

AGENDA

Meeting: **Cabinet**

Place: **The Kennet Room, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN**

Date: **Tuesday 2 July 2019**

Time: **9.30 am**

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 Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE	Leader of Council
Cllr John Thomson	Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries (and interim - Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection)
Cllr Pauline Church	Cabinet Member for Economic Development and South Wiltshire Recovery
Cllr Richard Clewer	Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism
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
Cllr Philip Whitehead	Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets

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Public Participation


Please see the agenda list on following pages for details of deadlines for submission of questions and statements for this meeting.

The full constitution can be found at [this link](#). Cabinet Procedure rules are found at Part 7.

For assistance on these and other matters please contact the officer named above for details

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 5 - 14*)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 June 2019, 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**

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 26 June 2019. Anyone wishing to ask a question or make a statement should contact the officer named above.

6 **Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Package - Pewsey** (*Pages 15 - 34*)

 Report by Executive Director, Alistair Cunningham

7 **Avon Mutual - The Development of a Regional Mutual Bank** (*Pages 35 - 42*)

 Report by the Executive Director Alistair Cunningham.

8 **Annual Governance Statement** (*Pages 43 - 60*)

Report by the Executive Directors

9 **Wiltshire Council Adoption Service: 2018-2019 End of Year Cabinet Report**
(Pages 61 - 84)

Report by the Executive Director Terence Herbert.

10 **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

NONE

Our vision is to create stronger and more resilient communities. Our priorities are: To protect those who are most vulnerable; to boost the local economy - creating and safeguarding jobs; and to support and empower communities to do more themselves.

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2019 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE (Chairman), Cllr John Thomson (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr Bridget Wayman and Cllr Philip Whitehead

Also Present:

Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Edward Kirk, Cllr Horace Prickett, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Cllr Christopher Williams, Cllr Graham Wright and Cllr Robert Yuill

69 Apologies

There were no apologies.

70 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2019 were presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2019.

71 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

72 Leader's announcements

The Leader made the following announcements:

1. The Leader was pleased to report that, as part of the 2019 Queen's birthday Honours List, Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philipe, Councillor for Warminster Without and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Highways, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, European Structural Investment Fund,

Canals and Military-Civilian Integration, has been awarded an MBE for services to Local Government and the Community. Also, in recognition of their work during and after the 2018 incidents in Salisbury and Amesbury, Executive Director Alistair Cunningham has been awarded an OBE, Director Robin Townsend and Network Operations Manager Simon Rowe have received MBEs for services to the community in South Wiltshire.

2. The Leader reported that this was the last Cabinet meeting before the Armed Forces Day starting on 29 June 2019 with the national event being held in Salisbury. The Cabinet noted that Armed Forces Day is an opportunity to show support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community from current serving troops to service families, veterans and cadets. It was anticipated that the weather would be good and the Leader encouraged everyone to show their support for the Armed Forces by attending the event, which would provide a much-valued morale boost for troops and their families.

73 **Public participation and Questions from Councillors**

There was no public participation.

74 **Disposal Programme**

Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Strategic Property presented the report about the current position in respect of capital receipts and confirmed the freehold interest in the assets to be sold to either generate capital receipts in support of the Council's capital programme or reuse to generate income for the Council.

Cllr Sturgis reminded the Cabinet that they approved a revised approach to the disposal of surplus assets at their meeting on 26 March 2019. He confirmed that once an asset was declared surplus it would then be considered by the Asset Gateway Group to determine the best financial return for the Council, during which time other uses of the site would be considered.

The Cabinet heard from Cllr Thorn, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, who confirmed that the Task Group had considered the report at their meeting on 6 June 2019 and were satisfied with the process undertaken.

Cllr Thomson, Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries, and interim – Adult Social care, Public Health and Public Protection, thanked Cllr Sturgis for including Lower Stanbridge Farm, Sherston, as a site to be declared surplus to allow for the development of community facilities in the area.

Resolved:

- 1. That the position in respect of disposals for financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 be noted.**
- 2. To confirm that the freehold interest of the 6 assets detailed in Appendix 3 can be sold by the Council.**
- 3. That the Director for Housing and Commercial Development be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property, and Cabinet member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and operational Assets to dispose of the freehold interest in the assets or in his absence the Executive Director for Growth, Investment and Place, following the process for asset disposal via the asset gateway group set out in appendix 1 of the report.**

Reason for Decision:

To note the current position in respect of capital receipts and confirm the freehold interest in the assets can be sold to either generate capital receipts in support of the Council's capital programme or reuse to generate income for the Council.

75 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Outturn 2018/2019

Cllr Philip Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets presented the report which provided:

- information about the (unaudited) General Revenue Fund and Housing Revenue Account outturn positions for financial year 2018/19, as well as the position for the Collection Fund and Reserves
- information about the year end 2018/19 capital programme, including budget virement; and
- an oversight of the unaudited Statement of Accounts, including the narrative report.

Cllr Whitehead was pleased to report that there was an underspend on the General Revenue Fund of £0.357m, representing an improvement of £1.515m on the budget monitoring position reported for Period 9 and the breakeven forecast reported to Council in February 2019. He congratulated Finance and other Services for their contributions towards the underspend, especially as there was significant demands on budgets. In particular, Cllr Whitehead highlighted the work undertaken by Adult Social Care and Children & Education Services.

In response to questions from Cllr Church about variances within Corporate expenditure and the General Government grants, Cllr Whitehead explained that the government grants received were in respect of compensation for the

requirement to award specific business rate reliefs. In previous years the grants were used at the year end, however the amount for the current year is being used to support overall revenue budget forecasts, and has also been built into the 2019/20 budget.

Cllr Thorn, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group stated that he was encouraged that the Council had ended the year with an underspend and welcomed the additional top up to the General Fund Reserves. He also paid tribute to Cllr Wickham, former Cabinet member, for his involvement in achieving the underspend and in particular the work undertaken within Adult Social Care.

Cllr Sturgis raised an issue relating to planning and how budgets are affected by influences outside of the control of the Council. In particular, he referred to a reduction in Planning fees received, the number of planning applications considered at Committee with officer recommendations being overturned by Members, and subsequently approved at appeal and the impact of this on budgets and officer time. In response to a comment from Cllr Hill, Cllr Sturgis urged members to consider the grounds for calling in applications and the reasons for overturning an officer's recommendations. The Leader spoke about the importance of Members reporting facts about planning applications to Parish Councils.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the outturn for the General Revenue Fund, subject to external audit, of a General Fund underspend of £0.357 million and an additional financial stability top up to reserves of £1.800 million;**
- 2. To note a Housing Revenue Account underspend of £2.119 million and a planned contribution to finance the capital programme of £6.503 million, giving an overall draw from HRA revenue reserve of £4.384 million.**
- 3. To note the transfers to the General Revenue Fund and Earmarked reserves, as set out in Sections 67-72 of the report, and return to Housing Revenue Account reserves.**
- 4. To note the position of the 2018/19 capital programme as at Outturn (31 March 2019).**
- 5. To note the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2018/19.**
- 6. To approve the budget virements in the revenue and capital programme, as detailed in appendices B & F of the report.**

Reason for Decision:

- 1. To inform effective decision making and ensure a sound financial control environment.*

2. *To inform Cabinet of the position of the 2018/19 outturn capital programme, including highlighting any budget changes.*

76 **Treasury Management Outturn 2018/19**

Cllr Philip Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets presented the report which provided the Annual Outturn Report reviewing the Treasury Management activities from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Cllr Whitehead explained that the Council has continued to finance capital expenditure through maximising the use of capital receipts, capital grants and internal borrowing. In order to take advantage of borrowing rates that are considered to be good value and to reduce the refinancing risk associated with existing external borrowing the Council has taken out £30m of external borrowing in order to improve the ability to manage the level at which it is internally borrowed. Overall, the Council is under borrowed by £136.104m, avoiding external interest costs of £3.226m.

Cllr Thorn, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group welcomed the report and referred to the overachievement against budget of £0.441m forecast for investment income for the year to date.

Resolved: To note that the contents of the report are in line with the Treasury Management Strategy 2018/2019.

Reason for Decision:

To give members an opportunity to consider the performance of the Council against the parameters set out in the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/2019.

77 **Partnership Working Framework**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism presented the report which recommended a partnership working framework for use by Councillors and officers when considering Wiltshire Council's engagement in partnerships.

Cllr Clewer explained that the intention was for the proposed framework to replace the existing Partnership Protocol with Council being asked to approve its removal from the Constitution.

The Cabinet heard from Cllr Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, who confirmed that he and Cllr Hill had received a briefing on the Framework and supported the proposal.

Cllr Williams also supported the proposal and was pleased that the Framework recognised the value of the Wiltshire Compact and is consistent with the fulfilment of its obligations.

Resolved:

- 1. Recommends that full council approve the removal of the Partnership Protocol in the Council's Constitution**
- 2. Agrees, upon removal of the Partnership Protocol, the adoption of a new Partnership Working Framework as set out in the appendix to the report.**
- 3. Agrees that any subsequent minor amendments to the Partnership Working Framework are delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member.**

Reason for Decision:

To strengthen and improve the Council's arrangements for governing partnership working to enable the Council to deliver the priorities in its Business Plan, including in particular 'working with our partners as an innovative and effective council'

78 **Local Code of Corporate Governance**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism presented the report which proposed a new local code of conduct.

Resolved:

- 1. That Full Council be recommended to approve the revised local code of corporate governance.**
- 2. That Cabinet approve the proposed process for developing the Annual Governance Statement for 2019.**

Reason for Decision:

Councils are required to develop and maintain an up-to-date local code of governance. Wiltshire's existing code is based on CIPFA guidance which has been updated. A new draft is attached based on the revised principles. This will have to be adopted by full council to replace the current constitution's protocol 10.

It is proposed that progress on delivery against the code is reviewed by officers on a quarterly basis and that this informs the future development of the Annual Governance Statement for consideration by Audit Committee and Cabinet in due course.

79 **Award of the New Highways Term Consultancy Contract**

Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste presented the report which proposed the award of the new Wiltshire Council Highways Term Consultancy Contract.

Cllr Wayman explained that the successful tenderer would provide the Council's Consultancy Services from 1 December 2019 for 5 years, with an option to extend the contract for a further 2 years subject to performance. Cllr Wayman commented on the procurement exercise, which followed the two stage process. The tenders were considered in terms of price and quality as described in the tender documentation and in accordance with the procurement procedures.

The Cabinet noted that the detailed scoring and financial information was contained in the confidential report to be considered in Part II of the meeting.

Resolved:

That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director, Highways and Environment to award the New Wiltshire Highways Term Consultancy Contract, instructing legal to execute all necessary documentation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste and the Director of Finance and Procurement.

Reason for Decision:

- 1. There is a need for specialist advice and support in connection with roads, bridges and related services. Awarding the Highways Term Consultancy Contract is considered to be the most economical way to provide this.*
- 2. The tender documents were assessed in terms of Price and Quality as set out in the report to Cabinet on 25 September 2018. The quality of the service is important because the contract is substantially involved with design work. Poor quality design can have a disproportionate effect on construction costs, especially in terms of capital road and bridge maintenance work which will form a large proportion of the workload.*
- 3. The most advantageous tender for the Council, taking into account quality and price, should be accepted in accordance with the procurement procedures.*

80 **Acquisition of Operational Asset**

Cllr Philip Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets presented the report seeking approval to vire £1.25m from the £10m commercial investment capital allocation and to agree to the acquisition of a property to meet operational service needs.

The Cabinet Heard from Cllr Thorn, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, who confirmed that the Task group had considered the report and supported its contents and proposals.

Resolved:

- 1. To agree to vire up to £1.250 million from the £10 million commercial investment capital allocation in 2019/20 to fund a purchase of an industrial unit to meet operational service requirements.**
- 2. To delegate the decision to agree the purchase price to the Director for Housing and Commercial Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets, and the Director for Finance and Procurement.**

Reason for Decision:

To ensure the Council can provide accommodation that meets operational service needs and to enable rationalisation of the Council's estate. To consider consolidation of other services into a new facility to accelerate the release of potential development sites and or site disposal.

81 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

82 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved:

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 Minute Numbers 83 and 84 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 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.

83 **Award of New Highways Term Consultancy Contract**

Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste presented the report which proposed the award of the new Wiltshire Council Highways Term Consultancy Contract.

Resolved:

That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director, Highways and Environment to award the New Wiltshire Highways Term Consultancy Contract, as detailed in the report, instructing legal to execute all necessary documentation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste and the Director of Finance and Procurement.

Reason for Decision:

- 1. There is a need for specialist advice and support in connection with roads, bridges and related services. Awarding the Highways Term Consultancy Contract is considered to be the most economical way to provide this.*
- 2. The tender documents were assessed in terms of Price and Quality as set out in the report to Cabinet on 25 September 2018. The quality of the service is important because the contract is substantially involved with design work. Poor quality design can have a disproportionate effect on construction costs, especially in terms of capital road and bridge maintenance work which will form a large proportion of the workload.*
- 3. The most advantageous tender for the Council, taking into account quality and price, should be accepted in accordance with the procurement procedures.*

84 **Acquisition of Operational Asset**

Cllr Philip Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets presented the report seeking approval to vire £1.25m from the £10m commercial investment capital allocation and to agree to the acquisition of a property to meet operational service needs.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the independent advice to inform a purchasing strategy.**
- 2. To Note the business case for the proposed purchase based on the recommended purchasing strategy.**

Reason for Decision:

To ensure the Council can provide accommodation that meets operational service needs and to enable rationalisation of the Council's estate. To consider consolidation of other services into a new facility to accelerate the release of potential development sites and or site disposal.

(Duration of meeting: 9.30am - 10.30 am)

These decisions were published, earlier, on the 13 June 2019 and will come into force on 21 June 2019

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 lines (01225) 713114/713115

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

July 2019

Subject: Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Package - Pewsey

Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Clewer – Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

Following the approval of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy in November 2017 Members and officers of Pewsey Parish Council and Wiltshire Council have worked to finalise the detailed package of services and associated assets to transfer from Wiltshire Council to Pewsey Parish Council.

The final package of services and assets to transfer to Pewsey Parish Council consists of the following:

Services:

- All grounds maintenance services within the Pewsey Parish Boundary
- All Streetscene services within the Pewsey Parish Boundary
- Responsibility for amenity land hard areas and assets.
- Responsibility for streetscene assets on the highway
- All tree maintenance for those trees not on the Public Highway
- The maintenance of play areas

The responsibility to carry out services and maintenance on all land assets will be discharged by way of an Agency Agreement.

