

AGENDA

Meeting: Cabinet

Place: The Kennet Room - County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN

Date: Tuesday 28 March 2023

Time: 10.00 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

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

Membership:

Cllr Richard Clewer	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing
Cllr Laura Mayes	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, and Skills
Cllr Phil Alford	Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfer
Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling	Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets
Cllr Nick Botterill	Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning
Cllr Jane Davies	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion
Cllr Nick Holder	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change
Cllr Ashley O'Neill	Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, Staffing, Communities, and Area Boards
Cllr Caroline Thomas	Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding

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Part I

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

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

1 **Apologies**

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (*Pages 5 - 22*)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 31 January 2023.

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 Mouncillors**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public. This meeting is open to the public, who may ask a question or make a statement. Questions may also be asked by members of the Council. Written notice of questions or statements should be given to Stuart Figini of Democratic Services stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 718221 by 12.00 noon on Wednesday 22 March 2023. Anyone wishing to ask a question or make a statement should contact the officer named above.


6 **LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan** (*Pages 23 - 56*)

Report of the Chief Executive

7 **Retender of Good Lives Alliance Framework** (*Pages 57 - 68*)

 Report of the Chief Executive

8 **Procurement of Cleaning Contracts** (*Pages 69 - 76*)

 Report of the Chief Executive

9 **Market Sustainability Plan** (*Pages 77 - 92*)

Report of the Chief Executive

10 **Household Support Fund 2023-2024** (*Pages 93 - 100*)

 Report of the Chief Executive

11 **Urgent Items**

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

12 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

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

To consider passing the following resolution:

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Number 13 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.

Reason for taking item in private:

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

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

13 **Environment Act 2021** (*Pages 101 - 118*)

🔑 Report of the Chief Executive

Cabinet

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2023 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Richard Clewer (Chairman), Cllr Laura Mayes (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Phil Alford, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Nick Botterill, Cllr Jane Davies, Cllr Nick Holder and Cllr Caroline Thomas

Also Present:

Cllr David Bowler, Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Cllr Dominic Muns, Cllr Nic Puntis, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr David Vigar, Cllr Graham Wright and Cllr Jon Hubbard

1 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ashley O'Neill.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 was presented for consideration. Councillor Ian Thorn made a comment regarding the level of detail of public comments included within the minutes.

It was then,

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Leader's Announcements

When opening the meeting the Leader announced that Councillor Dr Mark McClelland had stood down from the Cabinet following his appointment as Special Adviser to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury John Glen MP. He thanked Councillor McClelland for his work as Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Streetscene, and Flooding, and wished him well in his new role.

Councillor Caroline Thomas had been appointed as Cabinet Member for Transport, Streetscene, and Flooding.

Councillor Nick Holder had been appointed as Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

A detailed announcement was then made updating on council and other actions on addressing Cost of Living challenges, including bus fare reductions, cost of living payments, winter fuel payments, and support with energy bills. A full announcement is attached to these minutes.

Councillor Ian Thorn congratulated the council on the work taking place, and asked what more could be done to encourage housing associations to take proactive measures to provide assistance. The Leader noted Housing Associations were independent bodies, but reiterated support the council was able to offer, and that he was happy to raise concerns with the associations, and that MPs could also be contacted. Councillor Phil Alford provided details of complaints being raised with associations or through the Ombudsman.

Lastly, the Leader confirmed that following feedback from disability groups in Wiltshire, the council would soon be implementing a grace period to allow Blue Badge holders an extra hour on any parking ticket purchased in council-run car parks. Holders would need to purchase a ticket and display their Blue Badge as usual, and the additional time period would be implemented from when the ticket time has expired, to recognise the extra time need to leave and return to their vehicles.

5 Public Participation and Questions from Members

Questions were submitted from the following Members of the Public:

Celia Beckett on behalf of the Hilperton Area Action Group regarding the Local Plan review. Kevin Perrett on behalf of Staverton Parish Council regarding the Draft Local Plan and potential development of sites 4 and 5. Dr Jimmy Walker submitted a series of questions relating to cycling.

Written responses were provided along with the questions as detailed in Agenda Supplement 1.

Celia Beckett asked a supplementary question on the spread of proposed housing sites around Trowbridge. Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Strategic Planning, stated viability and sustainability of sites would be assessed as part of the Local Plan review process, with the draft plan due to be published later in 2023.

Keven Perrett asked a supplementary question relating to deliverability of sites and appropriate infrastructure being in place ahead of development on proposed sites. Councillor Botterill stated sites would need to be deliverable, and precise solutions would need to take account of local issues, though it was not possible to identify these at this stage.

Many questions were also received from Councillor David Vigar on several aspects of support being provided for Ukrainian refugees. The questions and written responses were also set out in Agenda Supplement 1.

Councillor Vigar asked a series of supplementary questions on the government definition of the purpose of funding provided to give support for Ukrainian families, assistance on finding rented accommodation, rental top up support and other measures.

The Leader responded disagreeing that rental top up support was a sustainable and appropriate measure, stating that families would require longer term solutions when funding may no longer be available, and that the council was assessing the latest revisions to government guidance on funding criteria.

6 **Wiltshire Council's Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24-2025/26**

Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning, introduced the report which proposed the 2023/2024 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/2024 to 2025/2026. The report also set out the Council's Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2029/30, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget 2023/24 and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Councillor Botterill noted that the council and country was facing unprecedented times, with inflation at levels not seen for four decades, escalating costs to contracts of up to 20%, high energy prices, and continuing impacts from Covid-19. The council had faced a notional overspend of approximately £45m, but through a sound financial base and necessary decisions in preceding years including transformations and organisation changes, was able to present a balanced budget proposal encompassing the next three years.

He stated the proposal did not rely drawing upon reserves, which would be increased overall over the three years, with others released to support Business Plan priorities. He stated there had been some extra government funds relating to social care, but other direct grants had been removed, and was not relying on deferring capital expenditure. He provided details of proposed council tax rises over the next three years, and the careful analysis undertaken before recommending them, and the fees and charges increases where it was deemed necessary and where good value for money was provided.

Colin Gale had submitted questions on behalf Rushall Parish Council and the Pewsey Community Area Partnership, regarding the recovery of costs for elections from town and parish councils, and the use of the Rural Mobility Fund, respectively. Written responses were provided with the questions as detailed in Agenda Supplement 1.

Colin Gale asked a supplementary question regarding communication sent to parish councils. He criticised the effect on small parishes, and believed there could have been consultation through the Area Boards.

The Leader responded that as a budgetary matter the issue would be determined by Full Council and Area Boards were not an appropriate method of consultation. A response would be provided after the meeting regarding communication with parishes.

Colin Gale also asked a supplementary question regarding the Rural Mobility Fund, asking how savings would be achieved through maximising the geographic area. Councillor Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Sreetscene, and Flooding, provided a response that maximising the area for demand responsive transport could reduce the schedule for bus services particularly affected by inflation. She stated it was about a more efficient use of limited resources, responding to requests rather than laying on services which may be empty.

Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, addressed the Cabinet regarding questions raised at the meeting of his Committee on 24 January 2023, with the report of the meeting included in Agenda Supplement 1.

Councillor Gavin Grant, Vice-Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, noted the thorough examination of the budget and council finances during the year by the Task Group, and planned to review the arrangements for budget scrutiny to ensure it was as effective as possible. The Leader noted the troubles faced by councils without effective financial scrutiny, and would await any outcome from a review by Overview and Scrutiny of its arrangements. He commented on the difficulty scheduling all the necessary meetings within the available timescales.

Councillor Botterill also provided details of a small update to Appendix 1 Annex 7 of the budget papers regarding £0.150m saving for cessation of support to VisitWiltshire. To ensure a smooth transition the saving would be delivered at the end of the contract in March 2024, so the saving would be delivered in the financial year 2024/25, not 2023/24. To manage the financial impact an underspend within Place services would be set aside in 2023/24 to fund the later timing of the delivery.

Councillor Jon Hubbard asked for details on how much was expected to be raised from parish councils paying for the cost of their own elections, raising concerns that it might act as a disincentive for people to stand and have contested elections in some areas, as the parish would then be liable for the cost of the subsequent election, and was not supportive of the proposal. The Leader responded that parishes bearing the cost of their elections was not uncommon and there had been a lot of discussion around setting the costs at a

reasonable level, and that income was expected to be approximately £0.400k for 2025.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves:

- a) **That the current Infrastructure List, is updated and the existing reference to upgrades to Trowbridge Sports Centre is deleted and a new entry is included to read New Trowbridge Leisure Facility Project.**

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

- b) **That a net general fund budget of 2023/24 of £465.372m is approved;**
- c) **That the Council Tax requirement for the council be set at £332.187m for 2023/24 with a Band D charge of £1,719.90, an increase of £1.57 per week;**
- d) **That the Wiltshire Council element of the Council Tax be increased in 2023/24 by the following:**
 - i. **A 2.99% general increase;**
 - ii. **Plus a levy of 2% to be spent solely on Adult Social Care;**
- e) **That the Extended Leadership Team be required to meet the revenue budget targets for each service area as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, for the delivery of council services in 2023/24;**
- f) **That the Extended Leadership Team be required to deliver the revenue savings plans for each service area as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, over the three-year MTFS period 2023/24 to 2025/26;**
- g) **That the changes in the fees and charges as set out in the report are approved;**
- h) **That the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2029/30 is approved;**
- i) **That the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix 2 is approved;**
- j) **That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2023/24 is set at £26.401m;**

- k) That a 7% increase is set for social dwelling rents, except for rents currently over the formula rent which will be capped at formula rent as per national guidance;
- l) That all service charges related to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to cover costs and garage rents are increased by 5%;
- m) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the forecast balanced budget over the MTFs period 2023/24 to 2025/26 is endorsed.

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Cabinet to recommend to Council a balanced revenue budget for the financial year 2023/24 and to set the level of Council Tax.

To enable effective, transparent decision making and ensure sound financial management as part of the council's overall control environment.

The Cabinet also sets out the final assumptions being used in the budget for growth, inflation, demand for services, the estimated level of income from sales, fees and charges and the level of income estimated from core funding e.g. Council Tax, Business Rates and government grants as well as the level of reserves held and assessed by the council's Section 151 Officer, as required, to provide future financial resilience.

This provides the council with a MTFs to deliver on the Business Plan priorities and drives long term financial sustainability.

7 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24

Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning, presented the report which proposed the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24. The report included information about:

- Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years
- Debt management decisions required for 2023/2024 that do not feature within the Prudential or Treasury Indicators (paragraphs 57 to 60)
- Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2023/2024; and
- Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/2024

Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee confirmed that the Committee considered the report at its meeting on 24 January 2023, raising issues such as the impact of higher interest rates, capital expenditures and cashflow management. The Financial Planning Task Group had looked at the report in greater depth.

Councillor Gavin Grant, Vice-Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group commented on the report. He thanked the Cabinet Member and S151 Officer for

providing answers to the Task Group on a number of matters. He commented on those elements of the capital programme funded by government grant and those subject to loans taken by the council, and any implications this had on the council's treasury management.

Councillor Ian Thorn sought additional details on the report. In response to queries it was confirmed advice was received from external advisors though any decisions on treasury management were taken by the council. He asked about management through money market funds, where it was stated that due to interest rate rises banks were more competitive than before. He also sought clarity on lender option borrow option loans.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

To recommend that the Council:

- a) Adopt the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (paragraph 26 – 28)**
- b) Adopt the Prudential and Treasury Indicators (paragraphs 17 – 25, 40 – 46 and Appendix A)**
- c) Adopt the Annual Investment Strategy (paragraph 63 onwards).**
- d) Delegate to the Corporate Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) the authority to vary the amount of borrowing and other long-term liabilities within the Treasury Indicators for the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary**
- e) Authorise the Corporate Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) to agree the restructuring of existing long-term loans where savings are achievable or to enhance the long-term portfolio**
- f) Agree that short term cash surpluses and deficits continue to be managed through temporary loans, deposits and money market funds**
- g) Agree that any surplus cash balances not required to cover borrowing are placed in the most appropriate specified or non-specified investments, particularly where this is more cost effective than short term deposits; and delegate to the Corporate Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) the authority to select such funds**
- h) Agree the revised Investment Policy (paragraph 70)**
- i) Agree the revised Creditworthiness Policy (paragraph 77)**

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to agree a Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 and set Prudential Indicators that comply with statutory guidance and reflect best practice.

8 Financial Year 2022/23 - Quarter Three Revenue Budget Monitoring

Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning, presented the report setting out the revenue forecast position for 2022/23 as at the end of November 2022, updated for any known significant changes in December 2022, for the third quarter budget monitoring period.

He explained that the current forecast indicated an underlying overspend for the year of £15.697m with one off mitigations in place resulting in a net overspend for the year of £5.037m. It was proposed that this overspend be met from the £8.8m inflation reserves that were set aside to cover the anticipated cost of inflation during 2022/23. He drew attention to net demand within Children's Services, though the number of Children in Care was within the target range, and necessary use of some agency staff. He stated 93% of identified savings were forecast to be achieved, which was a very good rate.

Councillor Botterill concluded that despite very significant inflation, unforecast pay award costs, and contract price rises, the overall position remained under control and sound.

Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Committee met on the 24 January 2023 to consider the report briefly, which had been considered in more detail by the Financial Planning Task Group.

Councillor Gavin Grant, Vice-Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, highlighted the rise in the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit as set out in the report, asking about the implications of the rise. The Leader noted the deficit in high needs funding was a national issue, and the government had delayed further decisions on the matter.

