

# AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

**Meeting:** Cabinet  
**Place:** Online Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday 8 September 2020  
**Time:** 10.00 am

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**The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 28 August 2020. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.**

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Stuart Figini, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718221 or email [stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

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6 **COVID-19 Update (Pages 3 - 26)**

This report provides an update to Cabinet on developments and activity since the last update report on 18 August 2020.

7 **Budget 2021/22 & Medium Term Financial Strategy (Pages 27 - 34)**

This report provides Cabinet with an outline of the approach and overarching framework in setting the budget for the 2021/22 financial year and an update of the medium term financial strategy given Wiltshire's emerging recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

11 **Interim position of Wiltshire Leisure Sites' Cafes and Creches (Pages 35 - 42)**

Confidential report.

12 **Interim Management Arrangements for Wiltshire Contracted Leisure Sites**  
*(Pages 43 - 52)*

This confidential report asks Cabinet to agree the way forward for the interim leisure centre management contract for the council's leisure centres currently managed by Places for People Leisure Ltd (PfP).

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2 September 2020
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**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**8 September 2020**

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**Subject:** COVID-19 Update and steps towards recovery

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

**Key Decision:** Non-Key

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## **Executive Summary**

Delivery of Wiltshire's Recovery Plan is underway with the aims of ensuring the most vulnerable in the community continue to be supported, help is provided to local communities and businesses and that a range of measures are implemented to support health and wellbeing.

This is an update to Cabinet on developments and activity since the update provided on 18 August 2020.

## **Proposal(s)**

Cabinet is asked to:

- Note the current impact of COVID-19 in Wiltshire
- Note changes in national policy
- Note the work underway within the four Recovery Coordinating Group themes and on Organisation Recovery

## **Reason for Proposal(s)**

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.

**Terence Herbert**  
**Chief Executive**

## Wiltshire Council

### Cabinet

8 September 2020

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**Subject:** COVID-19 Update and steps towards recovery

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

**Key Decision:** Non-Key

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### Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an update on the Council's plans and activities to promote recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic since the last report to Cabinet in mid-August. A financial update is provided in a separate paper.

### Background

2. On the 21 July 2020 Wiltshire officially moved from the Response phase of the pandemic into the Recovery. The official handover from the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) to the Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) was received by Wiltshire Council as the chair of the RCG.
3. As of Monday 24 August 2020, 325,642 people in the UK had tested positive for COVID-19. Further information is available [online](#). The [ONS](#) suggest that as of Friday 7 August there were 56,357 registered COVID-19 deaths across the UK
4. With specific respect to Wiltshire, there have now been 1,372 people who have tested positive for COVID-19. The rate of positive cases in Wiltshire is 274.4 per 100,000 population which is lower than that seen in England which is 500 per 100,000 population. Up to the 7 August, 364 registered deaths involving COVID-19 in all settings in Wiltshire had occurred. Further information on weekly mortality is available from [ONS](#).

### Main Considerations

#### Government updates

5. The Government [announced](#) the reopening of a number of venues from 15 August, including when following COVID-secure guidance:
  - Indoor play and indoor soft play, bowling alleys, skating rinks and casinos
  - Beauty salons, tattoo studios, spas

- Indoor theatres, music and performance venues
6. Business events and conferences will be [permitted to resume from 1 October provided rates of infection remain at current levels](#).
  7. The Government has also [announced](#) the creation of a National Institute for Health Protection, responsible for protecting people from external threats to this country's health. It will combine existing talent and scientific infrastructure with the response capability of NHS Test and Trace and the analytical capability in the Joint Biosecurity Centre. The intention is that it is a national Institute that will work locally with local directors of public health and their teams and drawing upon their local insight and intelligence.

### **Local Outbreak Management Plan**

8. The Wiltshire Local Outbreak Management Plan was published in line with national guidance by 1st July 2020. Since then through a series of multi-agency exercises with over 50 attendees at each one we have exercised different elements of the plan to ensure appropriate and effective response to outbreaks in different settings can be managed.
9. The Public Health team review new cases, infection rates, testing and tracing data and outbreak data on a daily basis in Wiltshire to identify any potential outbreaks or issues at the earliest possible time. In addition, the council chairs a fortnightly multi-agency meeting of the COVID-19 health protection board where infection rates, outbreaks and updates to guidance for specific settings are reviewed to ensure that all mitigation actions for outbreaks are in place in Wiltshire.
10. Swindon remains on the Government watch list with a higher rate of COVID-19 infection. We continue to work collaboratively with Swindon Borough Council to ensure any cross-border issues can be identified in a timely manner. To aid this our public health team attend Swindon's daily outbreak meetings with other external partners.
11. There has been an outbreak of COVID-19 in a Wiltshire business which has required us to work closely with Swindon Borough Council where employees are resident. The measures implemented by the business, including the provision of free transport for the employees and topping up statutory sick pay, have been extremely successful in reducing the spread of COVID-19 associated with the outbreak.

### **Recovery**

12. The Recovery Plan endorsed by Cabinet in July sets out objectives and principles for the Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) and similar objectives for each theme to achieve. As a reminder the main themes are:

**RCG** - Restore community, public health and wellbeing, environmental and economic resilience following the response to COVID-19.

**Economy** - Evaluate and understand the impact on Wiltshire's economy and environment, providing support to secure business recovery, revitalise town centres, reduce carbon emissions and support those impacted.

**Community Resilience** - Build on the Community Resilience shown in the response enabling Wiltshire's communities to take responsibility for their wellbeing, build positive local relationships and to get involved and take actions for what is best for their own communities.

**Care, Safeguarding & Education** - support the recovery of all age statutory and specialist services and locality-based community health & care services.