Assets to be freehold transferred:

- North Street Car Park (East) – Including the Public Conveniences
- North Street Car Park (West)
- Rear of Hallgate Street Car Park and Land
- Land at corner of Prospect Farm
- Land Rear of Smiths Close
- Land at Entrance to Fordbrook Business Centre
- Open spaces off Broomcroft Road (x4)
- Open space off Walnut Close
- Land near Little Island
- Bailey Close Open Space

- Wilcot Road amenity land
- Coopers Court Open Space
- Land on the north-west side of Marlborough Road
- Swan Meadow Amenity Land
- Roads and Open Space at Broomcroft Road (Part)

Section 106

All S106 monies held or due to Wiltshire Council relating to assets within the Pewsey Parish boundary will be transferred.

These services and assets meet the criteria set out in the policy and are to be included in this package.

Proposal(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Consider and approve the final list of services and assets listed that will be transferred to Pewsey Parish Council. The inclusion of any open space land is subject to consideration of any objections received following the advertising of the disposal in accordance with statutory obligations.
- 2) Note the net revenue impact to the Council and acknowledge that the Service Devolution programme benefits of cost savings and avoidance will be realised on a cumulative basis as the programme progresses and as more Towns/Parishes complete the process.
- 3) Delegate the implementation of the transfer of assets and the service delegation to Alan Richell, the Growth & Investment Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Cllr Richard Clewer.

Reason for Proposal(s)

To complete the transfer of the package of assets and services to Pewsey Parish Council.

Alan Richell
Growth and Investment Director

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

March 2019

Subject: Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Package - Pewsey

Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Clewer – Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism

Key Decision: Key

Purpose of Report

To recommend a final package of services and assets to transfer to Pewsey Parish Council and to provide detailed information in relation to the financial impact this will have on Wiltshire Council.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

The council has a Business Plan priority to build strong communities. An action under that priority is to transfer packages of assets and services, where applicable, to parish and town councils.

Background

Following several decisions made by Wiltshire Council's cabinet (please see appendix 1 for copies of each cabinet report) since 2015 it has been agreed that Wiltshire Council would work with each Town Council to produce a package of services and their associated assets to be devolved to them.

Following the completion of the Salisbury City package transfer in April 2017 the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy was agreed by Cabinet in November 2017 (appendix 2); it sets out clear guidelines for the packages and provides a more streamlined process including the use of standardised service delegation agreements, lease agreements and freehold asset transfer documentation.

In a change to the original premise and lessons learned from the package transfers to Devizes and Chippenham town councils, a forensic analysis of assets owned by Wiltshire Council has been completed for Pewsey Parish where all assets identified are being transferred. This approach has and will be adopted for all further package transfers. In cases where a freehold transfer is not possible the asset would become the responsibility of the Town Council via a service delegation agreement. The new policy lays out criteria for those assets which would not be included as a freehold transfer in the first instance, e.g: anything considered strategic for the Council, anything with a revenue income (except for Markets) and anything which the Council holds a statutory responsibility to deliver.

From the service perspective, the policy states that the entirety of the service must be devolved to enable the best outcome for the transfer as piecemeal delegations are difficult to manage and risk disparate levels of delivery across the area.

Main Considerations for the Council

The proposal is for the transfer of the following:

- Services
 - All grounds maintenance services with the Pewsey Parish Boundary
 - All Streetscene services within the Pewsey Parish Boundary
 - Responsibility for amenity land hard areas and assets.
 - Responsibility for streetscene assets on the highway
 - All tree maintenance for those trees not on the Public Highway – e.g. trees located on open space land around play areas.
 - The maintenance of play areas

The responsibility to carry out services and maintenance on all land assets will be discharged by way of an Agency Agreement.

The transfer of the Grounds Maintenance and Street Scene services is on the basis of a financial contribution to the existing IdVerde contract until June 2020 or the contract expires. All future amenity and cleaning services within the parish boundary will be the responsibility of Pewsey Parish Council to manage, including any future land adopted by Wiltshire Council.

- Assets to be freehold transferred:
 - North Street Car Park (East) – Including the Public Conveniences
 - North Street Car Park (West)
 - Rear of Hallgate Street Car Park and Land
 - Land at corner of Prospect Farm
 - Land Rear of Smiths Close
 - Land at Entrance to Fordbrook Business Centre
 - Open spaces off Broomcroft Road (x4)
 - Open space off Walnut Close
 - Land near Little Island
 - Bailey Close Open Space
 - Wilcot Road amenity land
 - Coopers Court Open Space
 - Land on the north-west side of Marlborough Road
 - Swan Meadow Amenity Land
 - Roads and Open Space at Broomcroft Road (Part)

The above list has been compiled on the assumption that there are no complex legal constraints on the assets which would prevent a freehold transfer being undertaken. In such circumstances the Parish Council will be given the most appropriate form of responsibility.

i.e. lease or licence.

Transfer of Funding

There will be no transfer of Wiltshire Council funding as part of this package.

There will however be a financial contribution of £50,000 per annum (pro rata from implementation in October 2019) from Pewsey Parish Council to Wiltshire Council in lieu of a novated contract with IdVerde. This arrangement will continue until June 2020, or the current contract expires.

Resources

Significant resource from Legal, Finance, Programme Office and Strategic Asset and Facilities Management (SA&FM) will be required to complete the transfer to Pewsey Parish Council, due to necessary due diligence to ensure transfer of service and assets can proceed.

Overview & Scrutiny Engagement

In November 2017 Overview and Scrutiny Management Select Committee (OSMC) undertook a scrutiny review of the revised Asset and Service Devolution and Community Asset Transfer Policy, prior to its adoption by Cabinet.

Safeguarding Implications

None

Public Health Implications

This proposal will have a number of positive public health implications as it allows the Parish Council to manage and enhance the local community services at a local level. A good example would be the redevelopment of the currently closed play areas in the Parish

Procurement Implications

This proposal affects current contracts and will result in a reduced requirement in future contracts. The procurement team will be involved further where appropriate.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal (detailing conclusions identified from Equality Analysis, sections 4 and 5)

The transfer of assets raises no issues in respect of equalities impact.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

None

Risk Assessment

Significant resources will be required to complete the work for the transfer.

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

- Reduction in budgets due to efficiencies may result in a reduction of services being offered by the Council and potential closures of amenity spaces.

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

- A removal of the grounds maintenance for the Pewsey area may result in a pro-rata increased costs of the overall services, as overheads will not be reduced and spread across the remaining service
- Customers may be uncertain about responsibilities in some areas, but experience from Salisbury, Devizes and Chippenham shows this can be overcome and a positive working relationship will be formed with Pewsey Parish Council
- Freehold titles may contain restrictions that impact on asset transfer, but these can be overcome by detailed due diligence and dialogue between the parties
- Contribution for ground maintenance is not sufficient to cover the actual costs of the service being delivered for the period that the contribution is in effect

Financial Implications

Ongoing Revenue

Financial analysis has been conducted to examine the impact for the council. The financial model is based on the following assumptions:

The model assumes the transfer will take effect from 1st October 2019.

Pewsey Parish Council will pay a revenue contribution of £47,000 per annum from 1st October 2019 (pro-rata for part years) until the 31st May 2020 or the end of the current IdVerde contract.

HR, Legal, Finance, SA&FM, Highways staff time costs for processing the transfer are excluded from the table below.

The table below shows a full year effect of the transfer for 2020/21

	Income	Expenditure	Net
Grounds Maintenance and Street Scene	(£11,500)	£47,000	£35,500
Total	(£11,500)	£47,000	£35,500

There would be an annual Net Revenue budget saving of **£35,500** for 2020/2021 and a part year Net Revenue saving based on October 1st 2019 transfer date of **£17,750** for 2019/2020.

The current Streetscene contract expires in June 2020. There is a proposal to extend the contract to 2022 past the Service Delegation and Asset Transfer programme timetable. This will mitigate the risks of considerable rate increases for the whole contract

from tendering a service in 2020 without detailed areas and locations over the contract period.

A tender in 2020 would result in a baseline service for rural maintenance, with no guarantee for urban work. Contractors would price accordingly increasing urban rates due to the risk of the loss of this work.

Tendering in 2022 would allow quantities to be known, mitigating the risks of urban rates increases. However, the loss of most of the large urban areas works, close to operational depots (such as: Devizes, Chippenham and Salisbury), will naturally increase the average rate per square meter of any new tender. This will be a challenge to the budget or provision at that time. Service Delegation savings will far exceed the cost increases of the loss of economies of scale, but currently all savings will be surrendered at the time of transfer removing funding from the future service budget.

Capital

The properties listed have a current asset value of approximately £315,000. This figure reflects the uses, restrictions and agreements that affect the assets. These values do not represent the sums that may be realised, were the properties to be offered to the market, but indicate the reduction of the Council's asset base that will result from the proposed transfers, if approved.

Section 106 monies

Around £119,000 of Off Site Contribution capital section 106 monies would transfer to Pewsey Parish Council.

As of June 2019 there is approximately £138,000 of commuted sum/maintenance money this sum will be pro rata'd to allow Wiltshire Council to maintain the associated land until transfer. Based on the implementation date of October 1st 2019 the maintenance sum for transfer would be £132,255.28 (which is the previous total, minus half of this year's increment).

Please note these figures are correct as of June 2019, these amounts may change by the time of transfer based on funds being accessed.

Legal Implications

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the LGA 1972") imposes a general restriction on disposals by local authorities which means that Wiltshire Council cannot dispose of its land for a consideration less than the best that can be reasonably obtained in the market, except with the express consent of the Secretary of State. Disposals by way of short term tenancies are not caught by this restriction.

The power of the Secretary of State to give a general consent for the purpose of land disposals by local authorities is set out in section 128 (1) of the LGA 1972. Specific consent is not required for the disposal of any interest in land at less than best consideration where the authority considers that the disposal will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area. However, disposal at less than best consideration is always subject to the condition that the undervalue does not

exceed £2 million. Therefore, all proposed transactions where the aggregate of “undervalue” exceeds the £2 million threshold will require the specific consent of the Secretary of State.

Whilst the majority of the sites will have a de-minimus value, there are some sites that may attract a value. Social value has not been determined as part of the package, but the overall view is that these services should be delivered at a local level and for enhancement, therefore generating social value.

The model community asset transfer and leasehold documentation is drafted on the basis that the use of the property will continue for the benefit of the local community.

- **Open Space Land**

A local authority has a statutory duty to advertise its intention to dispose of open space land in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks and to consider objections. This will be done before any final decision is taken on the disposal so that proper consideration is given to the responses that are received. This process will need to be factored into the transfer programme for Pewsey Parish Council.

- **State Aid**

European State aid law is intended to avoid any state aided subsidies which could distort competition and affect trade between members states. State aid law can potentially apply to town and parish councils and third sector organisations when they receive community assets and/or financial contributions from Wiltshire Council towards the cost of delivering delegated services. State aid can only be found in the situation where the organisation receiving the aid acts on a market. Local Authorities (as well as charities) can in some of their functions be assessed as acting on a market. This assessment is unlikely to be made where the recipient is engaged in carrying out not for profit activities to meet local community need. However, the use of each individual asset or financial contribution must be considered, and Legal Services must be engaged to advise Wiltshire Council on the State aid implications for the transfer package.

If State aid has been granted without European Commission approval (either through a separate notification or by following the terms of the relevant exemption) this would be illegal State aid. The European Commission has the ability to make such orders to correct the perceived market distortion caused by the illegal aid. This could take the form of an order to the recipient to return to Wiltshire Council any assets and/or repay the value of any financial aid, plus interest from the date of the aid to the date of repayment.

Even where there is no illegal State aid in favour of the recipient, care needs to be taken to avoid accidental leakage of aid in the future when the recipient itself deals with the asset or funding. For instance, care needs to be taken by the recipient to avoid giving a third party a competitive advantage by letting a community asset at below market rate, and an EU compliant procurement process must be followed by the recipient when engaging any third

party to carry out delegated services. There are clauses in the model legal documentation between Wiltshire Council and the recipient to deal with this.

- **Transfer of employees**

There are two different types of transfer of employees under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) – Service Provision Change or a Transfer of Whole or Part of an Undertaking.

It will be necessary to consider the application or otherwise of TUPE having regard to the circumstances of the case and whether for example redundancy costs may be payable in the event that TUPE doesn't apply. These costs will need to be identified and form part of the financial analysis of the proposed service devolution.

TUPE may occur at the end of the Idverde contract, for any work delegated. As the land transfers will occur pre the expiry of the Idverde contract. Pewsey Parish Council may receive staff subject to TUPE (staff will follow the work) and the implications for redundancies (or not) may be with Pewsey Parish Council following transfer.

Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and supporting legislation (the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012) allows the Council to decide to delegate certain functions relating to services to town and parish councils, including Pewsey Parish Council.

There are two levels of service delegation proposed under this report depending on the function involved:

Delegation of service delivery. This type of delegation applies for the Grounds Maintenance and Streetscene service and may be discharged by way of an Agency Arrangement. The function is a statutory function which remains the responsibility of Wiltshire Council, however the delivery of the service may be transferred to Pewsey Parish Council who will become responsible for the delivery contracted out services. This arrangement must be by way of a written agreement which clearly defines the services being transferred and any conditions to which the transfer is subject.

Delegation of service responsibility. The service (and any land, buildings or assets that are required to run the service locally) will transfer to Pewsey Parish Council. This type of delegation can only apply where Wiltshire Council has a high degree of discretion about the provision of the service. Wiltshire Council will cease to be responsible and accountable for the delivery of these services.

It is confirmed that Wiltshire Council has the power to delegate the proposed services by s.101 of the Local Government Act 1972. There is the power for Pewsey Parish Council to deliver the service however it is for Pewsey Parish Council to determine its own ability to deliver the service and this was considered at a formal meeting of the Town Council before deciding to accept the service delegation

Officers will instruct Legal Services to draft the required Agency Agreement, so that terms relating to all functions to be delegated can be negotiated with Pewsey Parish Council.

In respect of the Section 106 monies a process will need to be defined to ensure that there is a clear understanding of what it can be used for and the date by which it must be spent with the parties entering into legal documentation to set out the arrangements.