Councillor Ian Thorn asked about the potential for further reductions in the forecast overspend position, and sought details on the proposed earmarked reserved for investment in the county's road sign infrastructure. The Cabinet commented that a plan was being developed for how this would be delivered.

Councillor Jon Hubbard noted that the number of Children in Care in Wiltshire was low compared to comparator authorities, and whether if there was a rise to similar levels there was adequate funding in the latent demand reserves. It was stated that reserve was to deal with demand issues arising from the persisting effect of Covid lockdowns, but that the council was in a good position for further resource due to prevention work.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That Cabinet Approve:

- a) the utilisation of the inflation reserve to fund the net overspend, currently forecast at £5.037m, in 2022/23;
- b) the transfer of £0.015m in 2022/23 and £0.045m in 2023/24 from the SEN commissioning reserve to fund the SEND Youth Voice Pioneer Programme; and
- c) The transfer of the £16.5m Budget Equalisation Reserve and the balance remaining in the Inflation Reserves, estimated at £3.8m at the end of the year, as follows:
 - i. £7m to the General Fund Reserve
 - ii. £10m to a new earmarked reserve for accommodation needs
 - iii. £2m to the Transformation Reserve to support the community led Community Development pilots
 - iv. £0.5m to a new earmarked reserve for investment in the county's road sign infrastructure, and
 - v. The remaining balance to the Business Plan Priority Reserve.

That Cabinet Note:

- a) the current revenue budget is forecast to overspend by £5.037m by the end of the financial year.
- b) the current forecast savings delivery performance for the year.

Reason for Decision:

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

To inform Cabinet on the forecast revenue financial position of the Council for the financial year 2022/23 as at quarter 3 (31 December 2022), including delivery of approved savings for the year.

9 Financial Year 2022/23 - Quarter Three Capital Budget Monitoring

Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning presented the report setting out the Capital Programme for 2022/23 as at 31 December 2022 for the third quarter budget monitoring period.

He explained that the report included movements from September 2022 and sets out how the programme is forecast to be financed. The final projection for the year 2022/23 was £172.227m, but was expected to conclude nearer to £130m. Councillor Botterill detailed improvements in the council's financial reporting that was coming through, so more realistic expectations of capital expenditure was being forecast for future years.

The Leader stated there had been significant improvements in budget monitoring, nothing the constant flow of issues relating to capital programmes which were outside the council's control.

Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Management Committee met on the 24 January 2023 to consider the report.

Councillor Gavin Grant, Vice-Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, noted the variance between current position and expectation for the end of the financial year, suggesting some cash implications if there was borrowing for things that would not then happen. Whilst acknowledging some slippage would occur, the Task Group noted a gap of that order was of some concern.

Councillor Ian Thorn stated it would be important to see how much closer the estimates were for the next year.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That Cabinet note:

- a) the additional budgets added to the programme totalling £2.652m, £1.633m in 2022/23 and £1.019m in 2023/24 under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- b) the movement of £20.563m of budgets into future years under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- c) the removal of £13.926m from the capital programme, £0.50m from 2022/23 and £13.176m from future years under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- d) budget movements between schemes;**
- e) the revised 2022/23 Capital Programme as at quarter three of £172.227m; and**
- f) the capital spend as at 31 December of £87.998m.**

Reason for Decision:

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

To inform Cabinet on the financial position of the Council on the 2022/23 capital programme as at quarter three (31 December 2022).

(A break was taken from 1210-1215)

10 **Q3 Performance and Risk**

Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council presented a report which provided an update on performance against the stated missions in the Council's Business Plan 2022-32 for quarter three, along with a summary of strategic risk.

The Leader explained that the report provided the current corporate performance framework, with measures used to monitor progress against the 10 missions detailed in the Council's current Business Plan. The Strategic Risk Summary captured and monitored significant risks facing the Council in relation to in-service risks facing individual areas and in managing its business across the authority. He continued to note that the targets were flexible and would evolve over time, and so additional measures would continue to be added where these added value.

Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, reported that the Management Committee considered the report at their meeting on 24 January 2023 and that the Select Committees would continue to review performance measures relevant to their service areas.

Councillor Ian Thorn stated the report was improving from an already positive position and would be very useful in monitoring deliverance of the Business Plan. He sought details on how measures monitoring physical activity were compiled, and it was stated this was from survey data from Sports England. The difficulty in developing useful performance metrics for some issues was discussed. He also asked whether it Area Board Chairs or Council could receive the report in future. The Leader stated it was intended he would update Area Board Chairs and possibly Council.

Councillor Gavin Grant asked about specific metrics looking at the impacts of Covid-19, with it being stated that the impact could be seen in some measures such as education gap in phonics, but its impacts were wide ranging and not covered by a particular metric.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Note the updates and outturns against the measures and activities ascribed against the Council's priorities and agree the initial targets.**
- 2) Observe the Strategic Risk Summary.**

Reasons for decision:

To provide Cabinet with a quarterly update on the current corporate performance framework, which is compiled of the measures used to monitor progress against the 10 missions laid out in Wiltshire Council's Business Plan 2022-32.

New measures and details of those being developed are also included, both within the scorecard and in the report commentary.

The Strategic Risk Summary captures and monitors significant risks facing the Council, in relation to in-service risks facing individual areas and in managing its business across the authority.

This is supported by, and in compliance with, the Council's Corporate Performance and Risk Policy.

11 School Admissions Policies 2024-2025

Councillor Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills presented a report which detailed the four elements of the School Admission Policy 2024/2025, as part of the statutory process for the determination of admission arrangements to maintained schools and academies within the council area.

She noted the number of admissions per year and very low number of issues as an example of a high performing service.

Councillor Ian Thorn raised a query relating to school operating criteria.

It was then,

Resolved:

To approve the following:

- 1) the proposed scheme for the co-ordination of admission to secondary schools for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix A.**

- 2) the proposed scheme for the co-ordination of admissions to primary schools for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix B.
- 3) the proposed admission arrangements for Voluntary Controlled & Community Secondary Schools for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix C.
- 4) the proposed admission arrangements for Voluntary Controlled & Community Primary Schools for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix D.

Reason for Decision:

It is a legal requirement to have these policies in place.

The schemes and arrangements as presented have been sent out to all schools for consultation and no alternative suggestions have been received to date.

12 **Extension of the Wiltshire Special Educational Needs and Inclusion (SEND&I) Strategy for a Period of 12 Months**

Councillor Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, and Inclusion, presented a report highlighting the challenges associated with the renewal of the Wiltshire SEND&I Strategy within the previously agreed timeframe from 2020 to 2023.

The report sought an extension for the current Strategy of one year, with a renewed strategy to be produced by the summer of 2024. This was due to delays in implementing some activities due to Covid-19, and to await further details on potential changes coming from government.

There being no further comments, it was then,

Resolved:

- 1) **That an extension of a year is agreed for the current Wiltshire SEND&I strategy, due to the delay from COVID in adopting the current strategy document, the associated delay in undertaking some elements of identified activity and the developments associated with the Government Green Paper (published for consultation Summer 2022).**
- 2) **Co-production activity for the next Wiltshire SEND&I strategy to commence in Autumn 2023 with a finalised strategy available in Summer 2024 and shared with Health and Wellbeing Board for approval as soon after completion as possible.**

Reasons for Decision:

The process of writing a SEND&I strategy has a requirement for all elements to be co-produced with key stakeholders including partners in health and social care and local community representatives. A key tenet of a SEND strategy is

also co-production from the very earliest stage with families and children and young people.

The COVID pandemic resulted in a delay to the SEND&I Strategy being presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board for approval. It was shared and discussed with this group on 24th September 2020. The pandemic did not result in a delay in all priority areas of the strategy but there are activities which have had to be amended to take account of challenges relevant to the pandemic.

A Green Paper 'Right Support, Right Place, Right Time' was published for consultation in the summer of 2022 which detailed proposed change to local area arrangements for SEND, including the formation of a local area board. Consultation on this paper has now closed and we await further detail on the shape of these proposals in the future. This means that there are some key areas about which at the current time we remain unclear.

13 **Children's Residential Placements Block Contract**

Councillor Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, presented a report outlining proposals to commission 12 residential children's home places in Wiltshire, to ensure children are able to remain closer to their home and community where appropriate.

The Deputy Leader explained that commissioning the additional places would secure long term accommodation for children and young people in Wiltshire through a 10-year contract with an external provider. She provided figures for the number of children and young people in residential placements, and whilst that number was relatively stable the costs were always increasing. There had been a successful bid to the Department for Education to assist with purchasing residential homes to lease to a provider.

Councillor Jon Hubbard, Chairman of Children's Select Committee, thanked officers for briefings on the subject. He noted the proposals would save money, but more importantly would improve quality of life for young people.

Councillor Ian Thorn raised a query relating to the reasons for out of county placements, such as safeguarding concerns. It was stated that in some cases needs were so specialist that out of county placements were the only option with current provision.

It was then,

Resolved:

That Cabinet agrees:

- 1) **To award a 10-year block contract to an external residential care provider, to provide 12 places in Wiltshire for Wiltshire children and young people. This will include an annual review of the contract.**
- 2) **That officers continue to undertake to prepare and complete the tender programme, award, and implement a new block contract for children's residential care by 30 April 2023.**
- 3) **To delegate authority to approve and award a new contract and future extensions and variations and all associated documents to the Corporate Director of People in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills.**

Reasons for Decision:

1. *To ensure children are able to live closer to their home, family, community, and social networks where it is safe and appropriate to do so.*
2. *To ensure cost effective placements for children and young people within buildings owned by Wiltshire Council by leasing them to a provider at a peppercorn rent through a new block contract for 12 residential children's home beds.*

14 **Minor Amendments to the Councils Allocation Policy**

Councillor Phil Alford, Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets, and Asset Transfer, presented a report detailing minor amendments to the allocation policy ahead of a full policy review taking place later in 2023.

Amendments included to place former children in care within Priority Band 1 up to the age of 25, for any application who was a current social housing tenants under-occupying by one or more bedrooms to be awarded Band 1 status, to enable households owed the homeless relief duties to be placed in the exclusion group, and to adjust wording regarding suspension from the housing register.

The Cabinet noted the need to be careful when making any adjustments to allocation policy, and commended the proposals as reasonable, highlighting the importance of commitment to care leavers. It was confirmed the allocations policy was receiving a full review in 2023.

Councillor Bob Jones MBE made a comment in support of the amendments.

Councillor Ian Thorn welcomed the report and raised queries on limited availability of larger properties.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

To make the following amendments to the allocation policy:

1) Care Experienced Young People

For all Wiltshire care experienced young people , who are either relevant children or former relevant children to whom the Council owes duties under the Children Act 1989 (as amended), up to the age of 25:

- to be awarded Priority Band 1 status when it is confirmed that they are ready to move on into independent accommodation. In each case, a joint assessment of the care experienced young persons ability to live independently under their Pathway Plan will have been performed by Children's Services and Housing, with an independent living assessment agreed with the care experienced young person for prospective landlords. Where the care experienced young person has a tenancy with the council or a private registered provider, and their housing circumstances mean that they have a housing need under this policy, a further housing application will be treated in the same way as the application of another transfer applicant; and
- to be provided with an automatic local connection to Wiltshire as the Council are their corporate parents and the care experienced young person should always have a connection to Wiltshire. This would be an extension of the exclusion group contained within the existing allocation policy.

2) Under Occupation

For any applicant who is a current social housing tenant within the Wiltshire Council area who is under- occupying by one or more bedrooms to be awarded Band 1 status to make homes more affordable, to help free up larger homes and make best use of our social housing stock.

3) Homeless Relief Duty

To enable households owed the homeless relief duties to be placed in the exclusion group.

4) Removal of suspension following a verbal offer of accommodation

To substitute the wording within paragraphs 4.12 of the policy to confirm that suspension from the housing register will only occur when a formal offer of accommodation has been made via email or letter and not a verbal offer.

Reason for Decision:

- 1) *To improve our corporate parent offer to care experienced young people who are ready to live independently;*
- 2) *assist households with reducing households bills by allowing them to move to smaller properties which will better meet their housing need;*
- 3) *ensure that households who are owed the relief duty under the homeless act to be considered in the exclusion group; and*
- 4) *ensure that the Council doesn't suspend applicants from the register who are only made verbal offers of accommodation to reduce the number of complaints and reviews*

15 **Wiltshire Council's Housing Board - Annual Report**

Councillor Phil Alford, Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets, and Asset Transfer, presented a report which provided an annual update on the activities of Wiltshire Council's Housing Board between October 2021 and November 2022.

The report highlighted the key achievements of the Housing Board over the previous 12 months which included detail about economic response, planned investments in homes, services performance, approach and challenges and opportunities. The report also provided detail about Housing Revenue Account budgetary position.

Councillor Bob Jones MBE, Vice-Chairman of Environment Select Committee, stated the report had been considered at its meeting on 4 January 2023. The Committee had asked questions on performance indicators in need of improvement, sought details including on the number tenancies and how tenants were communicated with, and sought assurance on actions taken to improve performance and assistance for tenants to receive eligible benefit support.

It was then,

Resolved:

That the Housing Board Annual report be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

Wiltshire Council's Housing Board's Terms of Reference require an Annual report to be presented to Cabinet.

16 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 1.05 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718504, e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

28 March 2023

Subject: Corporate Peer Challenge – Action Plan (Spring 2023)

Cabinet Member: Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of Wiltshire Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing

Key Decision: Non-Key

Executive Summary

Following Full Council's receipt of the final report from the highly successful Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2022, a draft action plan reflecting the feedback and recommendations has been developed.