**Health and Wellbeing** - Coordinate the health and wellbeing element of the overarching recovery to COVID-19. Ensure effective local outbreak management of COVID-19

13. Each member of the RCG will also have their own organisation recovery arrangements.
14. Wiltshire Council continues to undertake activity under the Recovery programme. Some examples of the priority areas of operational activity as part of the recovery themes underway are below, and further information is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Support for Business**

15. For the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak, the Council has business rates data on business closures in Wiltshire during the pandemic. There has been a total of 361 business closures since 1st April 2020 and 94 new businesses opening during the same period. This represents a net loss of 267 businesses over 5 months.
16. In July 2020, 12,610 residents were claiming out of work benefits – a rate of 4.2% compared to a pre COVID-19 level (Jan 2020) of 1.7% which equates to 4,950 residents. Nationally the rate rose from 2.9% in January to 6.5%.
17. As at 27 August 2020, the Council has allocated £94M to over 8,000 businesses. The grant application period will close on 28 August 2020 and final payments must be made by 30 September 2020. In order to maximise the benefits of this scheme for as many Wiltshire businesses as possible, the economy team have worked to track down eligible businesses who were yet to apply for a grant and extended the discretionary grant window, to support more businesses. The grant money came in two tranches. In the first Small Business, Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business were eligible under strict criteria. 7,571 businesses were awarded a total of £90.23m. The second tranche was a discretionary fund in which 545 business were awarded a total of £3.66m.
18. The economy team are now preparing to support businesses and residents in Wiltshire, as changes that will impact on businesses take effect throughout

September and October e.g. Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Eviction Ban, VAT resuming, and the possibility of further redundancies.

### **Safe Space Measures**

19. The Safe Space workstream covers a wide range of topics in relation to helping social distancing and active travel in public spaces, including pavement licenses and school transport.
20. Following the announcement of the Emergency Active Travel fund by the Government, the Council bid for and was successful in receiving £227k in Tranche 1 for five temporary cycleway schemes; these are in the process of being implemented. The Council has applied for funding for five further schemes in Tranche 2 to a value of £900k and is awaiting the outcome. These schemes would be permanent in nature and would primarily improve cycling provision. Other social distancing schemes have been identified and assessed, with three schemes being implemented to date within Malmesbury, Marlborough and Bradford on Avon.

### **Helping schools and educational settings**

21. We expect good attendance in schools from 1 September as we go into this with confidence building on the strong work undertaken to enable high numbers of vulnerable and keyworker children to attend school throughout the COVID-19 period. 1016 (of 1421) digital devices have been issued to vulnerable pupils to support remote learning.
22. All schools have completed risk assessments ahead of reopening in September and were supported to do so by Public Health and Education and Skills. Specific advice has also been provided to Early Years settings due to the specific issues facing younger children starting school or integrating back into nursery.
23. Significant work has been undertaken to prepare for the schools returning from 1<sup>st</sup> September. Guidance has been provided to schools, parents and transport providers on how school and public transport will operate from the start of the new term and this will continue to be reviewed in coming days and weeks. Transport is being funded via the £460,000 Government grant allocated to Wiltshire Council.
24. All school year groups and college students will have returned by w/c 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Additional vehicles and drivers for select routes have been commissioned, to ensure sufficient capacity is available to meet demand.
25. The current Government guidance on home to school transport states that face coverings are 'highly recommended' for use on dedicated home to school transport and the Council has adopted the government's approach. We have recommended that everyone who can wear a face covering should do so on home to school transport arranged by the Council if they are over the age of 11

years. There is no requirement for primary aged pupils or children who are exempt to wear one, although it is strongly recommended.

26. Exam results are being collated and the Education Employment Advisors have been busy supporting students with next steps post 16, as well as making contact with those young people whose destination was unknown, resulting in our overall unknown figure improving from 5.3% in June to 4.14% at the end of July.

### **Supporting Care Providers and Discharge from Hospital**

27. Providing support to our adult social care providers, especially care homes, has been a priority for the Council during the COVID-19 response and continues in recovery. A COVID-19 team was established in early April to provide a single point of contact for all providers with a helpline operating seven days a week and is now operating six days a week. In partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Care Quality Commission, the Council has run regular webinars for children's and adults care providers, including specialist webinars on how to use Personal Protective Equipment and managing infection prevention and control. The Council has also provided guidance on the commencement of visiting in care homes regularly reviewed at the Health Protection Board and is also working with those providers which want to reopen day centres.
28. The Council has provided financial support to providers during the COVID-19 response, paying full costs for PPE, costs for staff who are self-isolating and additional running costs due to the pandemic. Funding totalling £7.5 million will be provided to support infection prevention and control measures. Care homes will receive £4.7 million with £2.8 million going to supported living providers and domiciliary care agencies. This has been paid in two equal instalments with 50% in June and the remainder before September.
29. The Health and Care workstream has been focused on the national guidance which has been published in this period and the Phase 3 letter received by the BSW CCG with a focus on restoring services and preparing for winter pressures. The Council continues to manage Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on behalf of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Resilience Forum and has good supplies.

### **Return to the Workplace**

30. Government guidance on returning to the workplace changed on 1 August and requires employers to consult with their employees to determine how to work safely. The guidance is clear that working from home is one way to do this, but that workplaces can also be made safe by following COVID-19 Secure guidelines.
31. Steps to ensure the Council's workplaces are COVID-19 secure took place in June as lockdown measures began to ease and means that capacity in all buildings is reduced. In the three in hubs this is by approx. 50% and means that

the staff capacity in these buildings has reduced from around 1600 to 800.

