovery programme will continue to review and update this in consultation the trade unions.
53. The organisation recovery programme is taking steps to assess, evaluate and review the way in which the workforce operated during lockdown so that we can embed some of the positive changes and identify new opportunities to deliver services differently. Further detail on the steps taken towards organisation recovery is provided in **appendix 1**.

Conclusions

54. Wiltshire Council continues to play a critical role with its partners and the local community in responding to the impact of the coronavirus in the county.

Terence Herbert, Chief Executive

Report Author: David Bowater, Executive Office and Recovery Theme Leads
2 October 2020.

Appendices: Appendix 1: Additional detail on work under themes and on Organisation Recovery

Health and Wellbeing – additional information

Public Service Staff Wellbeing

- Staff wellbeing continues to be a significant priority across the public service group with particular emphasis upon the mental health and musculoskeletal impacts associated with prolonged homeworking and isolation. Data is being collated across employers to measure impacts and assess the effectiveness of measures put in place as mitigation. Within the local authority, demand for support services has been lower than expected and sickness absence, including that linked to mental health, has fallen considerably against the same period last year. More work is necessary to explore these trends against the backdrop of staff having to transition working practices, and staff survey responses which indicate enhanced staff engagement juxtaposed with heightened anxiety relating to covid-related health issues and job security concerns.

Upcoming mental health work

- There are currently several community-based services aimed at supporting people to live their good life. The people employed in these services are not mental health professionals and the services are designed to offer low level support to prevent people's mental health deteriorating and support people to plan positively for their future. The services are run by local voluntary sector organisations, GP surgeries, and the local authority. Examples of roles include, health trainers, social prescribers, local area co-ordinators and community connectors. Many of these services are receiving referrals for people in mental health crisis and with complex, acute mental health issues. They do not have the tools to support people in crisis, and often the only option is to ask these people to seek support from their GP (who often had made the referral in the first instance).
- The Health and Wellbeing Board have discussed this gap in mental health services and identified a need for crisis support in the community that isn't linked to any specific service, condition or life circumstance (e.g. housing, domestic violence, disability). Steps have been made to address this by linking into the Thrive meetings and through separate meetings with Lucy Baker, who has responsibility for mental health in BSW CCG. The plan is to work together to develop community based Mental Health crisis support that will work alongside the connectors; enabling people to continue working towards their good life once the acute crisis has passed

Substance misuse

- The recovery plan has been completed and was signed off at the drug and alcohol strategy group on Thursday 24 September. This group will be responsible for driving forward the identified outcomes. Weekly meetings continue with providers and key information is shared with the recovery health and wellbeing group and the vulnerable people stakeholder group (VPSG).

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2020 is divided into around 20 chapters and each chapter describes what has and is likely to happen in a certain thematic area. Each chapter is being treated as its own publication, which may have a few editions before the financial year is over at which time the chapters will be combined into one JSNA 2020 publication. This will allow fast and fluid intelligence feeds to the Health & Wellbeing recovery cell. The Public Health Intelligence team have shared early editions of the following sections of the JSNA 2020:
 - COVID-19 (focused solely on the disease)
 - Demographics
 - Economy
- The JSNA chapters are being undertaken around the intelligence work involved in COVID-19 cases, outbreaks and mortalities. As the COVID-19 response work has grown again our original timeline and the number of chapters included is under review.

Care, Safeguarding and Education Theme – additional information

Education

- The DfE 'Well-being return to education' programme is being rolled out across all education establishments in Wiltshire. This is a national programme that is delivered locally to reflect Wiltshire systems and services. This programme provides an opportunity to take a co-ordinated approach to training for schools to support emotional and mental health and wellbeing, bringing together a multi-agency collective to ensure the training ties in with existing developments locally (e.g. Five to Thrive training programme) and clearly promotes and signposts children and young people to local support.
- The weekly attendance data survey of early years providers indicates that 94% of settings are open. There is sufficient childcare provision currently and some new providers have opened and some existing providers have extended their provision. The DfE have advised that settings should be funded '*broadly in line with 2019*' to maintain sufficiency. Some settings have more children this year whilst others have fewer so the Early Years Sufficiency and Finance Teams worked with the Early Years Reference Group to review the situation.
- Due to the disapplication of some of the requirements of the EYFS including the statutory duty to carry out assessment, we have no attainment or progress data to use this year. This has impacted on the educational checks for all two-year-old children in settings and these have not been undertaken. We are currently in the process of gathering information about how many children this has affected and how settings are planning to bridge that gap and ensure that no children have been missed and appropriate interventions put in place where needed. The disapplication for the EYFS end on Friday 25th September.

- The Family and Community Learning Service (FaCL) has launched a new online learning platform, offering support for disadvantaged learners to ensure they can access the courses through short term data packages. The new Young Work Wiltshire service which supports young people Not in Education or Employment (NEET) launched on the 1st June. Referrals to this service are increasing and to date, 60% have secured EET and 12% are on re-engagement programmes. The Education, Employment and Skills Action Group (EESAG) has been established to bring partners together to provide support to businesses with redundancy, pulling together a universal package of support delivered by key partners to assist employees in reskilling and sourcing alternative employment.

Social Care

- Demand modelling is drawing data and intelligence from a wide range of providers and partner organisations to enable a system wide response. For example data from mental health providers (Oxford Health and AWP) is used to understand the impact changes to their service provision will have on Adult Social Care. A significant increase in referrals is forecast through November 2020 and in December 2020 in to both Adult and Children's MASH. Planning is underway to ensure this demand can be met. Practice standards are under review and resource will be redirected to support safeguarding work if trigger points are reached.
- Where there are patterns or emerging themes presenting, these are highlighted as part of the Vulnerable People's Stakeholder Group (which currently meets fortnightly) for further discussion and to develop a system wide response. Themed meetings are currently scheduled and are exploring our preparedness in relation to:
 - Domestic Abuse – demand, thresholds, capacity and workflow;
 - Mental health prevention and crisis intervention (inc. suicide prevention);
 - Sudden and complex deaths. Learning from rapid reviews;
 - Custody support and delays within the criminal justice system. Impact on vulnerable adults and children.
 - Transitional safeguarding and pathway planning for vulnerable adolescents and younger adults.
- Work continues with commissioned support services to understand pressures on services and manage demand appropriately. This has also supported the wider work into a 'surge demand' model. Wiltshire Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner has extended its funding of the 'out of hours' domestic abuse support line for anyone impacted and in need of support and advice. A thematic rapid learning review was undertaken with partner agencies. This explored four serious domestic abuse incidents with a view to understanding whether the impact of COVID and the lockdown contributed to these events for individuals/families who perhaps otherwise would not have required support/intervention.
- A joint communications strategy between partners has been established and work has taken place across Wiltshire to raise the awareness of the support available for people with mental health concerns including work to support GPs and primary care networks to identify pathways for early intervention and

support. The Health Based Place of Safety (HBPOS) in Devizes (the place the police will take people who may be in a mental health crisis in the community) has also seen a large increase in activity including closure in order to accommodate one individual with highly complex needs. There remains between 30 and 50% of people being brought to the suite who are not from Wiltshire and Swindon. Work continues across the system to understand this increase, to prevent people entering into crisis and to ensure that the HBPOS is accessible at all times. This work is being completed across the Health, Social Care and Police partnership.

Families and Children Transformation Programme (FACT)

- Working closely with our partners we are committed to ensuring that our transformation activity remains in focus and addresses the key priorities as they emerge and develop.
- To ensure the FACT programme remains focussed, effective and true to its core values, we have held partnership events, engage regularly with families and children and ensure structured strategic dialogue across the partners to identify 'wicked issues' and agendas of mutual priority. The programme structure and priorities have recently been reviewed in the context of post-Covid needs analysis with partners sharing an update on the impact of the Covid period on their service priorities. In accordance with the FACT Executive Board's challenge to ensure the programme is focussed, manageable, tangible and measurable the future programme structure will be based around the multi-agency agreement on six Priority Projects that will follow the Outcomes-Based Accountability approach.
- As well as driving forward the priority projects, the FACT Programme also features explicit oversight and monitoring of other transformational projects that are in the implementation or delivery stage and a group of projects that are currently being scoped for potential future development. The revised programme structure focuses on the following 6 priority projects;
 - Early Support Assessment-implementation plan
 - Inclusive approaches- alternative education provision
 - Young People's Service-multi agency staffing
 - School readiness- speech, language and communication in the early years
 - Integrated Commissioning- MH/LD/ASD
 - Transitional Safeguarding- older adolescents and young adults

Community Resilience Theme

- Strategic partners and partners from across the voluntary sector continue to meet on a weekly basis working in together to ensure no one gets left behind in Wiltshire during the recovery from COVID19 and building on the tremendous response shown by our community during the lockdown period. Four workstreams currently sit under the Community Resilience theme: Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub; Community Engagement; Community Spaces; and Inequalities.

Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub

- While calls into the Wellbeing hub have remained low over the last couple of months we are ensuring we are prepared for any increased need as we hit a second COVID19 spike. This includes reviewing the shielding lists from the NHS to ensure we are supporting the most vulnerable in Wiltshire; reviewing the call handler scripts to make sure they have the latest information and guidance; and continuing to engage with the over 300 community groups across Wiltshire who have supported the COVID19 response.

Community Engagement

- Under the Community Engagement workstream Wessex Community Action have done an excellent job leading networking events for the COVID19 community groups and setting up the Wiltshire Together community digital platform. This online resource enables communities to post their activities, share information on volunteering and let everyone in Wiltshire know what is happening locally to them. Our Area Boards continue to play a central role in the community response, during the Autumn a series of virtual partner engagement events will be hosted by each Area Board focusing on how their areas have been impacted by COVID19. The data from these, partner data, our health data and information from Town and Parish Councils will all come together for the Area Boards to hold a local picture and develop local recovery plans. Wiltshire Faith Leaders continue to meet regularly with a recent focus on the impact of COVID19 on children and young people and very positive engagement in supporting the identification of further foster carers across the authority area.

Community Spaces

- The Community Spaces workstream is focused on three areas: the mobilisation of community spaces (leisure, libraries, village halls etc); active communities and the Wiltshire Council vision for Communities post COVID19. Mobilisation of the Council's leisure centres and libraries continues to go well with all spaces anticipated to be open in some form by the end of October. We are keeping a close eye on new government guidance and the impact of the latest restrictions. The active communities work is in its infancy but will take a targeted approach to support those most at risk from COVID19 to develop healthy lives including addressing obesity, mental health and targeting young people.

Inequalities workstream

- The Inequalities workstream currently has three areas of focus the impact of COVID19 on BAME communities in Wiltshire; the impact on our LGBTQ+ community and digital access. The partnership approach being taken has led to some valuable data being gathered. This is now being analysed to ensure we are able to identify need and target activity.

Organisation Recovery

- The theme leads for organisation recovery have continued to meet weekly to agree priority areas for action and have developed a vision for the programme, and a set of principles against which all recovery related work will be set.

COVID Policy

- Some of the temporary arrangements put in place at the start of the pandemic as part of a COVID-19 policy remain in place, and the policy continues to be updated as advice and guidance from government is issued or changed.

Furlough

- Some staff remained furloughed. Since the start of the start of the Coronavirus job retention scheme we have furloughed 583 staff across 828 posts mainly in leisure operations, City Hall and in the library service since March. We have also supported schools to make claims for 123 staff across 134 posts. For the period 20 March to 31 July we have claimed a total of £1.3m through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for these staff. As services have reopened, we have ended the furlough of some staff and as we move further into recovery and services re-open, we are flexibly furloughing others where it has been possible to allow staff to return to work for some of their hours. The CJRS closes on 31 October 2020.

Return to Workplace

- The Council approach is for office-based staff to continue to work at home wherever possible so that we can ensure social distancing within our workplaces, keeping the staff who are delivering essential services from our workplaces as safe as possible.
- As outlined previously from June some services and staff have returned to the workplace either because this is essential for ongoing service delivery, for ad hoc reasons, (for example to complete a specific task), or for wellbeing reasons. Requests to return to the workplace are subject to an approvals process and this is being closely monitored.
- The social distancing measures needed to ensure workplaces are COVID-19 secure means that Council's workplace capacity has been reduced significantly. For example, normal capacity across the three main council hubs is usually around 1600 staff, and this has reduced to around 800. The number of staff returning to the work in the three hubs has been increasing weekly with an average of approx. 45% of the reduced capacity being occupied across the three hubs. The increase in numbers since the last report has been in County Hall, with the average daily number of staff accessing the building up from 178 to 206.

Employee Wellbeing

- An employee wellbeing survey in May 2020 was completed by 2700 staff and indicated that around 77.7% of staff were working fully or mainly from home. The overriding response from staff was that there were not any significant challenges to working from home, some cited the time gained from a lack of

commute and the ability to spend more time with their family as positive to their wellbeing, and felt that, on the whole, the technology that has been implemented has worked well to support virtual working. This was reflected in an increased engagement score from 70 in December 2018 to 88 in May 2020.

- However, some of the challenges to working at home that staff cited were; social isolation, distractions in the home and a lack of physical workspace. 30% of all staff that were working from home did not have a dedicated workspace.
- Occupational Health have been providing IT equipment such as monitors, docking stations, and peripherals to try and create a more recognisable workstation at home and employees have been
- able to collect additional ICT equipment or chairs for working from home where there is a health need or an operational requirement.
- The on-going provision of home working equipment will be considered by the relevant workstream under the organisation recovery programme when looking at the future approach to use of workplaces.
- As outlined in the report a process was implemented in June to enable staff, who were finding that working at home was impacting negatively on their wellbeing, to raise this and to be supported by their manager and occupational health. In some cases, this has led to staff being approved to return to a workplace for some or all their working hours.
- A follow up wellbeing survey will be sent out to staff shortly and will give up to date insight into the impact of working at home, and the results of this survey will be fed into the organisation recovery programme activities and be considered when looking at the future approach to use of workplaces.
- In addition to the wellbeing survey staff will also be engaged through relevant workstreams under this programme to ensure they have an opportunity to have their voice heard, raise ideas and comment on proposals. This will include using existing staff forums, networks (e.g. digital ambassadors, Team EPIC, staff networks, trade unions) and virtual workshops to increase engagement with the wider programme and focus groups on specific themes.

EPIC Values

- The council launched its new EPIC values on Monday 21 September, replacing the previous behaviours framework which was introduced in 2011. EPIC values have evolved from the behaviours framework and have been developed and simplified in consultation with staff from across the council to focus on positive ways of working and to support the council with the significant changes and transformation the organisation is going through, particularly as we recover from the impact of COVID.
- There are 3 EPIC values – Excellence, Responsibility and Trust & Respect, a reduction from the 6 behaviours in the old framework. The EPIC values are described in a 2-page document making it simpler, quicker and easier for staff

to read and understand what they mean, and how the values support positive ways of working. The new EPIC values also show how the values and our employee brand promise, EPIC, work together to support us to create stronger communities.

- To support the launch and embedding of these new values a toolkit has been created to support managers and staff with understanding what these values mean and what they look like within their teams. Appraisals, interview questions and other policies have been updated to reflect these changes, and these EPIC values will underpin the organisational recovery programme.

Organisational recovery workshops

- Engagement with managers about organisation recovery has been happening as part of the monthly managers forums and this has been progressed further with a series of workshops with all heads of service. The purpose of the workshops was to provide further clarity and understanding from managers about the ways of working since the pandemic started in March, what elements of this should continue and be embedded, what improvements are needed and what new opportunities the way of working has identified.
- There is now 16 hours of feedback and ideas from these workshops to be analysed and this will help to shape the organisation recovery programme. Further workshops and engagement will happen with the Heads of Service as well as the wider organisation over the coming months to ensure engagement, buy-in and adoption of changes in ways of working to support organisation recovery and the delivery of business plan priorities.

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Subject: **Financial Year 2020/21 – Month 5 Budget Monitoring**

Cabinet Member: **Cllr Pauline Church – Cabinet member for Finance and Procurement, and Commercial Investment**

Key Decision: **Non Key**

Executive Summary

This report informs members of the budget monitoring forecast position for month 5 (as at 31 August 2020) for the financial year 2020/21 for revenue as well as an update on the forecast financial impact of COVID-19.

COVID-19 Financial Impact

The report provides details on the estimated financial impact to the Council of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and the anticipated impact for the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year. It gives detail on the Council's latest submission to the Government that sets out the forecast impact on the Council's finances.

Month 5 Revenue Budget Monitoring

Month 5 budget monitoring forecasts are based on information as at 31 August 2020. Given the current circumstances and the impact of COVID-19 and the steady rise in confirmed positive COVID-19 tests a degree of uncertainty still remains around some of the forecasts, however this report transparently estimates the most realistic overall financial position, given what is currently known, for the Council at this time, and confirms the position that has been previously reported to Cabinet that the Council is facing significant financial pressure.

After receiving £29m of emergency funding this financial year from Government, the month 5 position still forecasts an overspend of £25.644m which is an improvement of £1.362m on the Quarter 1 forecast overspend of £27.006m.

Crucially, with an estimate of further anticipated funding from Government to offset income losses as well as the spreading of collection fund losses over three years the forecast for this financial year is reduced to a £4.569m overspend as at period 5, a reduction of £1.362 from £5.931m in quarter 1.

Proposal

Cabinet is asked to note:

- a) the Section 151 officer's summary of the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's 2020/21 budget;
- b) the current revenue budget is forecast to overspend by £4.569m by the end of the financial year and forecast level of General Fund reserve;
- c) the current savings delivery performance for the year;

Reason for Proposal

To inform effective decision making and ensure sound financial management as part of the Councils overall control environment.

To inform Cabinet on the forecast impact upon the financial position of the Council due to COVID-19 and of the Councils overall position on the 2020/21 revenue as at Month 5 (31 August 2020), including delivery of approved savings and highlighting any budget changes.

Terence Herbert – Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Subject: **Financial Year 2020/21 – Month 5 Budget Monitoring**

Cabinet Member: **Cllr Pauline Church – Cabinet member for Finance and Procurement, and Commercial Investment**

Key Decision: **Non Key**

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of the Budget Monitoring position 2020/21 Month 5 (31 August 2020) for revenue for the financial year 2020/21 with suggested actions as appropriate.
2. To provide an update on the financial impact on the Council of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and details on Government support.

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

Government Funding for the COVID-19 Emergency

3. The total level of emergency funding allocated to Wiltshire from government to support the council in the financial impact of the emergency response to COVID-19 is £29.009m. This includes the amount announced and paid in the previous financial year as well as the announcement made by the Secretary of State on 2 July 2020.
4. Also announced on 2 July 2020 was a scheme to compensate Councils for an element of lost income from services such as Car Parking. The income loss scheme involves a 5% deductible rate, whereby Councils will pay the first 5% of all lost planned sales, fees and charges income, with the Government compensating at a rate of 75p in every pound of loss thereafter, following the netting off of any furlough grant and in-service savings such as savings arising from vacancies.
5. The first grant claim within this scheme has been submitted and will compensate the council for just over £3m of losses incurred in the first 4 months of this financial year. As lockdown measures have eased and elements of services re-mobilised the income losses are reducing and it is anticipated that the estimate included in the last financial report to Cabinet of £6m from this scheme remains an appropriate forecast.

6. More recently a grant to support additional home to school and college transport costs was announced and for the council the allocation is £0.450m. This grant is to cover the additional costs for the first half term of the Autumn term and it is anticipated that a future announcement of grant funding will be announced to cover the second half of that term.
7. We continue to include the option to spread the impact of the losses from Council Tax and Business Rates (Collection Fund), across three years within the forecast.
8. As previously reported further revenue funding has been received for hardship funding (£3.2m), rough sleepers (£0.015m), bus subsidy (£0.161m) and active travel (£1.135m), with the latter being a capital grant allocation. Allocations of the funding for the 'test and trace' service have now been confirmed, and for the Council the amount is £1.587m alongside the allocation for an Emergency Assistance grant with the specific allocation confirmed as £0.410m for the Council.
9. The Council has also submitted claims to HMRC against the furlough scheme and continue to estimate the full claims for the period March-October 2020 to be in the region of £1.5m excluding Wiltshire maintained schools. Claims against the scheme for Wiltshire maintained schools are estimated to be in region of £0.050m per month while schools were supporting Key Worker children. This funding has been passed directly to those schools. Final figures will be reported when the scheme closes at the end of October and will be included in a later report.
10. More recently a scheme to support people who will face financial hardship as a result of having to quarantine (either through a positive test or track and trace notification) has been announced. This scheme will be administered by the council. It is not clear on the cost of administering this scheme for the council and whether the full cost pressure will be reimbursed through new burdens grant funding so therefore no additional costs have been included in the estimates at this stage.
11. The Council has received funding from the Government for which it will act as the paymaster; passporting the funding through to those that it has been intended. The latest announcement (1 October) was confirmation of £546m nationally for tranche two of the Infection Control Fund, with £5.4m confirmed for Wiltshire Council to distribute. This is included in the figures below.
12. An analysis of the total funding for Wiltshire, broken down between that which the Council has utilised to fund specific service provision and the overall financial impact as well as that funding which has been passported on e.g. to businesses is detailed in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Funding Received from Government

Fund Description & National Funding	Wiltshire Allocation	Wiltshire Council	To be Passported
Business Grants (£12.3bn)	£108m	-	£108m
Business Rate Reliefs (£9.7bn)	£52m	-	£52m*
Emergency Funding (£3.7bn)	£29m	£29m	-
Infection Control Fund (tranche 1 & 2 - £1.1bn)	£11.7m	-	£11.7m*
Hardship Funding (£0.5bn)	£3.2m	-	£3.2m*
Test and Trace (£0.3bn)	£1.6m	£1.6m	-
Bus Subsidy (£0.2bn)	£0.2m	-	£0.2m*
Business Support New Burdens Grants	£0.2m	£0.2m	-
Emergency Assistance Grant (£63m)	£0.4m	£0.4m	-
Dedicated Home to School and College Transport Funding	£0.7m	-	£0.7m*
Total Revenue Funding	£207m	£31.2m	£175.8m

* the asterisk grant figures, together with the £31.2m funding for Wiltshire Council, and the £8.2m contribution from CCG provides the total £107m funding used to offset the financial impact reported to Government, as detailed in table 3 below.