Proposal

Cabinet is asked to:

- Approve the draft action plan.
- Agree to a follow up visit in Autumn 2023 to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified.

Reason for Proposal

Corporate Peer Challenges (CPCs) are a form of sector-led improvement arranged by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Responding to their feedback, via an action plan and agreeing to host a follow up visit to further reflect on learnings and actions, is the agreed approach undertaken by all councils.

**Terence Herbert
Chief Executive**

Subject: Corporate Peer Challenge – Action Plan (Spring 2023)

Cabinet Member: Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of Wiltshire Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing

Key Decision: Non-Key

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Cabinet with the draft action plan, reflecting the feedback and recommendations from the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge that took place in November 2022.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. Wiltshire Council aims to be the highest performing council in the country, but it cannot do this alone and working well with local communities, local businesses and partners in the NHS, fire, police, justice, military, schools, voluntary sector and central government is critical to this success.
3. As outlined in the Business Plan, the Council seeks common cause with partners to achieve the right outcomes in the right place and at the right time; a successful peer challenge and action plan can propel the achievement of this.

Background

4. Corporate Peer Challenges (CPCs) are a form of sector-led improvement arranged by the LGA.
5. They are improvement-focused and tailored to meet individual councils' needs, designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement.
6. They are not inspections and do not provide a detailed diagnosis or scored assessment.
7. All CPCs cover five core components: Local priorities and outcomes; Organisational and place leadership; Governance and culture; Financial planning and management; Capacity for improvement.

8. In advance of their visit, the peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information provided by the council and independently sourced to ensure they were familiar with Wiltshire Council and the challenges it is facing.
9. The team then spent 4 days onsite at Wiltshire Council between the 7-10 November 2022, during which they spoke to more than 180 people, including a range of council staff together with elected member and external partners and stakeholders.
10. Collectively, they spent over 200 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 5 weeks in Wiltshire – and in order to triangulate what they had read or heard from sources, consequently ensuring all conclusions and recommendations were evidence-based.

Main Considerations

11. The team published their report (Appendix 1) and this was shared with Full Council at its meeting in February.
12. The report noted that:
 - Wiltshire Council is clearly, and proudly, a values-led organisation with senior members and officers committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for residents.
 - A collaborative, open and transparent organisational culture has developed under the stewardship of the current senior leadership team, where challenge is genuinely welcomed between both officers and members.
 - The recently agreed Business Plan is visibly providing organisational direction and is quite clearly owned by members.
 - There are many improvement success stories within the council, not least within Children's Services – a service which has embraced a wide-ranging improvement journey resulting in the team be the first to be rated as 'Good' in the South West. The learning from this improvement journey is now informing transformation in Adults Services and the wider performance management approach across the council.
 - The Council has developed a visible corporate approach to transformation, with a strong narrative that the purpose of this activity is to drive service improvement over delivering financial savings.
 - There is impressive and strong internal governance with clarity around process and function which contributes to the overall internal improvements that have been delivered at the Council in terms of organisational culture and governance.
13. There were also a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions.

14. The proposed method of addressing the recommendations is outlined in the draft action plan (Appendix 2).

15. Once approved, timeframes for completion will be agreed with Cabinet and CLT.

Overview & Scrutiny Engagement

16. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) has received the report, albeit at short notice due to the tight production and publishing timeframes.

17. OSMC has been invited to consider both the Corporate Peer Challenge report and draft action plan, and to monitor progress on a periodic basis as required.

Safeguarding Implications

18. Not applicable as no decision is required.

Public Health Implications

19. Not applicable as no decision is required.

Procurement Implications

20. Not applicable as no decision is required.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

21. Not applicable as no decision is required, although it must be recognised that this is an area of notable achievement.

Workforce Implications

22. It was recognised that, in common with the rest of the sector, the Council is experiencing recruitment issues in some areas but a proactive approach to Organisational Development, including refreshing the Workforce Strategy, is part of a planned approach to address this.

23. The peer team also noted that the fact that staff rate the council so highly as an employer means the Council is better placed than some to face these challenges.

24. With this considered, when developing service-level plans, further assessments may be required to understand workforce implications.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

25. Not applicable at this point as no decision is required. However, when developing service-level plans further assessments may be required.

Risk Assessment

26. Not applicable as no decision is required.

Financial Implications

27. The CPC report noted that the Council overall has worked hard to ensure that there is a corporate approach to financial management and planning, with a collaborative approach taken, which needs to continue to ensure the council continues to strengthen its financial resilience in the context of sectoral financial pressures and increased demand.

28. When developing service-level plans further assessments may be required on other financial implications.

Legal Implications

29. The findings concluded that the Council has impressive and strong internal governance, with clarity around process and function, which contributes to the overall internal improvements that have been delivered at the council in terms of organisational culture and governance.

Conclusions

30. The final report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided at the end of their visit, noting that, when presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not consultants or inspectors.

31. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time and, reflecting on the findings and suggestions, a draft action plan has been developed to advance these recommendations where appropriate.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Corporate Peer Challenge November 2022 – Final Report
- Appendix 2: Draft Action Plan

Background reading: None

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LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Wiltshire Council

8th – 11th November 2022

Feedback report



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1. Executive summary

Wiltshire Council is clearly, and proudly, a values led organisation with senior members and officers committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for residents. This ethos modelled by the Chief Executive, Senior Members and Leadership Team is permeating all levels of the organisation. A collaborative, open and transparent organisational culture has developed under the stewardship of the current Chief Executive, where challenge is genuinely welcomed between both officers and members.

The council serves a large and mostly prosperous county which has a rich diverse heritage. With a population of nearly 510,000, including around 30,000 military personnel and their families, the council is also the fourth largest unitary council in England. With these and other key factors in mind, the council utilises a strong data and insight capability and focus to underpin and inform its recently adopted Business Plan, a plan which seeks to reflect and meet the needs and aspirations of the communities it serves.

The recently agreed Business Plan is visibly providing organisational direction and is quite clearly owned by members. The plan covers a ten-year period and so provides an important clarity of vision and purpose into the medium term – transcending political terms of office. Through this plan, the council articulates a mission to ensure:

- The people of Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy, and enriched lives
- Communities continue to be beautiful and exciting places to live
- The local economy thrives and is supported by a skilled workforce
- The council leads the way in mitigating the climate changes ahead.

In pursuit of this mission, the council is working hard on a place-shaping agenda and embedding an integrated place-based approach. Developing a wider Economic Strategy for Wiltshire, led by the council in collaboration with public and private partners, will be an important next step towards achieving this. Partners stand ready and willing to engage in a more structured way with the council and build on the existing good practice that often occurs at a service level currently.

The council's work to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change is impressive, with many activities that would be considered exceptional in other organisations being seen very much as the 'day job'.

There are many improvement success stories within the council, not least within Children's Services - a service which has embraced a wide-ranging improvement journey resulting in the team being the first in the South West to be rated as Good across all judgement areas. The learning from this improvement journey is now informing transformation in Adults Services and the wider performance management approach across the council.

The council has in recent times worked hard to ensure that there is a corporate approach to financial management and planning. This is much more developed than was the case during the last Corporate Peer Challenge – there is a more collaborative approach to the budget setting process in place, with members being provided with a range of budget scenarios and cross-council dialogue on budget and financial planning scenarios. This is an evolving picture that needs to continue to embed, especially as there will need to be some challenging conversations over coming weeks and months around delivering Business Plan priorities in the context of sectoral financial pressures and increased demand (and complexity of cases) within people services.

The council has developed a visible corporate approach to transformation, with a strong narrative that the purpose of this activity is to drive service improvement over delivering financial savings. The whole organisation is conversant with this approach but the balance between efficiencies and service improvement may need to be revisited as financial pressures will become increasingly prevalent.

Following unitarisation in 2009, 18 Area Boards were introduced in Wiltshire to provide a forum for multi-agency engagement at a community level. These Boards continue to be valued by members, but their role and remit would benefit from review and refocusing to enhance the council's Place Shaping Agenda.

Wiltshire Council has impressive and strong internal governance with clarity around process and function, which contributes to the overall internal improvements that have been delivered at the council in terms of organisational culture and governance.

The breadth and depth of these internal improvements are evident and provide a

sound foundation for senior leaders to develop a more outward looking focus, seeking to engage more locally, regionally, and nationally to promote the interests of Wiltshire Council and create opportunities for external collaboration to achieve the aims and ambitions of the council.

The Council's Local Plan is currently under review, and whilst the peer team appreciate there are concerns at a political level about the relevance and impact of national planning policy for Wiltshire, the Local Plan should be seen as a pivotal vehicle for delivery of the council's key ambitions for place. It is important that the council works with, rather than against national policy and seeks to make the plan work for Wiltshire and all its diverse places over the next 15-20 years. At a practical level, and as government thinking continues to evolve in this area, the absence of an updated Local Plan increases the risk of unplanned development, thus limiting the council's capacity to exercise place-shaping powers, such as securing relevant infrastructure, to maximum effect.

In common with the rest of the sector, the council is experiencing recruitment issues in some areas. A proactive approach to Organisational Development including refreshing the Workforce Strategy is part of a planned approach to address this – the fact that staff rate the council so highly as an employer means the council is better placed than some to face these challenges.

We found a council that has many strengths – resulting from a period of sustained focus on internal improvements – that, combined with the benefit of a Business Plan, can begin to complement a strong organisational core with a more outward-looking focus in pursuit of delivering 'services that are over and above their statutory obligations for the people of Wiltshire and ensure that the council is the highest performing in the country'.¹

2. Key recommendations

There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

- Develop a more clearly articulated strategic narrative of place, using the Local

¹ Taken from Business Plan introduction.

Plan as key spatial narrative. Making the Local Plan work for Wiltshire will be important, and ensuring this work is delivered at pace to agreed timescales will be important.

- Seek to take advantage of the fact that the council's internal improvements are now paying dividends to provide space and time for senior leaders to focus on wider external partnership opportunities to help take Wiltshire forward in line with the Business Plan.
- Consider how to celebrate the successes of Wiltshire Council where it is important and where it contributes to raising the council's external profile e.g., Climate Change and Children's Services.
- Create a county-wide strategic partnership board to oversee the Economic Strategy for Wiltshire and underpin the Wiltshire Public Service Board with appropriate officer groups that bring partners together to share resources and deliver on common priorities.
- Consider how developing a comprehensive Asset Management and Capital Investment Strategy could support future transformation and place-shaping ambitions and inform future budget decisions.
- Review the role and function of Area Boards so that they add maximum value to your Place Shaping ambitions.
- Use continuing work with VCS around the emerging framework to ensure opportunities to involve them (and other partners) in developing strategies and policies are maximised.
- Continue to ensure that your approach to transformation is embedded and understood across the organisation.
- Continue to build on the collaborative approach you're developing around budget setting to ensure clarity on all options given the inevitable difficult decisions that lie ahead (e.g. prevention/place).

3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

3.1. The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Councillor James Jamieson
Chairman, Local Government Association
- John Hewitt
Chief Executive, Durham County Council
- Lorna Baxter
Director of Finance and s151 Officer, Oxfordshire County Council
- Andrew Hunter
Executive Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration, Bracknell Forest
- Emily McGuinness
Peer Challenge Manager.

3.2. Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes, which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?

5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

In addition to these questions, the council asked the team to look specifically at organisational resilience and capacity to deliver an ambitious agenda for place.

The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. Over the course of 3.5 days, the team:

- Engaged with nearly 180 councillors, officers, and partners across 3 days of interviews in addition to further research and reading.
- Collectively spent over 200 hours to arrive at our findings, the equivalent of one person spending 5 weeks with Wiltshire Council.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.

4. Feedback

4.1. Local priorities and outcomes

The Business Plan adopted by the council in February 2022 is providing a clear set of objectives for the council and is clearly owned by members, with officers and the wider organisation well sighted on its content and purpose. The Plan has four key themes: Empowered People, Resilient Society, Thriving Economy and Sustainable

Environment, which resonant throughout the organisation and partner organisations. The fact that the Plan covers a ten-year period until 2032, stretching beyond the political term, is positive and demonstrates a long-term commitment to improving outcomes for the residents and businesses of Wiltshire. The Plan has well-articulated aims and activities, which sit below each intended outcome; members and staff are conversant in how performance will be managed and driven, and are clear that the priority is very much to secure improved outcomes for residents. The level of organisational focus provided by the plan, and supported by a rigorous performance management approach, will be increasingly important as the council works to address the challenges they face, along with the rest of the sector, in terms of reducing resources and increasing demand. Service Delivery Plans sit below the Business Plan and together they form the basis of an annual cycle that sequences service planning and budget setting, and provides a framework for services to describe how their activities are contributing to delivering improved outcomes for residents.

Nowhere is a focus on improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable in the community more evident than in Children's Services at Wiltshire Council. The council has delivered a successful improvement programme, with their last inspection report in 2019 noting that the determined and well-focused leadership, combined with the corporate resolution of key elected members, has paid dividends for the children of Wiltshire. The council is currently rated as 'good' – the first in the South West to achieve this rating across all judgement areas – and is now clearly in pursuit of an 'Outstanding' rating. The council is also a Sector-Led Improvement Partner in Children's Services. Strong performance, both in terms of service delivery and financial management in this service area, is against a national trend and is a result of a long-term improvement programme, which is paying dividends and shows the impact of maintaining preventative activities. Inevitably because of national funding challenges, the council will need to closely examine all spending over the coming months and ensuring, where it can, that it is able to understand the balance of any savings across people- and place-based services – particularly to understand the impact of any changes to preventative services that can influence longer-term costs to the council and balance the impact of this against other Business Plan priorities.