32. During the response to the pandemic a requirement to work at home has in the main applied to staff who are normally office based and work predominantly from one of the Council's three main hubs. For other staff, they have continued to work in and from their normal workplaces and some cases where it has been essential for service delivery this has been from the three hubs.
33. Advice from Public Health continues to be to work at home wherever possible and this approach enables us to ensure social distancing within all of our workplaces, keeping the staff who are delivering our essential services and customers accessing our services in our workplaces, as safe as possible.
34. Processes to support staff to return to the workplace in services where this is deemed essential, have been in place since June. More recently a process to allow staff "ad hoc" access to workplaces assessed as COVID-secure has also been confirmed and communicated. These ad hoc requests are for the completion of specific tasks that cannot be done at home, or in some cases where working at home is temporarily unavailable (internet down etc).
35. A staff wellbeing and engagement survey in June indicated that for some groups of staff, working from home for a prolonged period of time is adversely affecting their wellbeing. As a result, a process is now in place to enable staff to access their workplace for wellbeing reasons.
36. The number of staff returning to the workplace continues to increase but it is not anticipated that staff will return to the workplace in any greater numbers for the remainder of 2020 while social distancing measures remain in place. The next steps for return to workplace will be led through the Organisation Recovery Programme to ensure they are aligned with the future vision for the council. Further information, including the current numbers of staff returning to work in the hubs is in Appendix 1.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Engagement**

37. Overview and Scrutiny (OS) engagement on the council's response to COVID-19 and recovery is being led by OS Management Committee and its Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group. Reports to Cabinet on the COVID-19 situation receive prior scrutiny by the Task Group, with its comments being reported to Cabinet by its chairman.
38. At its meeting on 17 August the OS Management Committee reviewed the arrangements for overview and scrutiny during recovery and agreed:
  - The formal meetings of Children's, Environment and Health Select Committee scheduled for September to be deferred, with the position to be reviewed by OS Management Committee at its next meeting on 29 September, taking into account the COVID-19 situation.
  - Full Council approval for the continuance of the streamlined OS

arrangements in place to be sought in October 2020.

- Additional public meetings of OS Management Committee to be scheduled if appropriate to ensure ongoing public scrutiny.
- Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group to continue to meet, but more frequently and receiving additional information beyond the regular Recovery reports to Cabinet on request.
- Members of the Financial Planning Task Group to continue to be invited to attend meetings of the Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group to support ongoing financial scrutiny.
- The select committees to continue to be supported to meet informally with their members invited to raise any issues via their committee chairman for raising at the Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group. Officers and Executive members may attend if appropriate, with the OS chairmen and vice-chairman to discuss the most appropriate support for their committee with the Chief Executive and CLT.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

39. Safeguarding implications have been fully considered as part of the work to support residents shielding and identified by the NHS as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) through the Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub and coordinated via the Community Resilience Theme. This work has transitioned to resilience Recovery Theme. The Care, Safeguarding & Education recovery theme is addressing safeguarding across adults and children including domestic abuse. The health and well-being theme will ensure recovery for mental health, learning disabilities, rough sleepers and substance misuse.
40. Families & Children's Services has continued to meet all the statutory duties in children's social care. Performance has remained strong with visiting performance at 98% and 96% for child protection and looked after children at the end of August. Child protection conferences and looked after children reviews have continued throughout the pandemic using Microsoft Teams to ensure these meetings are COVID-19 secure. Adult social care have also continued to meet all the statutory duties throughout this period.

### **Public Health Implications**

41. This has been referred to throughout the report.

### **Procurement Implications**

42. 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**

43. Work is progressing 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 incident. Equality implications are being considered as part of decisions made and in interim changes to service delivery. Recovery theme leads are also embedding use of a Health Equality Assessment Tool.
44. 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. A plan is being developed to tackle issues caused by COVID-19 in specific groups (including the black and minority ethnic community, gypsies and travellers, carers and those with a disability).

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

45. 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 will be taking part in the Wiltshire Climate Alliance virtual conference this month, to discuss a green recovery in Wiltshire, and will carefully consider the suggestions that come out of these discussions.

### **Risk Management**

46. Wiltshire Council specific risks related to the management of, and recovery from, COVID-19 are owned and regularly reviewed by the Chief Executive.
47. 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.
48. 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.

### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

49. An update on the financial implications and latest outturn is presented in a separate report.

## **Legal and Governance**

50. The RCG as a collective does not have the power to direct the Council to act in any particular way or provide resources.
51. Therefore, the Council's normal decision-making arrangements, as set out in its Constitution apply. This means that any significant policy matters will be determined by Council, Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members or Committees as appropriate and officers will make operational decisions within the Scheme of Delegation to Officers. Overview and Scrutiny arrangements are summarised in paragraphs 37 and 38 above.
52. Other representatives on the RCG will be authorised in accordance with their own organisation's governance arrangements. Where these apply across more than one organisation e.g. health and social care, steps will be taken to ensure that these operate efficiently and effectively within the overall governance framework of the RCG. The RCG has established a Governance Task Group to streamline partnership governance arrangements related to Wiltshire Recovery themes to avoid duplication of effort and address gaps.
53. The latest decision notices for executive decisions made by officers under delegated authority in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are available [online](#).

## **Workforce Implications**

54. Government guidance about employment matters has been applied throughout the COVID-19 response and will continue through recovery.
55. A 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.
56. The organisation recovery programme structure includes a workforce theme that will 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 further opportunities to deliver services differently.

## **Conclusions**

57. The Council is taking a systems approach to recovery and are working with our partners and the LGA to deliver this work successfully in a rapidly changing environment.

**Terence Herbert**  
**Chief Executive**

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1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Updates from Recovery Theme Leads

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### Update from Recovery Theme Leads

#### **Economy Theme**

The majority of the reactive business support measures implemented by Government will come to an end over the next quarter, with a subsequent further impact on businesses and residents. Work on the Economy theme is therefore shifting from the delivery of this support to a longer-term programme. The Economic Recovery Plan is currently being drafted, and this will form the basis of the Economy Theme work programme. Work is also ongoing to develop the programme objectives and outputs for each theme

- **Impact**

There has been a total of 361 business closures notified to the Rates team since 1st April 2020 – 27% in the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector, 33% in the office sector and 40% from commercial units. The majority of the office sector has been from small office space – one to two desk offices – and the bulk of the commercial units have either been storage space or small workshops, under 800sqft. During this period there have been 94 business openings – 31% in retail, hospitality and leisure, 30% office space and 37% business units.