Proposal 'c' below in this report; " Delegate the implementation of the transfer of assets and the service delegation to Alan Richell, the Growth & Investment Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Cllr Richard Clewer" Paragraph 2.2 of the Constitution sets out the issues that must be properly considered and completed when exercising delegated powers, including:

- The views of the relevant Cabinet Member, Committee Chairman and Area Boards following the application of the consultation criteria set out in the Constitution;
- The implication of any Council policy initiative, strategy or procedure. Officers need to be aware of any potential impact of a delegated decision on other services. In such cases, consultation with officers, relevant Cabinet Members(s) or Committee Chairman from any affected portfolio and local members, where the issue relates to a specific area, should take place;
- The range of available options;
- The staffing, financial and legal implications;
- The assessment of any associated risks in accordance with the Council's risk management strategy

The above list is not exhaustive. Please refer to Part 3 Section D Scheme of Delegation to Officers of the Constitution for a complete list of the issues that must be taken into consideration.

Options Considered

None

Conclusions

The council can move towards achieving its Business Plan objective to transfer packages of assets and services to parish and town councils with this transfer.

Proposal

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a. Consider and approve the final list of assets and services listed that will be transferred to Pewsey Parish Council
- b. Note the net revenue impact to the Council and acknowledge that the Service Devolution programme benefits of cost savings and avoidance will be realised on a cumulative basis as the programme progresses and as more Towns/Parishes complete the process.
- c. Delegate the implementation of the transfer of assets and the service delegation to Alan Richell, the Growth & Investment Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Cllr Richard Clewer.

Alan Richell
Growth and Investment Director

Report Author: Lauren Ashdown Programme
Office

Lauren.Ashdown@wiltshire.gov.uk

11 June 2019

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Cabinet Papers

Appendix 2 – Service Devolution Policy

Appendix 3 – Grounds maintenance & Streetscene specifications

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Appendix 1

Cabinet papers relating to CAT Programme and Salisbury City Council Transfer:

- July 2015 – [Cabinet Report](#)
- April 2016 – [Cabinet Report](#)

Appendix 2

- [Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy](#)
- November 2017 - [Cabinet Report](#)

Appendix 3 - Grounds maintenance & Streetscene specifications

Soft Maintenance Services

Task	Comment	Conditions
Litter Picking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter examples include: • Dead animals (road kill) • Dog/ animal faeces • Cigarette waste & cigarette packets • Beverage and drinks containers • Food containers or utensils • Publications, magazines and newspapers • Shopping and other bags • Illegal deposits of commercial and household waste which shall be cleared as fly tipping, see further below • Removal of pigeon droppings from pathways and footways • Removal of fallen branches, wood, metal and plastic objects • Removal of leaf and blossom falls to an approved programme • Other similar waste types up to 1 cubic meter 	Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Emptying of Litter Bins		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Removal of Dead Animals on the Highway		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Removal of Fly Tipping (but no enforcement related tasks)		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Removal of Fly Posting (but no enforcement related tasks)		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Graffiti Removal (but no enforcement related tasks)		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Shopping Trolley Removal (but no enforcement related tasks)		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway

Task	Comment	Conditions
Leaf Clearance		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Balancing ponds, amenity footpaths, Streetscene assets and water courses	Monitor the condition and highlight any health and safety concerns on amenity footpaths, ponds, ditches and any amenity asset and effect their reasonable repair	Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Park and Highway Furniture	Monitor the condition of the furniture and highlight any health and safety concerns and effect their reasonable repair/replacement (subject on each occasion to WC's permission to repair/replace highway furniture)	Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway. WC's prior written permission must be given in respect of repairing and replacing Highway furniture.
Grounds Maintenance	Shrub Bed Maintenance, Maintenance of Shelterbelt/Plantation Areas/ Hedge Maintenance/ Tree/ Herbaceous Borders and any soft area maintenance.	Must be carried out on Amenity Land and the Highway. WC's consent to maintain the verges of the Highway is hereby given.
Grass Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered Housing Schemes • High amenity areas • General grass areas • Low Amenity areas • Highway verge areas • Rough grass areas • Flail grass areas • Wild flower/conservation areas 	Must be carried out on the Amenity Land and the verges of the Highway. WC's consent to maintain the verges of the Highway is hereby given.
Sports Pitch Maintenance (Football and Rugby)		Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Cricket Pitch Maintenance		Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Countryside	Litter clearance and emptying of litter bins	Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Woodlands and Countryside Site	Scavenging and cleaning and/or maintenance	Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Play Areas, Multiple Use Games Areas (MUGA) and Skate Park Inspection and Maintenance		Must be carried out on Amenity Land

Task	Comment	Conditions
Allotments	General up keep and maintenance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary fencing • Gates and Hedges • Tracks • Car parks • Grass areas and • Footpaths 	Must be carried out on Amenity Land (allotments)
Open Cemeteries	General up keep and maintenance including memorial testing	Must be carried out on Amenity Land (cemeteries)
Closed Churchyards	General up keep and maintenance including memorial testing	Must be carried out on Amenity Land (closed churchyards)
Car Parks and hard areas maintained by WC immediately prior to the Transfer Date	Maintenance of car parks – grounds and street cleaning (as per Idverde Scope)	Must be carried out on Amenity Land and hard areas subject to the exclusions in Column 1
Centre Litter Picking and Sweeping		Must be carried out on Amenity Land and the Highway
Weed Control (amenity hard areas and highways)	Responsibility for all weeds on the highways and service delegated areas	Must be carried out on Amenity Land and the Highway
Bus shelter maintenance	Litter collection, cleaning (graffiti, fly posting, moss etc. removal) and replacement of the structure	Must be carried out on Amenity Land and the Highway

Hard Area Maintenance Services

Type of Land	
The public open space where the hard asset is managed is:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public gardens; • land used for the purposes of public recreation; • parks; • natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces • derelict open land; • sports pitches; • outdoor sports areas; • play provision; • amenity greenspace; • play areas; • skateboard parks; • outdoor basketball hoops; • and other more informal area (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters); • accessible countryside in urban fringe areas; • cemeteries; • closed churchyards.
For the avoidance of doubt, hard asset management would not be delegated for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play & Display Car Parks • Highway assets (without prior agreement – see below) • Campus or Hub areas • Housing Revenue Areas
<p>The concept of the delegation would be for hard asset maintenance to be as an asset transfer.</p> <p>As such anything on the asset and anything beneath (but not adopted assets) would become the responsibility of the local council.</p> <p>Hard assets would include: fences; walls; paths; lighting; seats; fixed equipment etc.</p>	

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

Date 2 July 2019

Subject: Avon Mutual Bank – Development of a Regional Mutual Bank

Cabinet member: Cllr Philip Whitehead - Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

- 1.1. Local authorities have a role to play in shaping regional financial services as part of their policies and partnerships to support residents, develop local economies and meet their strategic policy objectives of promoting economic development, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs) business growth and improving financial inclusion. A growing number of local authorities are now investing in community banks, challenger banks and supporting microfinance and other initiatives outside the mainstream financial services sector to help meet their local priorities.
- 1.2. Wiltshire now has the opportunity to support the setting up of a regional bank for the wider Avon region, alongside the other local authorities in the region. Avon Mutual estimates that it needs to raise around £2million and it is asking Local Authorities across the region to support its establishment with capital funding before it applies for a banking license from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).
- 1.3. The Community Savings Bank Association (CSBA) was established in 2015 to apply international best practice to creating a network of 18 co-operative regional banks in the UK. The CSBA has invested in creating the IT, regulatory and operating infrastructure necessary to start a bank. Supplier agreements are in place for core banking, ATM and payments systems, accounting, regulatory and card services significantly reducing the risk and investment required to establish a regional bank.

Proposals

To consider the giving of a grant of £0.050m to support the funding of the initial process to accreditation by the FCA.

Reasons for Proposals

- 1.4. In general, the operation of Avon Mutual Bank in the County would align with strategic priorities and support the local authority's existing policy objectives with regard to social mobility, supporting vulnerable people and supporting the growth of businesses across the County. The operation of a mutually owned bank would be a means to reduce the problems of financial exclusion for households and extend the availability of loans and finance to small and micro-

companies which presently struggle to access sufficient finance from mainstream banks. In addition, an initial analysis suggests that there would be social and fiscal benefits.

- 1.5. One of the main characteristics of financial exclusion is having no bank account and no access to the financial services which are provided through it. It should also be noted that not having a bank account will affect a person's ability to get a job, arrange accommodation, pay bills and prove their identity. In particular, those claiming Universal Credit will need to have a bank account. A consequence of not having a bank account and financial exclusion is that those households could pay a 'poverty premium' because they have to pay more for accessing basic financial products and services as well as higher costs for paying for energy and insurance. The most recent research estimates that the average cost which poor families bear in acquiring cash and credit, and in purchasing goods and services, can amount to a 'poverty premium' of around £490 a year with the most affected experiencing a poverty premium of £750 a year. To poor households these are significant sums. People on low incomes must often rely on 'sub-prime' credit or high-cost mail order at higher rates of interest because they cannot access mainstream financial services.
- 1.6. In terms of the impact of SMEs and the economy, only 2-3% of total bank lending in the UK goes to SMEs despite SMEs accounting for 99.9% of all businesses, 60% of employment, and 40% of annual GDP in the UK. Lower rates of SME lending correlate with higher rates of SME failure. Local regional banks with decision making autonomy and local knowledge have an advantage and thus are able to lend far more to SMEs.
- 1.7. Restoration of the trust in banks since the financial crisis is key to ensuring that businesses and consumers have the confidence to seek access to finance that they require to make the most of economic opportunities. The Avon Mutual Bank's model redresses this as the customers are also the shareholders thus the Board is directly accountable to the customers.

Alistair Cunningham
Executive Director Investment & Growth

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

Date 2 July 2019

Subject: Avon Mutual Bank – Development of a Regional Mutual Bank

Cabinet member: Cllr Philip Whitehead - Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets

Key Decision: Key

1. Purpose of Report

Local authorities have a role to play in shaping regional financial services as part of their policies and partnerships to support residents, develop local economies and meet their strategic policy objectives of promoting economic development, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs) business growth and improving financial inclusion. A growing number of local authorities are now investing in community banks, challenger banks and supporting microfinance and other initiatives outside the mainstream financial services sector to help meet their local priorities.

Wiltshire now has the opportunity to support the setting up of a regional bank for the wider Avon region, alongside the other local authorities in the region. Avon Mutual estimates that it needs to raise around £2million and it is asking Local Authorities across the region to support its establishment with capital funding before it applies for a banking license from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

2. Background

Until recently it has been complex to set up a regional mutual bank. The Community Savings Bank Association (CSBA) was established in 2015 to apply international best practice to creating a network of 18 co-operative regional banks in the UK. The CSBA has invested in creating the IT, regulatory and operating infrastructure necessary to start a bank. Supplier agreements are in place for core banking, ATM and payments systems, accounting, regulatory and card services significantly reducing the risk and investment required to establish a regional bank.

The Avon Mutual Bank is a mission led community wealth building institution promoting sustainable and equitable prosperity for the West of England. The bank will be the first customer owned regionally focussed full service bank serving people of ordinary means, community groups, SMEs and social enterprises.

The business model will be based upon 9 main branches and 21 satellite branches, employing 92 FTE staff. A full range of services will be offered competing with high street banks, the main branches will act as sub regional hubs, with Branch Directors having autonomy over lending and being the anchor for local relationships and knowledge. The 21 high tech satellite branches give access to all the same services as the main branches and operate on a 24/7 basis. It is intended that the satellite branches will be co located with community facilities. Multi-channel

access to products and services by web online banking and banking app for mobile and tablet devices will be available.

3. Personal Banking

The current account offer will be fixed and transparent with a simple membership fee with no further bank charges being applied, interest will be paid to customers on whole combined balances across accounts, including the current accounts. To support more disadvantaged customers, budgeting tools will be available including analysis of expenditure and visualisations and “jam jar” functionality to improve control over finances.

The Bank can offer a current account without requiring a minimum income or a credit check, those customers currently excluded from current accounts with the high street banks will have access to bank accounts thus avoiding the high poverty premium as a result.

4. SMEs

Small and medium businesses deposit more than they borrow, a key advantage of Avon Mutual bank is that it pays interest on current account balances with a transparent monthly fee of £10. There are no complex additional charges such as paying in of cash and the monthly fee funds the provision of branch services which many SMEs rely upon for cash banking facilities.

For SMEs the ability to offer loans is important, the business model for the bank offers relationship banking and a local branch model which gives competitive advantage and development of local knowledge. It is important to note that the main credit facility for SMEs is an overdraft facility which can only be provided directly by banks rather than credit unions or loan funds.

5. Social Impact

Avon Mutual is a mission led bank with financial inclusion built into its structure and constitution, part of the bank’s ethos is to identify, target and report on their economic, social and environmental impacts. The bank will work with stakeholders to understand strategic priorities and how they can contribute to their targets and develop measures that are specific and appropriate for the needs of the region.

For individuals these may include reduced poverty premium, improved budgeting ability, lower debt costs and active savings.

In terms of SMEs these may include increased local spending, employment growth, wage growth and increased access to branches.

6. Safeguarding Implications

None

7. Public Health Implications

None

8. Corporate Procurement Implications

None

9. Equalities Impact of the Proposal (detailing conclusions identified from Equality Analysis, sections 4 and 5)

There are positive equality impacts from this initiative as this promotes financial inclusion for residents who currently do not have access to bank accounts

10. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

None

11. Risk Assessment

There is a risk that the Mutual Bank will not achieve FCA accreditation, however this is not considered a high risk as there are already a number of successful Mutual Banks that are already in operation and the CBSA has put in place the mechanics for setting up Mutual banks.

As this is a grant rather than an investment there are none of the risks associated with securitisation of such investments.

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

Residents will continue to be disadvantaged where they are unable to access bank accounts with national banks

SMEs will not be able to access funding from national banks which will increase the failure rate of such organisations

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

There is a risk that the Mutual Bank will not achieve FCA accreditation, however this is not considered a high risk as there are already a number of successful Mutual Banks that are already in operation and the CBSA has put in place the mechanics for setting up Mutual banks.

As this is a grant rather than an investment there are none of the risks associated with securitisation of such investments.

14. Financial Implications

The grant of £0.050m is a one-off payment which is to be funded from the Revenue Grant Reserve.

15. Legal Implications

The local authority has the power under the 2000 Local Government Act to promote the economic and social wellbeing of the borough, enabling it to support initiatives which support economic regeneration and development.

16. Workforce Implications

There are no workforce implications

17. Options Considered

The following options have been considered:

1. No grant funding – this would risk the ability of the Mutual Bank to achieve FCA accreditation
2. Grant funding – the proposed £0.50m is in line with other Local Authorities in the region and supports the development of the Bank to FCA accredited status
3. Investment funding – this would take the form of a share purchase which would attract a financial return of 7.5%. This is not proposed as the new government regulations require securitization of any such investment of public monies which is not possible at this stage as there is no asset to securitise the investment on. This could be a consideration once FCA accreditation is successfully achieved by the Mutual Bank.