Estimated Impact and Return to Government

13. To date four returns have been made to MHCLG and a fifth return was made on 5 October. Government continue to develop the return requirements to support a more consistent approach across all local authorities, however the basis of lockdown easing, assumptions on social distancing requirements remaining in some form and allowing Councils to judge and estimate impacts for the rest of the financial year remain.
14. The Council has continued to refine the modelling however the drivers of the financial pressures facing the Council continue to be additional spend, lost income e.g. car parking, council tax and changes to Council plans that can no longer be delivered e.g. saving plans.
15. A significant element of the financial pressure remains attributable to the losses forecast for Council Tax and Business Rates and more detail of those forecast

losses are included in the overview section of the budget monitoring paragraphs.

16. It should be noted that estimates at this stage remain caveated, and whilst some are known and can be more confidently estimated e.g. lost income, others are assumptions and much depends on timescales as well as the uncertainty on the fullness and timing impact on the economy, for businesses and individuals. Additional uncertainty remains as the number of positive cases is increasing nationally and the impact of moving into the winter months on the virus spread and additional lockdown measures that may be required either nationally or locally is not known.
17. The underlying assumptions around income losses within the return have not changed significantly and the actual losses of income for August are in line with the estimates.
18. At this stage the estimated total gross financial impact of COVID-19 for the Council is £142m, which is an increase of £8.1m on the estimate provided to Government in July.
19. The increase is due to the second tranche of infection control funding, which will be passported through to provides, as well as the changes in assumptions regarding the Hospital Discharge arrangements being extended past the end of August. This increase is off-set by grant funding for infection control and additional contribution assumed from the CCG, which can be seen in Table 3 below.
20. Table 2 below provides a high-level summary of the fourth submission to Government.

Table 2 – September Submission to MHCLG on impact of COVID-19

	MHCLG SEPTEMBER 2020						MHCLG
	2019/20 FY TOTAL	2020/21				TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT
		Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4		
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Additional Spend							
Adult Social Care	0.000	4.131	4.005	3.226	3.226	14.588	9.889
Children's Social Care	0.000	0.106	0.099	0.292	1.283	1.779	2.000
Education / Home to School Transport	0.000	0.000	0.154	0.463	0.463	1.080	1.080
Housing/Cultural/Environmental	0.101	1.995	1.636	1.356	1.356	6.343	4.899
Other (e.g. contracted relief)	0.065	1.583	0.805	0.442	0.440	3.271	3.669
Saving Plans	0.000	2.221	2.212	2.201	2.201	8.835	8.982
Test & Trace/Infection Control	0.000	2.360	3.933	6.193	0.793	13.279	7.879
Estimated Spend	0.166	12.395	12.843	14.174	9.763	49.175	38.398
Income Lost							
Council Tax / Business Rates	0.000	27.330	16.223	17.058	17.475	78.086	78.086
Highways & Transport (inc car parking)	0.081	2.092	0.980	1.072	1.072	5.217	5.232
Cultural & Related (inc Lesiure)	0.095	1.383	1.529	1.215	1.215	5.343	7.165
Planning	0.000	0.297	-0.023	0.314	0.314	0.903	1.592
Other Sales, Fees and Charges	0.000	1.130	0.428	0.206	0.206	1.969	2.413
Commercial	0.000	0.110	0.071	0.053	0.050	0.284	0.291
Other (bad debt, returns)	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.000	1.000	1.150	1.150
Estimated Lost Income	0.176	32.418	19.284	19.918	21.332	92.953	95.929
Total Financial Impact	0.342	44.813	32.127	34.092	31.095	142.128	134.327

21. No further emergency funding announcements from government are expected this financial year.

22. With £99m of grants from Government, an estimated £8.2m contribution from the CCG relating to hospital discharges Table 3 shows that the estimated shortfall in Council finances, related to COVID-19, is estimated be £35m.
23. However, this is before the £6m estimated receipt of funding expected through the income loss scheme as well as the spreading of losses arising from the Collection Fund over the next three years. This will reduce the financial impact in this financial year further and is reported later in the report in terms of the Councils overall bottom line.

Table 3 – Net Financial Impact of COVID-19

NET FINANCIAL IMPACT	£m
Total Financial Impact	142.470
COVID Grants & income receiveable	
Passported	
Rough Sleepers	-0.015
Bus Subsidy	-0.161
Infection Control	-11.692
Hardship Grant	-3.222
Additional Dedicated Home to School and College Transport Funding	-0.652
Business Rates S31 Grant	-52.251
Wiltshire Council	
Covid 19 Grant	-29.009
Test & Trace	-1.587
Business Grants Support Grant	-0.225
Emergency Food Grant	-0.410
CCG	-8.235
Grants & income	-107.458
NET FINANCIAL IMPACT	35.011

24. The return to Government continues to show the worst case scenario, and part of the budget monitoring exercise has reviewed some of the assumptions on cost forecasts and then the potential mitigations that could be applied. There is a level of risk around these areas of mitigations.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2020/21 – MONTH 5

25. The Council approved a net budget for 2020/21 of £344.023m at its meeting on 25 February 2020. The following paragraphs focuses on forecast outturn variances against the approved budget based on information as at 31 August 2020. These variances are subject to a level of uncertainty as described in the returns on the estimated financial impact to Government.
26. The forecasts include the previously reported financial impact of COVID-19 as per the return to Government adjusted for any proposed mitigations, and then

include other variances from within the Council to provide an overall position for the Council.

Revenue Budget

27. The council moved to a single Chief Executive at the beginning of July and an interim management structure, and as a result the reporting reflects the interim management hierarchy. The breakdown of the projected year end position is set out in table 4 below.

Table 4 – Month 5 2020/21 Summary Position

Summary Position	2020/21 Budget £ m	Profiled Budget to date £ m	Actual to date £ m	Projected Position for Year £ m	Variance due to Covid-19 £ m	Variances Other £ m	Overall Projected Variance £ m
Corporate Director - People	218.501	72.480	101.194	221.656	8.010	(4.855)	3.155
Corporate Director - Resources	34.123	21.963	17.847	35.186	2.363	(1.300)	1.063
Chief Executive Directorates	99.399	33.021	33.371	113.015	16.061	(2.446)	13.616
Corporate	(7.999)	(8.175)	(9.677)	4.033	11.932	0.100	12.032
General Fund Total	344.024	119.289	142.735	373.890	38.366	(8.501)	29.866
COVID-19 Emergency Grant Funding	0.000	0.000	(37.772)	(28.735)	(28.735)	0.000	(28.735)
General Fund Total	344.024	119.289	104.963	345.155	9.631	(8.501)	1.131
Collection Fund Loss					22.613	1.900	24.513
Total General Fund inc. Collection Fund	344.024	119.289	104.963	345.155	32.244	(6.601)	25.644
Estimates on Government Funding / Schemes still to be confirmed							
Defer Collection Fund Losses					(15.075)	0.000	(15.075)
Income Losses Scheme					(6.000)	0.000	(6.000)
Total General Fund impact on 2020/21	344.024	119.289	104.963	345.155	11.169	(6.601)	4.569

Table 5 – Forecast Impact on the Councils General Fund Reserve

General Fund Reserve Forecast	£m
Opening balance	(15.456)
Forecast overspend to be met	4.569
Forecast balance 31 March 2021	10.887

Overview of Month 5 Monitoring

28. Overall the Month 5 report identifies a potential net year end forecast overspend of £25.644m. This includes the variance forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates (the Collection Fund), although this would normally arise as a deficit in the following financial year, there is some uncertainty as, owing to its size, whether this would need to be recognised in current financial year. Ultimately this will be a deficit that the Council will need to fund.

29. When reflecting the announcements on collection fund losses being spread over three years, plus the expected funding on the income loss scheme for which we have estimated a figure of £6m to be received, the overall financial forecast is reduced to £4.6m for the 2020/21 financial year.
30. At present the collection fund losses are not being proposed to be met or shared by Government, although this may change in the forthcoming comprehensive spending review (CSR). Therefore the £15.075m that has been spread will need to be found in future years and as such represent the first call on the Councils budget when considering the budget in 2021/22 and 2022/23.
31. The Collection Fund losses are based on assumptions of losses to the Council Tax base, additional reliefs for both Council Tax and Business Rates and losses through non-payment and recoverability. Government is allowing councils to spread the Collection Fund deficits, due to the scale nationally, across 3 years so mitigation is shown in table 4 above to reduce the overall pressure. Also shown is a representation of what may be received through the Income Loss scheme, although the amount and timing is uncertain as previously detailed earlier in this report.
32. Collection rates for council tax continue to remain lower than originally expected, currently down by around 0.6% on those last year and 0.9% down on the expected collection rate, although a relatively small percentage, it equates to around £3m against the size of the total expected council tax income. The expectation is that losses will rise further during the year.
33. Following the deferral of 5,600 Council Tax instalment plans at the beginning of the financial year and with the re-start of active debt collection (some 13,000 reminders were sent) there has been an increase in requests to further make amendments to these plans to pay. This is alongside a significant increase in numbers of households that are now eligible for Council Tax Reduction, from an original estimate of 18,300 at this point of the year to actual numbers of 28,600.
34. These issues result in significantly less Council Tax income and will not only impact on the council's cashflow but will also reduce the base on which Council Tax is calculated for future years if these numbers stay higher than originally expected.
35. Government have recently issued a data collection tool to capture the information on the additional Business Rates mandatory reliefs that have been awarded, with an indication that these reliefs will be fully funded by government this financial year. It is anticipated that the Council will receive section 31 grants to cover this lost revenue up to a maximum of £14m, however the timing of these grants is not currently known. It remains unclear how these impacts will be included in the CSR and the overall impact in the final grant settlement figures we may see for 2021/22 and future years.
36. As part of other mitigations additional spending controls have been implemented. The largest financial impact currently included within the forecast is associated with

the external recruitment freeze, details of which are provided in the individual service details.

37. Details of significant variances within service areas are included below. Directors and Heads of Service continue to identify compensating actions in order to offset the current forecast year end position.

CORPORATE DIRECTOR - PEOPLE

Table 6

Summary Position	2020/21 Budget	Profiled Budget to date	Actual to date	Projected Position for Year (before mitigation)	Variance due to Covid-19	Variances Other	Overall Projected Variance
	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m
Family & Childrens	52.011	21.958	22.185	54.526	3.080	(0.565)	2.515
Education & Skills	16.831	(11.161)	14.180	17.719	0.376	0.512	0.888
Learning Disabilities & Mental Health	73.694	31.162	31.059	70.093	0.700	(4.301)	(3.601)
Access & Reablement	47.698	18.193	19.147	50.477	3.687	(0.908)	2.779
Commissioning - Adults	23.331	9.916	3.509	24.118	0.167	0.620	0.787
Commissioning - Childrens	4.936	2.412	11.114	4.723	0.000	(0.213)	(0.213)
General Fund Total	218.501	72.480	101.194	221.656	8.010	(4.855)	3.155

Children & Young People with Social Care Needs: Budget £52.011m – £2.515m overspend

38. This is a demand driven area. The Looked After Children (LAC) external placement budget is forecasting additional budget pressure due to several factors including increased reliance on external legal fees in care proceedings and numbers of children in our care and those with special educational needs and disability. A number of savings to fund schemes were delayed due to the response to COVID-19 taking priority, there are however mitigations in place to reduce these. We anticipate the number of new entrants into care increasing throughout the year as a consequence of the pandemic. Demand modelling undertaken jointly with Police and CCG shows a significant increase in safeguarding work as a result of latent and new demand following COVID-19 related pressure including extended periods of relative isolation for children and families throughout 'lockdown'. Forecasts suggest children in care numbers may exceed 500 by March 2021, this is an increase of approximately 10%. The forecast overspend includes an assessment of latent demand on services and ongoing, full year impact of this will create pressure in future financial years. Wiltshire's increase is in line with the national increase in social care activity and expenditure.

39. Work is ongoing in an effort to reduce the overspend, good progress is now being made with the Fostering Excellence project which has continued throughout the COVID-19 period. We anticipate reaching the Fostering Excellence end of year target with net growth in excess of 20 foster carers.

Education & Skills (School Effectiveness, SEN & Inclusion): Budget £16.831m – £0.888m overspend

40. The impact of the pandemic on schools not functioning as they would normally do extends to the amount of service being purchased from the local authority. The current estimate of reduced income is £0.244m. This is mitigated by holding vacancies and delaying expenditure to offset costs.
41. A number of savings to find schemes were delayed due to the response to COVID-19 taking priority, there are however mitigations in place to reduce these. All children with an education care and health plan (EHCP) are entitled to free school transport. The budget was increased significantly in 2020-21 to keep pace with demand, however the current forecast overspend is based around all children returning to school in September with the social distancing measures from the DfE in place. Additional costs attributed to COVID are estimated at £0.116m, this does not include cost pressures in schools.

Learning Disabilities and Mental Health: Budget £73.694m – (£3.601m) underspend

42. Overall Learning Disabilities and Mental Health budgets are projecting a variance of £3.601m underspend. Without COVID-19 pressures there would be an underspend of £4.301m.
43. The overspends (£0.700m) in the Learning Disabilities and Mental Health budgets are entirely due to the impact that COVID-19 has had on the ability of the service to deliver its savings for the year.
44. Collectively across adult social care, direct care budgets are contributing a £3.382m underspend. The Learning Disabilities and Mental Health directorate share of that is a £1.749m underspend. Underspends on Domiciliary Care (£0.617m) Nursing Care (£1.288m), Residential Care (£1.790m) and Shared Lives (£0.496m) are partly offset by an overspend on Supported Living of £2.371m. Some of this is representative of a shift from Care Homes support to Supported Living support, and budgets will be adjusted in future months to reflect this.

Access and Reablement: Budget £47.698m – £2.779m overspend

45. Access and Reablement budgets are projecting a variance of £2.779m overspend. Without COVID-19 pressures there would be an underspend of £0.908m, although the picture is very much complicated by current funding arrangements for hospital discharges.
46. Since March, hospital discharges have been funded through the NHS, but what was not clear was how long this would continue, and for how long people already discharged would have their costs met. The arrangements for the rest of the financial year are now clear, and everyone will, after a period of 6 weeks, transfer to their normal funding arrangements. However, there is a significant backlog of demand and it is unclear to what extent these funding arrangements fall on the Council. The forecasts assume 50% of the costs of supporting the current cohort

will fall on the Council (£1.895m) however there are a number of unknowns and the figure is subject to considerable uncertainty. The previous report suggested a figure of £2.683m; the reduction since then is due to the Government having extended the Hospital Discharge scheme.

47. The uncertainties are broadly three fold. Firstly, there is not a set cut off date for when the Hospital Discharge scheme for people leaving hospital between 19 March and 31st August will end, and therefore when the costs of supporting people move to the Council. Secondly, some of the people will be self-funders, or Continuing Health Care funded, and will therefore not cost the Council anything; finally, the support arrangements in place may not be the most appropriate long term arrangements, and there will be a transition to more effective arrangements.
48. The overspends in the 18+ service area are due to current additional staffing requirements in the Reablement service to help with the Council's COVID-19 response which amount to £0.410m. In addition, there are costs of supporting the market with current extraordinary costs, and the impact of COVID-19 on the ability of Adult Social Care to deliver its savings for the year. For the latter, the shortfall amounts to £1.381m, the most significant of which is Reablement. However, there are signs that reablement activity is getting back on track, and it may be that this figure will come down in future months.
49. Collectively across adult social care, direct care budgets are contributing a £3.382m underspend. The Access and Reablement directorate share of that is a £0.069m underspend. This is made up of an overspend on Domiciliary Care of £5.248m, which is offset by large underspends on Nursing Care of £1.839m, Direct Payments of £1.630m and Residential Care of £1.567m, largely make up the overall £0.069m.
50. The Domiciliary care budget overspend will in part be due to there being a significant savings target build into the budget for delivery of savings from Reablement. Whilst the picture on expected savings is starting to improve the main focus in the early months of the year has been on the emergency response to COVID-19, impacting on the delivery of savings.

Adults Commissioning: Budget £23.331m – £0.787m overspend

51. In the Adults Commissioning budget the significant variances have been reported on in previous months, and are now stable, with little movement month to month. Note that within Adults Commissioning, undelivered savings due to COVID-19 amount to £0.167m.
52. The Adults Commissioning budget also holds the budgets for the large block contracts for Residential and Nursing care. After taking account of client contributions this budget shows a very minor overspend of £0.005m.

Children's Commissioning: Budget £4.936m – (£0.213m) underspend

53. Children's Commissioning have put mitigation plans in place to delay expenditure and hold vacant posts where safe and practical to do so. The forecast as a result is an underspend of £0.213m.

CORPORATE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES

Table 7

Summary Position	2020/21 Budget	Profiled Budget to date	Actual to date	Projected Position for Year (before mitigation)	Variance due to Covid-19	Variances Other	Overall Projected Variance
	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m
Finance	6.367	5.970	4.726	7.267	0.150	0.750	0.900
Programme Office & Systems Thinking	1.223	0.379	0.636	1.452	0.886	(0.657)	0.229
Housing & Commercial Development	15.940	9.323	4.390	15.549	0.899	(1.290)	(0.391)
Digital & Information	10.593	6.291	8.095	10.918	0.465	(0.140)	0.325
General Fund Total	34.123	21.963	17.847	35.186	2.400	(1.337)	1.063

Finance & Procurement: Budget £6.367m – Variance £0.900m overspend

54. The forecast overspend is made up of an estimated decrease in Housing Benefit overpayment income of £1.3m offset by an underspend due to the number of vacancies being held and not currently recruited to.

Programme Office & Systems Thinking: Budget £1.233m – £0.229m overspend

55. Following the decision to defer £100m of capital programmes, these corporate services are unable to recharge staff to internal programmes of work and alternative funding streams as originally anticipated when setting the budget. In addition, internal restructures have been paused due to COVID-19 and therefore savings have not been made as anticipated, the cost impact of COVID-19 is currently estimated at £0.400m.

Housing Services and Commercial Development: Budget £15.940m – (£0.391m) underspend

56. Housing Services are projecting an underspend of £0.366m, this is due to a one off saving in relation to how the Council delivers Handyperson and HIA service while it is mobilised in 2020/2021 and by maximising the use of Grant Income to deliver services.

57. Strategic Asset & Facilities Management is projecting an overspend of £0.782m as a result of COVID-19 however this has been mitigated by savings, spend control measures and one off income totalling £0.806m.

58. The service is forecasting additional costs of £0.220m for cleaning and materials for additional measures to reopen building and return to work.

59. Savings targets in relation to additional income from occupation of Council Buildings are forecast not to be achieved at £0.250m, Libraries review £0.157 and operational costs for Highways Depots £0.050m.

60. In addition, it is forecast that there will be loss of income of £0.113m on the commercial estate, this has been reforecast based on performance to date.

61. These pressures are being mitigated by one off income for minerals extraction and savings associated with spend controls, forecast maintenance saving of £0.235m and a utilities saving of £0.291m from buildings being closed.

Digital and Information: Budget £10.593m – Variance £0.325m overspend

62. Digital and Information Services are forecasting an overspend of £0.465m due to the impact of COVID-19. This is largely due to £0.290m of undeliverable savings and £0.175m of increased pressures as a direct result of enabling and maintaining home working.

63. These pressures are being mitigated by savings and efficiencies within the service totalling £0.140m

CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Table 8

Summary Position	2020/21 Budget	Profiled Budget to date	Actual to date	Projected Position for Year (before mitigation)	Variance due to Covid-19	Variances Other	Overall Projected Variance
	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m
Legal & Governance	5.994	2.637	3.454	6.304	0.567	(0.257)	0.310
Human Resources & Org Development	3.116	1.661	1.544	2.924	0.140	(0.333)	(0.192)
Public Health	0.411	(1.433)	1.151	0.807	1.004	(0.608)	0.396
Highways & Environment	50.068	14.308	8.459	55.933	5.310	0.555	5.865
Communities & Neighbourhood	33.236	12.907	16.257	39.554	7.680	(1.362)	6.318
Economic Development & Planning	2.907	1.203	0.655	3.916	1.360	(0.351)	1.009
Directors & Members	3.667	1.738	1.851	3.577	0.000	(0.090)	(0.090)
General Fund Total	99.399	33.021	33.371	113.015	16.061	(2.446)	13.616

Legal, Electoral and Registration: Budget £5.994m – £0.310m overspend

64. Legal, Electoral and Registration are forecasting an overspend of £0.310m. Forecast loss of trading income and undeliverable savings due to the impact of COVID-19 has been revised down to £0.567m.

65. In addition, there is a £0.100m pressure in Coroner service due to the retender of the contract.

66. These pressures are being mitigated by savings in salaries and supplies and services as a result of the recruitment freeze and spend control measures and by maximising non COVID grant income.

Human Resources & Organisational Development Services: Budget £3.071m – (£0.192m) underspend

67. The impact of the pandemic has resulted in a reduction in the services being delivered to external organisations and therefore a reduction in trading income is forecast. The current estimate of reduced income is £0.140m however, this is mitigated by holding vacancies.

Public Health: Budget £0.411m – £0.396m overspend

68. There are favourable variances amounting to £0.346m in the staffing budgets for Public Health management due to several vacancies being carried here.

69. There is an adverse variance of £1m which reflects that the savings target built into the budget for this year is unlikely to be met because of focusing resources on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highways and Environment: Budget £50.068m - £5.865m overspend

70. Highways are reporting £0.100m overspend, this is predominantly due to forecast underachievement of income in Development Control fees and Highways Operations due to the impact of COVID-19. The forecast loss of Income and pressures as a result of COVID-19 totals £0.366m this is being offset by spend control mitigations, including holding vacancies that total £0.266m.

71. The total income budget for Development Control £0.820m, the majority of this income is received from developers for inspection and supervision works for new developments, due to COVID many development sites closed down or were delayed which has had a significant impact on income. Like Planning this budget is difficult to forecast, there was a 81% loss of income for the period April to August for Development Control fees compared to prorated budget. The service is forecasting a total loss of income for the year of £0.228m.