This represents a net loss of 267 businesses over 5 months. In comparison, across the past 2 years there has been an average of 171 business openings/month and 160 business closures/month; a net gain of 9 per month. There is regularly a delay in businesses notifying the Business Rates team of closures, we expect this will be exacerbated this year by the zero-rate bill for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector.

- **Business Grant Scheme**

Over £94M has been paid out to Wiltshire businesses. Of the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants 7,571 businesses have been paid a total of £90.23M. Through the Discretionary Grants 566 businesses have been paid a total of £3.78M. Government have announced that these schemes are to close at the end of August and any unspent allocations are to be returned.

- **People, Debt and Income Task & Finish Group**

The People Debt and Income Task and Finish Group is utilising the 'Wiltshire Money' Partnership and have a targeted series of campaigns: August – Employment and Housing; September – debts and bills (as payment holidays end); October – employment (as the furlough scheme comes to an end).

## **Community Resilience Theme**

The Community Resilience Recovery theme partnership have focused their attention through August on consolidating the workstreams, clarifying delivery project purpose and gathering the data and evidence to ensure the work and focus is targeted to where the biggest difference can be made. Voluntary Sector partners, while having more business as usual activity reactivated, are continuing to commit considerable time and resource into ensuring Wiltshire's communities recover strongly from COVID19 and no one gets left behind. The following provides updates on the current partnership workstreams:

- **Wellbeing hub**

Pro-active outbound calling to shielding residents has now stopped and the Well-being hub line (and email inbox) has moved into Customer Services. Very low numbers of enquiries coming in, consistently below 10 a day.

- **Community Engagement**

Formal Area Boards resume from September, with local recovery as the key theme for discussion at the online discussions. CEMs are working closely with the boards to ensure that local recovery plans are starting to be developed in each community area.

A meeting was held with over 60 representatives of the brilliant Wiltshire COVID19 response groups on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August. The purpose of this was to learn from our communities on how they have stepped up to the challenge of the pandemic, to share best practice, to enable them to build networks across the county and to understand how we can continue to support their development in the future. This vital workstream will continue over the coming weeks and months. Faith leaders relationships continue to be strongly developed with a joint discussion around bereavement, grief and loss, and a further discussion scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

On 06 November 2019 the FACT Executive Board endorsed findings of the Integrated Earliest Support in Communities (IESiC) project which led to 3 new projects being set up, Community Connector/Navigator; Digital Platform and Community Development/Partnership Commissioning. On 16 July 2020 the FACT Executive Board considered proposals that these projects move into the Community Resilience Recovery Group governance from FACT, due to their synergy with the work of this group during COVID-19 and moving into recovery. The Community Resilience Recovery Group is currently working to integrate these projects into recovery workstreams.

- **Summer Holiday Provision**

The Active Communities group, which was established to enable people across Wiltshire to keep physically and mentally active during the coronavirus lockdown, continues to deliver a range of interventions both virtually and via other innovative approaches. As services begin to mobilise and start to reengage mainstream customers, the focus of the group has shifted towards

vulnerable individuals who are still deciding to shield and are therefore more likely to be isolated.

A directory of summer holiday activities and provision has been coordinated with partners across the authority area to seek to meet the needs of Wiltshire families. The directory details 43 activities offered by 36 different providers and has been downloaded 1,196 times. An updated version of the directory will be available during October half term and the Christmas holidays.

- **Community Spaces**

Reopening of community spaces has been a priority over the last few months. 6 libraries are now open (Chippenham, Corsham, Devizes, Salisbury, Trowbridge & Warminster) offering browsing and lending for up to 30 mins and bookable computer sessions for 45 mins. 8 more libraries (Amesbury, Bradford-on-Avon, Calne, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Melksham, RWB & Westbury) will reopen in September offering an Order & Collect service from the library entrance and bookable computers sessions for 45 mins. We are looking forward to meeting with Volunteer Coordinators at the 16 smallest libraries on 3 Sept to talk to them about the pre-requisites required before they reopen – including sharing some of the return to volunteering pack produced by HR.

Our in-house Leisure have now re-opened five facilities operating on our COVID-19 principles including reduced access and operations. A further 2 centres will open from 7<sup>th</sup> September. The feedback from customers has generally been very positive and informative for future learning; the Net Provider Score from the first 2 weeks of opening was 68% from 619 responses. To date the 5 centres have had just over 15,000 attendances, with swimming being the most popular activity.

- **Inequalities**

The Digital Access Support Group was set up to support those who are digitally excluded to access essential information and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have achieved the following:

Developed an assessment tool to understand the needs of those who are digitally excluded. Sourced devices and technical solutions for those without digital access. Identified grant funding for small voluntary organisations to apply for. Worked with Building Bridges/Community First to secure support for 50 people without digital access. NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG gained approval from NHS England for digital needs to be included as part of personal care plans in south-west region including Swindon and Wiltshire. Grant from Community First enabled Get Connected - Safer Supported Salisbury pilot digital inclusion project to provide digital access, training and ongoing support, for 10 identified vulnerable individuals. Wessex Community Action will be providing Digital Champions through the new digital community platform Wiltshire Together to provide countywide access to digital skills training and support.

- **Safe spaces**

This workstream covers a wide range of topics in relation to helping social distancing and active travel in public spaces.

### **Pavement Licences**

Hospitality and food outlets are invited to apply for licences to use space outside their premises for offering food and drinks. The process is working well although there have been a small number of applications so far. The applicants are informed of the outcome within 10 days.