18. Conclusions

Grant funding is the appropriate type of funding at this stage to support the development of the Mutual Bank to achieve FCA accreditation

19. Proposals

To consider the giving of a grant of £0.050m to support the funding of the initial process to accreditation by the FCA.

20. Reasons for Proposals

In general, the operation of Avon Mutual Bank in the County would align with strategic priorities and support the local authority's existing policy objectives with regard to social mobility, supporting vulnerable people and supporting the growth of businesses across the County. The operation of a mutually owned bank would be a means to reduce the problems of financial exclusion for households and extend the availability of loans and finance to small and micro-companies which presently struggle to access sufficient finance from mainstream banks. In addition, an initial analysis suggests that there would be social and fiscal benefits.

One of the main characteristics of financial exclusion is having no bank account and no access to the financial services which are provided through it. It should also be noted that not having a bank account will affect a person's ability to get a job, arrange accommodation, pay bills and prove their identity. In particular, those claiming Universal Credit will need to have a bank account. A consequence of not having a bank account and financial exclusion is that those households could pay a 'poverty premium' because they have to pay more for accessing basic financial products and services as well as higher costs for paying for energy and insurance. The most recent research estimates that the average cost which poor families bear in acquiring cash and credit, and in purchasing goods and services, can amount to a 'poverty premium' of around £490 a year with the most affected experiencing a poverty premium of £750 a year. To poor households these are significant sums. People on low incomes must often rely on 'sub-prime' credit or high-cost mail order at higher rates of interest because they cannot access mainstream financial services.

In terms of the impact of SMEs and the economy, only 2-3% of total bank lending in the UK goes to SMEs despite SMEs accounting for 99.9% of all businesses, 60% of employment, and 40% of annual GDP in the UK. Lower rates of SME lending correlate with higher rates of SME failure. Local regional banks with decision making autonomy and local knowledge have an advantage and thus are able to lend far more to SMEs.

Restoration of the trust in banks since the financial crisis is key to ensuring that businesses and consumers have the confidence to seek access to finance that they require to make the most of economic opportunities. The Avon Mutual Bank's model redresses this as the customers are also the shareholders thus the Board is directly accountable to the customers.

Alistair Cunningham
Executive Director Investment & Growth

Report Author
Becky Hellard

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet/ Audit Committee

2 July 2019/ 26 June 2019

Subject: Draft Annual Governance Statement 2017/18

Cabinet Members:

Cllr Philip Whitehead - Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets

Cllr Richard Clewer – Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism

Key Decision: Non Key

Executive Summary

The Annual Governance Statement for Wiltshire Council should demonstrate how the Council is meeting the principles of good governance adopted in its Code of Corporate Governance. A draft statement has been prepared based on the local code of corporate governance agreed by Cabinet.

Proposal(s)

Audit Committee and Cabinet are therefore, asked:

- a. to consider the draft AGS as set out in Appendix 1 and make any comments or changes as they see fit;
- b. to note that the draft AGS will be revised in the light of any comments before final approval by the Audit Committee and publication with the Statement of Accounts and Senior Information Risk Owner Annual Report at the end of July 2019.

Reason for Proposal

The Council is required, as part of its annual review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements, to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2018/19. This will be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Corporate Directors after final approval by the Audit Committee on 24 July 2019. The AGS will form part of the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2018/19.

Ian Gibbons

Director, Legal, Electoral and Registration Services (Monitoring Officer)

Wiltshire Council

Audit Committee/ Cabinet

26 June/ 2 July 2019

Subject: Draft Annual Governance Statement 2017/18

Cllr Philip Whitehead - Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets

Cllr Richard Clewer – Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism

Key Decision: Non Key

Purpose of Report

1. To ask Audit Committee and Cabinet to consider a draft Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 for comment before final approval is sought from the Audit Committee on 24 July 2019.

Background

2. The Council is required, as part of its annual review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements, to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2018/19. This will be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Corporate Directors after final approval by the Audit Committee on 24 July 2019. The AGS will form part of the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2018/19.
3. The format of the AGS follows recent advice from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), with an onus on making it focused and readable. This is also the format of the [Local Code of Corporate Governance](#) that Cabinet at its meeting on 11 June recommended for adoption to full council on 9 July.
4. The AGS for Wiltshire Council should demonstrate how the Council is meeting the principles of good governance adopted in its Code of Corporate Governance. These principles aim to ensure the Council is:
 - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
 - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
 - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
 - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes
 - Developing capacity, including the capacity of the Council's leadership and the individuals within it
 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal controls and

strong public financial management.

5. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver accountability. The AGS is primarily retrospective. It reports on the assurance framework and measures in place for the financial year 2018/19, but must take account of any significant issues of governance up to the date of publication of the Statement of Accounts in July 2019. The AGS should outline the actions taken or proposed to address any significant governance issues identified.
6. The AGS is drafted by senior officers who have lead roles in corporate governance. The evidence for the AGS comes from a variety of sources, including service plans, relevant lead officers within the organisation, internal and external auditors and inspection agencies.
7. In last year's Annual Governance Statement the Council identified a number of areas where further improvements to can be made to strengthen its governance framework. Much of the details of these areas for improvement are covered in this year's draft Annual Governance Statement but to enable simple comparison details of the progress made on these specific areas since 2018 is summarised below:

Summary of improvements suggested in 2017/18

- a. Responding to the recommendations in peer reviews including the Corporate Peer, SEND and CQC reviews. This will include assessing the impacts on the delivery of the Council's Business and Financial Plans of external factors including the Social Care green paper expected Summer 2018, changes to the Business Rates system and lessons learnt from the s114 issued at Northamptonshire County Council.

Action Plans for the relevant inspections and reviews have been drawn up and progress monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, Families and Children's Transformation Programme and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Social Care green paper has been repeatedly delayed and the outcome of the fairer funding review is still awaited from central government.

- b. Embedding improvements to data protection to be compliant with the new regulatory framework.

Mandatory training on GDPR has been rolled out across the council; further detail is provided in the SIRO annual report.

- c. Responding to an event in March 2018 that occurred in Salisbury the Council will seek to learn and share lessons surrounding the event, as well as assess the long-term impact and actions needed for the County, Council and Partners.

The Salisbury and Amesbury incidents in March and July 2018 had significant implications for the county, council and partners. The council has continued to participate in evaluations of the response and recovery, sought funding from central government and diverted funding from reserves as appropriate.

- d. Ensuring the new waste contract is mobilised effectively in line with current plans for July 2018.

reserve identified for Waste of £1.250 million that was set aside as part of 2017/18 outturn. The majority of this overspend was due to the significant delay in the Council's Contractor obtaining planning permission for construction of a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to sort dry recyclable materials. As a consequence, the contract for sorting dry recyclable materials (Lot 1) and the contract for collection of waste and recycling (Lot 5), which commenced on 30 July 2018, could not be delivered as originally intended. An interim service was put in place to enable the collection and recycling of additional plastic materials from the blue lidded bin. However, this required the use of additional vehicles and employment of additional staff as the collection of dry recyclable materials continued to be based on separate collection of materials from the black box.

In addition, a number of savings proposals for 2018/19 around the new contract were not achieved. This was due to a combination of the delay in implementing the service changes referred to above and the availability of sufficient resource in the Waste and IT teams, given ongoing work on implementing new systems for management of the waste contracts.

Landfill tax was £0.598 million above budget. In 2018/19 the budget was reduced to reflect a forecast reduction in tonnes of waste to landfill as a result of the cessation of collection of commercial waste and other 2018/19 savings initiatives. These savings proposals have been implemented but the anticipated reduction in tonnes has not been seen. The Waste Budget has been rebased for 2019/20 based on the forecast contract models and tonnage expectations.

- e. Improving the Council's counter fraud framework including greater awareness and response. There will be a review of the inter-relationship between key policies to improve clarity and consistency of processes including: Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Whistle Blowing, complaints and some staff policies, such as registering interests, gifts and hospitality.

Audit Committee have approved the new counter fraud framework and a review of the inter-relationship of key policies has taken place. Accompanying action plans will be finalised within 2019.

- f. How the Council collects general feedback from individuals and communities to assess improvements in approach

This action has not been undertaken is being taken forward during 2019.

- g. Reporting of finance and performance and risk management will be more closely aligned. A review of the relevant Corporate Performance Strategy and Risk Management Strategy will take place to ensure a focus on links between the use of resources and the outcomes being achieved. Alongside this there will be a focus on delivery of comprehensive plans for change for council services and a review of council commissioning, procurement and contract management.

A new risk and performance management policy was agreed in February 2019 to replace the previously separate Corporate Risk Strategy and Corporate Performance Strategy. July 2019 will see the first aligned quarterly finance and performance report to cabinet.

Main Consideration for the Council Draft AGS - Content

8. A draft AGS for 2018/19 is attached at Appendix 1. The draft will be updated in the light of any observations of Cabinet and Audit Committee, as well as external audit (Deloitte).
9. The Council's internal auditors have given an overall audit opinion of reasonable assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's control environment for 2018/19.
10. The final sections of the draft AGS require the Council to identify any significant internal control issues affecting the Council during the relevant period. CIPFA guidance suggests that an internal control issue is to be regarded as significant if:
 - the issue has seriously prejudiced or prevented achievement of a principal objective;
 - the issue has resulted in a need to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved, or has resulted in significant diversion of resources from another aspect of the business;
 - the issue has led to a material impact on the accounts;
 - the audit committee, or equivalent, has advised that it should be considered significant for this purpose;
 - the Head of Internal Audit has reported on it as significant, for this purpose, in the annual opinion on the internal control environment;
 - the issue, or its impact, has attracted significant public interest or has seriously damaged the reputation of the organisation;
 - the issue has resulted in formal action being taken by the Chief Financial Officer and/or the Monitoring Officer.
11. At this stage it is proposed to include the following governance issues as areas for improvement:
 - Agree an updated Corporate Equality Plan for 2019/20
 - Review the arrangements for dealing with code of conduct complaints (Protocol 12)
 - Review and update as appropriate the Behaviour's Framework
 - Review the procurement approach to social value
 - Adopt a new Partnership Working Framework (replace Protocol 8 of the constitution) and undertake an audit of partnership arrangements across the council
 - Review the Wiltshire Compact and role of Wiltshire Assembly
 - Agree new consultation policy/ guidance to replace the 2015 consultation strategy
 - Consider options for collecting feedback from residents, including surveys
 - Review Part 4 of the constitution in relation to petitions
 - Fully implement the peer review recommendations by developing an outcome-based planning process aligned to budget build
 - Consider additional resource for service delegation and asset transfer delivery
 - Respond to the findings of an Ofsted inspection in May/ June 2019

- building on the previous progress that has been made.
- Review the effectiveness of the commercial policy and current commissioning approaches.
- Implement the newly adopted Part 10 of the constitution on procurement and contract rules; aligned to a regularly updated Annual Procurement Plan and medium-term contract management strategy. Embed good commissioning and contract management as part of staff job descriptions.
- Deliver outstanding waste service changes and saving initiatives
- Rollout training and awareness on decision making processes following a review of corporate governance practices
- Review business intelligence (data analysis and insight) functions across the council and supporting systems
- Review how performance can be communicated to the public to deliver maximum openness and transparency.
- Combine financial reporting and performance and risk reporting in the same quarterly report to Cabinet and embed good practice across the council
- Review how the council collects general feedback from individuals and communities to assess improvements in approach (such as residents surveys)
- Align organisational processes more closely to the outcomes in the Business Plan to ensure a focus on the resources used and outcomes achieved
- Finalise accompanying action plans for the counter fraud framework

12. The governance of the Council will continue to be monitored by Cabinet, other Councillor committees and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team. That will include the areas to address identified above.

13. The Council's external auditors, Deloitte LLP, have been consulted on the draft AGS and their comments will be reflected in the final draft to be presented to Audit Committee 24 July 2019.

Safeguarding Implications

14. There are no safeguarding implications arising directly from this report.

Public Health Implications

15. There are no public health implications arising directly from this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

16. There are no environmental or climate change considerations arising directly from this report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

17. There is no impact on equality arising from this report.

Risk Assessment

18. Ongoing review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements is an important part of the Council's performance and risk management policy.

Financial Implications

19. There are no financial implications arising directly from the issues covered in this report

Legal Implications

20. The production of the AGS is a statutory requirement.

Proposal

21. Audit Committee and Cabinet are therefore, asked:
 - c. to consider the draft AGS as set out in Appendix 1 and make any comments or changes as they see fit;
 - d. to note that the draft AGS will be revised in the light of any comments before final approval by the Audit Committee and publication with the Statement of Accounts and Senior Information Risk Owner Annual Report at the end of July 2019.

Reason for Proposal

22. To prepare the AGS 2018/19 for publication in accordance with the requirements of the Audit and Accounts Regulations.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE

Leader, Wiltshire Council

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Background Papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: Local Code of Corporate Governance

Appendices

Appendix 1 Wiltshire Council's Draft Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

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Wiltshire Council

Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

Introduction

Wiltshire Council is a local authority that is responsible for providing services to nearly half a million residents, tens of thousands of varied businesses and over a million visitors per year. It aims to create strong communities, grow the local economy and protect vulnerable people and this approach underlines everything we do. The Council secures funding from national government, local taxation and charges. So, as a public body, it needs to have a strong governance and assurance framework to make certain its business is conducted to the highest standards, ensuring:

- resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities;
- there is sound and inclusive decision making, conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards;
- there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities; and
- public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised is secured, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

This statement reflects how Wiltshire Council has met those standards in 2018/19 and the ongoing actions it is taking to maintain and improve its governance arrangements. Evidence of how we have assessed ourselves has been grouped into sections as set out by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in its publication 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016)' and is consistent with the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

Approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

We are satisfied that this statement provides a substantial level of assurance that good governance is in place in Wiltshire Council and that appropriate arrangements are in place to address improvements identified in our review of compliance. Progress on these improvements and on addressing and mitigating the risks will be monitored through the year by senior officers and the Audit Committee.

Alistair Cunningham OBE
Executive Director

Dr Carlton Brand
Executive Director

Terence Herbert
Executive Director

Cllr
Leader of Wiltshire Council

25 July 2019

The Local Code of Corporate Governance provides a means of demonstrating that a sound level of governance is operated. This local code acts as a means of assurance, but also a mechanism for achieving continuous improvement. This approach is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government* framework. The principles are set out below:



The following pages set out a summary of the key governance controls, mapped against the CIPFA principles. These are supported by case studies to help demonstrate where positive improvement action has already been taken, and a note of improvement actions that the Council will take.