72. Highways Operations impacted Income budgets have been revised, mainly due to markets forecast being amended for the Community Asset Transfer and Service Delegation programme, income budgets total £0.585 million and covers Taxi Licencing, Fleet, Markets & Fairs (still operated by Wiltshire Council) and Environment and Enforcement. For the period April to August there was an average loss of 23% compared to prorated budget. Overall, the service is forecasting a total loss of income of £0.105m for the year.

73. Car Parking is forecasting a £4.673m overspend and this is predominantly from underachievement of income after netting off spend control mitigations due to the impact of COVID-19.

74. On the 25 March 2020 the Government gave critical key workers the use of all council parking without time restriction or charge. On the 27th March 2020 Wiltshire Council went further, suspending all parking charges for parking including residential areas. All valid parking permits and season tickets were frozen at that time.
75. Charges were reintroduced from the 1st June 2020. However due to lockdown and the easing of social distancing it is forecast that income will continue to be affected. There was a 70% loss of income for the period April to August, totalling £2.463 million, and projecting forward it is assumed there will be a 50% loss of income over the remainder of the year in parking and a 25% loss of income on season tickets.
76. Waste is forecasting a £1.098m overspend, £0.214m of this this is predominantly due to a forecast underachievement of income as a result of COVID-19 the remainder £0.884m is made up of several non COVID-19 related variances as discussed below.
77. The Council receives a share of the income from the sale of recyclable materials managed under the waste contracts. Though often volatile, UK and worldwide markets for key materials such as paper and cardboard have been in decline for several months. The continued reduction in material prices has prompted a significant re-assessment of the level of income forecast for 2020/2021 and this is now forecast to be £0.591m underachieved. Although the overall tonnage of recyclables at the kerbside has increased during the lockdown period, the low materials value has had a detrimental effect on the forecast income. The closure of two HRCs due to COVID-19 has also reduced the overall tonnage recyclable materials managed and sold on for reprocessing under the Lot 1 contract, this is the element that can be attributed directly to COVID-19 and account for £0.130m of the variance.
78. A forecast underachievement of £0.215m for the loss of income through the HRC sites, sites were closed in April and May, £0.084m is forecast to be directly attributable to the closures in response to COVID-19.
79. The Waste contract financial models for Waste Collection, the Management of Recycling and Transfer and Household Recycling Centres are still to be finalised and prior year interim solution accounts reconciled. There is therefore a risk that forecasts could change because of these updates. The Budget is based on the Councils contractual and anticipated update position. A variance of £0.445m has been forecast on Lot 5 Waste Collections, this reflects the Councils assesment of contract model update and the number of Vehicles required to run the service. Round optimisation work on residual and garden waste rounds are due to be undertaken by the contractor and implemented in October 2020.

80. Waste contractors are having to manage the impacts of COVID-19 which has seen increased tonnages and operational issues as staff have been shielding or self-isolating, indicative figures suggest this could be circa £2.822m. HRCs have had to implement new measures to re-open which has meant increased costs for traffic management and new processes forecast at £0.068m. These costs are reported in the COVID-19 section of Budget monitoring.

Communities and Neighbourhood: Budget £33.236m – Variance £6.318m overspend

81. Libraries Heritage and Arts are forecasting a £0.611m overspend. This is predominantly from loss of income from Libraries and City Hall being closed in April, May, June and July. The forecast has been updated since period 3 for prudence and assumes City Hall will remain closed this financial year as presently shows do not look viable with social distancing rules. The forecast assumes Libraries will follow the mobilisation plan presented to Cabinet. This forecast is after accounting for Furlough grant. Savings targets in relation to review of Libraries £0.157m are forecast not to be delivered due COVID-19 causing a delay to planning and consultation.

82. Leisure are forecasting a £3.905 million overspend, this is predominantly from loss of income from the Leisure centres being closed in April, May, June and July. The forecast assumes that Leisure will follow the mobilisation plan presented to Cabinet with sites mobilising from August 2020 with social distancing restrictions.

83. The forecast loss of income has been revised down since P3 to £5.803m in line with the mobilisation plan and is based on activity in August. There is an assumption going forward that income will be underachieved by 60% once centres are reopened due to following social distancing measures and loss of memberships.

84. In addition, £0.420m has been included in the forecast for the loss of earnings implications for Places Leisure as a result of Clarendon Leisure Centre closure.

85. The forecast assumes non-delivery of savings targets totalling £0.540m as a result of delay due to COVID-19.

86. This forecast is after accounting for estimated Furlough grant of £1.492m, savings from service not operating and includes estimated costs for additional measures around cleaning and hygiene supplies required to reopen. The forecast Government grant for Loss of Income is being shown centrally and is not included in the service forecast.

87. Transport are forecasting £0.275m overspend, this is an improvement of £0.644m to the position reported in period 3 of £0.919m. This is due to additional funding from Government for dedicated home to school and college transport to assist with managing the demand and the increased capacity. The pressure remains as forecast at £1.080 million but has been reduced by the grant awarded to date and the commitment for the Autumn term, this has been forecast to be £0.652m, bringing the net reported pressure down to £0.428 million. This position could improve further if Government support continues beyond the Autumn term or instructions change.
88. The service is forecasting loss of income totalling £0.223 million as a result of COVID-19.
89. These pressures are being offset in part by efficiency's and spend control measures totalling £0.376m.
90. Public Protection are forecasting £0.385m overspend. This is predominantly from loss of income from traded services as a result of COVID-19.

Economic Development & Planning: Budget £2.907m - £1.009m overspend

91. Economic Development & Planning is forecasting a £1.009m overspend, this is an improvement of £0.146m from the position reported in period 3. The variance is predominantly due to forecast underachievement on income in the Enterprise Centres, Development Management, Building Control and Local Land Charges from the impact of COVID-19.
92. The total Income Budget across these areas total £7.314m and the forecast loss is £1.359 million, so this equates to an average loss of income of 19% for the year. The Income loss is being offset by spend control mitigations, including holding vacancies that total £0.350m.
93. The Enterprise Centres offered businesses a two month rental holiday in April and May and a one month rent deferral in June in response to COVID-19.
94. Development Management, Building Control and Local Land Charges are more difficult to forecast, across the board there was a 10% loss of income for the period April to August compared to prorated budget. The service are forecasting a full year loss of £1.190m which would be an 18% loss overall and is based on the assumption that there will be no further lockdowns. This will be monitored closely as the impact of the furlough scheme, further restrictions and business failures come to light over time.

CORPORATE EXPENDITURE

Table 9

Summary Position	2020/21 Budget	Profiled Budget to date	Actual to date	Projected Position for Year (before mitigation)	Variance due to Covid-19	Variances Other	Overall Projected Variance
	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m
Movement on Reserves	(0.674)	(0.674)	0.000	(0.674)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Capital Financing	23.148	2.190	2.947	23.298	0.150	0.000	0.150
Restructure & Contingency	4.931	5.147	0.188	7.088	2.157	0.000	2.157
General Government Grants	(41.029)	(18.083)	(30.099)	(41.029)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Corporate Levies	5.625	3.245	6.550	6.725	1.000	0.100	1.100
Covid	0.000	0.000	10.737	8.625	8.625	0.000	8.625
General Fund Total	(7.999)	(8.175)	(9.677)	4.033	11.932	0.100	12.032

Restructure & Contingency: Budget £4.359m – £2.157m overspend

95. Restructure & Contingency projected overspend is due to the current assessment of risk of undeliverability of some cross-cutting savings from both 2019/20 and 2020/21 such as the Management Review, Procurement / Contractual and Digital savings. A proportion of these savings have previously been reported within services but due to the undeliverability and cross-cutting nature of these savings that have been centralised to provide a more transparency in both financial performance reporting and for financial planning purposes. As the year progresses and recovery begins to be embedded it will become clearer what scope there is to deliver these savings.

Corporate Levies: Budget £5.625m – £1.100m overspend

96. The current forecast overspend on Corporate Levies is due to the assessment of losses on aged debt becoming irrecoverable due to the COVID-19 impact on the economy and financial impact across the residents and customers of the Council. As the year progresses, recovery begins to be embedded and debt recovery action restarts it will become clearer whether the basis of the estimation reflects the debt recovery performance.

COVID-19 Direct costs: Budget £0 – £8.625m overspend

97. The costs reported under the COVID-19 line are costs incurred as a direct result of COVID-19 and where actuals or forecasts can be assessed directly. They include the costs of PPE, additional cleaning to open Buildings safely, additional IT costs to improve and facilitate working from home, the setting up of a temporary morgue, the direct additional costs of reopening HRC's for example traffic management and new processes, Waste collection contractor costs in relation to increased agency and overtime in managing operations while staff are self-isolating/shielding and increased tonnages, setting up and supplies for the

Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub providing emergency food parcels and supplies to the most vulnerable, supporting adult care providers. The emergency COVID-19 grant funding is shown separately as this funding will support the direct costs pressure explained within this paragraph and the additional pressures forecast in services.

Dedicated Schools Grant – Total Grant £375.446m - £6.519m net overspend

98. The forecast variance for dedicated schools grant (DSG) is a £6.519m overspend. This is driven by demand from parents and schools for support for vulnerable children with SEN & disability. This is reflected in increased numbers of education health and care plans (EHCP) which, unless demand changes, are forecast to rise by 12% from April 2020 to March 2021.

99. The overspend is aligned with the national picture for many other local authorities and the Government’s acknowledgement of this is the additional funding for the 2020/21 high needs block of £780m. The 2021-22 allocations have been published during the summer which includes a further £5m increase. This will come somewhat to alleviating the pressure for future years it will not however, assist with current or previous years overspends. Lobbying continues to request support and additional funding at national level.

100. The DSG is ringfenced and is separate to local authority budget. Any underspend or overspend is also ringfenced. At the end of the financial year, the DSG reserve balance will have a deficit of £17.356m following a positive prior year early years adjustment. The local authority has a 10-year recovery plan centred around inclusion which is being implemented in partnership with schools however the deficit lies with Wiltshire Council whilst the recovery plan is delivered. Additional funding is key to meeting the needs of Wiltshire pupils.

DSG Reserve (held in the council’s balance sheet)

Balance brought forward from 2019-20	£11.376m
Early Years previous year adjustment	(£0.539m)
Forecast Variance (all blocks) for 2020-21	£6.519m
Forecast DSG Deficit carried forward 2020-21	£17.356m

101. Heads have raised the profile of the funding challenges with Wiltshire’s MPs who have been supportive and raised with central government.

102. Officers are taking part in national and south west comparator research which when available, will show the extent of the national issue. Best practice and savings approaches are being shared. These are limited to a parent’s legal right to state parental preference and recourse to a tribunal.

103. Discussions have been taking place between officers and the DfE regarding the 10 year recovery plan which takes into account significant Council investment in the System of Excellence and new Special School places in the north of the county, the 150 place free special school in the south, expansion of specialist places within

our schools and the flexible use of capital receipts by the council to fund a series of projects to facilitate change both internally and to influence partners. These and the savings planned from them do not lead to a balanced position within the 10-year recovery period. Our position is that we simply cannot sustain the DSG deficit. In addition, the pupil driven needs simply cannot be met without an appropriate level of funding. The DfE guidance has been updated and now includes some new information around “Additional” dedicated schools grant funding. Officers hope to be in a position to update Schools Forum next month with progress from these meetings.

SAVINGS DELIVERY 2020/21

104. The Council has a savings requirement of £14.682m within its 2020/21 budget which were approved by Council in February 2020. The deliverability of these proposals were being monitored through a newly formed savings delivery board, however the COVID-19 response has seen resource focused away from savings delivery and, quite rightly, on service delivery during the response phase. With recent interim changes to management reporting, and now a greater focus on savings delivery moving into recovery, this will now be reported direct to CLT.
105. The assessment on the deliverability of the savings at the end of quarter one (June 2020) can be seen in Appendix A. These assessments are included in the General Fund figures set out in this report.
106. Of the £14.682m savings proposals £7.096m (48.3%) are assessed as either being delivered (blue) or on track to be delivered (green) or have alternative replacement savings identified (grey), and £2.537m are assessed as amber rated. This means that they are deemed to be deliverable in 2020/21, but with some risks associated with them.
107. £5.049m (34.4%) of savings targets are currently assessed as red. This means they are deemed unlikely to be delivered as planned and to the timescales required i.e. in this financial year. Officers will continue to try and identify compensating savings and corresponding mitigating actions, as well as identifying where the savings will now no longer be able to be delivered at all as originally approved.
108. Some of the savings that were agreed as part of the 2019/20 budget to be delivered in 2019/20 remain undelivered along with an amount from 2018/19 (£0.657m). Of a total of £5.590m that was deemed undelivered at the beginning of the financial year £2.106m has now been delivered or is on track to be delivered and £0.547m of alternative replacement savings have been or are on track to be delivered, which leaves £2.937m (52.5%) remaining undelivered.
109. The delivery of savings remains a focus for the Council and the status of the undelivered savings will be considered as part of the financial recovery and future year financial planning processes to ensure the budget remains robust and deliverable.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

110. The financial position facing the Council is still significant, however the additional emergency COVID-19 grant funding, the estimated funding from the scheme to cover irrecoverable income and the spreading of collection fund losses means that the General Fund reserve is no longer forecast to be exhausted.

111. This position means that the Council now has some time to be able to plan for recovery and future financial resilience.

112. However, it is likely that further support will still be required from Government in the longer term, to ensure the Council is on a sure financial footing, and to enable it to undertake its role in leading the recovery process.

Overview & Scrutiny Engagement

113. Regular reports are taken to Overview & Scrutiny relating to the Council's financial position.

Safeguarding Implications

114. None have been identified as arising directly from this report.

Public Health Implications

115. None have been identified as arising directly from this report.

Procurement Implications

116. None have been identified as arising directly from this report.

Equalities and diversity impact of the proposals

117. None have been identified as arising directly from this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

118. None have been identified as arising directly from this report.

Risks Assessment

119. If the Council fails to take actions to address forecast shortfalls, overspends or increases in its costs it will need to draw on reserves. The level of reserves is limited and a one-off resource that cannot be used as a long term sustainable strategy for financial stability.

120. Ongoing budget monitoring and management, of which this report forms part of the control environment, is a mitigating process to ensure early identification and action is taken.

Financial implications – Section 151 Officer Commentary

121. Without the emergency funding provided by the Government the Council would be facing an insurmountable £54m overspend. The emergency funding of £29m reduces this down to a £25.6m overspend, and then when taking into consideration an estimate of £6m from the Governments proposed income loss scheme, and a deferral of collection fund losses of £15m reduces the forecast overspend for 2020/21 to £4.6m.
122. This continues to be an improved position on the forecasts previously reported. At the Cabinet meeting in May an overspend range of between £18m to £51m was estimated, this was consolidated to £50m in June and then reduced to £36m in the first overall budget monitor reported to Cabinet in July.
123. The forecasts have been refined over time as the impacts of the dynamic position on the Councils services are understood. In addition, the announcements by Government on emergency funding and other schemes have undoubtedly recovered the financial position of the authority for this 2020/21 compared to that which was forecast in June.
124. Changes to this forecast are predominantly around the level of support the Council anticipates from Government, but also underlines the volatility and uncertainty being faced this financial year, particularly when trying to forecast into the future based on current guidance and thinking. Uncertainty still exists and rising number of positive cases and local lockdown restrictions being applied elsewhere in the country adds further concern and uncertainty to the underlying assumptions on which the current forecasts are based. It is also not clear exactly how the new Job Support Scheme will support the economy as the Furlough Scheme finishes at the end of October.
125. Although the combination of emergency funding and the additional schemes from Government will on the whole mitigate the overspend, it is without doubt that the quick action taken to introduce tight controls on spending, a freeze on external recruitment has had a positive impact on the Councils financial position. This, together with the way Council is conducting its current operations and service delivery, has led to an overall underspend on general fund services of £8.5m.
126. These measures are under constant review but will still be continued until the financial position becomes more stable and more importantly is not reducing the General Fund Reserve.
127. Whilst this forecast position continues to present some breathing space in the current financial year, we should be under no illusion at the tough times and difficult decisions ahead. The collection fund losses of £15m will still need to be found and represent a first call on the Council's finances when setting the 2021/22 budget, whilst the overspend is still forecast to deplete the General Fund Reserve to just under £11m.

128. In addition, the erosion to the Councils base level of funding for council tax and business rates, as well as the ongoing impact to its income streams combined with the almost inevitable latent demand for services that will come through, will further compound the financial pressures being estimated and faced.

129. We continue to work closely with Government on the Councils financial position, as well as working with colleagues in the sector to put the case forward to Government on further funding and specific support.

130. The Council made representation on funding for Local Government in response to the Comprehensive Spending Review consultation and an announcement in response to the consultation representations is expected in November.

Legal Implications

131. None have been identified as arising directly from this report.

Proposals

132. Cabinet is asked to note:

- a) the Section 151 officer's summary of the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's 2020/21 budget;
- b) the current revenue budget is forecast to overspend by £4.569m by the end of the financial year and forecast level of General Fund reserve;
- c) the current savings delivery performance for the year;

Reasons for Proposals

133. To inform effective decision making and ensure a sound financial control environment.

Background Papers and Consultation

None

Contact Name:

Andy Brown, Interim Corporate Director Resources (Section 151 Officer)
andy.brown@wiltshire.gov.uk

Report Authors:

Andy Brown, Interim Corporate Director Resources (Section 151 Officer)
Lizzie Watkin, Head of Corporate Finance & Deputy Section 151 Officer

Appendices:

Appendix A: Savings Delivery 2020/21

APPENDIX A - SAVINGS DELIVERY 2020/21 – to be updated

2020/21 Savings Delivery							
Service Area		Total Saving (£ m)	Delivered (£m)	Green (£ m)	Amber (£ m)	Red (£ m)	Alternative Savings (£m)
Corporate Director People							
Family & Childrens	Prior Years	-1.333	-0.812	0	0	-0.351	-0.170
	2020/21	-1.086	-0.040	-0.036	-0.525	-0.073	-0.412
	Total	-2.419	-0.852	-0.036	-0.525	-0.424	-0.582
Education & Skills	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.586	-0.045	0	0	-0.541	0
	Total	-0.586	-0.045	0	0	-0.541	0
Learning Disabilities & Mental Health	Prior Years	-0.527	-0.527	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.720	0	-0.020	0	-0.700	0
	Total	-1.247	-0.527	-0.020	0	-0.700	0
Access & Reablement	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-6.000	-0.942	-2.254	-1.423	-1.381	0
	Total	-6.000	-0.942	-2.254	-1.423	-1.381	0
Commissioning - Adults	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.487	-0.020	0	-0.300	-0.167	0
	Total	-0.487	-0.020	0	-0.300	-0.167	0
TOTAL		-10.739	-2.386	-2.31	-2.248	-3.213	-0.582
Corporate Director Resources							
Finance	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.100	-0.100	0	0	0	0
	Total	-0.100	-0.100	0	0	0	0
Housing & Commercial Development	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.754	0.100	-0.604	0	-0.250	0
	Total	-0.754	0.100	-0.604	0	-0.250	0
Digital & Information	Prior Years	0.000	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.647	-0.249	-0.108	0	-0.290	0
	Total	-0.647	-0.249	-0.108	0	-0.290	0
TOTAL		-1.501	-0.249	-0.712	0	-0.540	0
Chief Executive Directorates							
Legal & Governance	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.002	0.000	0	0	-0.002	0
	Total	-0.002	0	0	0	-0.002	0
Human Resources & Org Development	Prior Years	0.000	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.123	-0.073	-0.050	0	0	0
	Total	-0.123	-0.073	-0.050	0	0	0
Public Health	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-1.004	0	0	0	-1.004	0
	Total	-1.004	0	0	0	-1.004	0.000
Highways & Environment	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.088	-0.088	0	0	0	0
	Total	-0.088	-0.088	0	0	0	0
Communities & Neighbourhood	Prior Years	-0.380	-0.050	-0.048	0	-0.271	-0.011
	2020/21	-0.580	0	0	-0.032	-0.548	0
	Total	-0.960	-0.050	-0.048	-0.032	-0.819	-0.011
Economic Development & Planning	Prior Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020/21	-0.025	0	-0.025	0	0	0
	Total	-0.025	0	-0.025	0	0	0
Directors & Members	Prior Years	-0.500	0	0	0	-0.134	-0.366
	2020/21	-0.025	-0.025	0	0	0	0
	Total	-0.525	-0.025	0	0	-0.134	-0.366
TOTAL		-2.727	-0.236	-0.123	-0.032	-1.959	-0.377
Corporate / Cross Cutting							
Corporate / Cross Cutting	Prior Years	-2.850	0	-0.669	0	-2.181	0
	2020/21	-2.455	-0.900	-1.205	-0.257	-0.093	0
	Total	-5.305	-0.900	-1.874	-0.257	-2.274	0
GRAND TOTAL	Prior Years	-5.590	-1.389	-0.717	0	-2.937	-0.547
	2020/21	-14.682	-2.382	-4.302	-2.537	-5.049	-0.412
	Total	-20.272	-3.771	-5.019	-2.537	-7.986	-0.959
		%	0.186	0.248	0.125	0.394	0.047

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Subject: A350 Melksham Bypass – Public Consultation

Cabinet Member: Councillor Bridget Wayman

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary

The importance of the A350 to the local economy has long been recognised by the Council. The section of the road through Beanacre and Melksham has been a concern for many years. It has sections with 30mph speed limits passing through residential areas, with several busy junctions providing access to Melksham town centre, retail and commercial sites, the A365 Bath Road and A3102.

The A350 at Melksham is one of the busiest major roads in Wiltshire, with daily traffic volumes generally above 20,000 vehicles per day, and heavy goods vehicles accounting for around 8% of all vehicles.

Funding has been received from the Department of Transport (DfT) to develop a Large Local Major improvement scheme for the A350 at Melksham and to prepare an Outline Business Case (OBC).

A range of options have been identified and public consultation should be undertaken to inform the selection of a preferred option and enable the OBC to be developed for submission to the DfT.