It is positive to see that the successful transformation approach used in Children's

Services is now being implemented across the People Directorate in Adults Services, ensuring that improvement plans are owned by the whole organisation. The transformation programme in this service area is comprehensive and includes a focus on strategies, reforms, delivery of efficiency savings and continuous improvements. It is important that the council ensures corporate focus is maintained on this challenging change and improvement programme in the face of national reforms and resource pressures/requests from across the council.

The Area Boards, which have been an important and defining part of the council's community engagement framework since its' inception in 2009, continue to allow the council to have a visible presence in 18 clearly-defined localities. These Boards usefully provide a structured engagement forum for elected members, and it is positive that grants awarded by Area Boards are now clearly aligned to the Business Plan. Whilst the Area Boards are largely well regarded, as the council moves forward with a stronger focus on delivering the ambitions of the Business Plan, there is a need to review their role and function, taking onboard lessons learned through the pandemic when the council successfully, and impactfully, adopted a more community convenor type role, by providing structure and guidance as well as mapping activity. The Council recognises that they do not need to step into spaces where they are not needed, but can instead add value through providing advice, guidance, and structure. Through the Business Plan leading members are clearly committed to a strong place-shaping agenda for Wiltshire, and the existing Area Boards could support these ambitions through a more clearly defined role as convenors of partners from all sectors at the local level.

There is a wide and diverse voluntary sector in Wiltshire – which reflects the nature of the area. The sector is well mobilised and there are examples of where the council works well to deliver improved community outcomes such as the Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub and it is positive to note the VCS is represented in the ICB arena. Work is already underway to review and develop a framework for a more consistent approach for engaging the VCS at all levels of the organisation. The sector would particularly welcome greater engagement in the early stages of some strategy development. This could be an important opportunity to ensure community capacity is maximised and that the good practice, which can be found at an operational level in terms of working alongside voluntary and community organisations, is replicated

across the council. We saw positive relationships between senior officers and VCS representatives - where challenge was welcomed and heard, and this constructive engagement will be important in developing an effective VCS framework that meets the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.

The relationship between the Council and Stone Circle (a wholly owned company of the council) is maturing well and there are sound governance arrangements in place. The council continues to face a number of strategic housing needs that cannot be easily addressed through traditional approaches e.g. the lack of key worker accommodation is impacting on the availability of services in some parts of the county. Stone Circle is working to meet the needs of the residents of Wiltshire through the purchasing (and ultimately development) of homes that are available at sub-market rents. The provision of homes for homeless people and those on whole life pathways is commendable and has greatly reduced the council's use of temporary Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Wiltshire Council is a valued partner and is working well in specific projects, such as working with UK Health Security Agency and Ministry of Defence at Porton Down and delivering spaces to support innovation in this location, as well as working in partnership to deliver a community café for tenants, often at an operational level. We heard that the Business Plan was very much developed with a focus on what is in the gift of the council to deliver, and the council is rightly proud of what has already been achieved. However, as financial pressures become more prevalent, looking to deliver through partnerships could be beneficial. Developing a strategic level Partnership Plan that sets out how the council plans to engage with the whole spectrum of partners could help establish shared priorities and vision across all sectors and, importantly, identify opportunities to share resources. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to an ambitious place shaping agenda.

Building on this, a focus by the Chief Executive on strengthening the internal organisation has paid dividends, as is explored in later sections of this report. There is now a stable basis that should allow the Chief Executive and Leader to continue to adopt a more proactive and outward looking approach, locally, regionally, and nationally. This will ensure both the offers and the asks of Wiltshire Council and its residents are clearly articulated and heard in the right places and by the right people.

4.2. Organisational and place leadership

There has evidently been a cultural change at Wiltshire Council, driven by a Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) who model leadership values and the principles of the 'Our Identity' Framework. The framework was launched in 2021 and now consists of seven elements forming a blueprint for an inclusive, high-performing council and is underpinned by a genuine and commendable desire to make life better for residents, which is shared by the members and officers from across the organisation that the team met with.

The 'One Council – public servants building stronger communities together in Wiltshire' element of the framework is prevalent throughout the organisation, and we saw many examples of positive collaboration on key projects across service areas, from pan-organisational transformation projects to support for the Performance and Oversight Boards/Groups. This approach is enabling the council as a whole to work collectively on delivering the outcomes stated in the Business Plan, unfettered by traditional service and professional boundaries.

Constructive challenge and discourse are genuinely welcomed between senior officers and members – and between senior officers. The shared commitment to securing the best possible outcomes for residents provides a clear framework, but as these discussions move into the inevitably more challenging realm of allocating increasingly reducing resources, this level of open and honest challenge will be even more vital.

The depth and breadth of internal changes ranging from regular staff surveys, bootcamps² to review the council's employer brand and the deployment of staff brand ambassadors is impressive and means that the council has laid strong foundations for organisational resilience. This, coupled with work to empower staff to take decisions at the most appropriate levels, means that senior officer capacity can look to develop a more outward focus – both in terms of the Wiltshire partnership agenda,

² Our Identity bootcamps were launched in 2021 to review and make changes to the employer brand to ensure a more coherent framework, aligned to the council's identity that staff could identify with and help the council create a brand to support future recruitment.

but also promoting the council at a regional and national level. The Council has a good story tell in so many areas and the sector would benefit from hearing, and learning from, their experiences.

Whilst progress in organisational development has been good, the council is self-aware and appreciates that it is not the yet the finished article. There remain some challenges around workforce reforms, but the right building blocks are in place and there is positive organisational energy and commitment to continue the journey.

Place leadership is clearly an important focus for members at Wiltshire Council and their ambitions are well articulated in the Thriving Economy and Sustainable Environment themes of the Business Plan. Members speak with passion about their desire to positively shape their communities. However, delivering an ambitious place-shaping agenda has significant resource implications for the council and as budgetary pressures grow, there will need to be some challenging discussions about resource allocation, ensuring the right balance is maintained between people and place priorities, and that the impressive performance in areas such as Children's services is not jeopardised. Exploring alternative delivery options through enhanced partnership working could help build capacity to achieve place-shaping ambitions.

Area Boards are well placed to facilitate leadership on local issues, and the Place Board³ model is allowing all partners to coalesce around vision and delivery for specific geographies – the next stage is to review the role and function of the Area Boards and the part they should play in a more strategic and collaborative approach to place-shaping.

The Council is taking an active lead and is well respected in the ICB/ICS space – The Leader of the Council is the first Chair of the BSW Integrated Care Partnership, and the Chief Executive is a member of the BSW Integrated Care Board. The fact that the Corporate Director for People is the first Chair of the new Wiltshire Integrated Care Alliance, means that the voice of children is heard in this increasingly important and high-profile arena.

Wiltshire Council is excelling in work to address Climate Change. The council has declared a climate change emergency, which commits them to cut council carbon emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, seeking to also achieve the same

³ Place boards have been established for key settlements, chaired by the local MP

for Wiltshire as a whole. The Climate Strategy, which was informed by a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, has good levels of corporate ownership amongst officers and members, to the extent that climate change work is seen very much as 'business as usual' and is integrated in the day-to-day operations of the council, and is aligned to the delivery of the Business Plan. The team saw and heard work in this area that they feel the wider sector would benefit from and would encourage the council to be more proactive in sharing best practice regionally and nationally – there is a lot to be learnt from the approach they are taking.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for the council in terms of place leadership is the lack of a single narrative of place for Wiltshire. Given the geographical spread and diverse nature of the county, maybe a single narrative would be an artificial construct. Having said this, being the "Home of the Market Town" is a USP – as is the role the council plays in supporting community identity. However, there are times when the council needs to own its unitary role, leading and advocating for the special features of the county as a whole, and taking a more strategic view to positioning Wiltshire regionally and nationally, looking to lead the place agenda and bringing willing and engaged partners with them.

Prioritising the Local Plan as the council's spatial narrative is key - this would also provide cohesion and act as a way to pull together what the council is already doing to drive the council's place-shaping agenda. The Local Plan is currently under review, and whilst we appreciate there are concerns at a political level about the relevance and impact of national planning policy for Wiltshire, the Local Plan could and should be a pivotal vehicle for delivery of the council's key ambitions for place. It is important that the council works with, rather than against national policy and seeks to make the plan work for Wiltshire and all its diverse places over the next 15-20 years. At a practical level, the absence of a 5-year land supply is putting the council at risk of unplanned development in inappropriate locations, thus limiting its capacity to exercise place-shaping powers to maximum effect.

Whilst the commitment to the place-shaping agenda is evident across the council, how to achieve the ambitions in a strategic and planned way is less clear. The concept is recognised by officers in the Economic Development and Regeneration team as relatively new, with some good local projects underway. The joint project between the Council and the Environment Agency to create a green waterside park

that acts as a flood defence for Salisbury is a good example of collaborative working to solve a problem, whilst also improving the quality of the environment for residents, and is a good example of what is being achieved in partnership. The emerging Economic Strategy will be a vital corporate document to frame place shaping intent and activity – and this strategy should include a narrative of place and ‘brand’ for Wiltshire in terms of economic growth, providing the cohesion that will better enable the council to meet its economic aims and objectives.

A more strategic approach to place shaping may help with prioritising activity across the council. Identifying key locations and projects for growth/regeneration, with clear rationale, being unapologetic and as part of a strategically planned approach, will enable the council to marshal increasingly limited resources and manage the expectations of internal and external stakeholders. The council can continue to work at a more macro level and through enhanced partnership delivery in other areas. This could, for example, help to address how the viability of smaller rural communities can be resolved.

The council is not currently engaged in any meaningful devolution discussions with Government, primarily as there are no immediate proposals that are felt to be in the interests of the residents of Wiltshire. We would urge the council to be clear on the risks of not actively entering into a devolution discussion, and to agree a strategy for how and when they will engage moving forward to ensure opportunities are not missed and the council continues to shape its own future – particularly as this is a government policy area that continues to be a focus for future investment opportunities at a local level.

Community Asset Transfers are an integral part of the council's place-shaping agenda – between 2010 and 2022, 202 such transfers have been made. Whilst the Cabinet have recently agreed a revised Community Asset Transfer Policy, we found no visible strategic overview of all assets owned by the council and how these could be used to help shape place, and to deliver some key ambitions and meet needs. Developing a comprehensive Asset Management Plan that is aligned to the emerging Economic Strategy, feeds into the emerging Local Plan, and which identifies the assets of partners that could contribute to shared place shaping ambitions, would help contribute to achieving important Business Plan objectives.

4.3. Governance and culture

A truly positive organisational culture pervades all levels of the council, where collaboration and challenge do appear to be genuinely welcomed and encouraged. There is a shared commitment to the One Council ethos with everyone working for the benefit of the residents and communities of Wiltshire. This is also shared by Cabinet members who demonstrate a strong desire to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable people in Wiltshire. The work we have outlined in previous sections in terms of organisational development has evidently contributed to this. The Team heard from staff that the fact that senior leaders are seen to model organisational values and behaviours has contributed significantly to a positive organisational culture.

The council has impressive organisational governance providing good levels of rigour and consistency in corporate decision-making, there is clarity around roles and responsibilities, and member/officer relationships are strong and productive. This extends to the Stone Circle wholly owned company where governance improvements now appropriately balance risk and benefit. Effective governance is seen as an enabler for the delivery of Business Plan objectives and the council should be commended for the improvements it has made in this area.

As already mentioned, as the council continues to implement some aspects of organisational development, there can be at times challenging dialogue with recognised trade unions. Representatives of all trade unions were invited to meet with the Peer Team, and the one that we spoke with reported having a good relationship with key officers and members, and that they felt able to raise issues formally and informally and are listened to.

The peer team found Wiltshire Council to be a modest and humble organisation, which is to its credit as time and energy is spent improving outcomes rather than self-promotion. However, continuing to build a profile regionally and nationally based on tangible successes is important in terms of staff morale and making sure the council is best placed in an increasingly competitive recruitment market.

The Extended Leadership Team is recognised by staff as a positive forum for cross-organisation collaboration (and challenge). We saw a passionate and engaged group

of leaders who embody the One Council approach to addressing challenges on a pan-organisational basis and who stand ready (and able) to embrace a more empowered style of leadership, allowing more senior leaders to continue to function at a strategic level and adopt a more outward focus where appropriate.

The pervading culture of the council is testament to the leadership of the Chief Executive, who has led on instilling a strong public service ethos and invested in developing a more empowered model of leadership, where people are encouraged to make the right decisions at the right time and in the right place.

Scrutiny at Wiltshire Council is well resourced, and members feel they are able to challenge and influence the policy agenda. There are effective mechanisms in place to co-ordinate activity on an annual basis between Scrutiny and the Cabinet, ensuring that there is a balance between overview and scrutiny. However, members recognise that there is scope for them to continue to develop the value they add through engagement in the early stages of policy formation, perhaps through Task and Finish Groups.