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

Respect for the rule of law

The Council's [Constitution](#) provides the framework within which the Council operates. It sets out how decisions are made and the procedures which must be followed to ensure that these are efficient, effective, transparent and accountable.

The constitution is kept under review and in 2018/19 the role and responsibilities of portfolio holders and access to confidential material by councillors have been clarified.

The Constitution includes at Part 13 the **Members' Code of Conduct**, which makes clear the obligation of elected members in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and ensuring the principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership) are adhered to. Pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests are [registered](#) and published on the web site in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and the underlying legislation.

Behaving with integrity

The Council publishes and promotes both a code of conduct for its staff and a **Behaviours Framework** that details what is expected of all employees. The behaviours framework is embedded throughout the employment lifecycle and forms a key part of the appraisal system to promote ethical awareness amongst the Council's staff.

There is a process for dealing with complaints under the code of conduct for unitary, parish, town and city councillors in Wiltshire. This process and its application is set by the Council and reviewed regularly by the Council's **Standards Committee**. Minutes from the meetings of this Committee can be found [online](#).

Strong commitment to ethical values

Ethical considerations are also evident in the Council's [Procurement Strategy](#) where Social Value is a consideration. The Strategy describes a voluntary charter for suppliers asking for a commitment to local employment, skills, training and environmental issues.

There were 47 complaints last year, 12 in relation to unitary members, 35 parish members. 8 in total were referred for investigation. The number of complaints per year since 2012 has ranged from 24-79.

How we can improve

- Agree an updated Corporate Equality Plan for 2019/20
- Review the arrangements for dealing with code of conduct complaints (Protocol 12)
- Review and update as appropriate the Behaviours Framework
- Review the procurement approach to social value

Principle B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Openness

The Council makes available a range of important information on its website including its strategic aims and ambitions in its published [Business Plan](#) and via its [publication scheme](#). The council has arrangements for dealing with requests under Freedom of Information laws. In 2018/19 there were 1818 requests with 98% responded to within 20 days

Committee meetings are open to the public, and **agenda papers and minutes** are available on the internet in various formats along with forward work plans/ calendars.

Public consultation plays a key part in the decision-making process, across the full range of the Council's services. Key consultations undertaken during 2018/19 include those on Housing Allocation Policy, Parking Charges, Special Schools, Bus Services and Children's Centres. A **communications protocol** is in place for councillors and officers

The Council supports a range of partnerships including: the [Health and Wellbeing Board](#), promoting integrated working between the council and the NHS; the [Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel](#) which reviews and scrutinises decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner (the Panel is a joint committee with Swindon Borough Council); and the work of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership ([SWLEP](#)). Cabinet have [reviewed](#) LEP governance as part of a business transfer agreement following the LEP's formal incorporation.

Engaging with institutional stakeholders

Engaging with citizens and service users

Wiltshire Council's 18 **Area Boards** involve the local community in decision-making within the agreed scheme of delegation. 124 area board meetings took place with devolved funding on community grants, youth, health and wellbeing and transport and devolved decision-making powers on community asset transfers.

The **Wiltshire Compact** is an agreed set of guidelines and principles to foster good working relationships between the voluntary sector and the public sector.

Quick, open officer decision making is in place with the ability for local **planning** committees to call-in decisions in response to local concerns. A strategic planning committee oversees the application of the Local Plan. Expectations for [Community Involvement](#) in preparing Wiltshire's planning policy documents and in considering planning applications are clearly set out.

An **electoral review** was conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission. After consideration of submissions from the council, the LGBCE maintained the number of councillors at 98, noting in particular the importance of our area boards.

How we can improve

- Adopt a new Partnership Working Framework (replace Protocol 8 of the constitution) and undertake an audit of partnership arrangements across the council
- Review the Wiltshire Compact and role of Wiltshire Assembly
- Agree new consultation policy/ guidance to replace the 2015 consultation strategy
- Consider options for collecting feedback from residents, including surveys
- Review Part 4 of the constitution in relation to petitions

Principle C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Defining outcomes

The [Business Plan](#) was agreed in 2017 to enable the vision, priorities and goals set out to be translated into actions that deliver the changes required in the coming years.

Following the publication of the report of the LGA's **Peer Review** on Wiltshire Council in 2018, an [action plan](#) continues to be implemented and overseen by CLT and Cabinet with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee monitoring progress on a six to nine monthly basis.

A [Local Development Scheme](#) provides a three year rolling project plan for producing the **local development framework**

The findings of the **CQC Local System Review** in Wiltshire were published June 2018 and a joint [action plan](#) developed with the NHS to address these. The key findings included the need to have a single joined up commissioning strategy that builds on the Better Care Plan, an integrated workforce plan and closely aligned transformation programmes. Wiltshire Council has continued to invest in transformation of adult social care and established a reablement team in 2018/19 which has improved outcomes for clients.

The Council receives reports on the combined economic, social and environmental impacts of its policies in the form of various reports including the **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**. These also inform community led action planning and inform other schemes such as the Big Pledge.

Community facilities have a key role in supporting people to live more active and fulfilled lives. The campus programme has provided sustainable assets for towns that provide a place, facilities and services that help to combat isolation and loneliness and increase the opportunities for social interaction; and in so doing build strong communities. Several campuses have been completed already and work continues in Calne, Cricklade and Melksham

During 2018/19 significant **service delegation and asset transfer** packages have been or are being negotiated with Devizes, Chippenham and Pewsey and Royal Wootton Bassett Town Councils following the successful asset transfer package for Salisbury City Council. This enables our local communities more of a say on the things that matter to them and will eventually cover the whole county.

How we can improve

Fully implement the peer review recommendations by developing an outcome-based planning process aligned to budget build
 Consider additional resource for service delegation and asset transfer delivery
 Respond to the findings of an Ofsted inspection in May/ June 2019 building on the previous progress that has been made.

Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Principle D - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes

Determining and planning interventions

Regular Performance and financial updates are reported to senior officers and councillors, including scrutiny through the **Financial Task Group** which is a task group established by the [Overview and Scrutiny](#) Management Committee.

Oversight of corporate projects is undertaken by the Corporate Leadership Team, supported with advice from Finance, Legal, HR and Procurement Teams. The **Programme Office** manages projects and programmes on behalf of the Council and provides reports to the Council on ongoing work. During 2018/19 the majority of projects were delivered or progressed according to schedule. Monthly reports were provided to CLT with appropriate actions taken.

Significant programmes in 2018/19 include the transformation of adult social care; families and children; and digital. These were supported by the council's system thinking team where appropriate.

Following its adoption in early 2018, the Council continues to implement its new [commercial policy and approach](#) which is designed to improve our data and management information; improve the skills of our staff; use our assets and resources to make financial returns; and review and revise our models of delivery

The council's [annual budget](#) setting process has also seen updates to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and ongoing Capital Programme

The [Corporate Procurement Strategy](#) provides the framework for the council to obtain value and social capital from all of its bought in goods and services. The strategy focuses on the delivery of the following corporate and social goals:

- Identifying and delivering efficiencies, but not at the expense of quality
- Developing and embracing the principles of sustainable procurement

The procurement strategy is used to encourage the adoption of a mixed economy approach, evaluating on the basis of whole life costings and breaking down barriers to participate in council opportunities. Using transparent processes, the council commits to meeting its obligation to ensure that all of our procurement activity addresses relevant social, economic and environmental standards.

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

How we can improve
Review the effectiveness of the commercial policy and current commissioning approaches. Implement the newly adopted Part 10 of the constitution on procurement and contract rules; aligned to a regularly updated Annual Procurement Plan and medium-term contract management strategy. Embed good commissioning and contract management as part of staff job descriptions. Deliver outstanding waste service changes and saving initiatives.

Principle E - Developing capacity, including the capability of the Council's leadership and the individuals within it

Developing capacity

The Wiltshire Council **People Strategy** focuses on attracting the best people to work for the Council and engaging, developing and retaining existing staff and continues to be implemented.

A bi-annual **staff survey** in 2018 showed an improvement in staff engagement overall (+12% to 70%), and included an increase in positive responses to those who can 'always or frequently' find appropriate training and development opportunities (+13% to 58%).

Managers are required to complete **annual appraisals** with their staff and use these to identify training and development needs and develop plans to address these needs

Following the introduction of the **apprenticeships levy** the council now has over 170 apprentices employed. A new leadership and management development programme launched in 2018 and offers aspiring and developing managers the opportunity to complete accredited qualifications using levy funding. In addition, the council now has the highest number of under 25s employed in recent years at 6.9 per cent, some of which are employed as apprentices. p

Further consideration was given to the alignment of service responsibilities to roles at tier 2 of the organisation and the Business Plan objectives. A **senior management** restructure at tier 2 took place in March 2019, and steps to appoint to roles internally following consultation have been completed. Current actions to recruit to the remaining vacancies are being taken

The council continues to learn by seeking **best practice** from elsewhere and responding to the findings of external inspections such as the CQC Local System Review; and an Ofsted inspection taking place in May/ June 2019. The council is also participating in evaluations of how well we have worked with our civil contingency partners in the response to (and recovery from) the events in south Wiltshire in 2018, which had significant implications for the county, council and partners.

As well as the training provided as part of councillor induction a range of learning material is made available to councillors online via the Wiltshire Council **learning portal**, GROW.

Developing the capability of the Council's leadership and other individuals

How we can improve

Rollout training and awareness on decision making processes following a review of corporate governance practices

Principle F – Managing risks and performance through robust internal controls and strong public financial management

Managing risk and performance

A new [risk and performance management policy](#) was [agreed](#) in February 2019 to replace the previously separate Corporate Risk Strategy and Corporate Performance Strategy

The Council’s risks are monitored at various levels in the organisation including by the Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Managing risks is the responsibility of services who define the risks related to their service areas and assign individuals to be responsible for their management. All services risks are scored on the same basis and some service risks are elevated, through the policy, onto the corporate risk register which is published and reviewed quarterly. An audit of risk management was undertaken in 2018/19 leading to a more nuanced approach on categorisation of risk appetite.

The main **changes in risk** during 2018/19 have been relating to the implications of and uncertainty around Brexit, where the council has worked closely with its partners through civil contingency arrangements to address this possibility; and a greater understanding of financial risk including income generation.

Wiltshire’s section 151 Officer or **Chief Finance Officer** has a statutory duty to ensure that the Council has a strong financial control environment, including an effective and independent Internal Audit function in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Council is the administering authority for more than 180 employers through the **Wiltshire Pension Fund**, and the [Pension Committee](#) exercises its responsibilities in relation to investment management where it sets investment policy and appoints and monitors external investment managers. This has included participation in the Brunel Pension Partnership (as agreed by full council). The operation of a **Local Pension Board** continues, with the purpose of scrutinising the Council as Administrator for the Wiltshire Pension Fund and ensuring the efficient and effective governance of the pension scheme.

Robust internal control and strong public financial management

The General Data Protection Regulations came into force in May 2018. The Senior Information Risk Owner’s **(SIRO) Annual Report**, outlines that significant work that has taken place to embed good practice and manage risk to ensure compliance across the council. SWAP have conducted an audit confirming this, noting that compliance is a constantly evolving target and services will need to adapt as the interpretation of the legislation continues to develop.

How we can improve

- Review business intelligence (data analysis and insight) functions across the council and supporting systems
- Review how performance can be communicated to the public to deliver maximum openness and transparency.
- Combine financial reporting and performance and risk reporting in the same quarterly report to Cabinet and embed good practice across the council

Principle G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver accountability

Assurance and effective accountability

The Council has independent external auditors (Deloitte) and the South West Audit Partnership who provide an internal audit function, the Council being the oldest and biggest partner. SWAP's periodic update reports were considered during 2018/19 by the Council's [Audit Committee](#).

As at April 2019, SWAP Internal Audit completed 60 **internal audit** reviews, to draft and final report including significant high risk areas e.g. contract management and project management. Reporting also has included action to follow up implementation. Overall SWAP assessed the Council's control environment as 'reasonable' with no significant issues raised. The Council's **External Auditors** have also not raised any significant matters during 2018/19.

A review of the inter-relationship between key polices has taken place to improve clarity and consistency of processes, including: Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Anti Money-Laundering, complaints and some staff policies, such as Registering interests, gifts and hospitality. New policies have been agreed

Senior directors meet weekly and review on a quarterly basis progress against the ambitions set out in the **Local Code of Corporate Governance**

How we can improve

Review how the council collects general feedback from individuals and communities to assess improvements in approach (such as residents surveys)
Align organisational processes more closely to the outcomes in the Business Plan to ensure a focus on the resources used and outcomes achieved
Finalise accompanying action plans for the counter fraud framework

There is a strong culture operating in the Council of acting to the highest standards. This is rooted in the behaviours expected of councillors and staff, and upheld by the senior leaders. Where any resident feels the Council has not acted properly the Council has a **corporate complaints procedure**

The council has received the Annual Letter of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. There were 64 complaints referred to the Ombudsman in 2018 vs 73 in in 2017, and those upheld fell from 12 to 8.

The **Overview and Scrutiny** committees in Wiltshire Council have undertaken a range of reviews to inform policy development and evaluate decisions of the executive. Key reviews include those on digital services, military-civilian integration, special schools, maternity, children's centres, outdoor education, homelessness, LED lighting and taxi fares. An [Annual Report](#) from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee sets out this activity in detail.

The Council complies with reporting requirements such as an [online structure chart](#) and information on senior salaries and expenses.

Implementing good practices in transparency and reporting

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

Date of meeting: 2 July 2019

Subject: Wiltshire Council Adoption Service: 2018-19 Year End Report

Cabinet member: Councillor Laura Mayes Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Key Decision: Non Key

Executive Summary

It is a statutory requirement that the Adoption Service provides a year-end report to the Council. It describes the management arrangements, outcomes, priorities and finances of the Agency for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

There has been a significant change since the last Annual Report was received by Cabinet; the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adoption West launched on 1st March 2019, towards the end of this reporting period. This means that Wiltshire Council *now* retains aspects of responsibility for the adoption of children whilst others are now undertaken by Adoption West. Adoption West is a Local Authority Trading Company that is owned by the six partner Local Authorities and commissioned by them to provide defined adoption services. Adoption West is registered with Ofsted as a Voluntary Adoption Agency. It is managed by a Service Director who reports to the Board of Directors, currently chaired by Terence Herbert, Wiltshire Council Executive Director and Director of Children's Services.