There will be many factors to consider in connection with options appraisal, including emerging guidance on carbon impacts, ecology, public health and road safety, landscape, archaeology, employment and the economy, flood risk and drainage, cost and economic benefit.

This consultation is non-statutory and will be used to develop options further and help identify a preferred option. Statutory consultations will take place as part of the next stage in the scheme development and following approval of the OBC by DfT, when the scheme would be designed in detail and a planning application would be submitted. It is likely that statutory orders, including compulsory purchase orders, may be required, and the scheme could be the subject of a public inquiry.

Proposals

It is recommended that:

- (i) Public consultation should be undertaken on the options for the A350 Melksham Bypass scheme, which would take the form of a predominantly on-line consultation.
- (ii) The views of the Town and Parish Councils, Area Board and other organisations should be obtained in order to inform the future development of the scheme.
- (iii) The outcome of the consultation and the options appraisal should be reported to a future Cabinet meeting in order to consider the adoption of a Preferred Option for the scheme, the submission of an Outline Business Case to the Department of Transport, and the submission of a planning application for the scheme.

Reason for Proposals

The A350 Melksham Bypass is a Large Local Major scheme which has been awarded development funding by the DfT to take it to OBC stage. It will be a major improvement to the important A350 route which provides vital transport links between the M4 and the towns of western Wiltshire.

As part of the development of the scheme various options have been identified and, in order to inform assessment of these options, it is proposed to undertake consultations with the public, town and parish councils, the Area Board and other organisations.

In order to progress the development of the proposals it will be necessary to adopt a preferred option, prepare an Outline Business Case to submit to the DfT, and prepare a planning application for the scheme.

Terence Herbert - Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Subject: A350 Melksham Bypass – Public Consultation

Cabinet Member: Councillor Bridget Wayman

Key Decision: Yes

Purpose of Report

1. To approve public consultation being undertaken on the options for the A350 Melksham Bypass scheme, and to carry out options appraisal to inform the adoption of a preferred option for the scheme.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The Council's Business Plan 2017 – 27 has priorities for Growing the Economy, Strong Communities and Protecting the Vulnerable. The goals for Transport and Infrastructure include:
 - (a) Road Infrastructure is improved
 - (b) New infrastructure to support housing and employment growth
 - (c) Improved strategic roads and rail
3. The proposed Melksham Bypass scheme is a major infrastructure improvement to the transport network to support housing and employment growth and would improve connections to the strategic road network.

Background

4. The importance of the A350 to the local economy has long been recognised in Wiltshire, and improvements have been undertaken in recent years to address sections where there were capacity constraints and where improvements were needed. There are a number of proposals for further improvements to the route currently being developed, including at Melksham.
5. The A350 through Beanacre and Melksham has been a concern for many years. The road has sections with 30mph speed limits passing through residential areas, with several busy junctions which provide access to Melksham town centre, retail and commercial sites, the A365 Bath Road and A3102. It is one of the busiest major roads in Wiltshire, with daily traffic volumes generally above 20,000 vehicles per day, and heavy goods vehicles accounting for around 8% of all vehicles.
6. In July 2017, Department for Transport's "Transport Investment Strategy" was published. As part of the Strategy, Government committed to creating a 'Major Road Network' (MRN) across England – more specifically a network of England's most important routes which complement motorways and strategic trunk roads.

7. Government acknowledged the need for a long-term funding stream for road investment, specifically through establishment of the 'National Roads Fund', being £28.8 billion between 2020-2025; £3.5 billion of which is to be spent on improving the MRN. This funding was confirmed in March 2020 in DfT's publication of their second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) for the period 2020 – 2025.
8. A central principle in the development of this strategy was to:

“create a road network that is safe, reliable and efficient for everyone – whether they are cyclists or drivers, passengers or pedestrians”
9. Government indicated that access to the local roads fund would require prioritised investment planning within a consistent national framework. Government made it equally clear that Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs), should carry out this important strategic role – i.e. as bodies designed to enable regions to speak with one voice on strategic transport planning.
10. The Western Gateway Shadow Sub-National Transport Body (WGSSTB) was officially formed in a shadow status in December 2018 with Cllr Bridget Wayman elected as Chair.
11. Guidance for STBs on submitting their priority schemes was issued by DfT in December 2018, with a deadline for submission of priorities in July 2019. The WGSSTB considered candidate schemes from all member authorities, and following its meeting in June 2019, the Board agreed to submit nine schemes to DfT, four of which are in Wiltshire.
12. The Wiltshire schemes are:
 - (a) A350 - M4 Junction 17 Improvement
 - (b) A350 Chippenham Bypass Improvements – Phases 4 & 5
 - (c) A338 Southern Salisbury Improvements and
 - (d) A350 Melksham Bypass
13. At its meeting on 19 May 2020 Cabinet considered a report on the success of the Council bid to the DfT for development funding for the A350 Melksham Bypass Large Local Major (LLM) road scheme, and also the award of funding for the development of other schemes for the MRN at A350 – M4 Junction 17 and A338 Southern Salisbury Improvements.
14. The success in obtaining funding for the next stage of these schemes required consideration of the resources needed to manage and deliver an increasing programme of scheme development. Funding was identified to enable the development of the A350 Melksham Bypass scheme to continue to Outline Business Case (OBC) stage, which has been progressing.

Main Considerations for the Council

Scheme Development

15. In developing the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for proposals at Melksham, various options were considered, including demand management,

public transportation, online highway improvements, and new bypass options to the west and east of the existing route.

16. The SOBC identified an eastern route, which could cost in the region of £135 million as being feasible, but all options are being revisited in more detail as part of the preparation of the Outline Business Case. This includes further consideration of the non-bypass options, developing the previously identified bypass route options and considering variations of those routes, which could potentially improve their performance in economic terms or reduce the environmental impact, and complimentary measures to improve facilities for walking and cycling.
17. The transport objectives for the scheme have been derived from relevant key policy documents and strategies, including the DfT Transport Investment Strategy, Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan, Wiltshire Core Strategy, and the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan. The transport objectives set for the scheme are considered to reflect existing transport problems and the key policy documents.
18. The transport objectives of the scheme are to:
 - (i) Reduce journey times and delays and improve journey reliability on the A350 through Melksham and Beanacre, improving local and regional north-south connectivity, and supporting future housing and employment growth in the A350 corridor.
 - (ii) Reduce journey times and delays on and improve journey reliability on the following routes through Melksham and Beanacre:
 - A350 South – A3102
 - A365 West – A365 East
 - A350 South – A365 West
 - (iii) Provide enhanced opportunities for walking and cycling between Melksham town centre and the rail station / Bath Road, and along the existing A350 corridor within Melksham and Beanacre, which will help reduce the impact of transport on the environment and support local economic activity.
 - (iv) Reduce personal injury accident rates and severity for the A350 and Melksham as a whole, to make the corridor safer and more resilient.
 - (v) Reduce the volume of traffic, including HGVs, passing along the current A350 route in northern Melksham and Beanacre to reduce severance, whilst avoiding negative impacts on other existing or potential residential areas.
19. There will be many factors to consider in connection with options appraisal, including emerging guidance on carbon impacts, ecology, public health and road safety, landscape, archaeology, employment and the economy, flood risk and drainage, cost and economic benefit.

20. The Scheme forms part of the Western Gateway Sub National Transport Body's Strategy to improve connectivity between M4 and the South Coast. A range of strategic transport priorities have been established which will assist economic performance by improving labour market efficiency, increasing business and economic connectivity, providing access to international gateways and enabling development within the corridor.
21. The scheme is forecast to deliver strategic benefits including:
- (a) Helping unlock the potential of the south coast and facilitate greater economic alignment between the north and south of the Western Gateway by providing improved strategic connectivity from the M4 and A303 corridors to the south coast.
 - (b) Potential to help realise local growth ambitions and forge significant agglomeration benefits by removing one of the barriers to more efficient north and south travel in the Western Gateway area.
 - (c) Creating a more reliable, less congested, and better-connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it.
 - (d) Providing a well-connected, reliable and resilient transport system to support economic and planned development growth at key locations.
 - (e) Supporting and helping to improve the vitality, viability and resilience of Wiltshire's economy and market towns.
 - (f) Providing transport infrastructure to support new housing in the western Wiltshire corridor.
 - (g) Assisting the efficient and sustainable distribution of freight in Wiltshire and beyond to build stronger, more balanced economies by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities.
 - (h) Supporting and promoting a choice of sustainable transport alternatives.
 - (i) Reducing the level of air pollutants, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from transport, thereby contributing to the Council's carbon reduction targets.
 - (j) Improving safety for all road users and reducing the number of casualties on Wiltshire's roads.
22. Significant localised benefits will accrue from a parallel package of transformational improvements including:
- (a) Improving access to the railway station from the town and residential areas.
 - (b) Improving walking and cycling routes from the town to the south and Semington.
 - (c) Improving air quality, physical and mental well-being by reducing traffic and traffic noise on the existing A350 through Beanacre and Melksham.
 - (d) Improving access to local services, shops, amenities and schools with the removal of through traffic.
 - (e) Reducing severance impacts on communities in Beanacre and northern Melksham caused by high traffic volumes and encouraging HGVs to use more suitable routes.
 - (f) Improving localised air quality by shifting traffic and pollutants away from sensitive receptors, especially residential areas.
 - (g) Generating opportunities for public realm schemes following the diversion of traffic.

Consultation and Public Engagement

23. The next stage in the scheme development is to undertake a consultation on the options. This will provide the opportunity for the public, town and parish councils, Area Board and others to comment on the scheme and the options. Other organisations, including the Environment Agency, Natural England, Highways Agency, will also be invited to comment as part of the consultation.
24. In view of the current circumstances it is envisaged that this will be primarily an on-line consultation, although the opportunity will also be provided to submit written comments.
25. The opportunity will be offered to the town and parish councils, and Area Board, to attend virtual meetings or to hold webinars to explain the scheme and the options should they wish. The possibility of providing display boards in the library is not considered to be feasible in the current circumstances.
26. The intention is to hold the consultation at the end of October and beginning of November.

Next Stages

27. The information collected through the consultation process would be used to develop the options further, inform their assessment and help to identify a preferred option.
28. The consultation would provide the opportunity to gather additional information on the scheme and its potential impacts and help identify mitigation measures. The views of organisations with specialist knowledge of the area will be particularly important in helping to refine the proposals.
29. It should be noted that the consultation would not be a public 'vote' for the most popular route or option. There are many factors to be taken into account in determining the preferred option, including, landscape, archaeology, ecology, air quality, flood risk, environment, cost and benefits. The preferred option may be a variation of the options being consulted on as the design will be refined in response to the consultation.
30. The assessment of scheme options will be in accordance with DfT guidance, primarily as set out in DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance (WebTAG). The OBC for the scheme will have to make the case for obtaining DfT funding as the Council would not be able to fund a major scheme of this type from its own resources. The preparation of the OBC will require the consideration of the strategic, economic, financial, management and commercial cases.
31. It is anticipated that the OBC will be submitted for approval to the DfT next year, and the scheme would then be designed to planning application stage. The statutory orders would be prepared to enable the compulsory purchase of land if required and the alterations to side roads and private accesses. With a scheme of this potential size it is expected that there would be a public inquiry in connection with the statutory orders.

32. Subject to successful progress through the statutory procedures and the option adopted, construction could start in 2024, and the scheme open in 2027.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

33. The scheme is at a very early stage of its development and the next stage of the scheme preparations would be to undertake public consultation. Future progress on the project will be reported to the Environment Select Committee in connection with the annual report made on the highways service.

Safeguarding Implications

34. There are no safeguarding implications.

Public Health Implications

35. The scheme could improve the highway network significantly in the local area and has the potential to improve road safety and reduce the number killed and seriously injured on our roads. The potential reduction in injury collisions and road safety implications would be considered in assessing the scheme options.
36. The removal of through traffic from residential areas could reduce traffic noise and air pollution with consequent health benefits for residents, but the options could have the potential to introduce traffic into previously unaffected areas and may have other detrimental effects. The options assessment and business case for the scheme will take these impacts into consideration.
37. Reduced traffic on some of the existing roads could provide the opportunity to provide improved facilities for walking and cycling to encourage active travel and healthier lifestyles. The potential for improved walking and cycling provision is being considered at the earliest stage of the scheme development and would be prepared in more detail at the planning application stage.

Procurement Implications

38. The Melksham Bypass would be a major construction project. The exact procurement arrangements may depend on the particular option adopted, and at this stage it is too early to confirm the likely procurement process to be followed. The procurement strategy would be developed as part of the OBC and would include consideration of opportunities for advanced works, staged construction and specialist contracts.
39. It is anticipated that the scheme would be largely funded by the DfT and procurement would be carried out to meet the DfT requirements, using standard documentation where available, and in accordance with the Council's own procurement rules.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

40. There are a large number of scheme options currently under consideration. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken in accordance with the DfT guidance as the scheme is developed and will be used to inform option selection.

41. It is anticipated that scheme options may have different implications for different groups and the public consultation and proposed development work should help identify these so that they can be taken into account in preparing the business case for the scheme.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

42. The Melksham Bypass would be a major transport improvement, which would be likely to reduce journey times and vehicle operating costs on the A350 and at the associated junctions. The reduced congestion, better facilities for active travel, and improved road safety would be expected to reduce energy consumption as a result of the scheme. This is likely to vary between the different options and will be assessed as part of the options appraisal process.
43. The scheme is likely to involve major civil engineering works, with the use of large plant and equipment and energy consuming manufacture of materials, especially concrete and asphalt. There would be scope for the use of energy efficient plant, materials and processes to reduce the carbon footprint of the construction stage of the scheme. The impact would be considered in the light of emerging policies and strategies at government and local level.
44. The scheme would include environmental mitigation measures, including landscaping proposals, sustainable drainage schemes, and environmental protection measures to control potential incidents as a result of collisions. A road designed to modern standards with appropriate environmental protection measures is likely to be less of an operational risk to the environment and people than the existing road.
45. The potential effects of climate change will be taken into account in the design of the scheme. This would include making allowances for increased rainfall and flood risk, as well as the use of more durable materials to provide resilience in connection with increased temperatures and other impacts of climate change. The options appraisal process will include consideration of the carbon impacts, ecology and flood risk associated with the options.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

46. Should the decision be made to not proceed with the scheme, the opportunity to obtain significant government investment in the county would be lost. The existing problems on the A350 at Beanacre and Melksham would remain, and the situation would be expected to deteriorate because of anticipated future traffic growth.
47. Not undertaking consultations on the route options at this early stage could mean that potentially all the information required to inform route selection would not be available. This could lead to incomplete information for later stages of the scheme development and would not be in accordance with the DfT guidance for major schemes. There are other formal consultation stages, including at planning application and in connection with the statutory orders, but it is considered that early consultation is a vital stage in developing major projects.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

48. If it is agreed to undertake public consultation on the full range of route options currently identified, it should be noted that the Council would have to reveal the routes on property searches, which could lead to concerns from home owners about potential difficulties in selling properties. In order to limit this potential adverse impact, it would be helpful to adopt a preferred route as soon as possible to reduce the uncertainty.
49. There is a risk that after identifying a route and taking it to the planning application and statutory orders stage, the scheme does not proceed because funding is no longer available, or if the statutory orders are not confirmed. Consideration will be given to the risks associated with progressing the scheme at various stages of its development.

Financial Implications

50. The report to Cabinet in May 2020 recognised that most of the funding for the scheme would be provided by the DfT, with £1.33 million awarded by the DfT to prepare the OBC for the scheme. The report identified Council funding of £0.66 million to contribute to that stage of the scheme development.
51. The indications are that the currently identified funding resources will be adequate to progress the scheme to the OBC stage. It is anticipated that the successful acceptance of the OBC by DfT will result in an award of further funding to progress the scheme to Full Business Case (FBC), which would include the planning and statutory processes and the contract procurement.

Legal Implications

52. There is no legal requirement to undertake public consultation at this stage. However, undertaking a consultation on the route options at this early stage ensures that the Council captures all information potentially required to inform route selection. It also ensures that information is available for later stages of the scheme development and is in accordance with the DfT guidance for major schemes.
53. There are other formal consultation stages, including at planning application and in connection with the statutory orders, but it is considered that early consultation is a vital stage in developing major projects.
54. The adoption of a Preferred Route or Option for the scheme is an important stage in developing a scheme of this type. It should be noted that in certain circumstances this could result in blight claims if land is adversely affected by the scheme. Any such claims would be considered on their merits should they be received but are unlikely to be successful at this early stage when options are still being considered.
55. The scheme could be the subject of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) under the Highways Act 1980 should it not be possible to acquire the necessary land and rights from owners by agreement. It is also likely that the scheme would require Side Roads Orders (SRO) in order to make alterations to minor roads,

rights of way and private accesses needing to be altered to accommodate the scheme.

56. Objections to the CPO (should they be required) and SRO statutory orders could result in the Secretary of State (SoS) requiring a public inquiry to be held. The Inspector's report would be considered by the SoS in determining whether or not to confirm the orders.

Workforce Implications

57. There are no immediate workforce implications in undertaking public consultation or developing the A350 Melksham Bypass. A small major highway projects team has been established in the Council, which works closely with the Council's consultants who have the specialist knowledge and expertise required for a scheme of this type.
58. In the longer term, if the project proceeds through the detailed design and construction stages, it is likely that there would be significant training opportunities for the Council's technical staff with good opportunities to broaden their experience.

Options Considered

59. The possibility of delaying the public consultation was considered in view of the current circumstances but taking into account the importance of the scheme it was concluded that there would be benefits in undertaking the initial consultations as soon as possible. Further formal consultations will be undertaken in the future as part of the planning and statutory procedures.
60. Not undertaking public consultation was not considered appropriate as the views of the public, businesses and other organisations are vital in developing a viable scheme which would attract DfT funding.

Conclusions

61. The A350 Melksham Bypass is a Large Local Major scheme which has been awarded development funding by the DfT to take it to OBC stage. It would be a major improvement to the important A350 route which provides vital transport links between the M4 and the towns of western Wiltshire.
62. As part of the development of the scheme various options have been identified, and in order to inform assessment of these options it is necessary to undertake consultations with the public, town and parish councils, the Area Board and other organisations.

Parvis Khansari (Director - Highways and Waste)

Report Author:

Peter Binley

Head of Service - Highway Asset Management and Commissioning,

peter.binley@wiltshire.gov.uk, Tel: 01245 3712

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

Appendices

None

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Subject: Regulation 18 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) Consultation on scope of Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document

Cabinet Member: Cllr Toby Sturgis Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Investment

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

Cabinet at its meeting on 24 March 2020, in updating the Council's Local Development Scheme, approved the preparation of a Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document (hereafter referred to as the Plan). The Plan will address the accommodation needs of Wiltshire's travelling communities and update Core Policy 47 'Meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers' of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

In line with legislation, the first formal stage in preparing the Plan is to consult on its scope with the local community and other stakeholders. This report sets out the proposed content for this initial consultation on the Plan and the arrangements for consultation.

Consultation will take place for a minimum of 6 weeks commencing January 2021 and ending during February 2021. The dates will be aligned with consultation on the wider Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which will be the subject of a report to December's Cabinet. Alongside the scope of the Plan, the findings of a new Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment will be published, and comments invited on: the proposed objectives of the Plan; level of need to be addressed; approach to meeting accommodation needs; and site assessment criteria. In addition, there will be a 'call for sites' to identify potential land that may be suitable for new sites.

The implementation of the Emergency Stopping Places Strategy approved by Cabinet in July 2018 should be carried forward as part of the Plan, with the delivery of one site ahead of it; to manage delivery costs and provide learning for the delivery and management of the other two sites. Approval is sought for provision to be made for capital funding to deliver these sites, the management of which will need to be supported by future revenue funding.

Cabinet should be aware that the implementation of the Plan over the coming years will have finance and workforce implications that need to be planned for.

Proposal(s)**That Cabinet:**

- (i) Note the content and findings of the Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment;**
- (ii) Approves Appendix 1 for the purposes of consultation on the scope and content of the Gypsies and Travellers Plan subject to amendment at (iii);**
- (iii) Authorises the Director for Economic Development and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Investment to: make any necessary changes to the consultation documents in the interest of clarity and accuracy before they are finalised for publication; and make arrangements for and undertake statutory consultation;**
- (iv) Approves a capital budget of £1.3 million from the 'Other Capital Schemes to be approved' budget to fund the delivery of three Emergency Stopping Place sites; and**
- (v) Note that the Emergency Stopping Places will have revenue implications of circa £0.030 million per year, which will need to be addressed in future Revenue budget setting.**

Reason for Proposal(s)

To ensure progress continues to be made in updating the Local Plan for Wiltshire in line with the Local Development Scheme and statutory requirements; and the housing needs of Wiltshire's travelling communities can be met.

**Terence Herbert
Chief Executive**

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Subject: Regulation 18 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) Consultation on scope of Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document

Cabinet Member: Cllr Toby Sturgis Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Investment

Key Decision: Key

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for the first stage of consultation on the Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document (hereafter referred to as the Plan) .

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The Council's 'Wiltshire Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater Strategy 2020-2025' [INSERT LINK] recognises the importance of a settled base to support the health and well-being and educational needs of these communities. Providing for the housing needs of Wiltshire's Gypsy and Traveller communities therefore aligns with all three of the priorities within the Council's 'Business Plan 2017 -2027 Forward Thinking' - 'Growing the Economy', 'Strong Communities' and 'Protecting the Vulnerable'.

Background

3. National planning policy requires local planning authorities to assess and reflect in their planning policies the accommodation needs of travellers, and to set pitch targets and identify sites for gypsies and travellers and plots for travelling showpeople to address identified need¹. The Government's overarching aim is to "*ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community*" (paragraph 3, Planning policy for traveller sites (PPTS)).
4. Cabinet on [24 March 2020](#) approved a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) and made provision to progress a separate single-issue plan to address the housing needs of gypsies and travellers, ahead of the wider Local Plan Review. To inform the plan, a Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has been completed, which is provided as an

¹ Paragraph 61, [National Planning Policy Framework \(July 2019\)](#); Policies A and B, [Planning policy for travellers sites \(August 2015\)](#)

[accompanying paper](#) to this report. It sets out pitch and plot requirements for the period 2019 to 2036 for the permanent and temporary accommodation needs of both gypsies and travellers and travelling show people within Wiltshire; and reinforces the approach to temporary accommodation set out in the Emergency Stopping Places Strategy, approved by Cabinet on [3 July 2018](#).