The recent improvements to the Audit and Governance Committee, such as the appointment of independent members and carrying out a member skills audit, have had a positive impact on both the efficacy and profile of this committee. As these changes embed, it will be important that members and officers continue to ensure the challenge provided by this committee is sufficiently rigorous and provides the necessary levels of assurance and reassurance to internal and external stakeholders

4.4. Financial planning and management

It is positive to see that improvements have been made in terms of collective ownership, understanding and responsibility for financial management and oversight since the council's last Corporate Peer Challenge. Officers and members that we spoke with were able to articulate how and when they engaged in both budget setting and financial monitoring, and many stated that this year's budget setting approach has been much more collaborative and inclusive than in the past. This is an evolving picture that is continuing to embed into organisational culture and will no doubt be tested by the inevitable difficult decisions that the council (like many others within the

sector) will be faced with in the coming weeks and months. However, the council has created a much better – and supportive – environment for these discussions than has been the case previously.

Financial management and members of the finance team are now much more integrated into the day-to-day business management of the council, for example through collaborative budget setting processes and formal engagement in the Transformation Board, further strengthening a more inclusive approach to finance and performance management.

There is an opportunity to use the financial management code to help shared understanding of financial management responsibilities across CLT and Cabinet and the wider organisation. Local Authorities are expected to demonstrate that the requirements of the Financial Management Code are being satisfied and so being able to demonstrate this will be important for the council.

As part of the current budget setting process, scenarios are being considered that articulate both pessimistic and optimistic positions, providing members with a range of potential options. Going forward, there will need to be some challenging discussions to ensure a balance between Business Plan Priorities (i.e., political priorities and ambitions) and the provision of statutory services. By way of example, the council has maintained spend in preventative services within Children's Services, which has enabled them to manage demand more effectively, a decision to reduce spend in this area in preference for a Business Plan priority would risk an increase in demand. The more collaborative and participative approach to budget setting and financial management across senior officers and members should ensure the council is better placed than ever before to resolve these questions.

As part of the budget setting, consider creating a corporate contingency budget rather than build in all demography/increases in demand services. This will help manage budgets in more challenging financial situations and not always seeking to build in maximum increases in demography/costs.

Wiltshire Council is bucking a national trend in reporting that its Children's Services are managing within budget and this year's Quarter Two budget monitoring was showing an improved forecast outturn position, which staff vacancies are helping to achieve, and this is positive for as long as they are able to manage demand with less

resource. The position remains challenging in the face of national increases in demand, complexity of cases, and recruitment and retention issues, but the successful improvement programme within the service has resulted in impactful and sustainable service improvements. Maintaining organisational focus – and spend – will be crucial in sustaining this relatively positive position.

Wiltshire Council has adopted Performance and Outcome Boards as an effective mechanism for driving continuous improvement and ensuring organisational oversight of performance. The approach was initially piloted as part of the Children's Services Improvement Programme and is now part of the organisations' performance framework. In some areas they are relatively new and need to continue to embed, but they offer a valuable opportunity to review, and importantly, challenge performance and improvement across the council, and are structured to drive the finance conversations not vice versa, which works well for the Council. The council recognises the importance of having a coherent corporate approach so that performance and risk are not undermined. Oversight of risk has only recently been included as part of the remit for the Boards and this needs to be embedded across the organisation too. Member involvement in the process adds another important dimension and the team saw an organisation that is conversant in the principles and mechanisms of performance management – and where the focus is very much on driving service improvements for residents.

The council has recently established stronger capital governance processes through a new board, but an enhanced focus on capital programme oversight, delivery and financing would be beneficial. A clearer understanding and assessment of the full financial implications of commercial / asset investment decisions (such as refurbishment of industrial estates and asset transfers) alongside capital financing implications (such as the borrowing costs of new leisure provision) would help in maximising financial benefits and in decision making. Linked to this, a broader understanding of the implications for treasury management and the treasury management strategy would enhance understanding of the costs of financing the capital programme.

Wiltshire Council's Transformation narrative is very clearly about driving service improvements and improved outcomes, rather than prioritising the delivery of substantial savings, which aligns with the organisational culture of the council. As

financial pressures in the sector increase, the need to secure financial benefits through transformational activity may need to be more of a focus for the council.

The team were impressed by the extent to which Portfolio Holders were well briefed and aware of the High Needs issues and financial risks facing the sector as a whole and the council specifically – for example the fact that the Adults Portfolio Holder has SEND within her remit to reflect the whole life pathway for some shows the priority given to the issues. It is important that organisational focus is maintained in this area to mitigate future risks.

The council is currently implementing a new ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system - a significant project which is intended to help improve financial control processes and is expected to bring about savings that are not yet included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The introduction of such a system has obvious organisational benefits, but given the size and nature of the project, the council should be careful to ensure sufficient resources and capacity are allocated.

4.5. Capacity for improvement

Staff at Wiltshire Council are motivated, energetic, and committed, who genuinely share the 'One Council' ethos and are driven by a desire to improve outcomes for the residents of Wiltshire. The council takes a proactive approach to Organisational Development through initiatives such as 'Our Identity', which sets out a shared vision of how the employees are expected to work together to deliver services and priorities. The council is also reviewing its People Strategy and a refreshed Workforce Strategy is due for to be launched imminently – both strategies are designed to ensure that the council has the right people in the right place at the right time with the right skills to deliver the Business Plan. Staff we met spoke with passion and energy about the evolving PDR system and internal talent management and leadership programmes. This positive approach to supporting and developing the workforce, as well as sound data and insight, has resulted in staff who are loyal and dedicated to delivering the ambitions of the council.

Whilst the above measures mean the council has done much to ensure they are an employer of choice, national and regional recruitment and retention challenges exist

across the organisation. Staff are working hard to ensure these capacity issues don't impact on service delivery to some of the most vulnerable residents (for example those who engage with Adults and Children's Services) as well as other high demand areas such as Planning. However, there are inevitable impacts on capacity to deliver in challenging national circumstances and against an ambitious Business Plan. Discussions around how deliverable long-term plans and aspirations are when short term budget pressures could be about to land would be beneficial moving forward.

The council has set out a broad range of transformation and business change activities, which are co-ordinated through the Transformation Planning Group and through various measures such as setting up a dedicated Transformation and Change Directorate and including People and Change team representatives, have ensured that practical steps have been taken to help marshal resources and that interdependencies and efficiencies are identified and maximised. These arrangements are new and evolving and have significant potential, but need to be understood across the organisation so that this potential is realised. The council has a strong track record in service-specific Transformation in People Services. In Children's Services the operating model resulting from the improvement programme is ensuring that Looked After Children Numbers are sustainable, and the transformational approach led by the Chief Executive in Adults Services is valued and provides strong oversight of the workstream.

Opportunities exist for Wiltshire Council to continue to work with partners from a variety of sectors (Health, Third Sector, Military, Businesses etc.) to explore how resources can be shared in the pursuit of shared priorities and ambitions. Wiltshire Council is a respected partner, and by developing a more cohesive narrative of your place shaping agenda, has the opportunity to develop a framework for shared endeavours and building capacity to deliver Business Plan priorities that go beyond the delivery of statutory service.

5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss, and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge. The CPC process includes a six-month check-in meeting. This will be a short, facilitated session which creates space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps.

In the meantime, Paul Clarke, Principal Adviser for South West, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Paul is available to discuss any further support the council requires. paul.clarke@local.gov.uk

Corporate Peer Challenge 2022 - Action Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Success measures	Leads (bold where multiple)
<p>1. Develop a more clearly articulated strategic narrative of place, using the Local Plan as key spatial narrative. Making the Local Plan work for Wiltshire will be important, and ensuring this work is delivered to agreed timescales will be important.</p>	<p>Develop a narrative for Place</p> <p>Ensure Local Plan and LTP development provide the key spatial narrative</p> <p>Area Boards and Place Boards explain and champion the Local Plan</p> <p>Ensure the new economic strategy clearly aligns with the narrative in the local plan</p>	<p>Council strategy documents align with strategic place narrative</p> <p>New Local Plan and LTP4 adopted and supported by a plan for delivery</p> <p>Work of the Place Boards is aligned to delivery of local plan allocations</p> <p>Proactive approach for delivery of local plan allocations in partnership with developers and investors</p>	<p>Parvis Khansari</p> <p>Nic Thomas</p> <p>Victoria Moloney</p>
<p>2. Seek to take advantage that the council's internal improvements are now paying dividends to provide space and time for senior leaders to focus on wider external partnership opportunities to help take Wiltshire forward in line with the Business Plan.</p>	<p>Increased engagement with neighbouring authorities and partners (including the ICB/P) through existing and bespoke meetings</p> <p>Regular 1 to 1s with neighbouring Leaders and Chief Executives</p> <p>Maintaining leverage and influence at key fora where Wiltshire plays a leading role, for example: SW ADASS, SW ADCS & regional forums on children, families, education and public health</p> <p>Promote Wiltshire Council activities through the LGA (including conferences), County Council</p>	<p>The new potential for shared services is fully explored with other organisations</p>	<p>Terence Herbert</p>

	<p>Network, South West Leaders and Chief Executives meetings</p> <p>Engage central government officials in discussion on the potential for devolution and continue participation in the Western Gateway</p>		
<p>3. Consider how to celebrate the successes of Wiltshire Council where it is important and where it contributes to raising the Council's external profile e.g., Climate Change and Children's Services.</p>	<p>Identify a number of cross cutting issues/opportunities that encourage organisational and system-wide collaboration; promote the results accordingly</p> <p>Build on previous promotion of success e.g. leading for SW ADCS on sector led improvement and presenting at COP 27 with the LGA exhibits</p> <p>Case studies included in trade press (such as LGC and the MJ)</p> <p>Transformation programme regularly profiles its activity</p>	<p>Wiltshire's profile raised and recognition for areas of good practice.</p> <p>Service transformation is co-produced with residents.</p>	<p>Lucy Townsend</p> <p>Parvis Khansari</p> <p>Stuart Honeyball</p> <p>Perry Holmes</p>
<p>4. Create a county-wide strategic partnership board to oversee the Economic Strategy for Wiltshire and underpin the Wiltshire Public Service Board with appropriate officer groups that bring partners together to share resources and deliver on common priorities.</p>	<p>Review Wiltshire Public Service Board terms of reference, considering its role in the oversight and championing of the Economic Strategy for Wiltshire</p> <p>Implement technical officer subgroups to inform activity across the board, including on: UKSPF, One Public Estate, refugees, workforce</p>	<p>Economic strategy adopted and aligned to Local Plan</p> <p>Engaging partners on emerging economic strategy and ensuring this is adopted collectively</p> <p>Working with board and partners to champion economic opportunities in Wiltshire and make the case for investment</p>	<p>Perry Holmes</p> <p>Andy Brown</p> <p>Parvis Khansari</p> <p>Victoria Moloney</p>

		Improving communication of economic opportunities, green and investment	
5. Consider how developing a comprehensive Asset Management and Capital Investment Strategy could support future transformation and place shaping ambitions and inform future budget decisions.	<p>Create capacity within the capital programme and revenue budget that allows the development of place shaping ambitions</p> <p>Understand the future requirement of Council assets and then how these can be utilised with partners to act as a catalyst for future place shaping ambitions</p> <p>Increase financial literacy and embed the use of financial models to support business case development that underpin our capital investment decisions (e.g. on industrial estate refurbishment, asset transfers, new leisure provision)</p>	<p>Comprehensive strategy in place which is linked to and supports the funding of our place shaping ambitions</p> <p>Ongoing improvements in staff development on required skills and expected financial implications of investment decisions</p> <p>Service delivery plans and transformation business cases are clear on the level of capital required</p>	<p>Andy Brown</p> <p>Lizzie Watkin</p>
6. Review the role and function of Area Boards so that they add maximum value to your Place Shaping ambitions.	<p>Evaluate the operation of recent community area function developments – such as LHFIGs and the SEPM team structure</p> <p>Support ‘place based’ delivery of services so that co-ordination of activities between communities, parishes and towns across a larger geographical footprint can be exploited to the full</p>	<p>Additional matched funding is levered in</p> <p>Revised SDAT policy in place and agreed programme for negotiation with town and parish councils</p> <p>Additional assets delegated Accelerated phasing of transfers</p> <p>Policy and strategy aligned to support the community</p>	<p>David Redfern</p> <p>Andy Brown</p> <p>Nic Thomas</p> <p>Perry Holmes</p> <p>Sam Howell</p>

		conversation and embed outcomes in the wider place shaping agenda	
7. Use continuing work with VCS around the emerging framework to ensure opportunities to involve them (and other partners) in developing strategies and policies are maximised.	<p>Include VCS reps in the Health and Wellbeing Board and Wiltshire Public Service Board</p> <p>Review and develop a framework for a more consistent approach for engaging the VCS at all levels of the organisation</p> <p>Promotion of Community Conversations</p>	<p>VCS reps included</p> <p>VCS strategy agreed</p>	<p>Perry Holmes</p> <p>David Redfern</p> <p>Kate Blackburn</p>
8. Continue to ensure that your approach to transformation is embedded and understood across the organisation.	<p>Deliver a comprehensive service planning process including a strong planning and performance management regime; one that more explicitly links business, risk, financial planning, and major programmes into one coherent whole with a clear and coherent “Golden Thread” throughout</p> <p>Promote understanding of the gateway process, financial input required and the governance of transformation</p> <p>Continuing the lessons learned from recognised successful transformations and partnerships (FACT, Adult Transformation)</p>	<p>Service Delivery Plans in place with key priorities distilled for budget setting process</p> <p>Redesigned performance measures and quantifiable goals (targets) reporting arrangements agreed by Cabinet</p>	<p>Perry Holmes</p> <p>Stuart Honeyball</p>
9. Continue to build on the collaborative approach you’re developing around budget setting to ensure clarity on all options given the inevitable difficult decisions that lie ahead (e.g. prevention/ place).	Service planning process used to link priorities, finance, procurement and HR to inform performance goals and budget setting (including capital required for transformation) to inform future budget setting	<p>New Service Delivery Plans in place</p> <p>Changed approach moving away from one year budgeting to holding to a balanced budget over the 3</p>	<p>Andy Brown</p> <p>Lizzie Watkin</p>

	Ensure service planning and transformation programmes include plenty of scope for challenge (e.g. use of 'red teams', insight and corporate research activity)	year MTFS, with effective long term saving delivery and transformation Regular reports on progress with transformation programme included in quarterly monitoring reports at Cabinet	
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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

28 March 2023

Subject: Re-Commissioning of the Good Lives Alliance Framework for Learning Disability, Mental Health and Autism Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Jane Davies – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

Services to support people with Learning Disabilities, Mental Health and Autism are currently purchased through the Good Lives Alliance (GLA) Framework. These services include supported living, residential and nursing care. The current framework commenced in September 2019 and terminates in September 2023 at which point a new framework will need to be in place.