### **Active Travel**

Following announcement of Emergency Active Travel fund by the government, the Council bid and was successful in receiving £227k in Tranche 1 for five temporary cycleway schemes, which are being built. These are:

1. A420 Chippenham to Bumpers Farm Cycleway
2. Winsley to Bradford on Avon Cycle / Footway
3. A361 Hilperton Road Cycleway, Trowbridge
4. Salisbury to Harnham Cycleway, Salisbury
5. Monkton Hill Cycleway, Chippenham

The Council has applied for funding for five further schemes in Tranche 2 to a value of £900k and is awaiting the outcome. These schemes are:

1. A420 Bristol Road and Lowden Hill tunnel scheme in Chippenham
2. Downton Road in Salisbury
3. People Friendly Salisbury (PFS)
4. Hilperton to Melksham via Semington
5. Easton Lane (Corsham to Chippenham)

### **Other Social Distancing Schemes**

The Council has received 528 suggestions for social distancing, walking and cycling, cycling, school and other schemes from town and parish councils, members of the public and officers to respond to Covid-19 implications. Whilst the assessments of these schemes are still ongoing, 242 have been discounted on safety or other grounds, with 171 schemes thought suitable for either short or medium-term implementation should funding be available. These schemes will be discussed with the Community Area Transport Groups for further consideration. Limited funding may also be available from the Integrated Transport budget for certain cycling schemes.

### **Care, Safeguarding & Education Theme**

The Care, safeguarding & Education Theme has continued to meet weekly and will be moving to fortnightly meeting from the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The focus has been on ensuring the demand modelling is completed for each workstream in order to assess capacity requirements for winter pressures and latent and new safeguarding demand post lockdown.

- **Education**

Over the summer period 1421 Digital Devices for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Pupils were delivered to Wiltshire. This is following an initial allocation of 1016 which was increased after we submitted a business case resulting in a further 405 being approved by DfE. 1161 have been allocated to date and available for collection by School, Social Worker or Personal Adviser. The remaining 260 digital devices will be distributed to eligible children in early years settings.

Early Years providers have been supported to implement the latest guidance and to manage children's return to settings safely, including producing a risk assessment. A transition to school guidance document has been produced to support children starting school in reception. Along with this, a settling in guide for Early Years providers on how to welcome all children from 0-4 years back into their settings using the Five to Thrive approach and high-quality practice has been shared. This has specific advice on how the settling in process will be different this year due to the pandemic.

Public health guidance has been provided to support schools to complete risk assessments for the safe return to education in September. Where necessary, pupils are starting school at different times to prevent large groups gathering, pupils are spending the day in bubbles and following good hygiene advice. Supportive 'Team Around the school' meetings have taken place with officers from SEND, Education Welfare, health, children's social care and behaviour support to provide schools with the support they need to ensure full attendance from September onwards.

We are following the government guidance on home to school transport which was received later than expected on the 11<sup>th</sup> August, and can be found [here](#). 20 additional buses and coaches have been procured to manage peak travel demands to school from the 1<sup>st</sup> September. This will be funded through the £40m government grant allocated to local authorities of which Wiltshire received £460k. Guidance has been provided to schools, parents and transport providers on how school and public transport will operate from the start of the new term, this can be found [here](#). Communications around the return to school will continue into the start of term and feedback reviewed constantly to determine if our approach needs to be amended

During July the new Education Employment Advisor (EEA) team contacted Young People who were in employment destinations who did not have a September Guarantee, and those who were recorded as destination unknown. This has contributed towards our overall unknown figure which stands at 4.14% at the end of July, reduced from 5.3% in June and 6.3% February 2019. The NEET figure June 2020 was 2%, this is in line with the June 2019 figure

- **Care Homes**

Care Home visits are taking place and are being carefully monitored by Public Health & Adult Social Care via the Health Protection Board to ensure that there are no further outbreaks in care homes.

Guidance has been developed with Public Health to advise providers who want to reopen day services.

Funding totalling £7.5 million will be provided to support infection prevention and control measures. Care homes will receive £4.7 million with £2.8 million going to supported living providers and domiciliary care agencies. This has been paid in two equal instalments with 50% in June and the remainder before September.

- **Safeguarding**

Individual risk assessments have been written and continually updated for children known to children's social care; a sample of these are audited through the practice leads group on a fortnightly basis.

Statutory services and requirements have been maintained throughout with greater use of technology being utilised to maintain contact with children, families and carers. Face to face contact has been maintained throughout according to risk assessment and as social distancing measures reduced, it was re-introduced as a routine expectation. Short-term and long-term placement stability has remained good (8% and 75%) and stronger than both the England and statutory neighbour average. The number of children placed in foster care and the proportion placed within in-house provision has continued to improve throughout the COVID-19 period with 77% in foster care and 51% in in-house provision at the end of quarter 1.

Demand modelling to explore the impact that COVID-19 has had in relation to children has been completed in partnership with CCG and Police. A significant increase in demand is anticipated in children's social care with MASH referrals expected to rise swiftly in September through to October, falling very slightly in November only to rise again just before the school term ends at Christmas. The forecast predicts a 63% increase in referrals by December. Children in need caseloads will largely mirror the same pattern excepting a slow-down in caseloads in November.

Child Protection will see a more gradual rise in caseloads through and into the new year with a slower decrease afterwards. Within this, however, there are likely to be spikes in S47 Enquiries as children become more 'visible' returning to school and services re-open/return to normal staffing capacities and practice. The number of children subject to child protection plans is expected to increase by more than 120 at the turn of the year.

Children Looked After are further away from front door activity and, although with exceptions, much fewer children are in such need that they need to urgently become looked after. Therefore, we expect to see a more gradual increase in the number of children looked after, nevertheless we expect to see numbers rise by a minimum of 25 by the end of December or early in the new year.

Work is underway with partners to ensure services are prepared for the anticipated increase in demand. Capacity is being managed within the MASH, Safeguarding and Support Service and Children in Care Teams to ensure we have the resource to available through the autumn to respond to the initial

increase in demand. Placement pressures will likely be experienced if additional numbers of children do come into care; through Fostering Excellence we have increased in-house foster care provision, further work is needed (and is underway) with independent providers to ensure we have access to additional placements locally. It should be noted that there is a national shortage in foster care and residential placements and so this does remain a challenge for us. Any significant increase in the number of children in care will place pressure on the placement budget. Through the Vulnerable People Stakeholder Group partners are working to ensure that health services and commissioned services are also readying themselves for the anticipated surge in demand. Data is shared and joint actions agreed to ensure access to services is prioritised appropriately, this monitoring will continue throughout the autumn.