This reporting period ends on 31 March 2019, a short time after Adoption West was launched. Whilst figures reported therefore relate largely to Wiltshire Council, the narrative of this report indicates the close partnership which developed before operational implementation of Adoption West, and after it. As Adoption West was launched for the final month of the reporting period, it was agreed that reporting would remain with the local authority.

Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service was inspected by Ofsted in July 2015 as part of the wider inspection of Children's Services. The overall inspection judgement was Requires Improvement (RI). Since this time, the Families and Children's Service, and within it the Adoption Service, has continued to develop and improve how it works to best effect. Two areas for improvement were indicated regarding the Adoption Service. Increased timeliness of both:

- Assessment of adopters and their match with a child to be adopted, and
- Adoption of children with complex needs.

In 2017/18, 22 adoption orders were granted and 19 families were approved as suitable to adopt. For the year 2018/19, 33 Adoption Orders have been granted and 27 families have been approved as suitable to adopt, demonstrating an increasing need for adoptive families and family finding. The regional picture is positive with an overall increase in adopters being approved with Wiltshire being part of this; this is different from the national picture where the overall number of approvals each year is falling.

It is anticipated that 40-45 children, who live in Wiltshire, are likely to require adoption per year (benchmarking 10% of the care population).

In 2016/2017 Wiltshire's recruitment target was revised to recruit 30 adoptive families, through targeted and general recruitment, to meet anticipated needs.

Recruitment, assessment and approval activity is now completed by Adoption West; increasingly, children from Wiltshire can be placed for adoption with any Adoption West approved adopters, not only those living in Wiltshire. Previously, interagency placements have been made outside Wiltshire.

Adoption West has not set specific recruitment targets for the year; the original targets were set in the project two to three years ago and have not been met due to the national decline in adopter recruitment. The forecast for the next six months, based on potential adopters in the assessment process, is 65 families. This is the sufficient for the numbers of children requiring adoptive families, and maintaining a "pool" of adopters who are prepared and waiting to adopt.

The Adoption Service was delivered successfully by Wiltshire Children's Services and was underpinned by the Government's Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay (2011). The new Adoption West was launched March 1st. 2019.

Comparative performance for local authorities uses the Adoption Scorecard which, for Wiltshire, shows overall continued improvement. The Government has not yet given clarity about how the Scorecard will be used by the Regional Adoption Authorities (RAA). In the meantime, Wiltshire continues to use the Scorecard to track improvement.

Proposal(s)

It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted and accepted.

Reason for Proposal

Wiltshire Council is an Adoption Agency registered with Ofsted. The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards (25.6) and 2013 Statutory Guidance (3.93 and 5.39) describe the information that is required to be regularly reported to the executive side of the local authority to provide assurance that the adoption agency is complying with the conditions of registration whilst being effective and achieving good outcomes for children and service users.

Terence Herbert
Executive Director

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

Date of meeting: 2 July 2019

Subject: Wiltshire Council Adoption Service: 2018-19 Year End Report

Cabinet member: Councillor Laura Mayes Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Key Decision: Non Key

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides a year-end report to Cabinet regarding the performance of the Adoption Service within Wiltshire Council alongside a consideration of the effectiveness of Adoption West. It is a requirement of the condition of registration, as described in the 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards and 2013 Statutory Guidance, that Cabinet is satisfied the Adoption Agency complies with the conditions of registration, is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children. These Standards and Guidance have not yet been specifically revised to describe the reporting requirements for the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA).
2. Cabinet last received an Annual Report regarding the Adoption Service in July 2018, covering the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. This report relates to the full year 2018/19 reporting period. Cabinet also received an interim six-month report in January 2019.
3. The Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in July 2015, (arriving at the overall judgement of Requires Improvement) which included the Adoption Service, noted strengths alongside two areas that required further attention:
 - The timeliness of the assessment of adopters and their match with a child to be adopted, and
 - The timeliness of the adoption of children with complex needs.
4. This report includes information regarding the management of the Wiltshire Council Adoption Service, the role of Adoption West, the Wiltshire Adoption Scorecard, children who require adoptive families and those who are placed, the recruitment and approval of adopters by Adoption West, the disruption of placements, children where the plan for adoption changes and the work of the Adoption West Panel.
5. It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted and accepted.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

6. The Wiltshire Council Adoption Service contributes to a central priority as set out in the Wiltshire Council Business Plan 2017-2027; namely to protect those who are most vulnerable and provide permanent homes for children in care.
7. Identifying adoptive families for Wiltshire children remains a priority for the Council. Wiltshire Council remains as an adoption agency because it retains responsibility for children requiring adoption. The arrival of Adoption West as the RAA means that from March 2019, the recruitment, assessment and approval of adoptive families, family finding and adoption support has become the responsibility of the new agency.

Main Considerations for the Council

8. The main consideration for the Council is to be assured about statutory compliance and the effectiveness of the Adoption Service. In 2016/17, 33 children were adopted. In 2017/18, 22 children were adopted and in 2018/19 this number was 33. Of these, 30 (91%) were placed within 12 months of the decision that adoption was in their best interest being made. In 2016/17, 26 adoptive families were approved, in 2017/18, 19 families were approved and in 2018/19, 27 families living within Wiltshire were approved as suitable to adopt. These are significant increases, particularly in the context of a national reduction in the number of new approvals. Sufficiency of approved families must be maintained through the work of Adoption West.
9. Wiltshire's current Adoption Scorecard (most recently published performance to March 2018) shows overall continued improvement and is included below (para 13), for reference. National performance targets are no longer published by the Government and it has not yet indicated what national and local reporting will be in place when an RAA is in operation and functions pass to it from the local authority. At present, each local authority Adoption Agency still has a scorecard and there are three key measures that are included:

A1: the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted:

- The local authority three-year average (2015-18) is **397** days. This is significantly shorter than the three-year average of 469 days in 2014-17 and shorter than the England three-year average for 2015-18 of 486 days. The Scorecard shows steady improvement over time.
- Excluding two legacy cases, adopted in 2016, the three-year average figure becomes **337** days for 2015-18
- The local authority figure for 2018-19 is 342 days, up slightly from 326 in the previous year.
- Including Early Permanence placements and legacy cases, locally reported data estimates the figure for 2016-19 as **377** days, a continued improvement on 397 days and a marked improvement on 486 days, remaining significantly less than the England average.

A2: the average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family:

- The local authority three-year average (2015-18) is **173** days. This is a small decrease on the three-year average of 186 days in 2014-17. Excluding two legacy cases this figure becomes 139 days for 2015-18.
- It remains shorter than the England three-year average of 201 days. Overall the Scorecard shows steady improvement over time.
- The local authority one-year figure for 2018-19 is **100** days. In 2017-18 the figure was 132 days.
- The three-year figure still includes 2 children adopted in May 2016 following protracted court proceedings, who were originally placed for adoption in 2014 with the placement orders being granted in 2011. One child has significant additional needs and the second experienced placement disruption prior to being matched with adoptive parents. In addition, 2 children were adopted by their foster carers whose adoption assessments needed to be completed once placement orders were granted. Three adoptive placements were found for a family of 7 children, meaning significant sibling contact was required.
- Including legacy cases where they remain in the three-year period, locally reported data estimates the figure for 2016-19 as **152** days. 2016-19 will be the final three-year average where these legacy cases will have an impact.

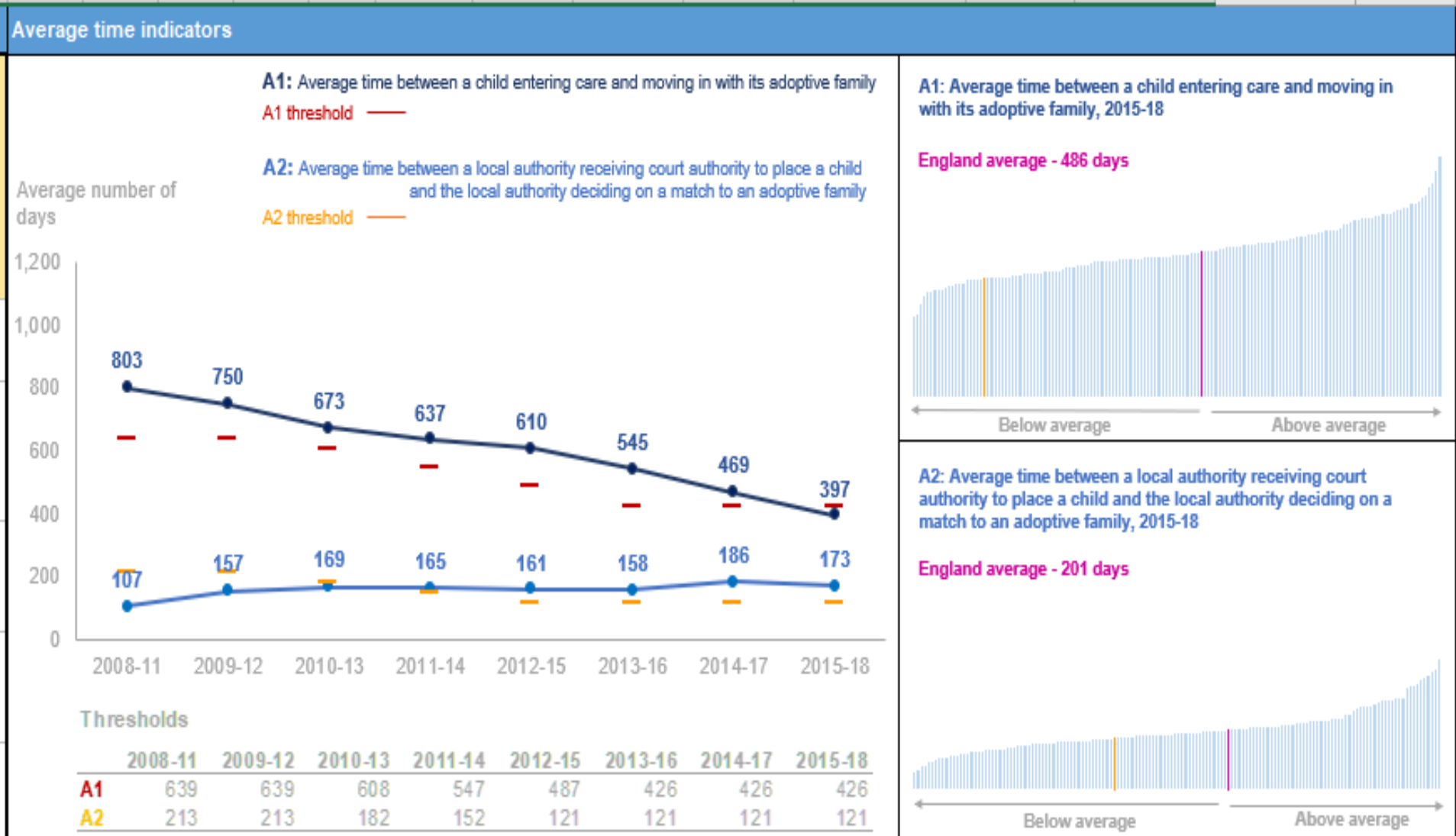
A3: the number of children who waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family:

- In the three-year period 2015-18, there were **76%** (95) of children who waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. This is an increase from 69% (85) in the previous cycle. The England three-year average (2015-18) is 56%. Locally reported data estimates the figure for 2016-19 as 76% (99) of children. This shows maintenance of high levels of performance over time.

10. The most recent Scorecard three-year averages relate to 2015-18, therefore there has been a further year of work taking place in Wiltshire which has produced the unverified averages described above. This data indicates that the three key measures have continued to improve this year, with the overall pace and trajectory of improvement being positive. There is significant improvement for indicator **A1**, meaning that more children are being placed in their adoptive families in a shorter time after being received into care. **A3** also continues to improve. This is good progress. There is small increase in **A2** due to the legacy cases; it is anticipated in local data that the positive trajectory will return in 2016-19 figures. This reflects the impact of two children who have been hard to place and who are now in adoptive placements, demonstrating commitment to seek secure, permanent arrangements for all children where adoption is in their best interest. To ensure continued progress and improvement, careful attention must be given to all aspects of adoption work that remain the responsibility of Wiltshire Council Adoption Agency, whilst ensuring, through governance arrangements, the effectiveness of Adoption West.

11. Within the Score Card data, there is detailed comparative information available regarding Wiltshire Council's performance in relation to Statistical Neighbours. This shows strong performance.
12. Robust processes have remained in place and have continued to be developed within the Council functions and in Adoption West, to ensure that family finding starts at the earliest opportunity and that all activities are monitored and completed in a timely fashion. Adoption West will identify best practice nationally and from within the partnership, making sure that it is recognised and delivered within Wiltshire and across the Adoption West area.
13. The 2018 Scorecard is as follows:

Children			
	A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (days)	A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)	A3: Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %)
LA's 3 year average (2015-18)	397	173	95 (76%)
Distance from 2015-18 performance threshold (426 and 121 days)	Threshold met	52 days	n/a
1 year trend - Improvement from 2017 to 2018	Average time in 2018 was shorter than in 2017	Average time in 2018 was shorter than in 2017	n/a
3 year trend - Improvement from 2014-17 to 2015-18	Average time in 2015-18 was shorter than in 2014-17	Average time in 2015-18 was shorter than in 2014-17	n/a
England 3 year average (2015-18)	486	201	11010 (56%)



Adopters

	Number of approved adoptive families waiting to be matched as at 31 March 2018	Number of applications to become an adoptive family still being assessed (not yet approved or rejected) as at 31 March 2018	Proportion of adoptive families who were matched to a child during 2017-18 who waited more than 3 months from approval to being matched to a child
LA	10	25	82%
England	1,600	1,760	69%

Related Information

	New ADM decisions	New placement orders granted	Adoptions from care during 2015-18 (with % leaving care who are adopted)	Children for whom the permanence decision has changed away from adoption during 2015-18	Number of children waiting to be placed for adoption (as at 31 March 2018)	Number of children waiting to be placed for adoption with a placement order (as at 31 March 2018)	A10: A1 timeliness where times for children who are adopted by their foster family are stopped at the date the child moved in with the foster family (days)	Number of children in a Fostering for Adoption / Concurrent Planning foster placement (as at 31 March 2018)	Adoptions of children from ethnic minority backgrounds during 2015-18 (number adopted and % of BME children leaving care)	Adoptions of children aged five or over during 2015-18 (number adopted and % of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted)	Average length of care proceedings locally during 2015-18 (weeks)
LA	35	30	75 (17%)	10 (9%)	20	10	343	x	5 (10%)	15 (5%)	29
England	-17%	16%	12300 (14%)	2450 (11%)	4,500	2,760	412	410	1930 (7%)	2910 (5%)	30