These services should meet people's needs as assessed under the Care Act 2014 and will range from support that promotes independence and community engagement, through to more intensive personal and behavioural care and support. All services must have a clear purpose and meet people's goals and aspirations.

The last 2 years has seen some significant challenges in the care market. We are working with a fragile market, which is struggling with workforce recruitment and retention. There is also an evidenced increase in level of need that is challenging due to a lack of care provision and appropriate accommodation.

To co-produce the specification of the new framework, officers engaged with a range of people who access services. People have described what a good life looks like, and what support they need. The framework will encourage providers to work with us in a more efficient way and allows greater range of provision to enable people with eligible social care needs to live safely in their own homes for as long as possible and to lead fulfilled lives.

Proposal(s)

Cabinet is recommended to agree the following proposals:

- The approval of a new price model is delegated to the Corporate Director for Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion.
- Procurement and award of a new framework from 4 September 2023.
- That the decision to award contracts against the framework is delegated to the Corporate Director for Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion.

Reason for Proposal(s)

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to Cabinet on the Wiltshire Council procurement process for Whole Life Commissioning services and sets out the approach to be taken.

Procuring an open framework under the light touch regime will ensure that all providers are vetted and evaluated to ensure they adhere to legal and quality standards and financial parameters. Successful providers will join the open framework, which will be clearly publicised to customers, carers, and practitioners. People assessed under the Care Act as requiring care and support services will then be placed with the most appropriate service, using a combination of customer choice, geography, availability, etc – with the most cost-effective option that meets need.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

28 March 2023

Subject: Re-Commissioning of the Good Lives Alliance Framework for Learning Disability, Mental Health and Autism Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Jane Davies – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion

Key Decision: Key

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the services we commission now, how we will develop our offer, and a proposed procurement route to achieve this. The tender aims to support and stabilise the market.
2. Cabinet is asked to approve the approach to recommissioning Wiltshire's Framework for purchasing which currently includes residential and nursing care, transitional step up/step down services supported living services as live services, to approve the proposed procurement approach to achieve this. We have the option to include other spot purchased services within the new framework e.g., unregulated outreach support, extra care, Individual Service Funds, respite and short breaks, parent enabling, day and evening opportunities.
3. The Framework will be in place for up to 3 years with an option to extend for 2 years and will enable providers to join at any time (as long as specific criteria are met).

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

4. Wiltshire's commissioning priorities for 2023/24 are:
 - to ensure services are in the right place at the right time.
 - ensure right people receive services in the right place e.g., Increasing services delivered by the right people, in the local community and in peoples own homes.
 - individuals receive the right services at the right price.
5. Wiltshire's Market Position Statement (MPS) for Whole Life Commissioning emphasises that people should receive the support they need at the earliest opportunity to live independently and safely within their local community.
6. This proposal will ensure that the framework will:
 - Focus on the strengths, assets, and potential of people.

- Have a positive and meaningful impact on people's lives.
- Increase choice and control.
- Develop people's life skills.
- Utilise technology enabled care in promoting independence and resilience to supplement or replace the support provided through funded Wiltshire Council services.
- Market shaping and commissioning of adult care and support services.

Background

Current supply arrangements

7. Wiltshire Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB), currently commission Residential and Nursing Care, and Supported Living services, via the Good Lives Alliance (GLA) Framework. This has been in place since September 2019.
8. The Alliance encompasses support services for adults of working age who may present with mental health needs, learning disability (with or without dementia), autistic spectrum condition, physical or sensory needs, social, emotional, and behavioural needs, speech, language, and communication needs. This may cover young adults (16-25).
9. The service types we commission using the GLA include:
 - Supported Living
 - Residential & Nursing Care
 - Supported Housing with or without accommodation
 - Short breaks
 - Extra Care
 - Parent enabling service.
10. This tender is an opportunity for a more flexible co-produced approach that includes a consistent method to pricing which would be more equitable and support a more sustainable provider market.
11. There are 67 providers on the alliance for supported living, residential, nursing or a combination of these services. Throughout the term of the framework, we have actively encouraged spot providers to join. We have reached 74 providers; however, we have served notice on 7 providers due to a lack of engagement with us.

Main Considerations

12. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that people with eligible care act needs, have appropriate support to meet their needs and be able to access good quality services. The Care Act also requires councils to shape the care services market sustainably, in collaboration with providers and to retain local oversight of that market.
13. We have a duty to support people to live independently, with a focus on preventing, reducing, and delaying the need for specialist services. This framework is an essential service to meet the need of people, and their family and carers eligible needs.
14. We continue to work with our market, to ensure that the environment provided is fit for purpose. We regularly undertake vacancy management, with the providers and our

operational teams, to ensure that we are utilising the gap within our market. However, we know that we do not have enough services to meet growing population and increase in need, e.g., 150 people waiting for support and accommodation.

- 15. We have seen a positive shift in the purchasing of supported living services and far more scrutiny when making residential placement both in and out of county.
- 16. We have seen an overall reduction in residential placements and increase in supported living. The data is also showing a 15% increase in the need for services in the community.

	Residential & Nursing		Supported living	
	2019	2022	2019	2022
GLA packages	212	294	463	627
SPOT packages	265	146	120	81
Total packages	477	440	583	708

- 17. The overall spend is up 42%, which is due to annual inflationary uplifts, cost of living pressures, an increase in the number of customers supported and an increase in their level of need.

	Residential & Nursing		Supported living	
	2019	2022	2019	2022
GLA Annual Spend	£12,873,706	£24,150,442	£16,622,510	£28,533,337
SPOT Annual Spend	£19,315,359	£14,978,861	£2,988,381	£5,906,885
Total Annual Spend	£32,189,065	£39,129,303	£19,610,891	£34,440,222

Co-production

- 18. The council utilises the Service User Engagement contract, working with the Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (WCIL) and Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC), who engage with families and people who use services, working with those with lived experience to get their views and input. This is done through focus groups, speaking to individuals, completing surveys, facilitating forums, or holding information cafes, to ensure that individuals living in Wiltshire are able to have a voice to help to shape health and social care services.

- 19. WCIL have produced several reports to support Whole Life recommissioning activity, all of which will be considered during this procurement:

- [The Good Life Project 2018](#)
- [Accommodation and Support 2019](#)
- [Meaningful Lives - Day Services Report 2019](#)
- [A Place I Call Home 2021](#)
- [The Future of Mental Health Support 2021](#)
- [It's My Life 2022](#)
- [Supporting Young People on their Journey to Adulthood Report 2022](#)
- [Smarter Homes for Independent Living - 2022](#)

- 20. Feedback from the GLA providers has been positive, quarterly forums followed on from the engagement sessions to support good conversation. Providers have enjoyed

the alliance approach, allowing the council and the market to work in partnership, sharing information and data. This has led to huge improvements to relationships.

21. We continue to work closely with our ICB colleagues across Bath and Northeast Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) to ensure we are aligned and consistent in our approach.
22. Market engagement has continued through provider forums with Whole life commissioners and Provider Oversight and Support Team (POST) gathering intelligence. Providers have been sharing their views and suggestions through the workshops held recently. This has been during a time of market pressures in the care sector especially around the recruitment of support staff. The table below details of the planned workshops:

Activity	Topic	Date
Provider Workshop 1	Service type/Level of need/Zones	03-Oct-22
Provider Workshop 2	QA, KPI, CM	25-Oct-22
WCIL / WPCC mtg 1	Engagement	09-Nov-22
Provider Workshop 3	Co-production	28-Nov-22
Submit Liquidlogic Adults System (LAS) request	LAS engagement	08-Dec-22
ICB Workshop 1	Overview	08-Dec-22
WCIL / WPCC meeting 2	Engagement	13-Dec-22
Provider Workshop 4	Vacancies/voids, expression of interest (Eol) Process	24-Jan-23
Ops Workshop 1	Overview of all - Service type/Level of need/Zones	25-Jan-23
Provider Workshop 5 - F2F	Consolidation of all topics one on each table	14-Feb-23
LAS/Brokerage/Finance Workshop 1	LAS Work/Eol process/ContrOCC	Mar 23
Ops Workshop 2	Process and implementation	Mar 23
LAS/Brokerage/Finance Workshop 2	LAS Work/Eol process/ContrOCC	Apr 23

Proposed Changes for retendering

Zones

23. The current 3 zones are too large and although providers sign up to a zone, they may not cover all towns listed. Our intention is to replicate the change from the Strategic Provider model for domiciliary care, creating smaller more manageable zones. This will enable commissioners, brokerage, and providers to focus on efficiencies, decreasing travel and supporting with more effective recruitment. It also allows better data and information on neighbourhoods and community provision.

Bands & Pricing

24. The price model and annual price review mechanism will be established ready for the tender to be launched in May. Fee rates are not ready to be published at the time of this report going to Cabinet. Delegated authority to approve this new price model is requested.
25. We are creating the mechanism by which to purchase and set the rates against each service type. We will take into consideration the national living wage increase and CPI for setting uplifts. Operational teams manage the budget and assess the eligible care needs.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

26. This paper will be going to Transformation Operational Board on 14 February 2023.
27. A briefing on the proposals is being provided to Health Select Committee and the Financial Planning Task Group on 17 March 2023.

Safeguarding Implications

28. Current contract arrangement within Whole Life Commissioning contains robust safeguarding measures in line with Council policy. Contracts provide clear direction on how and when to raise safeguarding alerts to avoid any confusion about who is responsible. We also work closely with all stakeholders on feedback and quality assurance concerns.
29. As we work with both children and adults any issues relating to child protection are also included.
30. We are piloting an online system, the Provider Assessment and Market Management tool to support with capturing this information and having a consistent approach across the commissioning directorate.
31. In November 2022, The Oliver McGowan Mandatory training for Learning Disability and Autism was introduced. We are working with NHSE to understand the requirements and impact on this sector, including our own staff.

Public Health Implications

32. The service specifications are underpinned by public health data and evidence from [Wiltshire Intelligence - Bringing Evidence Together](#) - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). With relevant Key Performance Indicators commissioners ensure the services being designed are able to meet the anticipated demand within the contract time frames and are effective and efficient to meet the needs of the people of Wiltshire.
33. The Framework will benefit from the overall health and wellbeing outcomes of people in terms of service continuity and reducing the risk that their health and care outcomes could be compromised if the services were not in place.

34. We are working with ICB and Public Health colleagues on ensuring people access health services and have health action plans and hospital passports in place where appropriate.

Learning from Lives and Deaths - people with a learning disability and autistic people' (LeDeR)

35. The LeDeR inequalities national programme is funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement, was established in 2017 to improve healthcare for people with a learning disability and autistic people, who on average die 20 years younger than the rest of the population. LeDeR aims to:

- Improve care for people with a learning disability and autistic people, who often have poorer physical and mental health than other people.
- Reduce health inequalities for people with a learning disability and autistic people, who are sometimes dying much earlier than they should, many from things which could have been treated or prevented.
- Prevent people with a learning disability and autistic people dying prematurely, due to barriers to accessing health and care to keep them healthy.

36. LeDeR reviews are completed for anyone with a diagnosed learning disability aged four and over who dies in England. Since 2022 reviews have been completed for anyone aged 18 and over with a diagnosed autistic spectrum disorder who has died in England.

37. Analysis of the reviews are completed and presented in an annual report. Recommendations on how to reduce avoidable deaths are made and the implementation of the recommendations is the responsibility of individual ICB's.

Procurement Implications

38. A compliant procurement process will be followed in line with Public Contract Regulations 2015. The procurement process will be designed and run, in conjunction with the Procurement team. The specification of future services will state that providers are expected to demonstrate social value.