5. Preparation of the Plan will involve a review of Core Policy 47 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy 'Meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers': to identify accommodation needs of travellers to 2036; and make provision to meet those needs through site allocations and policy. To date provision has been made through assessing planning applications against national policy and site assessment criteria within Core Policy 47.
6. To ensure plans are prepared on a sound basis, local planning authorities are required to undertake consultation at the start of the process in line with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and their Statements of Community Involvement.

Main Considerations for the Council

7. This public consultation is the initial consultation on developing the plan and will seek the views of the local community and other stakeholders. **Appendix 1** sets out the proposed consultation document, which includes:
 - (i) The scope and objectives of the plan;
 - (ii) Overview of Wiltshire's travelling communities and their accommodation needs;
 - (iii) Summary of findings of GTAA and level of provision to be planned for;
 - (iv) Proposed approach to meeting accommodation needs and site; assessment criteria; and
 - (v) Call for sites to help identify land that may be suitable for new sites.
8. The scope of the Plan is set out in the LDS. The Plan:

"...will identify the future level of need for accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers, including travelling showpeople to 2036. It will identify sites to meet permanent and temporary accommodation needs and focus on Core Policy 47 'Meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers' of the Wiltshire Core Strategy."
9. Through preparation of the Plan Core Policy 47 of the Core Strategy will be reviewed to set out requirements for new traveller accommodation over the period 2019 to 2036 consistent with the GTAA and allocate sites in accordance with national planning policy. It will address the accommodation needs of travellers who meet the Government's planning definition in Annex 1 of the PPTS.
10. To address temporary accommodation needs, the GTAA proposes three emergency stopping places in the north, west and south of the county to offer facilities for transient travellers and assist in managing unauthorised

encampments. This is consistent with the Emerging Stopping Places Strategy previously endorsed by Cabinet, which set out this principle and identified criteria to enable sites to be identified on council owned land. As progress is now being made on the Plan, it would be prudent for the identification of sites for emergency stopping places to be carried forward as part of it, which allows for consultation to be undertaken through the plan making process. The site assessment criteria within the strategy have therefore been carried forward into the consultation document.

11. However, given the lack of transit provision in the county it is proposed that one of the three sites should be delivered ahead of an adopted plan. This will help manage delivery costs and provide learning for the effective delivery and management of the other two sites. See financial implications below.
12. For permanent sites, it is proposed that a cascade approach is taken to identifying sites as much of the need is derived from overcrowding/concealed households or household growth; and generally, there is a desire for families to stay together. Therefore, subject to site assessment, need should be addressed by: first, accommodating additional pitches on existing lawful sites and if necessary, considering the potential to extend these sites; and considering whether unauthorised sites should be regularised. This would make best use of land and works in the interests of traveller families. Where this is not possible, new sites will need to be identified to meet any remaining requirements.
13. The site assessment criteria in Core Policy 47 are generally considered to be fit for purpose. However, a few changes are proposed to provide additional clarity and improve consistency with national policy to prioritise use of previously developed sites. The revised criteria will be used to guide the identification and assess the suitability of sites for inclusion within the Plan, as well as providing the basis for revised policy to guide the determination of planning applications.
14. Experience to date shows that land is rarely promoted by private landowners for use as traveller sites and consideration may therefore need to be given to the council's own landholdings or potentially land acquired to meet plan requirements, which could have budget implications. Nevertheless, a call for sites to identify other opportunities through the consultation will be undertaken.

Consultation Arrangements

15. Subject to Cabinet approval, preparations will be made to finalise and publish the consultation material to support the consultation for a period of at least six weeks in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and statutory requirements. The [July 2020 Local Development Scheme](#) anticipated this would take place for a minimum of 6 weeks commencing December 2020 and ending January 2021 with the dates aligned with consultation on the wider Wiltshire Local Plan Review. This will now be the subject of a report to December's Cabinet, and therefore consultation will start in January and close in February 2021. As part of the consultation the following arrangements will be put in place:

- (i) Early notification of the consultation period to Parish and Town Councils following Cabinet approval;
- (ii) Letter or email to consultees on the spatial planning consultation database, providing notification of the consultation. This will also include traveller representative bodies and planning agents;
- (iii) Publication of a notice in local newspapers to cover Wiltshire;
- (iv) Online publication of all consultation documents on the Council's website including consultation portal;
- (v) An item about the consultation in the Parish/Town Council Newsletter;
- (vi) Publication of a notice on 'Our Community Matters' websites;
- (vii) Notification of the consultation to be distributed through Community Area Board networks leading up to and during the consultation period as necessary;
- (viii) Leaflet drop to traveller households. This could be undertaken by a third party familiar with traveller engagement on behalf of the Council;
- (ix) Engagement with travellers on unauthorised encampments regarding the use of emergency stopping sites; and
- (x) Discussions with relevant authorities on cross boundary strategic planning matters.

16. In the light of COVID-19, consistent with the [Council's Statement of Community Involvement Temporary Arrangements](#), Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and Planning Practice Guidance the consultation material will not be displayed at Council offices and libraries in the interest of public safety. Bespoke measures will be put in place for anyone unable to access the online consultation documents.

17. However, due to the importance of the spoken word in traveller communities, arrangements under viii and ix may require a brief conversation. Any face to face contact would need take place in strict accordance with COVID-19 safety measures.

Next Steps

18. Any representations received will then need to be considered in preparing the draft Plan; once the draft Plan is prepared further consultation will be undertaken (Regulation 19 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) stage).

Government reforms to the planning system

19. It is recognised that the Government has published in its Planning for the Future White Paper proposals for reform of the planning system, including an overhaul of the local plan process. These are at the consultation stage and it is not certain of the outcome or when any changes may take effect. Any such overhaul is likely to include transitional arrangements, which will allow plans that have reached certain stages at the time of implementation to continue through the current system. Notwithstanding this, any changes are unlikely to alter the need to plan positively to meet the accommodation needs of these communities. Officers will monitor any changes in legislation or national policy as part of the plan making process.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

20. Overview and Scrutiny has not been formally engaged in the specific proposals in this report. However, Environment Select Committee has previously received reports on the Gypsy and Traveller communities via updates from the Traveller Reference Group and the importance of meeting the accommodation needs of these communities is recognised.

Safeguarding Implications

21. Provision of suitable permanent sites with access to facilities ensures that both vulnerable adults and children have better access to support services available within Wiltshire e.g. health, welfare, financial and education services. Emergency stopping sites are a safe alternative to roadside encampments.

Public Health Implications

22. As recognised in the [Health Needs Assessment for Gypsy, Traveller and Boater Populations Living in Wiltshire \(July 2019\)](#) ethnic gypsies and travellers have significantly worse health outcomes than the general population and experience substantial health inequalities. Living conditions are one of the most significant contributory factors to poor health. Providing a settled base in locations where there is access to health and education services and connections to main service infrastructure has public health benefits.

Procurement Implications

23. As an initial consultation on the Plan there will be no direct procurement implications other than potentially securing the services of a third party to facilitate effective consultation with Wiltshire's gypsy and traveller communities. See financial implications also. Any future procurement will be undertaken in line with corporate procedures.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

24. The Council is subject to a public sector equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010. Consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and associated Temporary Arrangements that are in place in the light of the COVID-19

situation. This takes an inclusive approach to consultation ensuring that everyone can be involved.

25. Positively planning for the needs of Wiltshire travelling communities will have a positive impact. A lack of suitable accommodation, as referred to above, can underpin many of the inequalities that they experience.
26. An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out alongside the preparation of the Plan and will accompany the draft Plan when it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

27. In developing the Plan regard will be given to the Wiltshire Council Climate Change motion (26 February 2019), as part of policy and proposals formulation.
28. The site selection criteria have been developed to reflect environmental and climate change considerations, ensuring that impacts can be minimised while ensuring accommodation needs are addressed. Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment are a required part of the development plan process and will inform the development of the plan at later stages.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

29. The principal risk is that the accommodation needs of these communities will not be met, which has implications for safeguarding and their health and wellbeing. It is likely to also lead to more incidents of unauthorised encampments and associated conflict with the settled community.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

30. Communities may be concerned about new development taking place near to where they live. This is being mitigated by working with the Council's Communications Team to design the consultation material and enable effective communication and engagement during the preparation of the plan.

Financial Implications

31. The financial implications associated with undertaking the consultation are small and can be met from 2020/2021 Spatial Planning budget. Aligning the consultation with that for the wider Wiltshire Local Plan Review will help minimise costs. See procurement implications also.
32. Following this initial consultation new evidence will be required to support the evolving plan and progress it through subsequent stages of preparation including examination. While as far as possible this will be developed using technical expertise of officers within the Council there may be the need to procure support from external sources where this is not possible to ensure timely delivery of the Plan. Provision will be made for this in the 2021/2022 Spatial Planning base revenue budget.

33. As previously reported and recognised by Cabinet, council owned land and financial investment is needed to support the delivery and management of temporary accommodation (i.e. emergency stopping places). Preliminary work indicates that the capital costs to develop a site on council owned land could be circa £400k subject to characteristics of the site. This report is therefore seeking approval of £1.3 million from the 'Other Capital Schemes to be approved' budget in 2021/2022 to fund the delivery of three Emergency Stopping Places sites. The £1.3 million allocation would leave £16.924 million in the Council's Capital contingency budget for 2021/2022.
34. There will be revenue budget requirements in subsequent years to support the management of the sites. At this stage it is estimated to be circa £0.030 million. This will need to be captured and addressed as part of the relevant Revenue Budget setting process.
35. As set out in paragraph 14, it is possible that Council owned land and further financial investment may need to be considered to address permanent site accommodation needs also.

Legal Implications

36. The Council has a statutory duty to prepare and maintain a Local Plan for Wiltshire (referred to in legislation as development plan documents), for which the process is set out in Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
37. In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended); the Council, as local planning authority, must first notify and consult certain bodies and persons, who they consider have an interest in the subject of the plan, about what the local plan they propose to prepare should contain. The Council carries out this engagement in accordance with its Statement of Community Involvement and related Temporary Arrangements that are in place in the light of the COVID-19 situation. Further, section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires the Council to cooperate with neighbouring authorities and other bodies constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to address any strategic cross boundary issues associated with the Plan.
38. Once adopted, the Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the area and be used as such for determining relevant planning applications across Wiltshire.

Workforce Implications

39. A cross-authority project team is necessary to take forward the Plan including officers from legal, development management, property, housing and communications, as well as spatial planning. Specialist input will also be needed from other services in relation to site assessments e.g.

highways and drainage. Staff will need to be prioritised to work on the plan as the need arises.

40. Engagement with travellers on Council owned sites and unauthorised encampments will involve council officers within housing and environmental services due to their familiarity in working with traveller communities.
41. Implementing the Plan and ensuring the provision of sites across the Plan period is a cross-cutting corporate piece of work that will need to be resourced.

Options Considered

42. There are limited options available. The consultation is being carried out in line with legislation and must be undertaken in a manner to satisfy legal requirements. The consultation material has been informed by national planning policy, current local policy and evidence. Potential site options will be considered at a later stage in the process.
43. Consideration has been given to continue to implement the Emergency Stopping Places Strategy outside of the Plan. However, for the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that the sites should be identified as part of the plan process, with the early implementation of the first ahead of its adoption. It is anticipated that this could take place once consultation on the published draft plan has taken place (scheduled to commence quarter 3 2021).

Conclusions

44. The proposed format of the Regulation 18 consultation on the scope and approach to developing the Plan will provide a robust basis for its preparation, enabling the views of travellers, the settled community and other stakeholders to be taken into consideration at an early stage. To help manage unauthorised encampments ahead of the Plan being adopted and provide some transit accommodation in the short term, provision should be made for an emergency stopping place to be delivered. To progress development of the Plan, following consultation consideration may need to be given to the suitability of Council owned land for permanent site provision.

Sam Fox (Director - Economic Development and Planning)

Report Authors:

Georgina Clampitt-Dix
Head of Spatial Planning
Georgina.clampitt-dix@wiltshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01225 713472

Henning Totz
Senior Planning Officer
Henning.totz@wiltshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01225 718461

August 2020

Appendices

Appendix 1: Planning for Wiltshire's Gypsy and Traveller Communities

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Opinion Research Services,
June 2020

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Planning for Wiltshire's Gypsy and Traveller Communities Consultation Document

Regulation 18 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)
(England) Regulation 2012 (as amended)

Wiltshire Council

Information about Wiltshire Council services can be made available on request in other languages including BSL and formats such as **large print** and audio. Please contact the council on **0300 456 0100**, or by email on **customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk**

如果有需要我們可以使用其他形式（例如：大字體版本或者錄音帶）或其他語言版本向您提供有關威爾特郡政務會各項服務的資訊，敬請與政務會聯繫，電話：0300 456 0100，文本電話：(01225) 712500，或者發電子郵件至：
customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk

يمكن، عند الطلب، الحصول على معلومات حول خدمات مجلس بلدية ويلتشرير وذلك بأشكال (معلومات بخط عريض أو سماعية) ولغات مختلفة. الرجاء الاتصال بمجلس البلدية على الرقم ٠٣٠٠٤٥٦٠١٠٠ أو من خلال الاتصال النصي (تيكست فون) على الرقم ٧١٢٥٠٠ (٠١٢٢٥) أو بالبريد الإلكتروني على العنوان التالي:
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Na życzenie udostępniamy informacje na temat usług oferowanych przez władze samorządowe hrabstwa Wiltshire (Wiltshire Council) w innych formatach (takich jak dużym drukiem lub w wersji audio) i w innych językach. Prosimy skontaktować się z władzami samorządowymi pod numerem telefonu 0300 456 0100 lub telefonu tekstowego (01225) 712500 bądź za pośrednictwem poczty elektronicznej na adres: customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Planning for Wiltshire's Gypsy and Traveller Communities

Wiltshire Council is preparing a Plan to address the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire and is seeking your views to inform the content of the Plan.

Definition of terms:

For the purposes of this document: "travellers" means "gypsies and travellers" and "travelling showpeople" as defined in Annex 1 of the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, August 2015, summarised below.

"pitch" means a pitch on a "gypsy and traveller" site and "plot" means a pitch on a "travelling showpeople" site (often called a "yard"). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for "gypsies and travellers" and mixed-use plots for "travelling showpeople", which may need to incorporate space to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.

Annex 1, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

For the purpose of this planning policy "gypsies and travellers" means:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

In determining whether persons are "gypsies and travellers" for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:

- a) Whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life.
- b) The reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life.
- c) Whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.

For the purposes of this planning policy, "travelling showpeople" means:

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.

Scope of the Plan

This Plan will identify accommodation needs for travellers to 2036. It will identify sites and broad locations for growth to meet permanent and temporary accommodation needs and review Core Policy 47 'Meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers' of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

This accords with Government policy in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Plan does not cover boaters. Boater requirements will be addressed in the Local Plan.

This consultation document is the first step in developing the plan. It is not a draft Plan but seeks your views on the approach proposed by the Council to developing the Plan.

Question one: Do you have any comments on what the Plan should contain?

Traveller communities in Wiltshire

In response to the Census 2011, 757 people in Wiltshire self-identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller. This number is now likely to be higher since the last Census was undertaken almost 10 years ago.

Most travellers in Wiltshire are English Travellers, Romany Gypsies, and Irish Travellers. They are a diverse group of communities which share some features but have their own histories and traditions. A key common feature is nomadism. Under the Equality Act 2010, several groups have recognition as ethnic groups protected against discrimination. These include English, Welsh and Scottish Gypsy Travellers, Irish Travellers, and Romany Gypsies and Roma people. Travellers history, heritage and traditions distinguish them from settled communities.



New Age Travellers can also be found in Wiltshire. Their origins lie in the 1960s counter culture and they are distinct from ethnic travellers. New Age Travellers are more transient with numbers increasing during the summer months, for example around the Summer Solstice.

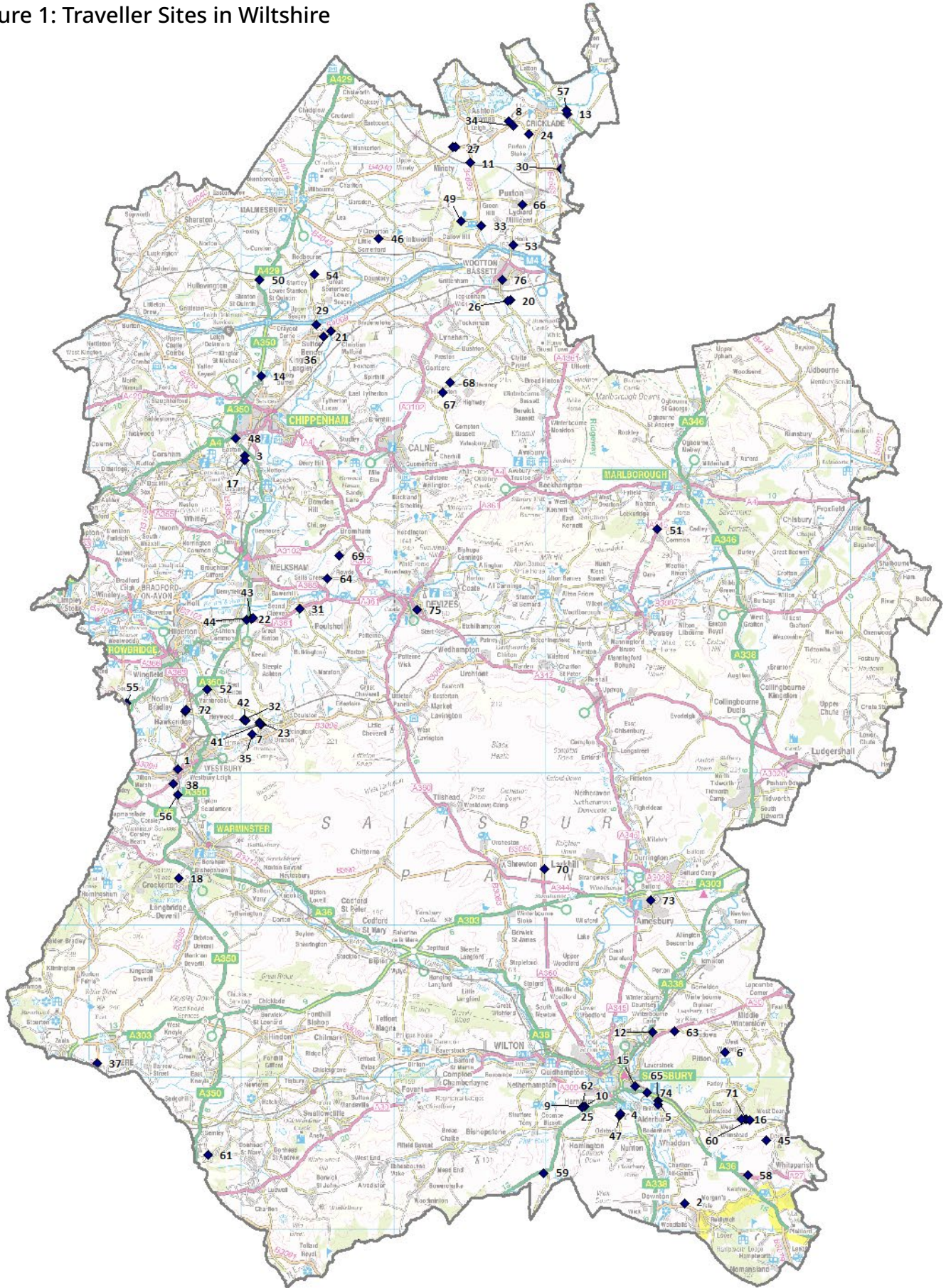
Distinct again from these groups are travelling showpeople. They run fairs, circuses or shows, and their presence in Wiltshire goes back many years.

Travellers live on a mix of local authority sites, privately owned sites and unauthorised sites as shown on **Figure 1** below. Most private sites are small but local authority-managed sites are larger. Most sites lie within the north and west of Wiltshire, and around Salisbury. There are also travellers who live in 'bricks and mortar' housing.

Many travellers pursue an active itinerant lifestyle and are mainly self-employed. However, these traditional patterns are changing whereby travellers have become increasingly settled, which increases the need for new sites.

In addition to travellers who have a settled base in Wiltshire, groups travel through the county. This can result in temporary unauthorised encampments on private or public land. The number and location of encampments varies year on year.

Figure 1: Traveller Sites in Wiltshire



Source: Wiltshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (June 2020), Opinion Research Services

Key Issue:

Why is it important to meet accommodation needs?

Having no permanent accommodation can adversely affect any traveller. Providing permanent and temporary accommodation improves the ability to meet other primary needs, especially health, education and access to employment. Accommodation does also enable gypsies and travellers to continue to live a nomadic life.

There is evidence that ethnic gypsies and travellers in particular suffer from significant health inequality, nationally and locally.

'Having nowhere to go' and living on unauthorised sites or encampments can have a direct effect on mental and physical health. Most recently the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of some travellers due to the lack of access to sanitation, clean water and shelter. This Plan can contribute to improving traveller health through meeting accommodation need on lawful sites. It can also ensure that sites have a minimum standard of basic amenities.

Ethnic gypsies and travellers have the highest proportion of people with no formal qualifications when compared with any other ethnic group in the United Kingdom. Gypsy and traveller children show the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups throughout schooling for example; however, families are increasingly seeking to secure primary school education as a minimum.

A settled base does provide children with a secure environment for learning and accessing school. Meeting accommodation needs can also improve education opportunities for adults and lead to employment options and opportunities outside self-employment.