THESE ARE NOT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

14. Management arrangements and staffing within the Council are compliant with regulation in terms of qualification and experience. The Executive Director (with the responsibility of Director of Children's Services) has overall responsibility for aspects of adoption retained by the Council. Reporting to the DCS is the Director with responsibility for the Families and Children's Service. The Head of Service: Care and Placement Services and their Service Manager ensure the effectiveness of overall adoption provision and the Service Manager is the designated link with Adoption West. This provides strength and clear accountability with an opportunity to develop and challenge the strategy for improvement and ensure best outcomes for children.
15. Wiltshire Council retains case responsibility for children who require adoptive families. These children are usually allocated to social workers within the Support and Safeguarding part of the organisation (occasionally in Children in Care Teams where a child is relinquished) where work is carried out with colleagues from Adoption West to ensure appropriate and timely decision making to achieve adoption. Each of these case holding teams is appropriately managed within the Families and Children's Service.
16. During the reporting period, the Wiltshire Adoption Service was appropriately staffed and managed, in accordance with regulation. The senior management structure was as above and there was a Team Manager responsible for the day to day operations, supported by an Assistant Team Manager (Adoption West has two Deputy Team Managers in each hub team) and social workers. There was also designated administrative support. There was no significant staff absence during this reporting period.
17. Alison Lewis, who was the Adoption Team Manager, took up the post of Service Director for Adoption West in July 2018 and a social worker in the team acted up to provide cover until the permanent position was filled in November 2018. All the staff in the Adoption Service have coped with an unsettled period as the launch of Adoption West, and therefore their TUPE transfer from the Council, was delayed on three occasions. In addition, tragically a member of the team suddenly died, which understandably had an impact on staff and service users. The team coped extremely well with these sets of circumstances and ensured that they maintained operational services.
18. The core task of adoption work, as carried out by the Wiltshire Adoption Service and now Adoption West, is to provide secure, stable adoptive families for children who require legal permanence and are no longer able to remain living safely with their parents or other family members. The Council retains case holding responsibility and, therefore, responsibility for the outcomes for children, although direct services are now provided by Adoption West. Within the latter organisation and previously within the Council), work is managed within the agency as follows:

- The recruitment, assessment and approval of adopters: this provides permanency options for children through the recruitment, assessment and preparation of prospective adopters. Recommended for approval by the Adoption West Adoption Panel, with decisions currently made by the Wiltshire Agency Decision Maker, adopters are then matched with children through the family finding process; Wiltshire social workers work closely with colleagues, previously from the Adoption Service and now from Adoption West.
 - The support of adoptive families and their children to ensure placement stability and that the needs of children are fully met: Services that can be made available include therapeutic support, counselling, training, family days, newsletters and a link to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Staff are also responsible for managing referrals to the Adoption Support Fund which increases adopters' access to specific services for adoption support.
19. In addition, in the reporting period, the local authority was responsible for providing an intermediary service for adopted adults and birth relatives wishing to trace family members, for those wishing to trace adopted children, support for non-agency adoptions (typically step-parents wishing to adopt), support for birth families and those wishing to adopt children from overseas. These functions have now also transferred to Adoption West along with the Adoption Support services described above.
20. A Wiltshire Council Adoption Service development plan, supported by an adopter recruitment strategy, was published in autumn 2015, refreshed in autumn 2016, with further review in 2017. This reflected the priorities of the Service and the areas of improvement indicated in the Ofsted inspection of 2015, linking to the developments and improvements required to improve performance as evidenced within the Scorecard. (Adoption West is developing a recruitment strategy and a business plan for adoption services in the region, reflecting the need of Wiltshire children as well as those from the other local authorities.) The Council does have clear policy and guidance regarding permanence for children which ensures that those requiring adoptive families move towards permanence in a timely way.
21. For reference, and to make sure that they are replicated in Adoption West planning, the priorities of the Adoption Service Development Plan included:
- Identification of suitable adoptive families without delay for children for whom adoption is in their best interest
 - Adopter recruitment and retention
 - Provision of an effective and efficient family finding service
 - Provision of an adopters' training pathway
 - Promotion and continued development of Early Permanence for children
 - Provision of an adoption support service that is responsive to the needs of adopters, special guardians, adopted children and their families
 - Ensure that the Adoption Panel is effective
 - Ensure that the Adoption Service is integral to the development of Adoption West

All these activities are now carried out between the Council and Adoption West.

22. The Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services carried out in July 2015 graded the overall Service as Requires Improvement. A culture of continuous improvement was noted with a positive trajectory towards Good. Children and young people were considered to enter Care when they needed to, and the timeliness of care proceedings had improved. Inspectors identified an Adoption Service that "made well informed and well-matched placements supported by effective family finding". There was evidence that good performance information was used to inform practice and service development. Adopters were prepared and assessed well, and the Adoption Support Team was seen to be effective, innovative and forward looking. The Adoption Panel and Agency Decision Maker (ADM) ensured that children were effectively matched with the most appropriate families. These judgments describe the foundation of continuing improvement and it is anticipated that subsequent inspections of both the local authority and Adoption West will be similarly positive.

23. As indicated above, Adoption West become registered and was launched in March 2019. However, in the preceding time, work had been done to develop practice in the "shadow" organisation which existed before all staff moved to the new organisation through TUPE arrangements. The business model for Adoption West is that of an independently managed Voluntary Adoption Agency, discrete from the local authorities it serves. It is the only RAA in the country that uses this approach. As it matures, it is anticipated that Adoption West will continue to improve the timeliness of adoption for children and the effectiveness of adoption support. Staff and managers from Wiltshire Council were fully involved in the development of Adoption West, not only to ensure it became an effective agency but also so that the interests of children from Wiltshire were well served. The chairing of the Board of Directors is with a Wiltshire Council Executive Director, a Head of Service attends the meetings and there is representation on the Service Manager Group which supports the partnership. All this represents a significant commitment from the Council.

24. The governance task is to ensure that the new service and partnership is robust and can deliver sustained improvement, can meet the needs of the region through each of the six local authorities working in partnership with the Voluntary Adoption Agencies. There are benefits to be gained in terms of the recruitment and sharing of a pool of adopters across the area who can best meet the needs of children requiring adoptive families and therefore increased opportunity for timely matching of children with those families, particularly those who may be considered harder to place.

25. As required to be provided to Cabinet, this report provides performance information relating to the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Profile of Wiltshire children waiting for an adoptive placement at year end

Legal status	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Section 20	0	0	0
Interim Care Order	7	17	19
Care Order	7	0	0
None	10	3	2
Total	24	20	21

Ethnic Origin	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
White British	20	19	20
Mixed/Other	3	0	0
White Irish	0	0	0
Other Ethnic Group	1	1	1
Total	24	20	21

Age	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
0-11 months	4	9	3
12-23 months	3	2	2
2-4 years	11	5	6
5-10 years	6	4	10
11 and over	0	0	0
Total	24	20	21

26. To be noted is that some children remained at home with birth family whilst subject to care proceedings with a care plan for adoption. This meant that other permanence options (such as Special Guardianship Orders) will be considered by the court for these children.

Wiltshire Children adopted

Age	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
0-11 months	3	5	4
12-23 months	7	8	15
2-4 years	14	5	9
5-10 years	8	4	5
11 and over	1	0	0
Total	33	22	33

Wiltshire Children matched within Adoption West	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	N/A	N/A	13 children placed in 11 placements within Wiltshire Another 8 children in 5 placements within Adoption West

Out of county children matched with Wiltshire adopters	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	8 children in 5 placements	8 children in 5 placements	N/A

Rescissions of Placement Orders and Disruptions

27. In 2018-19, 5 rescissions were made where the plan for the child moved away from adoption (7 in the previous year), leading to the rescission of Placement Orders. Wiltshire Council applies rigorous scrutiny to care planning and it is inevitable that there will be developments in a case or a child's situation that means that adoption is no longer in that child's best interest; for example, a family member or parent can resume the care of a child where it had not previously been envisaged, a court may not grant a Placement Order but make a Special Guardianship Order instead or a plan will move to long term fostering, particularly for older children. There is one child who is currently in the rescission process.
28. During 2018-19, there have been no adoption placement disruptions notified to the Adoption Service before an Adoption Order was made, although on one occasion a child did not progress to be placed as the match disrupted during introductions. There have been no placement breakdowns that occurred post-order, when the child returned to being looked after.

Prospective adopters

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Enquiries to be an adopter	85 (households)	66 (households)	67
Applications to be an adopter	n/a	30	35
Number of newly approved adopters	26	18	27
Application to approval: 0-3 months	3	0	3
4-6 months	15	3	19
7-12 months	7	13	4
Over 12 months	1	1	1
Number approved adopters unmatched	14	12	23
Number approved adopters matched	14	18	12

29. Of the 23 adopters, unmatched and "waiting", 4 families were linked and waiting to go to Adoption Panel for a match and 2 are on hold due to personal circumstances, one has an Early Permanence placement, leaving 16 families actively looking to be matched with children. There were 7 children with Placement Orders who were waiting for placements at the year end and where active family finding was happening.
30. Through Adoption West, there are more people becoming approved as adopters who are more immediately accessible to social workers looking for families for Wiltshire children. It is not necessarily the case that these children will be placed with adopters living in Wiltshire as the match with the family best placed to meet the long term, permanence needs of the child is paramount. The increased access to adopters will support children where

there are concerns about the location of birth parents and families to adopters' homes. It is nationally recognised that it is more challenging to find placements for children with complex needs, older children and sibling groups and so a larger pool of prospective adopters, who the agency knows well, within Adoption West is a benefit.

Financial summary of the agency

31. The tables below indicate the budget, actual and predicted expenditure, for the financial years 2017/18 to 2018/19.

32. Adoption West went live on 1st March 2019 therefore the 2018/19 table, includes 11 months of internal team costs and 1 month of contractual payment to Adoption West.

2017/18	Budget (£)	Actual Expenditure (£)
Salaries and team running costs	557,900	531,326
Adopter recruitment and training	17,000	215
Adoption allowances (all types)	501,500	712,048
Special Guardianship Allowances	1,835,600	1,533,815
Adoption income	-200,000	-183,000
Total	2,712,000	2,614,404
2018/19	Budget (£)	Predicted Outturn (£)
Salaries and team running costs	436,500	437,873
Adopter recruitment and training	17,000	2,723
Adoption allowances (all types)	610,600	860,199
Special Guardianship Allowances	1,654,700	1,602,679
Adoption income	-200,000	-213,013
Contractual Payment: Adoption WEST	140,300	140,202
Total	2,659,100	2,830,663

33. There have continued to be adoptive families who are financially supported to look after Wiltshire children. Numbers of families and total costs are indicated below:

	At 31 March 2017 Children/Carers	At 31 March 2018 Children/Carers	At 31 March 2019 Children/Carers
RO Allowance	14/11	11/10	10/9
Adoption Allowance	38/31	32/26	34/27
Other (SGO)	184/136	195/150	213/164
Total	236/178	238/186	257/200

	2016/17 Actual Expenditure (£)	2017/18 Actual Expenditure (£)	2018/19 Provisional Outturn (£)
RO Allowance	108,706	93,404	84,964

Adoption Allowance	332,757	291,330	308,632
Other (SGO)	1,397,912	1,553,815	1,602,679
TOTAL	1,839,375	1,938,549	1,996,274

- In addition to the direct budgets above, adoptive families have access to ringfenced therapist services, the estimated value of the contract is £40,000.

34. In this reporting period, and prior to Adoption West becoming operational, the local authority continued to apply for funds from the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) to enable families to access commissioned therapeutic services. At 31.3.2019 there were 80 allocated Wiltshire families who were receiving adoption support and 117 applications had been made to the ASF (this is the number of applications relating to therapy delivered in the reporting period. The actual applications may have been made earlier), with the current budget being administered of approximately £266,082. Adoption West works actively within the £5,000 fair access limit per child and has sought match funding from the local authority for 4 children when there has been significant risk of placement breakdown. The most common types of therapy provided remain DDP, Sensory Integration Therapy and creative therapies such as art or play therapy.

35. The outturn budget for Adoption Allowances is broadly in line with the activity. Cost per adoption have increased over time. This reflects more “complex” adoptions being supported (often in adolescence and to prevent placement breakdown). In addition, the limitations of the Adoption Support Fund only financing therapy for children plus the requirement of the local authority to contribute, means that some adoptive placements require additional financial support to maintain stability.

Adoption Panel

	2016/17	2017/18 (Wiltshire Council and Adoption West (AW))	2018/19 (Wiltshire Council and Adoption West (AW))
Panels held	19	19	18
Adoptive families considered	25	24* (including 4 assessed by other AW local authorities)	26
Matches considered	31	36 (28 Wiltshire children and 8 from other AW local authorities)	32 (24 Wiltshire children and 8 from other AW local authorities)
Relinquished Children	0	1 (Wiltshire child)	0
Reviews of Adopters notified	0	0	0

* Two suitability assessments were considered by panel on 27.3.18 and their ADM decision was made in April. Therefore, they do not appear in the 2017-18 count.

36. The Adoption West Adoption Panel complies with Regulation. This is important assurance as children who are the responsibility of Wiltshire Council are matched with adopters at these panels. Although they are different panels, information is included, in the table above, relating to Wiltshire Panels and Adoption West Panels, one of the latter panels is hosted by the Council under the partnership “hub” arrangement. These panels are not the direct responsibility of the local authority. The panel is chaired by a suitably skilled and experienced Independent Chair who ensures that the functions of panel are delivered effectively. There are Agency Panel Advisers from Adoption West to ensure that the panel is always adequately supported. To ensure that panels are quorate, there is an Adoption West central list of panel members established which includes members with direct experience of adoption, including adopters, and those who have been adopted. There are dedicated Administrators in place within the three Adoption West hubs to support the work of the Adoption Panels.
37. To comply with regulation, all Panel members, including the Chair, receive annual appraisals which consider their effectiveness as panel members and any areas for development. There is an annual training day; the most recent Wiltshire Panel day was in June 2018 and for Adoption West, 30 April 2019. This ensures that panel members are updated regarding statutory and legislative changes along with Adoption West developments and improvements to practice. Panel members have an opportunity to consider how well the Panel is operating and what could be done better. The Chairs meet regularly with the Panel Advisers to discuss operational and developmental issues relating to the panels’ work and consistency, making any changes and improvements as required.
38. The arrangement for Panel recommendations being considered by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) is robust, although interim. In the period between October 2017 and the implementation of Adoption West as an Adoption Agency in March 2019, decisions regarding Wiltshire children being matched with adopters and the suitability of adopters assessed by the Wiltshire Adoption Service were made by a Wiltshire ADM. Following Adoption West becoming operational, decisions about matches remained with the local authority responsible for the child and decisions about suitability to adopt were made by the ADM from the local authority where the assessing Adoption West worker was linked.
39. To ensure capacity and availability within Wiltshire, there are currently three senior managers who take the ADM responsibility on a rota basis within the organisation, with administrative support and a clear process in place to make sure that ADM decisions are made within timescale. This means that adopters are informed of decisions promptly following Panel recommendations. When Adoption West has secured more senior management capacity, all suitability to adopt assessments/approvals related ADM decisions will rest with that organisation.