Date	Task
October 2022 – March 2023	Market Engagement
March - April 2023	Prepare Invitation to Tender
May – June 2023	Publish DPS - Round 1 Go Live
July 2023	Evaluation Period End Date
August 2023	Award Decision Notification
September 2023	Alliance Commencement Date

There is sufficient time to reshape the services, embed a robust quality assurance framework and go to market before the existing contracts come to an end and to achieve continuity of services.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

39. An Equality Analysis is not required in this case, as the risks to the Council are considered as 'Low.' The request is to retender and ensure service continuity where possible.
40. The recommissioning of this framework will support equitable access for any individual to health and social care and impact positively on equality by reducing or removing inequalities and barriers that exist for people with eligible needs. Consideration to Social Value will be given when developing the specification, which will be reflected within our tender documentation.
41. Commissioners will require the provision of services which take account of and are committed to ensuring that the organisations value diversity and promotes equality and inclusivity on all aspects of their business.
42. The performance of the framework will be monitored through quality systems and performance management, monitoring and reporting. Providers will report on Key Performance Indicators and commissioners will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing reports and ensuring any improvement actions are completed by providers.
43. Stakeholder engagement is a key element of the success and continual development of the framework. This includes Wiltshire Care Partnership and service user engagement organisations identifying and supporting the implementation of opportunities to develop services.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

44. This proposal aligns with the Council's draft Climate Strategy, and particularly its commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030. By ensuring a choice of service provision across Wiltshire, the proposal will support people to remain local and help to ensure that Wiltshire residents have opportunities to increase the use of community assets and activities in their local area. There will be a reduction in travel distances which will enable transport links and other means of transport to be utilised locally.
45. Procuring an open framework will mean that providers can be vetted for compliance and their commitment to Wiltshire's values and priorities. This means that if the council develops specific environmental priorities or principles that are relevant to the service, they can be included easily in the procurement process, where appropriate to do so. Potential providers can be made aware of the council's commitments and policy on environmental issues and can build this into their offer over time. This will be part of how the social value of the contract is demonstrated.
46. Energy consumption associated with the service area will remain roughly at current levels due to the scope of the service unchanging. Annual reviews of the providers operations will place requirements on the provider to make ongoing improvements in this area and in the day-to-day environmental management of the service.
47. Carbon emissions will be managed through energy efficient options, some of which are:

- Reducing support workers travelling by car to provide care in peoples' homes and potentially reducing emissions from fossil fuel vehicles by increasing use of low carbon alternatives.
- Reduction of services through improved use of alternative support, such as technology enabled care, voluntary and community organisations and outcomes-based approaches.
- Encouraging carbon offset projects for any unavoidable carbon emissions or increase a renewable energy or green tariff for avoidable carbon emissions, such as electricity consumption in registered offices.

Workforce Implications

48. These proposals relate to a continuation of current activity which is delivered through external suppliers. So, there is little-to-no direct impact on council employed staff.
49. If the incumbent providers are not successful in the new tender, then TUPE may apply, but only if transferring business between providers. However, while the council would be an interested party, any transfer of staff would be a matter between the incumbent and new provider.

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

50. A potential delay, will mean we are out of contract, opening ourselves up to a potential price increase.

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

51. The report's proposals offer the most effective mitigation to the following known risks:
- Services being delivered outside of a formal contract once current contract arrangements for the Good Lives Alliance end in September 2023, increasing use of spot provision and increasing care costs.
 - Undertaking an emergency procurement, which would lack the required time to create a robust opportunity.
 - Capacity of the market not having the ability to meet the demand. Staffing issues are being experienced nationally, due to pandemic, cost of living, Brexit, and increased fuel costs.
 - Additional costs incurred by the council when seeking to support customers in difficult to source areas and an increase in the complexities of our young people and adults. e.g., through use of incentives which is generally higher fee rate/paid travel/additional time.
52. A risks and issues log are in place enabling potential risks and mitigations to be identified and implemented. This is a live document which allows risks and mitigations to be continually revised as the project develops.
53. There is a risk of challenge from providers to the tender process and outcome. However, the impact and likelihood of these risks will be reduced by continued and

transparent engagement with providers. This same engagement offers an opportunity to assess providers' appetite and readiness for a new tender as well as the potential impact of current challenges.

54. As with all projects of this nature, it is important to have input from the relevant department across the council to enable us to deliver on time.

Financial Implications.

55. All spend under the operational budget will be managed by the appropriate team, as Whole Life commissioned services, support individuals across adult social care. The current forecast spend for 2022/23 for Residential, Nursing and supported living services is £73.569m.
56. The annual cost of the new contract will be broadly similar to the current contract but taking into account the increased demand due to population increase and inflationary pressures. This will be informed by the new price model and will remain within the financial envelope available.

Legal Implications

57. Legal advice has been sought and will continue to be sought on this project. The procurement of the framework will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and Procurement Law. The proposed arrangements will ensure the Council meets its duties as described more fully above.

Options Considered

58. The work with Local Partnerships is not due to conclude until the end of March, we will then be in a better position to know their recommendations. The workshops we have planned will enable us to consider our options review the risk and make a decision on the route forward, e.g., costing of services, quality assurance, zones, and service type.

Conclusions

59. All of the above information has been taken into account in establishing this report's proposals.

Andy Brown Corporate Director for Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

Report Author: Victoria Bayley, Interim Head of Service

Whole Life Commissioning, Victoria.Bayley@wiltshire.gov.uk and Kellie Mackenzie
Commissioning Manager, Kellie.MacKenzie@wiltshire.gov.uk

7 February 2023

13 March 2023 – updated.

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

28 March 2023

Subject: Procurement of Cleaning Services

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling Cabinet Member for Leisure, Libraries, Governance, Facilities Management and Operational Assets

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

The council's contract for cleaning services was awarded in 2016 through an OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union), procurement procedure. Contract start date 1st December 2016, expiring 30th November 2023.

The intention is to use the Find a Tender Service (FTS) procurement procedure to procure cleaning services from 1st December 2023.

It is anticipated the cleaning contract will exceed £4m (including any optional extension periods) and will therefore require Cabinet approval.

The council has considered a range of options. These are

- Do nothing
- Stop providing a cleaning service
- Bring service 'in house'
- Use national procurement frameworks ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) or CCS (Crown Commercial Service)
- Use the FTS procurement procedures.

The council's Facilities Management Security services contract will also be included as part of the procurement exercise. This service is low value and does not represent a key decision for the council, however it is considered beneficial to procure both services as part of the same exercise.

Proposal(s)

1. Cabinet approves the use of the Find a Tender Service procurement for the re-tendering of cleaning services, with a new contract starting 1st December 2023 with a contract term for 5 years, with the option to extend by two further one-year periods.
2. To delegate authority to enter into contracts, following the procurement and tender evaluation process, to the Corporate Director for Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Libraries, Governance, Facilities Management and Operational Assets

Reason for Proposal(s)

- Existing cleaning contract is due to expire 30th November 2023 and cannot be extended further; with all extension options exhausted by this time.
- Procuring independently through the FTS process is considered the most cost effective and flexible approach, and the best option for delivering the most competitive outcome for this service.
- It is anticipated the cleaning contract will exceed £4m, including any optional extension periods.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

28 March 2023

Subject: Procurement of Cleaning Services for December 2023

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling Cabinet Member for Leisure, Libraries, Governance, Facilities Management and Operational Assets

Key Decision: Key

Purpose of Report

1. To agree to the procurement of cleaning services across the council's operational estate managed by Strategic Assets and Facilities Management (SAM&FM), within Assets & Commercial Development, with effect from 1st December 2023.
2. To seek delegations to award Cleaning Services that are subject to tender.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

3. To support the council's aim to "provide useful, modern spaces in communities for groups to interact in", the recommended approach will ensure properly procured, high quality, competitively costed, customer focused cleaning services across the council's operational estate.

Background

4. The previous procurement exercise in 2016 delivered a 25% saving on the cost of cleaning services across the council's operational estate. The annual spend in the previous contract i.e., the contract that ran from 2012 to 2016, was approximately £0.990m.
5. Savings in 2016 were achieved by:
 - Adjusting cleaning regimes and removing planned deep cleaning activities to drive annual savings.
 - A general reduction in the number of operational buildings due to property rationalisation.
6. The annual contract value has varied between 2016 and 2022. This is in response to buildings being closed, new buildings and facilities being added, increased opening hours and community use.
 - 2016 £0.750m per annum (p.a.)
 - 2017 £0.730m p.a.
 - 2018 £0.770m p.a.
 - 2019 £0.775m p.a.
 - 2020 £0.780m p.a.
 - 2021 £0.790m p.a.
 - 2022 £0.820m p.a.

Main Considerations for the Council

7. The council is required to commence the process for procuring a replacement cleaning service contract in early spring 2023, to ensure a suitable contractor can be appointed with effect from 1st December 2023.
8. With no contract clauses in the existing cleaning contract to allow price uplifts (other than the National Living Wage applicable 1st April each year), cleaning charges have been kept artificially low. It is therefore anticipated contract spend on cleaning services from December 2023 will increase by 20-30%.
9. A Sourcing Plan covering soft Facilities Management (FM) services procurement (including cleaning) has been approved. The approach outlined in this paper is consistent with this, supports the Sourcing Plan and the wider procurement activity for all FM services.
10. Procurement of the cleaning contract will coincide with the procurement of the council security contract. The security contract has an approximate annual value of £0.120m per annum. The security contract covers key holding duties, alarm monitoring and response, out of hours patrols for some sites and void site inspection patrols.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

11. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a briefing on the procurement activity on the 15th March 2023 and no concerns were raised.

Safeguarding Implications

12. Cleaning contractors are required to operate recruitment and training policies and procedures, having regard for the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and to take into consideration the council's safeguarding procedures. Any cleaning contract staff who are likely to encounter children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst undertaking their regular duties, are required to have appropriate safeguarding checks. This requirement is stipulated in the contract conditions.

Public Health Implications

13. In March 2020, the council implemented the use of anti-viral cleaning chemicals due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Anti-viral cleaning chemicals for all hand-held cleaning regimes continues and will be maintained in the future to help reduce the spread of infection amongst staff and site users.

Procurement Implications

14. The recommendations in this document have been developed in consultation with the Commercial and Procurement team.

15. The tendering process (for both services) will follow the 'Restricted' procurement process under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and in accordance with requirements as set out in the Constitution.
16. The Procurement will be conducted and managed through the Council's e-tendering portal.
17. It is possible the security contract may have to be extended for a period of 12 weeks to allow for the procurement process to be finalised, considering the TUPE exercise that will have to be undertaken. This will allow it to co-terminate with the cleaning contract on 30th November 2023 and allow both new contracts to start on the same date, 1st December 2023.
18. Cleaning services at most council operated sites is covered by Strategic Assets and Facilities Management. Sites out of scope are those with leisure facilities where cleaning services are delivered 'in house'. The use of council leisure cleaning staff, providing regular duties throughout leisure operating hours, is considered to deliver the best outcomes to the communities who use them.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

19. Based upon a calculation of the council's equality risk matrix, there is no requirement for engagement. This is because the risk is determined to be low in terms of both impact and likely occurrence.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

20. The proposed recommendations are made with consideration to the council's environmental and climate change commitments.
21. There are no risks associated with environmental management.
22. The proposed recommendations are expected to result in energy consumption remaining roughly at current levels. Cleaning operatives use minimal energy consumption in the form of water (for floor and washroom cleaning) and energy (for powering vacuum cleaners). Since 2016, contracted cleaning staff have been encouraged to assist in the reduction of the council's energy use by engaging in simple campaigns such as switching off laptop screens and lights when they are last to leave the building.
Contracted cleaning staff have also been actively encouraged to report faults and inconsistencies (heating on late at night or inefficient automatic controls on lighting), to the facilities management team to enable swift rectification, leading to an overall reduction in the council's energy costs and carbon emissions.
The council will continue to engage with future contractors in the same way.
23. Contract is not planned to last longer than 20 years.

Workforce Implications

24. The procurement of the cleaning contract will result in existing employees of the current contractor having rights under The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE). The council will work with the incumbent

contractor to determine where TUPE is applicable and make appropriate arrangements to meet any legal obligations.

25. The successful tenderer will be required to demonstrate good practice in terms of employment policies and practices, and to conform to the council’s standards and behaviours framework.

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

26. The council will be left without a contract, with the vulnerabilities in terms of service and pricing inherent in any out of contract position.

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

27.

Risk	Actions to Mitigate the Risk
Deterioration in services once council committed to an initial 5-year contract term	A strong supplier relationship, combined with a robust contract management approach throughout the life span of the contract, including regular formal contract performance reviews. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in place to improve performance. KPIs can also be used to terminate the contract, should this become necessary.
Tender price submissions anticipated to increase	The cleaning specification will receive a full review to establish if further service reductions are possible (although further reductions will lead to a drop in cleaning standards). Assets and Commercial Development will work to reduce the volume of operational sites through continued rationalisation.

Financial Implications

28. The revenue budget for this activity is currently £0.820m p.a. based on the current size and make up of the property estate. Current pressure on supply chains and turmoil in the energy markets mean it is a challenging time to expose the service to competition and the result of the procurement exercise is not predictable.
29. If the tenders’ prices are submitted higher than the current approved revenue budget, requirements would need to be reviewed to ensure the contract is within budget. If this is not possible, then the service will need to look at other savings and efficiency options to deliver a balanced budget. As a minimum, one off savings would need to be identified for 2023/24 and if savings were not on-going growth would need to be factored into the medium-term financial strategy for future years to address the pressure.
30. Future contractual uplifts are likely to need updating in the medium-term financial strategy to reflect the new contract.

31. The total value of the contract represents a key decision and therefore requires cabinet approval with delegations from relevant cabinet members.

Legal Implications

32. Legal support has been solicited by the completion of Instructions to Legal Services Commercial Team (new or bespoke contract).

The procurement will be undertaken in accordance with Constitutional and Legal requirements under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Options Considered

33.