The 24-hour domestic abuse helpline that was stood up at the start of the pandemic will continue for at least a further 4 months. The service provided through Women's Aid is jointly funded by the Council and the Police. The service provides consultation and access to specialist services, including where required referral into child and adult safeguarding services.

Adult social care have continued to meet all the statutory duties throughout this period. Advice and Contact have seen a small increase in demand for first conversations (the initial discussion which takes place at the front door) and for requests for care and support.

Further demand modelling work (using the same process as Families and Children's) is underway in Adult Social Care to establish the impact of COVID-19 on the wider community and to assure ourselves we are able to continue to meet the need of our service users going forward.

Adult Social Care saw an initial drop in contacts made to the Adult MASH, however, as lockdown has eased these have returned to pre-COVID-19 figures. The types of concerns remain of interest, for example, we have seen a decrease in numbers of concerns being raised for people who suffer from self-neglect.

Where there are patterns or emerging themes presenting, these are highlighted as part of the Vulnerable People's Stakeholder Group for further discussion and to develop a system wide response.

In the case of self-neglect, work was undertaken by the MASH and the Communication Team to raise awareness of the area of concern and how to access help and support.

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. This has included specific work with primary care networks to work with local GP practices to help them identify concerns and promote access to mental health 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. Work is underway across the system to understand this increase in greater detail, 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.

- **Health & Care**

There have been two key national publications from government that have impacted on the recovery work within the Health and Care Sub theme.

The first outlines the third phase of the NHS response to COVID-19 and their priorities from August 2020. There is a focus on restoring recovering services and preparing for winter demands. It includes a commitment to tackle health inequalities that were further exacerbated by the pandemic. It also emphasises the benefits of collaborative working and requires a system wide plan to be submitted by the end September which covers the key actions within the letter. The BANES Swindon & Wiltshire (BSW) system plan will capture the requirements and progress of the Wiltshire locality.

The Hospital Discharge guidance has also been updated. This was first published in March and describes how health and care systems should work together to support safe discharges from the acute hospitals. This guidance further reinforces the need for 'Discharge to assess' approach which supports people to go home as quickly as possible. The Wiltshire Council Reablement service working alongside Wiltshire Health and Care community health colleagues have been very successful in supporting increasing numbers of individuals to return home. There has been a 100% increase in the number of referrals on this pathway since March 2020. In addition, we are seeing requests for social care focused reablement for people living in the community begin to return to pre-covid levels. This means that individuals are increasingly able to remain independent and active without reliance on long term funded care.

Wiltshire Council is now responsible for submitting the weekly DELTA return, for Wiltshire & Swindon Local Resilience Forum, which reports the current stock levels, weekly usage and estimated days of supply across both councils. The LRF stock levels are healthy due to supplier contracts secured by the procurement teams within Wiltshire and Wiltshire Councils, however, CCG mutual aid is still in place should it be required. In addition, the Government PPE Portal is now in place for emergency supplies which can be utilised by adult social care, domiciliary care settings and primary care settings. The department of Health and Social Care will be responsible for distributing PPE to small organisations who are unable to register on the portal which will assist the LRF in sustaining healthy stock levels. MHCLG drops will cease by 11 September 2020 with a stockpile DROP due to be delivered to the LRF week commencing 31 August.

- **Families & Children's Transformation**

The Families & Children's Transformation Programme restarted following the pandemic with an Executive Board meeting held in July. The executive agreed to review the partnership priorities going forward and this activity will be presented to the next Executive in September.

### **Health and Wellbeing Theme**

The Health and Wellbeing theme moved to fortnightly meetings at the start of August 2020 after an initial series of weekly meetings to identify the key priority work streams. The focus has been on ensuring that the health protection measures around local outbreak management, testing and tracing are well developed across the system to enable swift and effective local responses.

In addition, work on the COVID-19 JSNA and evaluation of programmes against the Health Equity Assessment tool have taken early priority to ensure that data and intelligence are used to inform work streams. A set of outcomes have been agreed with the overarching aim of maintaining and improving health and wellbeing.

- **Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP)**

LOMP published, and a suite of multi-agency exercises scheduled in throughout the summer and autumn to test the delivery of the plan and inform its continued development. Two exercises have been run and the learning from these will be utilised by the COVID-19 Board and the LRF to inform the LOMP. Agreement provided that all partners will review the LOMP against the LGA self-assessment tool for assurance and ongoing improvement in a quarterly basis.

- **Testing**

Review and planning for local testing sites completed across the county – next stage is development of local testing plan to include rapid deployment teams and community sites.

- **JSNA 2020**

The JSNA is in development and will provide an evidence base for recovery across health and social care and the wider determinants of health. Early priority sections include: COVID–19 (the disease itself), mental ill health, domestic abuse, economy, health sector, deprivation and life expectancy. More than a dozen additional sections will be added to JSNA 2020 after these priority sections.

- **Substance misuse**

The substance misuse workstream is meeting weekly with commissioned services – key focus on service continuity, referrals, service risks, gaps and mitigation actions.

- **Homelessness**

Workstream has completed a review of all rough sleepers accommodated during COVID-19 response to determine health needs to provide targeted support. In addition, a funding bid to support rough sleepers has been submitted.

- **Mental health/LD/ASD**

Workstream focusing on recovery in Wiltshire for service users and organisations. Working closely with education work stream to ensure CAMHS interventions for young people are understood and implemented effectively. For early intervention, the Wiltshire Health Trainer service has undergone a repurposing and will be able to offer more support around low level mental health and resilience across the county. Next steps include review of social prescribers to identify the types of individuals being referred with poor mental health and assess any gaps on service provision.

- **Wider determinants of health**

This will be a key focus, and strong links with the economy theme, particularly around mental health, employment and carbon neutral are being explored for joint working.

New focus areas for the theme will include PSPO, obesity strategy and the requirements for increasing the number of flu vaccinations across the population.