Commentary

40. The main externally reported performance information for Wiltshire Council is included in the Adoption Scorecard and is summarised above. There

has been steady improvement in performance over the three-year rolling period. The impact of legacy cases is noted alongside local reported actual and predictive figures.

41. Sustained improvement is evident when considering the two priority areas of development (the time between assessment of adopters and matching and the timeliness of the adoption of children where it was in their best interest, including those with complex needs), the unverified data indicates that strong improvement continues, with attention to be paid to performance following the implementation of Adoption West so that momentum is maintained. Overall, over the last 10 years practice has improved year on year because of improved planning that is focussed on outcomes for children and is part of the wider Looked After Children improvement agenda. Robust management arrangements are in place within the local authority and, now, in Adoption West, providing a solid foundation for continued improvement.
42. Continued improvement of performance at **A1** requires permanence planning to be timely and responsive to a child's needs. The second review (held four months after a child becomes looked after) must identify an appropriate plan where the decision is that permanence is the preferred option. To ensure timely planning and decision making, the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer, working alongside the child's Social Worker, provides challenge and oversight to a case. This is checked through audit. Permanency Planning Meetings are used on all cases to decide which options are right for a child and required actions are identified, supporting the care planning process. The terms of reference of the monthly Permanence Panel ensures that children have an appropriate plan for permanence, including adoption, at the right time in their care pathway. In addition, the pace at which matters proceed through the legal process has improved over recent years. The Scorecard shows that as of March 2019, the average time was 29 weeks (28 weeks at March 2018); several complex cases requiring lengthy finding of fact hearings have maintained the average figure.
43. Cabinet will have been encouraged to see the number of adopters recommended for approval in 2016-17 to be an increase on the previous year. However, a decrease followed with a recovery in this reporting period. The decrease mirrored the national trend whereas, as previously indicated, the recent upturn does not. Whilst this is clearly very encouraging, a better indication of overall effectiveness and impact upon outcomes for children is how many children are adopted and in what timescale. The percentage of children leaving care through adoption in 2016-19 in Wiltshire was 17% (14% nationally). The Adoption Leadership Board states that there is a national decrease in adopter recruitment figures. By way of comparison, currently Adoption West has 96 assessments in progress, of which 22 are "Wiltshire based". The previous annual report stated that Wiltshire Adoption Service had 21 assessments in progress (the highest since 2016), an increase of 33% from the end of the previous financial year. Recognising this is not an exact comparison, it does reflect growth in numbers of families approved as suitable to adopt.

44. The number of children who are “waiting” for adoption in this period is close to the number last year. At the same time, the number of children adopted has increased; this shows that there is a significant rise in the number of Wiltshire children who need adoptive families.
45. Promoting the needs of Wiltshire’s children, during the reporting period the local authority, and now Adoption West, has continued to use Link Maker, a national on-line resource that is adopter-led and provides adopters with information about children needing adoptive families. It has produced quicker matching for some children and national searches are made for children considered ‘hard to place’. The use of Link Maker will continue to have a vital place in family finding for children since the National Adoption Register was closed on 31st March 2019. The DfE is reviewing the purpose and function of a national register with a permanence focus following the Fostering stocktake. In some situations, and if required, adopters may be recruited either locally or via another adoption agency for specific children waiting. This strategy has not recently been used for Wiltshire children as placements have been identified with existing Wiltshire adopters, or from Voluntary Adoption Agencies or from Adoption West. Adoption West will have a positive impact on the timely placement of children with adoptive families as it will widen the pool of approved adopters available.
46. Early Permanence (EP) practice is established in Wiltshire. In 2018-19, 9 children were referred for EP and 3 were placed with EP carers. In 2017-18, 10 children were placed, and 3 in the preceding year. Of the 6 not placed, arrangements did not go ahead for different reasons such as uncertainty about sibling adopters or no one coming forward for the child. Four children from surrounding authorities were placed with Wiltshire approved EP carers. Of the 27 adoptive families approved in this period, 8 were open to consider EP placements. There are currently 5 adopters approved for EP without a child placed (one is on hold) and 4 families in assessment who will be approved as EP carers. Adoption West positively assesses potential adopters and seeks approval of their suitability through the Adoption West Panel. It is important that there is a pool of adopters who can look after children on an EP basis and where the long-term plan is adoption - and for children where there is concurrent planning for a potential return home. Such placements fall under the umbrella of Early Permanence. Regulation allows for children to be placed in these circumstances with the approval of the local authority. Adoption West is working towards implementing Panel arrangements whereby prospective adopters can also be approved as foster carers (dual approved), further facilitating EP arrangements. For the potential adopters, there is some uncertainty associated with such placements, as the child could return home or move to family, and so adopters need to be able to manage this and appropriate support is provided. The local authority should be confident in presenting the legal case to court and being assertive in matching children with adopters where it is in their best interest to do so. This will further improve outcomes for children, timeliness and, therefore, Scorecard performance.
47. The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) process is designed to meet statutory requirements and not bring undue delay into the system. It is under

continual review to ensure it is effective, by ensuring that family finding and matching work can begin at the earliest opportunity, the time is reduced that children wait to be matched. This activity, linked to the development of Early Permanence and the larger pool of Adoption West adopters, will allow placements to be made and matches agreed through Panel quickly and without reducing the rigour applied to ensuring that all decisions are in the child's best interest. This activity will support improvement of **A2**.

48. It is anticipated that **A3** performance will continue to improve as the scrutiny and challenge provided by the Independent Reviewing Service and the work of Permanence Panel continue to drive timeliness and permanence planning. It is important to note that the target has "tightened" in recent years and the measure is now taken over 14 months (previously 16 and 18 months), with progress remaining positive. The emphasis placed on effective planning means that several children, where adoption was identified as being in the child's best interest, have had the ADM decision reversed and the Placement Order rescinded, with an alternative permanence plan agreed. Current care planning practice and robust challenge will not allow cases to drift, thus securing permanence for children.
49. As indicated, the effective development of Adoption West was increasingly an area of priority involvement for the local authority. It remains a priority to ensure the new organisation is effective in helping to achieve best outcomes for Wiltshire's children.

Next Steps and Recommendations

50. To continue to improve outcomes for children who need adoptive families, the Local Authority will:
- By using a range of management and performance information, closely track the effectiveness of adoption practice in terms of children requiring adoptive families to be confident that the implementation of Adoption West does not adversely affect outcome for Wiltshire's children
 - Through the Board of Directors, maintain a high level of involvement with Adoption West; considering the needs of Wiltshire's children through ensuring good matching and support of adopters
 - Identify an officer within the Senior Management Team of the Families and Children's Service to be the lead on adoption and to be the primary connection to Adoption West
 - Through specific discussion and regular liaison meetings, continue to work with the local judiciary to further improve the way that the courts deal with care cases in a timely manner, recognising the potential delays for children where additional family members (sometimes multiple) may be considered as carers late in proceedings or where additional assessments are indicated
 - Provide Early Permanence placements for children via Adoption West
 - Working closely with Adoption West, ensure proactive family finding practice (anonymised profiles, information days and events, Link Maker, child appreciation events) to ensure the effectiveness of the process to

bring about timely identification of potential adoptive matches for children who require adoption

- Hold Adoption West to account to ensure a sufficiency of adopters who can meet the diverse needs of the population of children requiring adoption in Wiltshire. A suitably diverse pool of approved adopters allows matching to begin early in the process, often before a Placement Order is made.
- In cases where it is recognised that the agency may struggle to match children with in-house prospective adopters, request Court consent to feature the children's profiles beyond Wiltshire's boundaries and, through Adoption West, be pro-active in referring children to regional and national family finding services once a Placement Order has been granted (sooner with the consent of the court)
- Continue to ensure that formal Disruption Meetings take place where adoption placements breakdown before Adoption Orders are made to consider key learning to inform whole service improvement.

Background

51. Adoption is a route to provide permanency for children who are no longer able to live safely with their parents or other family members. This is achieved through the provision of quality adoptive placements for Wiltshire's children where a decision has been made that adoption is in their best interest. This is achieved through effective working between the local authority and Adoption West.
52. The fundamental requirement is that children are placed with families who have been assessed as being suitable to adopt. A recommendation of suitability is made by the Adoption Panel and this is ratified as a decision by the appropriate Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Through this process, there is rigorous assurance that approved adopters can provide safe, secure and enduring family placements for this vulnerable group of children. In turn, this allows them to grow, develop and thrive in a nurturing, supportive and loving family environment, removed from the stigma of being looked after by the local authority. To do this, there must be an appropriate range of enduring adoption placements to meet the assessed needs of children who need permanent adoptive families. These families must promote stability, safety and positive outcomes for children by working in partnership with all agencies, as required.
53. The legislative basis of this work is the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the accompanying 2005 Regulations. As indicated, Ofsted inspected the Service as part of the wider Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in July 2015. From April 2019, Adoption West has been the operating Regional Adoption Agency and Wiltshire no longer carries out the full range of adoption functions as it did. The Council retains some aspects of an adoption work and is an Adoption Agency; the requirement to be inspected and for Cabinet to be assured remains.
54. The local authority, through reporting to Cabinet, must be assured of regulatory compliance and effectiveness through performance monitoring, challenge and improvement planning.

55. Adoption West has the responsibility to recruit, assess and approve adopters for infants and younger children. This includes those who can provide permanence for children who may be considered “harder to place”. This group includes older children, sibling groups and children with disabilities. Adoption West remains part of the South West Adoption Consortium (SWAC) which works regionally to identify matches for children across the area and is developing a close working relationship with RAAs across the SW and nationally. Adoption West subscribes to Link Maker, an online adopter-lead resource.

56. Adoption West is a Voluntary Adoption Agency; a partnership of six local authorities working with a small number of locally operating Voluntary Adoption Agencies. It is the Regional Adoption Agency, providing adoption services in line with government requirement, from the point of expression of interest to adopt, through to assessment and approval at panel and beyond, to Adoption Support. It is anticipated that Adoption West will have significant impact on outcomes for Wiltshire’s children as it will deliver a more effective regional response to adoption and the needs of children. The case responsibility for children will remain with Wiltshire Council.

Safeguarding Implications

57. Children who require adoptive families remain the responsibility of Wiltshire Council’s Families and Children’s Service. This service is delivered in accordance with Wiltshire Children’s Services Policy and Procedures, overseen by the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Panel. The local authority has clear and effective safeguarding procedures in place for children and vulnerable adults.

58. The partnership with Adoption West is carefully regulated and Adoption West has the appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

59. This report is for note by Wiltshire Council Cabinet.

Public Health Implications

60. Not applicable - for note by Wiltshire Council Cabinet.

Corporate Procurement Implications

61. Not applicable - for note by Wiltshire Council Cabinet.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal (detailing conclusions identified from Equality Analysis, sections 4 and 5)

62. Throughout the adoption process due regard is had to the Public Sector equalities duties but as this report is for noting, there are no specific equalities issues raised by this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

63. Not applicable - for note by Wiltshire Council Cabinet.

Risk Assessment

64. Risks that may arise if the performance and management of adoption work, and that of Adoption West with whom the Council is in partnership, is not effective and does not achieve good outcomes for children:

- Safeguarding risk to looked after children if they are placed with adopters who have not been fully assessed, prepared and supported. Safeguarding is considered a high-level risk within the corporate risk register
- An inadequate supply of adopters to meet the needs of children requiring permanence through adoption
- Reputational risk if the Agency or Adoption West is not effective and does not achieve good outcomes for children who require adoption
- Reputational risk if statutory timescales are not met regarding adoption
- Reputational risk if the Agency or Adoption West is rated as Inadequate through inspection
- Financial risk if placements are made, are unstable and subsequently breakdown leading to children returning to local authority care
- Financial risk if Adoption West is not effectively managed
- Risks associated with the safety and effectiveness of overall service delivery provided by Adoption West.

Effective delivery of the provision of adoptive families to children who need them, supported by appropriate improvement and service plans, reporting and challenge will mitigate these risks. The secure operation of Adoption West, with appropriate accountability and reporting to the Board and to Wiltshire Council, as required, will support this.

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

65. See above. Not applicable - for note by Wiltshire Council Cabinet.

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

66. See above. Not applicable - for note by Wiltshire Council Cabinet.

Financial Implications

67. The previous budget for the Adoption Service is indicated, in summary, above. The Service has been managed within budget due to external incomes collected. The cost of supporting an adopted child is less than the average cost of looking after a child in the care system and is often time limited as opposed to costs of care which extend to 18 years old and beyond. Cabinet has previously received information relating to the financial implications of Adoption West and the contribution that the Council will make to the new organisation. This annual report relates to how well Wiltshire Council carries out responsibilities regarding the adoption of children, it cannot be separated from considerations of the effectiveness of Adoption West.

Legal Implications

68. It is a requirement of registration as an Adoption Agency that the Executive side of the Council receive regular written reports regarding the effectiveness, compliance and management of the Agency. It has been agreed that this will be in the form of this annual report and so it ensures that legal requirements are met. There are no additional legal implications arising.

Options Considered

69. Not applicable - for note by Wiltshire Council Cabinet.

Conclusion

70. Recent years have seen considerable change within the world of adoption and a focus on improving adoption performance. This has led to the need to review and develop services, amend policy and practice and so increase the effectiveness in achieving best outcomes for children to be adopted. At the heart of this is the belief that, for some children, adoption is the best route to legal permanence, security and the opportunity to achieve their potential. Wiltshire Council is committed to improving service delivery and, therefore, outcomes for children. Adoption West has brought further significant change and further anticipated improvement to this. The Council is an Adoption West partner, working collaboratively and regionally to ensure a whole service approach to prevent delay in securing appropriate adoptive placements for children in a timely and safe way.

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Background Papers

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

None

Appendices

None

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