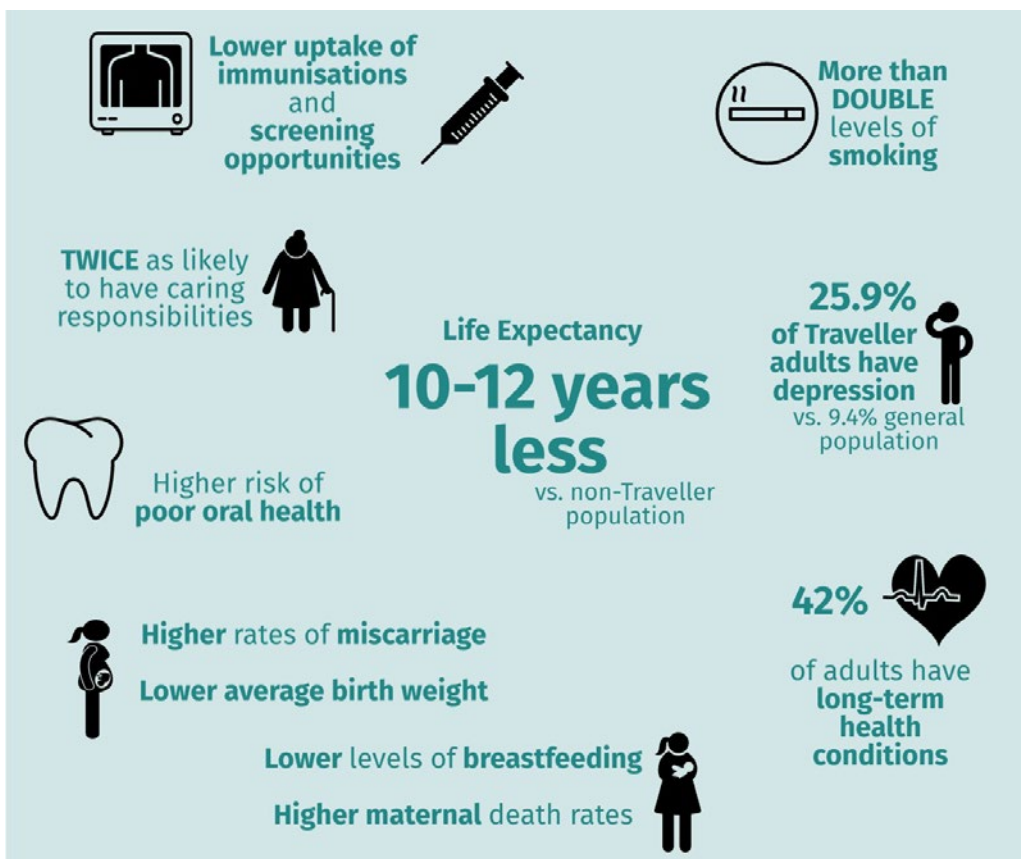


Figure 2: Inequalities in health amongst ethnic gypsies and travellers

Source: Wiltshire Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater Strategy 2020-2025

Proposed Plan Objectives

Two key priorities within the Wiltshire Council Business Plan (Wiltshire Council, 2017) are creating strong communities, and protecting the vulnerable. The adopted Core Strategy's contains the objectives to providing everyone with access to a decent affordable home; and helping to build resilient communities. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community (paragraph 3, PPTS).

In respect to traveller sites, the Government - in summary - requires us to

- Assess accommodation needs of travellers
- Identify land in the right locations to meet need through sustainable development
- Address unauthorised encampments
- Reduce tensions between traveller and settled communities in plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 4, PPTS).

Our Plan objectives are consistent with these aims and objectives:

Objective 1 - Meeting needs for permanent accommodation:

To meet identified accommodation need for gypsy and traveller pitches and travelling showpeople plots to 2036 through site allocations or broad locations for growth; and to provide a framework for assessing proposals.

Objective 2 - Making provision for temporary accommodation:

To provide three emergency stopping sites for temporary accommodation.

Objective 3 - Site location:

To provide well-designed sites in keeping with their surroundings, and in appropriate and sustainable locations with good access to facilities and services; which respect both the interests of the settled and traveller communities.

Question two: Do you agree with these objectives?
Please explain your answer.



Permanent accommodation requirements

In June 2020, we completed a [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment \(GTAA\)](#) which is published alongside this consultation document. This study provides the evidence on accommodation need that we will plan for from 2019 to 2036.

The GTAA is based on interviews with traveller households that were undertaken on sites and

yards in Wiltshire. It identifies accommodation need for households that meet the definition of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople in Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; households who do not; and households that could not be determined.

Tables 1 to 5 below set out the identified accommodation needs in Wiltshire.

Gypsies and Traveller Accommodation Requirements 2019-36

Table 1: Permanent pitch requirements of gypsy and traveller households meeting the planning definition

Years		Pitches
0-5	2019 - 23	76
6-10	2024 - 28	22
11-15	2029 - 33	21
16-18	2034 - 36	13
Total		132

76 pitches are required in the first 5 years for households meeting the planning definition. Need occurring after Year 5 results from household formation.

The GTAA also identifies need from gypsy and traveller households who do not meet the planning definition but may be protected under equality legislation as ethnic gypsies or travellers. It is proposed that their need is addressed in this Plan as it would otherwise persist.

Table 2: Accommodation need for Gypsy and Traveller households that did not meet the planning definition

Years		Pitches
0-5	2019 - 23	21
6-10	2024 - 28	23
11-15	2029 - 33	26
16-18	2034 - 36	8
Total		78

The GTAA also identifies need from households who could not be interviewed but might meet the planning definition. Need occurring after Year 5 results from household formation. The GTAA recommends that this need is addressed through the planning application process as it is not possible for the Plan to allocate land for undetermined need. Any applications could be assessed against criteria presented below.

Table 3: Permanent pitch requirements of undetermined gypsy and traveller households

Years		Pitches
0-5	2019 - 23	14
6-10	2024 - 28	6
11-15	2029 - 33	6
16-18	2034 - 36	3
Total		29

Accommodation Requirements for Travelling Showpeople

Table 4: Permanent plot requirements of showpeople households meeting the planning definition

Years		Pitches
0-5	2019 - 23	10
6-10	2024 - 28	1
11-15	2029 - 33	0
16-18	2034 - 36	1
Total		12

Ten plots for showpeople meeting the planning definition are required in the first 5 years. Need occurring after Year 5 results from household formation.

Consistent with the approach for gypsies and travellers, the identified need for 2 plots from undetermined households could be considered through the planning application process.

Table 4: Permanent plot requirements of showpeople households meeting the planning definition

Years		Pitches
0-5	2019 - 23	0
6-10	2024 - 28	1
11-15	2029 - 33	0
16-18	2034 - 36	1
Total		2

There are no showpeople households with accommodation need who do not meet the planning definition.



Question three: Do you support the above GTAA findings? Please explain your answer.

Temporary accommodation requirements

Temporary accommodation can offer a safe place to stay for transient travellers. Where groups or individuals travel through the county this can result in unauthorised encampments.

The GTAA shows that there was a total of 155 unauthorised encampments in 2016, 296 encampments in 2017, 225 encampments in 2018 and 161 encampments between January and September 2019.

The GTAA proposes that we provide three emergency stopping sites in the north, west and south of Wiltshire to meet temporary accommodation need. They should offer temporary stay for transient travellers and assist in managing unauthorised encampments. No set number of pitches are proposed in the GTAA.



Question four: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide three sites? Please explain your answer.

Proposed approach to meeting accommodation needs

Accommodation needs must be met on authorised pitches and plots. Pitches for travellers ordinarily include space for a static caravan, a tourer, car parking, a dayroom and open space. The GTAA advises that teenage children's accommodation needs can sometimes be met through provision of a touring caravan. Similarly, single adults may not need a formal pitch, but their accommodation needs could be met through provision of additional touring caravans.

Plots for travelling showpeople also include the above but tend to be larger and require more space for equipment such as fairs and rides stored on-site.

Commonly there is a desire for households to remain on a family site. It is therefore proposed to intensify existing lawful sites in the first instance to meet requirements. These sites already benefit from planning permission and could potentially take up more development.

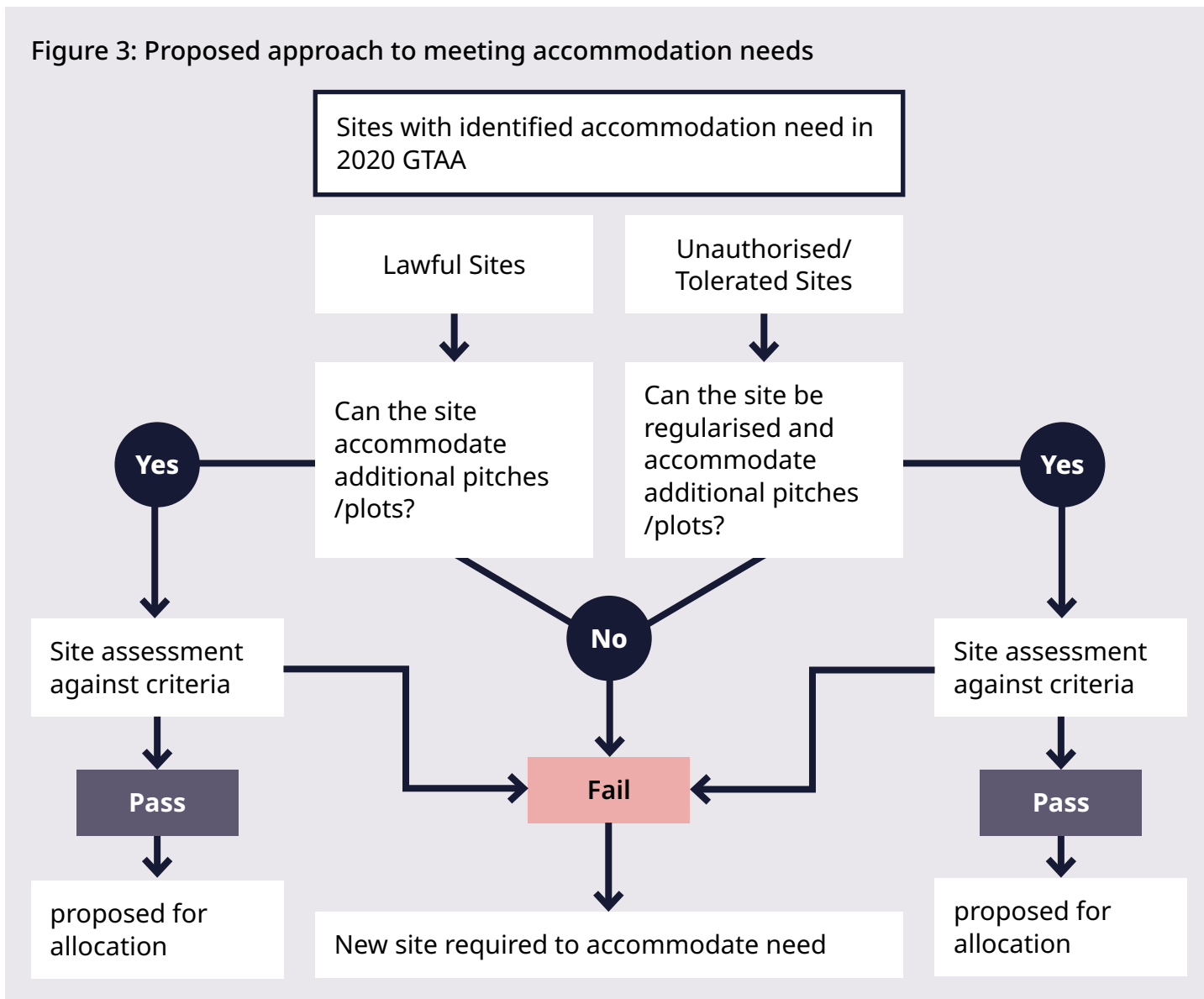


Unauthorised sites will be assessed to see if they can be regularised through an allocation in the plan. Both assessments will be undertaken based on a review of criteria in Core Policy 47 (see below).

We anticipate that most of the first five-year requirements could be met in this way. This also works in the interest of the best and most efficient use of land.

Any residual requirements are proposed to be met through new site allocations or by way of identifying broad locations for growth in the plan. At present we cannot be sure precisely how many new sites will be needed as this depends on the ability of existing sites to accommodate new development; and the availability of suitable and deliverable land.

Figure 3: Proposed approach to meeting accommodation needs



New sites for permanent pitches

It is proposed that new sites for travellers (including travelling showpeople) will be small and offer the opportunity for family-owned pitches and plots. Feedback from travellers received before emphasised that this is preferred to large sites.

New sites must comply with site assessment criteria below. In addition to new sites, broad locations for growth could be areas or existing sites where new pitches or plots are supported in principle, subject to planning permission.



Question five: Do you agree with the proposed approach to meeting accommodation need? Please explain your answer.

Site assessment criteria for permanent sites

We are reviewing the criteria in Core Policy 47 in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and propose to include them in the Plan. Since the Core Strategy was adopted, national planning policy has been revised so some criteria may require changes to ensure consistency. We also know from the planning application process that some criteria may need to be reviewed in the interest of clarity. The purpose of the criteria is to

- Inform site assessments for site intensification
- Inform assessment of unauthorised sites
- Inform assessment of candidate new sites
- Inform determination of planning applications

We would welcome your views on the criteria and the changes we are proposing:

Proposals for new gypsy and traveller pitches or travelling showpeople plots/yards will only be granted where there is no conflict with other planning policies and where no barrier to development exists. New development should be situated in sustainable locations. Where proposals satisfy the following general criteria, they will be considered favourably:

- i. Priority must be given to effective use of previously developed land over greenfield land. This can include land last occupied by farmyards.

(New criterion: In the interest of protecting undeveloped land. This new criterion does not preclude the use of greenfield sites but would require evidence that previously developed land has been considered.)

- ii. No significant barriers to development exist in terms of flooding, poor drainage, poor ground stability or proximity to other hazardous land or installation where conventional housing would not be suitable.
- iii. It is served by a safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access. The proposal should not result in significant hazard to other road users.
- iv. The site can be properly serviced and is supplied with essential services, such as water, power, sewerage and drainage, and waste disposal. Where possible, sites should connect to mains.

(Reason: To ensure that wherever possible, mains connections are achieved in the interest of sustainable development.)

- v. The site must also be large enough to provide adequate vehicle parking, including circulation space, along with residential amenity and play areas.
- vi. It is located in, or within three kilometres to, settlements that offer a range of local services and community facilities, in particular schools and essential health services.

(Reason: Our evidence shows that sites which were granted permission, and those that were subject to appeal decisions, predominantly fall within three kilometres of a primary school and GP surgery. The proposed change would clarify what constitutes a reasonable distance.)

- vii. It will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and the amenity of neighbouring properties and is sensitively designed to mitigate any impact on its surroundings.

- viii. Adequate levels of privacy should be provided for occupiers.
- ix. Development of the site should be appropriate to the scale and character of its surroundings and existing nearby settlements.
- x. The site should not compromise a nationally or internationally recognised designation nor have the potential for adverse effects on river quality, biodiversity or archaeology.

In assessing sites for travelling showpeople or where mixed-uses are proposed, the site and its surrounding context are suitable for mixed residential and business uses, including storage required and/or land required for exercising animals, and would not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity and adverse impact on the safety and amenity of the site's occupants and neighbouring properties.



Question six: Do you agree with the proposed criteria?
Please explain your answer.

Site assessment criteria for emergency stopping sites

Emergency stopping sites are sites with hardstanding, fence, gate, toilets and rubbish disposal. The GTAA recommends that we build three sites in line with the approved Emergency Stopping Places Strategy. This will ensure that they are available when needed.

The approved ESP Strategy includes the following assessment criteria to find suitable sites:

- i. Sites should avoid any adverse impact on local/national designations (such as conservation areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Sites should avoid any hazardous areas (such as flood zones, contaminated land).
- ii. The site must meet space requirements for internal road(s) and parking and circulation space, and fire safety standards. The site should have additional space for facilities such as waste disposal
- iii. The site should be near or adjacent to key travelling routes identified in the GTAA.
- iv. The site should not have a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the strategic/highway road network, including junctions and land within the ownership of Highways England and/or Wiltshire Council required for operational purposes.
- v. The candidate site must be serviced by an independent vehicular access point that adheres to the Highway Authority's guidance and standards in terms of safe entry and egress. The road to and from the site must be of sufficient quality and size to enable access onto and off the site by heavy vehicles such as trailers.
- vi. Access to candidate sites should avoid the need to use local roads within industrial areas, recognised commercial areas or housing areas. The site should not give rise to visual impacts or pollution on surrounding land uses and other receptors. Space for a clear barrier around the site is required to prevent unauthorised extension to the site
- vii. Brownfield land is preferred over greenfield land. Where no brownfield land is available, greenfield land of poor agricultural quality (Grade 3b or poorer) is preferred.
- viii. All routes for vehicles on the site, and for access to the site, must allow easy access for emergency vehicles and safe places for turning vehicles.
- ix. The ease of commitment to bringing sites forward and the timing of land release.

Question seven: Do you agree with the proposed selection criteria for emergency stopping sites? Please explain your answer.

Question eight: Do you have any further comments?

Call for sites

We would also welcome any suggestions for land that might be suitable for new Gypsy and Traveller sites, whether you own the land or not. If you wish to submit land/sites for consideration, please complete the attached Call for Sites Form and return it to us.

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/722/Gypsy-and-Traveller-Call-for-Sites-Form/pdf/call-for-sites-form.pdf

Completed forms can be sent electronically via email, to spatialplanningpolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk or posted to the following address:

**Spatial Planning,
Economic Development & Planning,
Wiltshire Council,
County Hall,
Trowbridge,
BA14 8JN.**

Next steps

Following closure of this consultation we will consider your comments and draft the Plan for consultation Autumn 2021, when there will be further opportunity comment. Adoption of the Plan is programmed for Winter 2022.

Planning for Wiltshire's Gypsy and Traveller Communities Consultation Document

This document was published by Spatial Planning, Economic Development and Planning,
Wiltshire Council

For further information please visit the following website:
www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13th October 2020

Subject: Chippenham Housing Infrastructure Fund Bid

Cabinet Member: Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

In March 2019, the Council submitted an application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for a £75m Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) grant as a contribution towards funding strategic road infrastructure, enabling the delivery of housing in Chippenham. Confirmation that the Council's bid for funding was successful was announced in November 2019.

This report sets out the main elements of the Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) that has been negotiated with Homes England (HE) to secure £75m of HIF grant funding and seeks approval from Cabinet to enter into the GDA with HE. Subject to the conditions set in the GDA the Council will be able to draw down historic and preliminary costs incurred within the programme to date. An Assurance Framework (AF) sets out the funding process and establishes the approach to monitoring and evaluation.

The GDA provides a recovery mechanism that ensures there is no net cost to the Council. It contains provisions linked to milestones that allow draw down of funding subject to conditions being met. The GDA includes default clauses which determine whether the Council would have to repay HIF funds if a default occurs.

The conditions of the GDA are not considered to be disproportionate to the scale and complexity of the project and do not unduly increase the Council's risk exposure.

It will be a condition of the GDA that the £75m fund is spent by the end of March 2024. Any costs expended after that date, or above the £75m will be forward funded by the Council and recovered in full through the recovery strategy. The recovery strategy relies upon planning conditions on future development of any sites that come forward for development. As such the HIF funded works will not proceed planning unless is granted for development.

The Council will recover the £75m HIF to reinvest into the delivery of the scheme ensuring that capital and associated revenue costs will be recovered by the council with any remaining recovered funds being invested into infrastructure to support the delivery of additional housing within Wiltshire.

Proposal(s)

Cabinet is asked to:

Agree that the Council enters into the Grant Determination Agreement (GDA), subject to Homes England confirming that the Wiltshire HIF recovery strategy is approved and subject to the terms of the GDA being finalised by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Interim Corporate Director of Resources (S.151 Officer) and Director of Legal and Governance.

Reason for Proposal(s)

The proposals seek consideration of the Grant Determination Agreement negotiated with Homes England to secure housing infrastructure funding so as to ensure funding is available to support infrastructure led development coming forward at Chippenham, which is subject to determination by the Local Planning Authority.

Development has already started through the planning permission granted at Rawlings Green site and the Council, through this funding, will be in a position to secure infrastructure led development is achieved rather than being market led. These proposals will ensure that the Council can access Government funding to support delivery of strategic infrastructure should development come forward around Chippenham over the next Local Plan period and beyond.

Terence Herbert, Chief Executive

Subject: Chippenham Housing Infrastructure Fund Bid

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Philip Whitehead
Lead Member Regeneration**

Key Decision: Key

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to enter into a Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) with Homes England (HE) for the acceptance of a £75m grant contribution towards the cost of delivering the strategic infrastructure in and around Chippenham.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The Council's award from Government of HIF funding and delivery of the infrastructure directly contributes to all three priorities in the Business Plan
 - growing the economy
 - creating strong communities and
 - protecting the vulnerable

Background

3. The Housing Infrastructure Fund is a government capital grant programme from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) aimed at unlocking housing sites and helping deliver new homes. The fund was split into two packages:
 - 1) Marginal Viability HIF (initially for schemes up to £10m)
 - 2) Forward Funding HIF (initially for schemes up to £250m)
4. In March 2018 the Council submitted an expression of interest for the HIF Grant.
5. In March 2019 the Council submitted a final funding application to MHCLG after authority to submit was obtained from the Leader and the Chief Executive Officer (Place) for £75m, which included an allowance towards improvements to the J17 motorway junction related to the scheme.
6. The scope of the works proposed for HIF funding include the building of the distributor road. These works would be required as a first phase of strategic infrastructure to support new housing development at Chippenham.