### **Organisation Recovery**

The theme leads for organisation recovery have continued to meet weekly to agree priority areas for action and are developing an organisation recovery strategy for approval that will set out the programme objectives and priorities for each programme theme. This strategy will be aligned with the strategic outcomes of the wider recovery and with the priorities in the Council's business plan.

Workshops with all heads of service will take place in early September to get feedback on the impact of the ways of working during the pandemic and to get ideas about how we can work in the future.

Activities/actions in support of recovery include:

- **External Recruitment Freeze**

An external recruitment freeze is now in place as part of the organisation wide spending controls, with approval from CLT required where there are exceptions to this freeze. The aim of the freeze is to hold vacancies and fill wherever possible from within the existing workforce and proposals to mitigate the impact of this are being developed. The proposals will include steps to improve workforce agility and introduce a more flexible deployment of our resources to meet demand.

- **COVID Policy**

Some of the temporary arrangements put in place at the start of the pandemic as part of a COVID-19 policy have now been stopped. This includes temporary arrangements for the payment of casual and variable hours staff in

services that were closed. Normal arrangements for these staff will recommence on 1 September 2020.

- **Furlough**

Some staff remained furloughed. In total 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 30 June we have claimed a total of £988k through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for furloughed staff. As we move further into recovery and services re-open, we are flexibly furloughing some staff, allowing staff to return to work for some of their hours. The CJRS closes on 31 October 2020.

- **Return to Workplace**

In line with Public Health advice our approach is still to encourage office-based staff to work at home wherever possible. This is enabling us to ensure social distancing within our workplaces, keeping the staff who are have been delivering essential services from our workplaces as safe as possible. From June, as lockdown started to ease, some services and staff have started to return 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. This is supported by an approvals process and is being 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 is reduced to around 800.

The number of staff returning to the work in the three hubs is increasing weekly as requests are approved and currently there is a daily average of 178 staff accessing County Hall, 48 in Monkton Park and 65 in Bourne Hill.

Based the reduced capacity in these hub buildings this represents 36% of the capacity in County Hall, 32% in Bourne Hill and 43% in Monkton Park.

- **Salary Finance**

The results of the employee wellbeing survey carried out in June indicated that some employees were concerned about the impact of the pandemic and the associated economic downturn on their families. As a result, we accelerated the launch of a new employee benefit to provide staff with financial education resources, savings products, advances on salaries and loans.

Salary Finance launched on 17 July and in the first few weeks after this launch around 20% of the workforce accessed the Salary Finance portal. Feedback from Salary Finance is that this is a very high level of engagement. In the first four weeks 31 staff have had loan applications accepted, indicating that staff who require financial support are making use of this benefit.



**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**8 September 2020**

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Subject: **Budget 2021/22 & Medium Term Financial Strategy**

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

Key Decision: **Non Key**

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### **Executive Summary**

This report outlines members the approach and overarching framework in setting the budget for the 2021/22 financial year and the updating of the medium term financial strategy given Wiltshire's emerging recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It will set out the high level timescales, activity and key dates that will be required to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year.

### **Proposal**

Cabinet is asked to note:

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

### **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 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.

**Terence Herbert – Chief Executive**

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**8 September 2020**

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Subject: **Budget 2021/22 & Medium Term Financial Strategy**

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

Key Decision: **Non Key**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the proposed approach and context to the setting of the 2021/22 budget and the updating of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
2. To inform Members of the key dates in setting the budget and the activity that will be undertaken in proposing a balanced budget.

### **Approach to Budget Setting 2021/22**

3. While the setting of any budget is a challenge, the setting of the budget for the financial year 2021/22 presents a unique set of circumstances and challenges, not least with the current level of funding uncertainty but also with the unknown quantity of the long lasting impact COVID-19 has had on the Councils income and spending.
4. Whilst the Council is used to planning financially with a degree of uncertainty, the impact of COVID-19 has and will continue to have a significant impact on the core funding resources, namely the collection fund (council tax and business rates) as well as income from sales, fees and charges e.g. car parking, leisure.
5. In addition, the financial pressure that normally presents itself during the setting of the budget e.g. demand for services, inflation is a further unknown quantity and potentially far reaching than the normal areas that would be expected e.g. social care, given the far reaching impacts and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. However, the Council should be thinking around its future service delivery and beginning to plan for that now, and that its future service delivery, and therefore resources required, are closely aligned to the recovery plans and outcomes being developed.

7. Therefore, the approach to the setting of the 2021/22 budget will be a hybrid of traditional budget setting together with beginning to align resources to meet the outcomes that are identified through the recovery.
8. This will see the normal assessment of service provision, its needs and requirements based on current and forecast data, across the whole Council, an assessment of funding and then crucially begin to shift the Council's resources to where they are most needed in order to deliver on the outcomes of Wiltshire's recovery.
9. It will therefore cover the full range of services, statutory and discretionary, that the Council provides as some will feed more into outcomes than others. A key consideration will be how and where we deliver services and how we integrate those services and what support is required during and post COVID-19.
10. Firstly, the Council will have to undertake a complete overhaul of the current MTFS base assumptions. Below is the table that was presented to Cabinet when the current budget and MTFS was approved, this estimated at the time the total budget pressures being faced, the required level of savings needed to achieve a balanced budget after taking into account the forecast increases in funding.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Net Base Budget</b>	344.023	353.436	364.011	374.902
Budget Pressures	29.219	24.959	24.705	26.644
Savings Required	(26.196)	(15.384)	(14.814)	(16.428)
Other Changes	6.390	1.000	1.000	1.000
<b>Closing Net Base Budget</b>	<b>353.436</b>	<b>364.011</b>	<b>374.902</b>	<b>386.118</b>
<b>Forecast Funding:</b>				
Council Tax (1.99% increase and 1% growth)	(269.288)	(278.055)	(287.084)	(296.382)
Social Care Levy	(23.893)	(23.893)	(23.893)	(23.893)
Business Rates Retention (3% growth)	(60.255)	(62.063)	(63.925)	(65.843)
<b>Total Forecast Funding</b>	<b>(353.436)</b>	<b>(364.011)</b>	<b>(374.902)</b>	<b>(386.118)</b>

11. All the individual assumptions that make up the detail of all the respective lines in the table will need to be reviewed and refined for their appropriateness in the current and anticipated circumstances.
12. Although the Council currently receives no revenue support grant funding from Central Government, the Council has received significant emergency funding support in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government's approach to financial support has shown that they will, where necessary, provide financial support to Local Government and have also recognised that Councils will be impacted beyond this current financial year, however they have also cited that the

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) will be the method in which these ongoing issues e.g. deficits on the collection fund, will be dealt with.