7. In November 2019, MHCLG confirmed that the bid submitted by the Council had been successful. Subject to Cabinet approval the process to secure funding has been and is as follows:
 - a. Completed Heads of Terms (May 2020)
 - b. Complete and sign GDA (October 2020 – subject to satisfying all pre contract conditions)
 - c. Drawdown for historic and preliminary costs (October / November 2020 subject to signing the GDA)
 - d. First drawdown for actual construction works, subject to acquiring planning permission (indicatively March 2022)
- b) Satisfy post contract conditions (ongoing until completion)
 - a. It is a requirement of the GDA that HIF funds must be spent before the funding availability deadline of March 2024
 - b. It is a requirement of the GDA that road must be delivered by 31st March 2026

Main considerations for the Council

8. The project has, through the successful HIF bid, secured funding for infrastructure work that will support land coming forward in Chippenham and the surrounding area to deliver new housing subject to the statutory planning process.
9. The £75m HIF funding will form a significant contribution to the total estimated cost of the strategic road infrastructure. The estimated cost will be in excess of the grant funding received and will require a level of upfront investment by the Council.
10. Sites are not currently allocated in the Local Plan and as such the infrastructure work supported by the HIF funding is subject to a) the statutory planning process allocating the sites in the Local Plan Review and b) the council as local planning authority granting planning permission for the distributor road and master plan for the site.
11. In order to ensure necessary infrastructure work is able to proceed in line with the statutory planning process and HIF availability period the following steps have been taken by the project thus far;

HIF Onsite works progress to date

12. The following works have been completed or are ongoing to ensure the project is progressed against the timescales.
 - a. Site Surveys
 - b. Strategic transport modelling
 - c. Completion of strategic flood modelling and flood mitigation plan
 - d. Options assessment report for infrastructure works
 - e. Concept framework for the site including strategic infrastructure works, utilities, parks, and road bridges

- f. Work to support the Environmental Impact Assessment across the whole site
- g. Draft sustainability strategy for the delivery of strategic infrastructure works
- h. Development of a procurement strategy to support delivery of the infrastructure works

Land Assembly for delivery of the HIF works

- 13. To progress the land assembly for the sites required for delivery of the HIF works the Council has commenced negotiations with landowners. As the exact road route option is yet to be determined, this will continue during the formal public consultation stage.
- 14. In the first instance, the Council's strategy is to acquire the necessary rights to the land that is required to ensure the delivery of the road infrastructure. Negotiations are progressing with parties to acquire the land required to deliver the HIF works, but will only be concluded once the preferred road route option is announced anticipated in Spring 2021.
- 15. In the event that acquisition by private agreement cannot be achieved, a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) will be necessary to acquire the remaining land. The CPO is also needed as a measure to cover unknown interests or unregistered land.
- 16. Should a CPO be implemented, any costs incurred by the Council in assembling land or making the CPO are not contained in the HIF bid. However, the Council has provision within the recovery strategy to recover any costs incurred through delivery of the infrastructure works to ensure the Council is able to recover any costs incurred.

Consultation on the proposed site(s) and HIF road route options

- 17. Consultation on the proposed site(s) and HIF road route options was originally planned in April 2020. However due to the impacts of the COVID-19 restrictions this has now been moved to commence in January 2021. A Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy has been developed to support the programme and is included in Appendix A of this report. The strategy confirms the Council's commitment to engaging and consulting with stakeholders, members of the public and other interested parties on both the road route options and the emerging Masterplan. The preferred road route option will be selected by late Spring 2021 (subject to government guidance on COVID-19 and possible impacts on the consultation process) and the council will continue to consult on the Masterplan late spring / early summer 2021.
- 18. A summary of the indicative consultation timetable is provided below:

Date	Milestone
11 January 2021	Public consultation starts

05 March 2021	Public consultation ends
08 March 2021	Assessment of consultation responses and preparation of report for Cabinet
Spring 2021	Announcement of preferred road route option

Summary of funding terms and conditions

19. The GDA includes both standard conditions for all HIF schemes as well as bespoke conditions for each project.
20. A summary of the legal implications on entering the GDA is provided for members in the Part II of this report which is exempt information under schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.
21. The following is a summary of the provisions set out in the GDA which are standard conditions for HIF schemes:
- a. The GDA makes a Grant available to Wiltshire Council to a maximum of £75m under Section 19 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and in compliance with the requirements set out in the European Commission's Decision of 20 December 2011 concerning public service compensation granted for Services of General Economic Interest (2012/21/EU).
 - b. Homes England will entrust Wiltshire Council as the Grant Recipient with a public service obligation to provide land and facilitate the provision of affordable homes through the Councils affordable housing planning policies.
 - c. The funding is made available according to the proposals that Wiltshire Council has submitted to Homes England in respect of the proposed construction of Infrastructure Works and Housing Outputs, and Homes England has agreed in principle to make the HIF funding available on terms which are set out in the Assurance Framework.
 - d. With respect to the Preliminary Costs (i.e., the costs incurred by the Council so far in developing the Future Chippenham scheme to this stage), the obligation of Homes England to make available HIF funding is subject to confirmation and evidence from the Council's Section 151 Officer that the Council has incurred the costs relating to that part of the claim and such costs form part of the Preliminary Costs and relate to the Infrastructure Works.
 - e. With respect to all other costs, the funding is made available subject to the discharge of conditions precedent of which the most important is that the Council enters into agreements which secure, amongst other things, the delivery of infrastructure and the future use of various sites to facilitate an increase in the level of housing in the Chippenham area, and implements a Recovery Strategy approved by Homes England to

secure recovery of the funding to invest in further schemes to facilitate new housing development.

- f. This includes confirmation of the grant of detailed planning permission including approval of siting, design, access and use, landscaping and materials, as well as confirmation that all rights have been required in the Infrastructure Site and access have been secured.
- g. The Agreement also sets out the terms and conditions upon which specific amounts of HIF Funding will be advanced to the council as Grant Recipient by Homes England as the programme progresses.
- h. The Funding is made available until the end of March 2024 and may be used for Infrastructure Expenditure only. The commencement and completion of the Infrastructure Works are to be delivered in accordance with the Delivery Plan and in any event to be completed by 31 March 2026.
- i. The Infrastructure Works are to be implemented in compliance with relevant regulatory and operational obligations including the receipt of all necessary consents (Including planning permission), public procurement laws, and other legislation including health and safety, and equality and diversity.
- j. The Council will provide Homes England with an Annual Forecast and Monitoring Reports throughout the lifetime of the programme in line with the specific requirements set out in the GDA, in addition to an Annual Review Meeting with Homes England
- k. The GDA distinguishes between two types of default: Fundamental, and General. A Fundamental Default would only occur in extreme circumstances and could lead to the GDA being terminated, with Homes England having the ability to seek the repayment and reallocation of HIF Funding together with interest. This would, for example, include a situation where the Council's Section 151 officer has issued a notice under section 114 Local Government Finance Act 1988 that the council is unable to balance its budget.

General Default covers all other issues that may arise during the delivery of the scheme that are capable of remedy e.g. failure to obtain planning permission within the agreed milestone, which could be remedied by agreeing a revised timescale. It provides a process by which the Council would submit a proposed remediation plan for Homes England's approval. In the unlikely event that a General Default cannot be remedied satisfactorily, the GDA provides for the Agreement and further grant payments to be terminated, however it does not provide for HIF funding already paid to the Grant Recipient to be repaid.

- l. The GDA also contains other provisions relating to communications and confidentiality, freedom of information, data protection, intellectual property, indemnity, governance arrangements and disputes resolution.

22. Project specific conditions are included within the schedules of the GDA and are also included in Part II of this report since they are exempt information under section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended. The paragraphs below provide a brief summary of these:

Pre contract conditions

23. There are 21 precontract conditions to be complied with prior to signing the funding agreement. Pre-conditions submissions have been made to Homes England and include but are not limited to, project information on governance arrangements, programme for infrastructure and housing delivery, financial model and CPO strategy.

24. At the time of writing this report, the project team has provided Homes England with the information to satisfy the pre contract conditions from Homes England. Upon satisfaction of the pre contract conditions and signing of the GDA the Council may claim for its historic and preliminary costs.

Pre works Conditions and ongoing contractual monitoring obligations

25. There are further pre works conditions that must be complied with prior to the Council being able to drawdown funding from Homes England for actual construction works. Most of the pre-works conditions relate to the delivery of the HIF road including obtaining planning consent.

MHCLG Assurance Framework and payment mechanisms

26. The Assurance Framework (AF) sets out the background to the Housing Infrastructure Funding process, how local authorities receive and utilise funding and establishes a robust approach to reporting and monitoring implementation. The framework provides assurance to MHCLG Officers that robust systems are in place to ensure funds are spent with regularity, propriety, and value for money, whilst achieving projected outcomes.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

27. Engagement with Overview and Scrutiny has not formally taken place around the specifics of the GDA, but a briefing with relevant Overview and Scrutiny Members is being held to update on this report.

28. Overview and Scrutiny engagement will be required on an ongoing basis over the life of the project, given its scale and associated risks. This will become necessary once the Council is successful in getting into contract with Homes England and delivery of the funded project is then confirmed.

Safeguarding Implications

29. There are no safeguarding implications at this stage

Public Health Implications

30. No public health implications arise at this stage

Procurement Implications

31. All procurement associated with the project will take place within the Council's procurement and commercial strategy.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

32. There are no Equalities Impacts arising at this stage

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

33. There are no Environment and Climate Change Considerations to be made at this stage. The terms of the GDA will require the Council to have full regard to all relevant environmental and climate change legislation and requirements in the Local Plan process as the project progresses. The project is cognisant that Local Planning policy may have requirements on how any development takes place and will, where required, comply with these.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

34. The deadline for signing HIF agreements is 31st October 2020, so there is no opportunity to renegotiate at this stage. If the proposed decision to enter the GDA was not taken, then the opportunity to draw down £75m of government funding to support infrastructure costs should development come forward in Chippenham would be lost.

35. The spend already incurred as at 2019/2020 would not be recoverable via HIF and would need to be found from an alternative source.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

36. There are risks around delivering on the Council's commitment in the GDA, which are mitigated in the project specific terms and conditions pertaining to delivery of the milestones within the agreement. These include robust governance, monitoring and reporting standards which meet government's and the Council's risk management requirements.

37. The GDA makes reference to General Default and Fundamental Default. The meaning and implications of these are addressed under Part II of this report.

38. There is a risk that the Local Plan Review process does not seek to allocate the project site for development and as such planning consent is not achieved for the infrastructure works. In that event, the GDA caters for this as a General Default and the HIF funding drawn down by the Council would

not need to be repaid, provided that the Council had used best endeavours to secure such allocation and planning permission.

Financial Implications

39. At its meeting on 8 October 2019, Cabinet noted the application to the Governments Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) for £75m worth of funding to support the strategic infrastructure required in and around Chippenham.
40. Following the notification of success, the £75 million HIF was included in the capital programme 2020/21 to 2029/30 that was approved by Full Council in February 2020, with the details of the programme and the negotiation of the GDA to then take place. £5m was allocated in this current financial year, to be fully funded by the grant.
41. At its March meeting Cabinet approved the advance of £4.220m from the Capital pipeline budget to the Future Chippenham team prior to the receipt of the HIF funding to progress the programme. A further £1m capital allocation was also approved to fund the team which would not be eligible to be claimed from the HIF grant.
42. The recommendation in this report is based on conditions being met that ensure that the negotiation with Homes England finalises a GDA that mitigates the risk being faced by the Council in developing out the strategic infrastructure.
43. Critical to this is a recovery strategy that enables the Council to maximise the offer of grant funding available to develop out the infrastructure and ensure an infrastructure first development, and then deploys arrangements that over the life of the development, through future receipts, covers the cost of the Council's upfront investment.
44. The details on the cost of the strategic infrastructure, the HIF funding and Councils upfront investment, together with the recovery strategy is provided in the confidential Part II section of the report.

Legal Implications

45. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with the power to do anything an individual may do, subject to a number of limitations. This is referred to as the "general power of competence". A local authority may exercise the general power of competence for its own purpose, for a commercial purpose and/or for the benefit of others. This general power of competence provides sufficient power for the Council to enter into a grant funding agreement with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.
46. As part of the conditions of funding, the Council must satisfy itself, as well as Homes England that the Housing Infrastructure Funding which is awarded by Homes England for the delivery of the infrastructure works, is not in breach of State Aid rules. The Council has obtained legal advice in

this regard from its external legal advisers, Trowers & Hamblins LLP. This advice has concluded that the funding is State Aid compliant.

47. Availability of funding will be contingent on satisfaction by the Council of certain conditions prior to drawdown of funding. These conditions are set out in the Grant Determination Agreement between Homes England and the Council (further details of which are provided under Part II of this report).
48. Once the grant agreement is entered into, notwithstanding any pre-conditions to funding, the Council will be entitled to claim and drawdown on the funding any historic and preliminary costs already incurred by the Council, subject to such costs specifically relating to the Council's bid for the HIF funding and to appropriate evidence of expenditure being provided by the Council's Section 151 Officer.
49. All legal agreements entered into in consequence of the approval of the recommendations set out in this report must be approved in advance of commencement by the Director of Legal and Governance/Monitoring Officer.
50. Further comments on the legal implications of the GDA are contained in Part II of the report.

Workforce Implications

51. No further workforce implications are reported at this time internally.

Options considered

i. Do nothing

The £75m funding opportunity and the ability to utilise recovery to fund the remaining costs of the scheme would be lost and the infrastructure required should development come forward around Chippenham would not come forward. This would significantly delay developments. Furthermore, the expenditure incurred to date by the Council would not be recoverable via HIF and would need to be found from another source. For these reasons this is not the preferred option.

ii. Renegotiate terms with Homes England

Negotiations with Homes England are at a very mature stage and subject to agreement with Homes England of the HIF Recovery Strategy which ensures that there will be no net cost to the Council in delivery, the terms and conditions of the GDA are proportionate and reasonable to the scale and objectives of the project. Given the October deadline for signing of HIF GDA, there is limited opportunity at this stage for further negotiation. This is therefore not the preferred option.

iii. Enter into the GDA subject to the conditions set out in the GDA

In consideration of all the factors discussed in this report, this is the preferred option.

Conclusions

52. In consideration of the above information it is recommended that Cabinet agree to and approve the steps set out in the proposals section fronting this report.

Terence Herbert – Chief Executive

Report Author:

Andy Brown, Interim Corporate Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Email andy.brown@wiltshire.gov.uk

Simon Hendey, Director of Housing and commercial development

Email simon.hendey@wiltshire.gov.uk

Date of report 5th October 2020

Appendice(s)

Appendix 1 – Future Chippenham stakeholder and community engagement strategy

Confidential Part 2 Appendix 2 – Financial and Legal Implications of the Grant Determination Agreement



FUTURE CHIPPENHAM

Stakeholder and Community
Engagement Strategy

Chrissie Lamb and Adene West-Webbe

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1. Introduction

In November 2019, following the submission of a bid to the Housing Infrastructure Forward Fund (HIF), Wiltshire Council was successful in being awarded £75 million grant from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG). The grant will provide forward funding to build a distributor road which will unlock land to support the delivery of up to 7,500 homes up to 2046 and beyond, known as Future Chippenham. In addition, the grant enables the project to be infrastructure led, which will in turn reduce traffic congestion in the town and ensure that any development has the appropriate infrastructure in place at the right time and sufficient for its needs.

The process set out below focuses on Future Chippenham and does not replace Wiltshire Council's statutory process, and therefore consultation requirements, to allocate such sites in the Local Plan and for any planning application to be determined against the Local Plan.

The overall aim of the Future Chippenham programme is to deliver 7,500 new homes and 1 million square feet of employment space by 2046 and beyond, with funds to support the delivery of a distributor road for Future Chippenham and improvements to Junction 17 of the M4 by March 2024.

Future Chippenham aims to create a new model of development, groundbreaking in its approach to providing residents and visitors with a place to live and to work, reflective and understanding of the history and beauty of the surrounding built and natural environment. It will be a place that meets existing and future challenges by being environmentally sustainable; resilient and adaptable to climate change; where health and wellbeing are part of the fabric; with a vibrant and diverse community with easy access to first class recreation and social facilities; and an economically prosperous community with an enduring sense of belonging.

The proposed benefits of the programme are far reaching for both the existing and proposed new community of Chippenham and surrounding areas. These include, but are not limited to:

Distinctive – Future Chippenham will have a distinct character and sense of place influenced by local history, heritage, natural features and the wider landscape.

Inclusive and Prosperous Economy – An inclusive development that enables access to key economic opportunities including employment, education and training.

A development contributing to a prosperous local economy and providing increased potential for Chippenham's economic self-containment. By delivering high quality new homes and commercial employment locations served by excellent transport connectivity, Chippenham's status as a Principal Settlement will be reinforced and enhanced in coming years and in the long term.

Healthy – Healthy lifestyles will be encouraged through a green infrastructure network that provides opportunities for leisure, active recreation, access to nature and community food growing.

A development that promotes more sustainable and active transport choices, that reduce the need to travel.

Environmentally Sustainable – An environment and biodiversity positive development with measurable improvement resulting in net environmental gain and measurable net gain in biodiversity.

Resilient and Adaptable – A climate resilient and adaptable development that can adapt to climate change.

Connected – COVID-19 will push communities to become increasingly resilient and self-sufficient, demonstrating the importance of easily accessible community facilities. This shift towards self-sufficient communities reflects the '10 Minute Neighbourhood' concept which advocates the provision of key facilities within walking distance of all residents.

A dedicated team has been established within Wiltshire Council's Housing and Commercial directorate within the Major Projects team to manage the Future Chippenham programme to achieving its objectives and represents the council as landowner / promoter in this context. The team operates separately from the council as Local Planning Authority.

1.1 The purpose of this document

This Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy has been produced in relation to Wiltshire Council's proposal to build a new distributor road in the North East and Southern area of Chippenham and surrounding areas that will unlock land to support a new mixed-use development proposal (called Future Chippenham) and associated infrastructure providing 7,500 homes by 2046.

- 1.1.1 The Future Chippenham Project team are undertaking pre-application engagement and consultation ahead of submitting a Full Planning Application for the road and an Outline Planning Application for development on the council's land.
- 1.1.2 This Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy sets out the council's, as Landowner and Highway Authority, approach to, and potential timetable, for engaging and consulting (both informally and formally) with all those with a possible interest in Future Chippenham, as part of the development of the proposal. This includes the new distributor road and the Masterplan for the council owned proposed development. These communications / engagements / consultations will be separate from the statutory consultation required by Wiltshire Council as Local Planning Authority which are governed by requirements in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

1.1.3 It is recognised that engagement and consultations on Wiltshire Council’s Local Plan Review have to and will take place. To avoid potential confusion, it is emphasised in this Strategy that our proposals are separate from this and the Future Chippenham Project team are representing the council’s interest as landowner / promoter.

1.1.4 This Strategy will be reviewed as the programme progresses to ensure it remains fit for purpose and takes into account a changing landscape of national best practice/regulatory requirements, technological advances etc.

1.2 The proposed distributor road (HIF road)

1.2.1 The new distributor road will form the main corridor of movement through Future Chippenham and create the capacity to enable new homes, employment and community facilities. The distributor road will also act as a link between the M4, both Eastern Chippenham and villages, South East Chippenham and joining with the A350 at Lackham roundabout.

1.3 The site for Future Chippenham

1.3.1 Chippenham is identified as a strategically important centre for major growth in Wiltshire, to help meet the local housing and employment need and support the growth aspirations of the wider south west region.

1.3.2 The current Core Strategy, which defines the housing requirement, runs until 2026. Wiltshire Council is currently carrying out a Review which will see an increase in the overall housing delivery requirement and will extend the Plan period to 2036. The ‘Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019’ by Opinion Research Services indicates an overall assessed housing need across Wiltshire of up to c45,000 new homes by 2036 and some 20,000 in the Chippenham Housing Market Area (HMA).

1.3.3 Chippenham Town is designated as a principle settlement and is a large market town on the River Avon which acts as a primary focus for growth. Ref Figure 1.

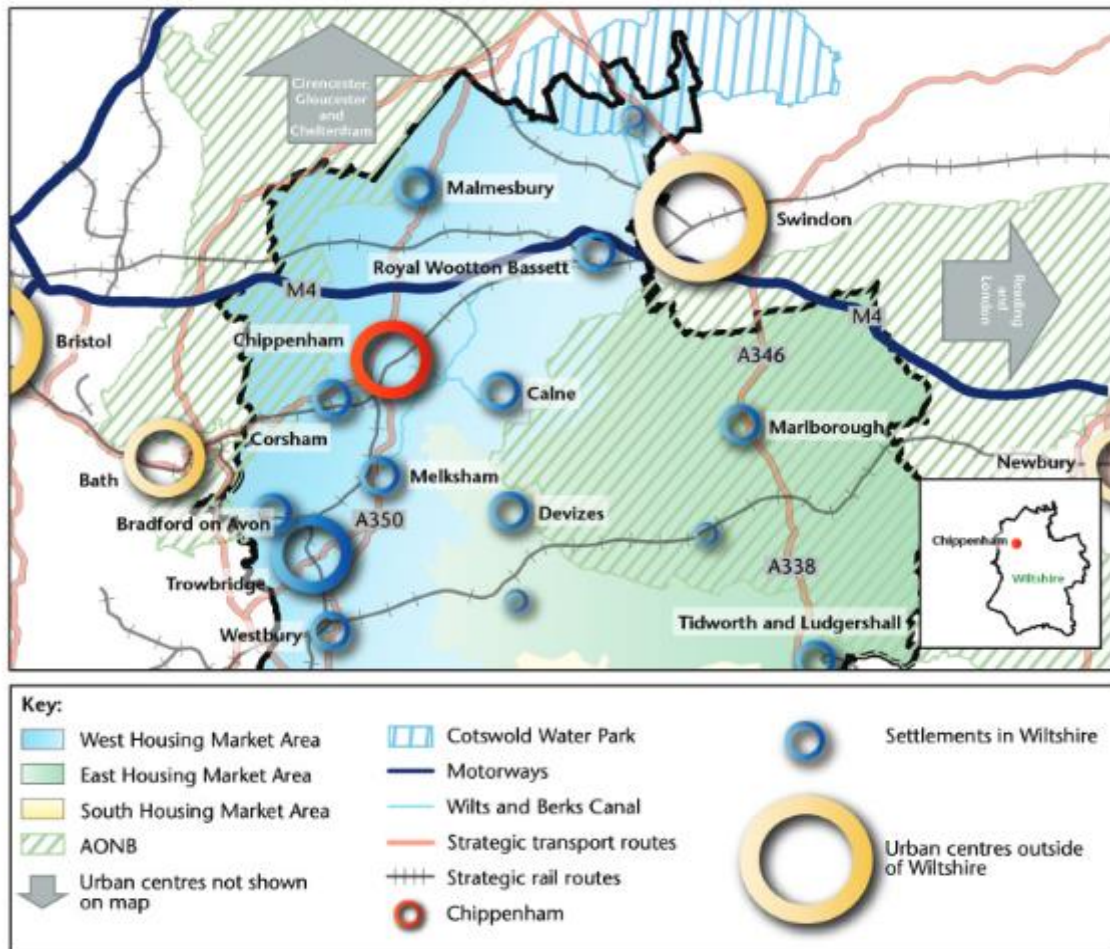


Figure 1 : Source – Chippenham Site Allocations Plan adopted May 2017

- 1.3.4 The town has excellent transport links, located near to J17 of the M4 and on the mainline Great Western Railway providing access to both the Southwest, Midlands and London areas.
- 1.3.5 In addition, Chippenham is well located strategically where both Swindon M4 Growth Zone and A350 Growth Zone overlap and is considered pivotal in the future development of the M4 and A350 economic corridors.
- 1.3.6 The site for the proposed development is made up of land owned by several parties including Wiltshire Council. Wiltshire Council, through the Future Chippenham Project team, will be leading the assembly of this land for the new distributor road through engagement and negotiations with the landowners / promoters to gain their support and commitment to build the road and enable the wider developments.