13. During September assumptions on corporate resources will be reviewed and updated, this will also take a view on the any assumptions around on-going financial support from Government that may come forward or continue because of COVID-19 e.g. hardship funding for local council tax support scheme.
14. It will also take in future planning around increases in bases going forward, most notably council tax increases in terms of price as well as housing growth, which will be a key part of the Cabinets consideration when putting forward proposals.
15. It is anticipated that a further report setting out the revised assumptions on funding, together with revised assumptions on pressures and other changes, and thereby estimating any gap that will be required to be met, will be presented to Cabinet in November.
16. The Capital Programme is planned to be reviewed in November 2020, following the CSR announcement and the levels of funding anticipated from Government on Capital investment. The Council can then begin to align its capital investment required to deliver on recovery as well as understand the remit and scope of any planned use of capital receipts under the current flexibility regulations.

### **Key Dates and Timescales**

17. Although this report marks the start of the process, there are some key dates, activities and decisions that will need to be made over the course of the next five months, ultimately setting a balanced budget in February 2021.
18. The key date above all else is the Council Meeting on 23 February 2021, and prior to that the Cabinet meeting on 2 February 2021 which will set out the Cabinet's final budget proposals.
19. However crucial to all of this will be the announcement of the CSR by HM Treasury and then the subsequent detail on the Local Government settlement by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
20. HM Treasury will receive representations on the CSR until 24 September and the CSR will be announced in the Autumn, however we are not expecting details on Local Government funding to be announced until early December.
21. The CSR will cover Government departmental spending for the years 2021/22 to 2023/24 with capital budgets going up to 2024/25. It is intended that the MTFs will cover a period of 4 years up to 2024/25.
22. Over the course of Autumn, following the revision being made to base assumptions, there will also be high level activity around mapping existing budgets to outcomes to help prioritise resources to achieve recovery outcomes.

23. At the same time Cabinet will also be firming up their proposals around priorities that are aligned with the emerging recovery plans and outcomes.

24. Any consultations and scrutiny will take place as statutorily required during the annual budget setting process.

25. A high level summary of the 2021/22 timetable is provided below.

**Budget 2021/22 Proposed Timetable:**

<b>Activity / Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Base review of assumptions covering: Council Tax / Business Rates Government Funding Pressures Savings	September 2020
Submit representations to HM Treasury on CSR	24 September 2020
High level mapping resources to recovery outcomes	October 2020
HM Treasury announce outcome of CSR for Government Departments	Autumn 2020 (assumed October 2020)
Set council tax base and notify Town & Parish Councils	31 October 2020
Cabinet – Outcome of base assumption review	3 November 2020
Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee	18 November 2020
Financial Planning Task Group	26 November 2020
Development of a Reserve Strategy	November 2020
Capital Programme reviewed and reset	November 2020
MHCLG announce settlement for Local Government	Early December 2020
Cabinet – Draft Budget Proposals	5 January 2021
Financial Planning Task Group	w/c 18 January 2021
Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee	26 January 2021
Statutory consultation with Businesses	January 2021
Cabinet – Final Budget Proposals	2 February 2021
Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (to consider opposition proposals)	9 February 2021
Full Council Budget & Council Tax setting	23 February 2021

**General Fund Reserves**

26. The level of General Fund and earmarked reserves held by the Council has highlighted the fragility the Council faces in operating and being able to deal with

financial shocks. Whilst COVID-19 was a financial shock beyond any expectation, the Council was faced with making potentially short term decisions to right size the finances sooner than otherwise would have been the case with larger reserves.

27. However, the right balance must be struck, 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.

28. Therefore, for the 2021/22 budget it is proposed to develop a reserve strategy. For the general fund reserve its aim will be to set out a risk assessed level of reserve to be held by the Council, as advised by the Councils Section 151 Officer, and then a strategy of how to achieve that over the life of the MTFs. For earmarked reserves it will set out why they are held and what their intention is for use in future, providing annual transparency for members and taxpayers.

29. Part of the Councils organisational recovery is to ensure the Council, over the life of the MTFs, is financially sustainable and the development of a strategy will help ensure the Council has the adequate level of reserve to deal with the inherent risks it faces.

### **Implications**

30. This report informs Members' future decision making.

### **Overview & Scrutiny Engagement**

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

### **Safeguarding Implications**

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

### **Public Health Implications**

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

### **Procurement Implications**

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

### **Equalities and diversity impact of the proposals**

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

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

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

## **Risks Assessment**

37. The risks around the financial implications of COVID-19 on the Council have been well documented and reported on a regularly basis and this will continue for the remainder of the current financial year.
38. This marks the start of the setting of the next financial year budget, part of that process will set out the risks facing the Council, quantify them financially and then also advise on the level of reserves that should be held to deal with those risks.
39. Risks associated with service delivery will be raised as and when proposals are brought forward.

## **Legal Implications**

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

## **Proposals**

41. Cabinet is asked to note:
- a) The intended approach and overarching framework for setting the 2021/22 budget, with further reports coming back to Cabinet as required.
  - b) The key dates and timescales that are required to set a balanced budget.

## **Reasons for Proposals**

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

## **Background Papers and Consultation**

None

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### **Appendices:**

None

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