1.4 Road route options

- 1.4.1 As part of the original HIF bid to support delivery of the road, an indicative route was identified that, in its concept phase, met the outcomes for the proposal.

- 1.4.2 This has since been refined through detailed options appraisals. This process is ongoing and continues to investigate environmental factors such as flood modelling, ecology surveys, landscape assessments and blue and green infrastructure. Community and social infrastructure also form a critical element of the appraisals. Public consultation, with those stakeholders identified as part of the stakeholder identification mapping and management process, will further inform and enhance the development of the road route options and design process.

2.0 Our approach to engagement

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Wiltshire Council and Future Chippenham recognise that since the announcement of the HIF bid's success in November 2019, engagement with stakeholders identified through the stakeholder identification mapping and management process has been limited.
- 2.1.2 Six public engagement events were held in November and December 2019 to discuss the new distributor road in general terms and to seek residents' views on the future of the town.
- 2.1.3 Following an analysis of the comments received, a public engagement feedback report was produced. This report has been published on Wiltshire Council's website.
- 2.1.4 Engagement is an on-going process and as such engagement activities will be carried out throughout the Future Chippenham programme to gather input and feedback as the programme develops.
- 2.1.5 The Future Chippenham Project team is committed to keeping everybody informed of progress with this project which will include formal consultation as required at appropriate stages within the process.

2.2 Engagement Strategy and Objectives

- 2.2.1 We will consider relevant national policy and guidance including:
- LGA, 10 Commitments for Effective Pre-Applications Engagement (January 2014)
- 2.2.2 Wherever possible, our engagement will be managed in line with the principles outlined in 3.2.3.
- 2.2.3 Our overall engagement objectives are, but not limited to:
- Raise awareness of what is proposed to help local people, local town and parish councils, businesses and other stakeholders have a greater understanding of the Future Chippenham programme
 - Provide clear and concise information so stakeholders can provide informed comments

- Provide a range of different opportunities for members of the local community, relevant local town and parish councils, businesses and other stakeholders to engage with the Future Chippenham programme and comment on the proposals
- Invite feedback and ensure that Future Chippenham understands the views of stakeholders so that they can be considered during the development process

2.3 When we will engage

- 2.3.1 We will engage on aspects of the programme and proposals that will have a material impact on Chippenham and surrounding communities.
- 2.3.2 Wherever possible, we will try to accommodate invitations from stakeholders to attend online meetings, presentations, briefings and events to give an update on the proposals.
- 2.3.3 This is a long-term project and there will be periods when the Future Chippenham Project team can only provide minimal new information. We will endeavour to maintain a flow of information through our corporate communication channels and thereby minimise disinformation or misinformation.
- 2.3.4 We will however undertake a programme of targeted communication and engagement to raise awareness of the proposed development prior to any anticipated public consultation.

2.4 What will we engage on

- 2.4.1 We will engage with a wide range of people, community groups, relevant town and parish councils, businesses and other relevant stakeholders who will, or who may be affected by the Future Chippenham programme.
- 2.4.2 It is likely that engagement activities throughout the project may be focused around, but not limited to:
- Principles of Development for Future Chippenham and road alignment options
 - Sustainability measures such as carbon neutrality, biodiversity offsetting
 - Environmental / biodiversity requirements
 - New public open space
 - Walking and cycling opportunities
 - Access to the River Avon
 - New schools, shops and community facilities
 - Traffic modelling
 - Housing
 - Employment space
- 2.4.3 Where appropriate, internal or external specialists/experts in particular fields will be invited to participate in relevant engagement events to ensure the topics/themes can be fully considered.

2.5 Who will we engage with

- 2.5.1 We will engage with stakeholders identified through the stakeholder identification mapping and management process. This will be regularly reviewed as the Future Chippenham programme progresses and amended to reflect the changing nature of stakeholders at that time.
- 2.5.2 An indication of the stakeholder groups identified is given at 3.5.2.

2.6 How we will engage

- 2.6.1 A Communications and Engagement Plan will be developed and will identify the most appropriate communication methods and channels such as those outlined at 3.6.3.
- 2.6.2 Where possible and subject to COVID-19 safety guidance, Future Chippenham engagement activities will include some face-to-face events. If this is not possible, alternative digital and virtual solutions will be used.
- 2.6.3 Where there is a focus on digital and virtual platforms, consideration will be given to the impact this may have on those less technically aware or hard to reach members of the community and further action will be taken as appropriate.
- 2.6.4 We will be engaging stakeholders in two-way dialogue and comments received will be considered as the proposals are developed.
- 2.6.5 Focus groups may be used to develop some aspects of the Future Chippenham programme before engaging with wider stakeholders on the proposals.
- 2.6.6 Where tensions occur between the aspirations of third-party groups and the Future Chippenham programme, every effort will be made to carry out meaningful engagement and dialogue to address these concerns where possible.
- 2.6.7 Stakeholders will be given adequate notice of relevant engagement activities to ensure they can take part.

Website, web contact form, email address and telephone number

- 2.6.8 The aim is for Future Chippenham to have its own micro website, subject to funding. This will provide information on the Future Chippenham programme, dates / times / locations of the public exhibitions / drop-in events, web contact us form and downloadable versions of the project and consultation documents etc. In the meantime, dedicated webpages providing this information will be available on Wiltshire Council's corporate website.
- 2.6.9 A Future Chippenham email address will be set up to provide an additional way in which people can contact the Future Chippenham Project team and access information on the

proposal. Consideration will also be given to having a dedicated telephone number, subject to resources.

Responding to information requests

- 2.6.10 We will aim to provide a detailed response in a timely manner to all questions or requests for further information received via the website contact us form, email address or written correspondence.
- 2.6.11 We will also aim to respond to any verbal requests (particularly at public events) but will generally ask for comments to be made in writing (through any method identified above). Unless we are able to explicitly confirm (in writing) that we are able to respond to a verbal request, we would ask that respondents contact us via the website contact us form, email address or written correspondence.

Petitions

- 2.6.12 Petitions received in relation to the Future Chippenham proposals will be logged and processed by Wiltshire Council's Democratic Services team in line with council policy.

FOI or EIR requests

- 2.6.13 FOI or EIR requests received in relation to the Future Chippenham proposals will be logged and processed by Wiltshire Council's Information Governance team in line with council policy.

2.7 How feedback will be acknowledged

- 2.7.1 We will aim to acknowledge and respond to all individual written responses (whether by the online feedback form, letter or email) within 10 working days, provided that a clear address to respond to is given.
- 2.7.2 Where possible, we will aim to provide a response to (non-rhetorical) questions raised. We will state whether any questions require detailed input and therefore more time to respond to.
- 2.7.3 Respondents can request to be included in our stakeholder management process to be kept informed of the Future Chippenham proposals as they develop. Respondents will need to provide their personal contact details and permission for us to use them for this purpose only in accordance with GDPR processes. Respondents can request to be removed from the stakeholder management process at which point their personal contact details will be deleted.
- 2.7.4 A Frequently Asked Questions section will be available on Wiltshire Council's website outlining generic questions asked and their responses.

2.7.5 Queries from stakeholders about the Local Plan Review will not be dealt with by the Future Chippenham Project team and will automatically be referred to the Spatial Planning team.

2.8 Capture, analysis and reporting stakeholders' comments

2.8.1 We are committed to recording, analysing, properly considering and providing feedback on the comments received during engagement activities.

2.8.2 All stakeholders will have the opportunity to respond to our proposals in several ways, specifically:

- online feedback form
- written representation either via letter or the printed feedback forms available at engagement events
- emailing the project email address

2.8.3 For specific engagement activities, consideration may be given to having an artist present at engagement events to capture feedback in a pictorial form. Alternative options may also be considered.

2.8.4 We will analyse all comments received and consider these as we develop our proposals.

2.8.5 All feedback will be properly considered by the Future Chippenham Project team. Depending on the type of engagement, a schedule of responses or an engagement feedback report will be produced. Appropriate consideration will be given as to whether this feedback is anonymised.

2.8.6 Where appropriate, any engagement feedback reports completed will be made public.

3.0 Our approach to consultation

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Wiltshire Council and Future Chippenham recognises that pre-application consultation by the developer is a key requirement for applications for major infrastructure projects.

Effective pre-application consultation will lead to applications that are better developed and better understood by the public, and in which the important issues have been articulated and considered as far as possible in advance of submission of the application.

3.1.2 As a landowner / promoter of the site, the Future Chippenham Project team will ensure that the approach to pre-application consultation is approved by the relevant parties in the council, in accordance with the process for any other developer. A flexible approach to pre-application consultation will be important so that issues identified throughout the process can be considered and any changes can be made prior to the planning application being finalised.

- 3.1.3 COVID-19 has delayed planned consultation events. The impact and implications of COVID-19 are still ongoing, and this situation is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. All Future Chippenham consultations will therefore adhere to COVID-19 safety guidance, as appropriate.
- 3.1.4 Wiltshire Council and Future Chippenham remain committed to ensuring that every effort is made to gain input from as many consultees as possible throughout the consultation process.
- 3.1.5 For all stakeholder and community engagement activities and consultations, we will carefully consider whether it is safe, feasible and appropriate to carry this out, during the COVID-19 pandemic, in a way that does not prejudice the ability of people to be engaged in terms of fairness and equality.
- 3.1.6 Face-to-face consultations will be managed safely and in line with government guidance relating to social distancing and safety measures at that time, to ensure the process is safe for all those wishing to take part.
- 3.1.7 Where it is considered unsafe to hold face-to-face events, alternative methods of virtual and digital consultation will be followed where we can demonstrate that this meets Wiltshire Council's and Government's guidance.
- 3.1.8 Those who are self-isolating due to COVID-19, or required to shield due to a second peak, will be able to input into the pre-application consultation process either online, by post, or where these cannot be offered, the opportunity to utilise other channels as appropriate.

3.2 Consultation Strategy and Objectives

- 3.2.1 We aim to be clear, open and honest in our consultation with stakeholders and the community.
- 3.2.2 We will take into account relevant local and national policy and guidance including:
- The Gunning Principles (four principles offering a legal precedent)
 - New conversations 2 : LGA Guide to Engagement
 - Broader Guidelines for Good Consultation and Engagement which is regularly updated by the government (whilst these guidelines are geared to central government it is important to keep them in mind)
 - The Consultation Institute's charter (outlines seven elements of best practice)
 - Wiltshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement July 2020 including the Temporary Arrangements to enable consultation to take place during the COVID-19 period
- 3.2.3 Our consultations will be managed in line with the following principles:
- Our consultations will have a purpose
 - Our consultations will be clear and concise

- Our consultations will be informative
- Our consultations will be targeted
- Our consultations will last for a proportionate amount of time
- Our consultations will take account of the groups being consulted (and the time of year)
- Our consultations will be agreed before publication
- Our consultation results will be considered in a transparent and timely manner

3.2.4 Our overall consultation objectives are, but not limited to:

- Raise awareness of what is proposed and to give local people, local town and parish councils, businesses and other statutory consultees an opportunity to comment and influence the proposals
- Provide clear and concise information so consultees can make informed comments
- Provide a range of different opportunities for members of the local community, relevant local town and parish councils, businesses and other statutory consultees to engage with the Future Chippenham programme and comment on the proposals
- Invite feedback and ensure that Future Chippenham understands the views of consultees so that they can be considered during the development process
- Show how the consultation has influenced the proposals

3.2.5 To deliver these objectives we will be undertaking the following consultation process:

- Formal public consultation on the road route options involving those stakeholders identified as part of the stakeholder identification mapping and management process. This will be accompanied by the broad Framework of proposed development on council owned land
- Announcement of the preferred road route
- Formal public consultation on the detailed road alignment and Future Chippenham Masterplan for council owned land involving those stakeholders identified as part of the stakeholder identification mapping and management process

3.3 When we will consult

3.3.1 In line with the Gunning Principles, we will consult on proposals whilst they are still at a formative stage. This means a final decision has not yet been pre-determined or made.

3.3.2 The consultation period must provide sufficient time for consultees to understand the proposals and can give informed responses. Our consultation period will last for at least six weeks.

3.3.3 In line with Local Government Association guidance, we will try to avoid starting any new consultations during an election period (known as purdah). We will also try to avoid, where

possible, holding our public consultation events at the same time as similar scale proposals in the local area.

- 3.3.4 The following is an indicative timescale for consultation and may be subject to change due to progress of the Future Chippenham programme, COVID-19 etc.

Early 2021 - Formal public consultation on the road route options and broad Concept Framework proposals for Wiltshire Council land



Spring 2021 - Announcement of the Preferred Route for the Road



Late Spring / Early Summer 2021 – Formal public consultation on the road alignment and council owned land for the Future Chippenham Masterplan



Winter 2021/22 – Submission of a Full Planning Application for the road and an Outline Planning Application for the mixed-use development for Wiltshire Council land

3.4 What will we consult on

- 3.4.1 The aim of our pre-application consultation on Future Chippenham is to ensure that the local community, relevant town and parish councils, businesses and other stakeholders have an opportunity to understand and influence the proposals for the road and development on council owned land.

- 3.4.2 There are some aspects of the proposals that determine the broad approach to development for example technical and environmental factors including topography / archaeology / ground conditions etc. There is however the opportunity to influence the following aspects that impact on the road alignment and proposed development, subject to technical feasibility, economic considerations, operational requirements, proposals for the development of land in the surrounding area, health and safety considerations and the views of specialist organisations:

- Route Alignment Options
- Housing – including delivery rates, mix and tenures, affordable homes, later living and lifetime homes, self and custom build
- Education – primary and secondary school provision and location

- Social and community infrastructure – health and wellbeing centres, cultural provision, childcare and pre-school, children’s play, care and extra care, sports facilities
- Employment – location, type and key sectors. Workspace in neighbourhood centres. Links with Wiltshire College and University Centre at Lackham
- Landscape, open space and green infrastructure – including landscape mitigation, new woodland, the proposed River Avon Country Park and green corridors
- Flood risk – surface water management strategy and use of SuDS (sustainable drainage systems)
- Sustainability and climate change – environmental performance and carbon targets
- Biodiversity – habitat protection, restoration and enhancement. Net gain targets
- Archaeology – setting of listed buildings and protection of heritage assets

3.5 Who we will consult

3.5.1 We will consult with a full range of people, community groups, relevant town and parish councils, businesses and other relevant statutory consultees who will, or who may be affected by the new distributor road and the development of land for new housing and employment opportunities.

3.5.2 A comprehensive stakeholder identification mapping and management process has been carried out and the following stakeholder groups have been identified:

- Residents
- Community groups and sports clubs
- Businesses and business groups
- Landowners / developers
- Statutory consultees (includes relevant technical and regulatory organisations)
- Those with an interest in the land required for the proposed development such as council tenants
- Education establishments
- Emergency services
- Environmental groups
- Transport providers
- Healthcare providers
- Local government including town and parish councils and internal stakeholders
- Central government departments

3.5.3 The stakeholder identification mapping and management process will be regularly reviewed and updated throughout the Future Chippenham programme to ensure relevant stakeholders are identified and consulted with.

3.6 How we will consult

- 3.6.1 A Communications and Consultation Plan will be developed for each consultation undertaken by the Future Chippenham Project team, to ensure that the Gunning Principles and other guidance has been fully taken into account.
- 3.6.2 Stakeholders identified through the stakeholder identification mapping and management process will be given adequate notice of the consultation period and public exhibitions / drop-in events to ensure they can take part.
- 3.6.3 The Communications and Consultation Plan will include identifying the most appropriate communication methods and channels such as, but not exhaustive:
- Online information
 - Wiltshire Council's website to contain all the relevant information during the consultation period so that people can still make informed comments even if they haven't been able to attend a public exhibition / drop-in event / virtual event
 - Appropriate consultation software to view documents / information and to give comments online (although printed forms will be available, especially at public exhibitions / drop-in events)
 - Direct notification to specific stakeholders
 - Invitation to comment
 - Invitation to public exhibitions / drop-in events / virtual events
 - Postal survey, depending on time and funding available
 - Face to face consultation (if safe to do so during COVID-19 pandemic)
 - Presentations
 - Briefings
 - Public exhibitions / drop-in events
 - Bespoke meetings
 - Virtual consultation
 - Virtual exhibitions
 - Video conferencing and webinars
 - Interactive meetings
 - Document deposit points
 - copies of documents to be made available for reading in venues such as Wiltshire Council hubs and libraries etc. This may also include unstaffed exhibitions
 - consider providing copies of documents to town and parish councils affected by the proposals for display in their venues
 - Promotion of consultation and exhibitions / drop-in events
 - News releases
 - Radio
 - Newspaper publications
 - Social media channels including corporate and those managed by the Community Engagement Manager
 - Video and podcasts
 - Posters

- Newsletter including corporate and those managed by the Community Engagement Manager
- Our Community Matters blogsite
- Information leaflets / flyers informing the local community of Future Chippenham, timescales and how they can get involved as the programme develops

Public exhibitions / drop-in events

- 3.6.4 We aim to hold a series of public exhibition / drop-in events in the main communities in the vicinity of the Future Chippenham proposals. These will follow COVID-19 guidelines, but where this is not possible due to a second wave of the pandemic / local lockdown measures etc then alternative arrangements will be made using virtual/digital technology. This will incorporate, wherever possible, activities outlined in 3.6.5 to 3.6.7 below.
- 3.6.5 By taking these public events to each of the main communities, we aim to ensure they are accessible for as many people as reasonably possible. The timing of the events will be varied including evenings and at least one day over a weekend.
- 3.6.6 The public exhibition / drop-in events will be attended by members of the project team to answer questions on the proposal, assist with interpreting the project information available at the events and to encourage people to give their views.
- 3.6.7 Information boards will be displayed at each public exhibition/ drop-in event to set out details of the proposals being consulted on. Subject to available funding, consideration will be given to using digital technology such as virtual reality etc to help explain the proposals being consulted on and maximise input from consultees. Supporting technical information may also be available as appropriate. The same information will be made available on the council's website to ensure full information is available to those people who are unable to attend these public events to still make informed comments.

Community Liaison Group

- 3.6.8 If there is sufficient interest, we will set up a Community Liaison Group (CLG) to provide an ongoing link to the local community and a means via which local concerns can be presented directly to the Future Chippenham Project team.
- 3.6.9 We will seek to identify people potentially interested in joining a CLG during the first public consultation.
- 3.6.10 Subject to there being sufficient interest from each group, the CLG will be made up of a mix of local residents, local councillors and representatives from local community groups and associations (including local schools where interest is shown).

Consultation with statutory consultees

- 3.6.11 Informal consultation with relevant statutory consultees will take place in advance of any public consultation.
- 3.6.12 These statutory consultees will also be made aware of the formal public consultations so that we can gain their further feedback during the consultation process.
- 3.6.13 In addition, we plan to hold a series of ongoing pre-application consultation meetings with key stakeholders such as landowners / developers and tenants to ensure ongoing and constructive dialogue on the scope of the project and obtain feedback on the evolving proposal.

4.0 Capture, analysis and reporting consultees' comments

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 We are committed to recording, analysing, properly considering and providing feedback on the comments received during our consultations.

4.2 How feedback can be provided

- 4.2.1 All consultees will have the opportunity to respond to our proposals in several ways, specifically:
- online feedback form
 - written representation either via letter or the printed feedback forms available at the public exhibitions / drop-in events
 - emailing the project email address

4.3 Analysis

- 4.3.1 We will analyse all comments received and take them into account as we develop our proposals.

4.4 Reporting

- 4.4.1 There must be proper consideration of the consultation responses, before a final decision is made. Our consultation feedback report will detail the feedback received and how this has shaped proposals.
- 4.4.2 Any decision-making reports or minutes of the decision itself should explain the number and the nature of the responses that have been received from consultees and how these have informed the decision. This will be achieved by way of our consultation feedback report being appended to the decision-making report.
- 4.4.3 The consultation feedback report will also be published on the council's website.

- 4.4.4 The Future Chippenham Project team's response to the consultation will be published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing or an explanation provided as to why this timescale is not possible.
- 4.4.5 The consultation feedback report to the pre-application consultation will accompany the planning application when it is submitted.

5.0 Next steps

- 5.1 The Future Chippenham Project team is aiming to submit a Full Planning Application for the road and an Outline Planning Application for the mixed-use development for Wiltshire Council land in Winter 2021
- 5.2 Wiltshire Council, as Local Planning Authority, will consider these in line with any other planning application. If they do not adhere to the relevant planning policies, then they can be refused.
- 5.3 As already mentioned, the Future Chippenham programme is a long-term project and further Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategies will be developed to cover particular aspects of the programme / proposals at the relevant time.

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