Option	Consequences
Do nothing	Rejected The cleaning contract cannot be extended beyond 30 th November 2023. The option to extend is not available as both one-year extension options have been exhausted. The council will expose itself to challenge without the support of a legal contract.
Stop providing a cleaning service	Rejected Cleaning service provision needs to be continued to provide a clean and safe environment for both staff and the communities it serves.
Bring cleaning service 'in house'	Rejected The high risk and burden (including the associated indirect costs), of insourcing contracting staff makes this option untenable.
Use national procurement frameworks	Rejected This option does not allow sufficient flexibility, particularly to accommodate the innovative approach to how cleaning services are delivered within the council. Small & Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME's), would be most likely to be excluded from the procurement process.

Conclusions

34. It is recommended Wiltshire Council undertake a restricted FTS procurement process for a contract for cleaning services starting 1st December 2023. Contract term for an initial five years, with the option to extend by two further one-year periods.

Andy Brown - Corporate Director for Resources

Report Author: Vincent Albano Lead Officer, Andy Brown, Corporate Director Resources

14.2.2023

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

28 March 2023

Subject: Market Sustainability Plan

Cabinet Member: Councillor Jane Davies – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the council's Market Sustainability Plan for the 18+ domiciliary care and 65+ care home market which forms part of the local authorities' conditions for receiving the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Grant

Proposal

It is recommended that the Cabinet notes the contents of the Wiltshire Council Market Sustainability Plan and approves the proposed areas of spend for the funding allocated.

Reason for the Proposal

The Market Sustainability Plan is required as part of the DHSC requirements for funding.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

28 March 2023

Subject: Market Sustainability Plan

Cabinet Member: Councillor Jane Davies – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion

Key Decision: Key

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the council's Market Sustainability Plan (MSP) for the 18+ domiciliary care and 65+ care home market which forms part of the local authorities' conditions for receiving the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Grant

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposal is relevant to the following mission statements laid down in the Council's [Business Plan 2022 to 2032](#):
 - The people of Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy, and enriched lives.
 - Our communities continue to be beautiful and exciting places to live.
 - Our local economy thrives and is supported by a skilled workforce.

Background

3. In December 2021, the Government published a White paper, 'People at the Heart of Care,' that outlined a 10-year vision that puts personalised care and support at the heart of adult social care. Following the publication of the White Paper, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care fund for the primary purpose of supporting Local Authorities to prepare their markets for the impact of charging reform and to support local authorities to move towards paying providers a fair cost of care.
4. On 16 December 2021, the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund was announced. The primary purpose of the fund is to support local authorities to prepare their markets for reform, including the further commencement of Section 18(3) of the Care Act 2014 in October 2023, and to support local authorities to move towards paying providers a fair cost of care. The Government announced £162m of funding in 2022/23 for this purpose of which Wiltshire Council has been allocated £1.231m
5. In 2023/24 we will receive £4.269m of Market sustainability and Improvement Funding, this is to address issues such as low fee rates, social care waiting times and workforce pressures as well as continue the work started in 2022/23 on fee rates.

6. As a condition of receiving funding in 2022-23 local authorities had to submit the following to the DHSC by 14 October 2022:

Annex	Contents
Annex A:	Two fully completed cost of care data tables for 65+ care homes (residential & Nursing) and 18+ domiciliary care
Annex B:	Two separate cost of care reports for 65+ care homes and 18+ domiciliary care.
Annex C:	Provisional Market Sustainability Plan. The MSP must focus on the 65+ care home and 18+ domiciliary care markets in Wiltshire.

7. The DHSC updated the guidance to state that local authorities must submit to the DHSC and publish on their websites the following documents:

Documents	Submission deadline
Annex B: Cost of Care reports	1 February 2023
Annex C: Market Sustainability Plan	27 March 2023

8. The final Market Sustainability Plan must focus on the following:

Section:	Guidance
Section 1	An assessment of the current sustainability of local care markets (65+ care homes and 18+ domiciliary care)
Section 2	An Assessment of the future market changes between now and October 2025, for each of the service markets
Section 3	Plans for each market to address sustainability issues, where identified

Market Sustainability Plan

9. Wiltshire's Market Sustainability Plan has been developed by the Adults Commissioning, Provider Oversight Support Team (POST), Adults Brokerage, Operational staff, BSW (B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire) Integrated Care Board (ICB), Adults Finance and consultation with our providers.
10. Wiltshire enjoys a mature relationship with the Wiltshire Care Partnership (the main association of care providers) and two provider workshops were held in the autumn of 2022 to identify the key messages in our Market Sustainability Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

11. Scrutiny by the Health Select Committee on 28 February 2023

Safeguarding Implications

12. There are no safeguarding implications from the Market Sustainability Plan

Public Health Implications

13. There are no public health implications from the Market Sustainability Plan

Procurement Implications

14. There are no procurement implications that arise from the Market Sustainability Plan

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

15. The equalities impact of the proposed decision is believed to be low against all criteria on the Equalities Risk Criteria Table and, therefore, a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

16. There are no perceived impacts on environment and climate change from the Market Sustainability Plan

Workforce Implications

17. There are no direct employment issues as a result of the Market Sustainability Plan for Council staff.

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

18. The Council must submit a Market Sustainability Plan to the DHSC on 27 March 2023 to comply with the conditions of receipt of Market sustainability Grant.

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

19. The Market Sustainability Plan does not require a decision to be made

Financial Implications

20. The grant funding for this purpose has specific grant conditions. The spend will be within this financial envelope, in line with the conditions and in line with the Market Sustainability Plan.

Legal Implications

21. There are no legal implications from the Marker Sustainability Plan

Options Considered

22. Due to the nature of the requirements of the Market Sustainability Plan, no options were needed to be considered.

Conclusions

23. It is recommended that the Cabinet notes, Appendix One – Wiltshire Council Market Sustainability Plan

Andy Brown

Corporate Director Resources & Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

Report Author: Jessica Chapman, Commissioning Manager - Transformation, Email: Jessica.chapman@wiltshire.gov.uk

Date of report: 28 March 2023

Appendices

Appendix One - Wiltshire Council Market Sustainability Plan

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Annex C: Market Sustainability Plan

Wiltshire enjoys a mature relationship with the Wiltshire Care Partnership (WCP, the Wiltshire based association of care providers). Two provider workshops have been held to agree the key messages in our Market Sustainability Plan. Further, Wiltshire Council Commissioning team have run a monthly Provider forum with WCP which has an agenda item on market demand, capacity, and social care reform impacts.

Section 1: Assessment of the current sustainability of local care markets

a) Assessment of current sustainability of the 18+ domiciliary care market and 65+ care home market

Levels of diversity in the market

Wiltshire has good diversity of care provision within the domiciliary and older adults care home market. This has in part been an outcome of the commissioning approach which for the last 3 years has developed a provider support and oversight team, easy to access commissioned frameworks and alliances, and close working links with NHS partners. The changes in national hospital discharge policy of 2021 have seen an increase in both demand and complexity of hospital discharge. Health and social care commissioners have worked closely with care provider partners to develop new innovative models of delivery in specialist dementia care, end of life care and discharge to assess. These initiatives need to develop to create more capacity.

There is a lack of supply to meet increased demand for all care, especially for those with more complex needs including dementia, delirium, and behavioural challenges. There remains more to do in terms of opportunities of models of care in extra care, shared lives and co-housing.

Complexity of Care

Over the last two years Wiltshire has experienced marked increases in the volume of people presenting with complex care needs requiring either a domiciliary care package of care (POC) or admission to a care home. There is a large gap within Wiltshire’s care market of providers that are able to offer high quality care for those with complex needs for the following reasons:

- Providers struggle to recruit experienced nursing staff who are skilled in the management of specialist dementia and mental health illness in older people.
- There is a shortage of provision of specialist Admiral nurses and training in the management of complex and challenging behaviour.
- A large number of care homes in Wiltshire do not have a suitable physical environment to meet complex needs, including bariatric care, due to the age or layout of buildings e.g. a lack of facilities/floor space to accommodate individuals with complex needs. There are only two care homes in Wiltshire with the appropriate facilities to manage bariatric needs.
- Domiciliary care providers are unable to accommodate the larger packages of care (POC) that people require due to a significant increase in demand from 2020 of people choosing to receive care at home.
- The large proportion of the self-funder market in Wiltshire means that providers are able to be more selective in which people.

Providers have told the Council that the increasing complexity and changing needs of individuals is often impacting occupancy rates, staff recruitment and retention as well as service performance.

Wiltshire Council brokerage service has reported a sharply increased trend in demand of people requiring long term care with delirium, bariatric needs and dementia following hospital discharge.

Inflation

High levels of inflation and the resulting cost of living crisis have added to challenges already being experienced by providers in Wiltshire following the pandemic. Fuel costs and the cost of agency nursing staff are two of the main inflationary pressures.

This is having an impact on their financial viability. A small number of providers have already exited the market due to cost-of-living pressures and being unable to recruit and retain appropriately skilled staff.

Care Workforce

Recruitment and retention of care staff is an ongoing issue within Wiltshire for our providers. There are historic and well cited issues with rurality, cost of affordable housing and proportion of available workforce in Wiltshire.

Providers have told us that staff recruitment is the most difficult it has been. A snapshot audit by the provider oversight and support team (POST) shows a total of 196 care staff (domiciliary, older adults nursing and residential care) left their jobs between 12 September 2022 – 7 October 2022 in Wiltshire, with only 5% leaving for other roles in the care sector. The majority of staff stated that they were either leaving the social care sector completely, leaving due to personal circumstances, or have provided no information as to why they have left.

Domiciliary care providers handed back 95 POCs between 1 May 2022 – 30 September 2022, with providers stating that 56% of all hand backs were due to having insufficient staffing levels to enable them to deliver the care required. Other issues included a breakdown in relationships or changing care need. Whilst the volume of hand backs has reduced between October 2022 and February 2023 to 42 POCs, having insufficient staffing levels accounted for 60% of all hand backs during this period.

Providers tell us that the pool of care staff is reducing and there is significant competition between providers to recruit from the same pool of staff. There has been increased movement within the care sector workforce due to providers offering incentives to attract new recruits. There is also competition from retail companies as well as the health sector, with some care workers exiting the social care workforce entirely for better terms and conditions in the NHS.

Care home providers are using more agency staff and an increasing number of Sponsorship Licenses to bridge the gaps of workforce shortages and supplement their workforce. Providers have advised that it has become harder to recruit registered managers.

Geographical Challenges

There are currently imbalances of supply of care provision within Wiltshire:

- **Residential Care homes** – There are challenges in placing people that require residential care within the local areas of Warminster, Westbury and Trowbridge, particularly those with dementia. There are either low volumes of homes relative to population sizes in those areas or unsuitable care home environments.
- **Nursing Care homes** – The Integrated Care Board (ICB) currently has issues sourcing nursing care beds in the north of Wiltshire (Calne, Corsham and Box) as there are a limited number of nursing homes in that geographical area.
- **Domiciliary Care** – The Council has experienced difficulties when trying to arrange POCs in Tisbury, Wilton, Marlborough, Southern Wiltshire Local Areas, Cricklade and areas bordering Dorset. This is due to:
 - Rurality
 - Limited public transport links for care staff to use if they do not drive.
 - A relatively low population density (over 65's).
 - Limited main road network

Most recently there have been issues sourcing providers to deliver POCs in Trowbridge and Corsham due to a lack of care workers available.

Hospital Discharge and Admission Avoidance

The Hospital Discharge and Community Support Policy and Operating Model (DHSC) released on 7 July 2021 sets out the aim to embed the Discharge to Assess model (D2A) model actioned during the COVID 19 response. There is an expectation that performance continues to reduce the length of stay for people in acute care, to improve people's outcomes following a period of rehabilitation and recovery and minimise the need for long-term care at the end of a person's rehabilitation.

The majority of this hospital discharge capacity is delivered through Care Homes in Wiltshire. The nature of the demand is often complex, the majority (over 75%) of all bedded hospital discharge referrals meet the criteria for therapy assessment and the opportunity for rehabilitation which is largely not now taking place in hospital. People with end-of-life care needs now only have a criterion to reside in hospital of a few hours, before the national guidance, people could choose to stay in hospital for end-of-life care.

There has been an increase demand for domiciliary care of 38% over the last 2 years drive by hospital discharge and hospital avoidance schemes such as our rapid response service.

Payment to Providers

Providers have reported issues with our payments processes.

Self-Funders

Wiltshire has a large self-funder market. Data submitted by providers as part of the 2022 Cost of Care exercise, shows that the percentage differences between self-funded and local authority funded customers are:

- Domiciliary care: 46.64% self-funders, 53.36% local authority funded customers.
- Care homes: 60% self-funders, 40% local authority funded customers.

The impact of the scale of the self funder market is a reduction of available capacity for local authority funded placements and also competition for capacity driving up cost.

b) Assessment of current sustainability of the 65+ care home market

Wiltshire has 162 care homes. 87 homes are 'Older Persons' homes providing 3,929 beds (1,455 nursing, 1,629 residential and 845 dual registration care beds). The Council currently funds 1,146 (as of 16 March 2023) older adults in long term residential and nursing care, with the rest purchased by self-funders, other councils, the NHS, or are unoccupied.

- 50 care homes are part of Wiltshire Care Home Alliance (WCHA).
- 26 care homes are contracted to provide either nursing block, framework or complex beds.
- 38 care homes are contracted to provide either residential block, framework, EMI or complex beds.

Block Nursing Care Beds

26% of people are placed into nursing care homes in the Salisbury area between 01/01/2017 and 31/12/2021. There is currently an extremely low volume of contracted block beds in Salisbury and its surrounding local areas meaning that the majority of beds are either framework or spot purchased which is placing a significant budgetary challenge on the Council.

Fee Rates

In comparison to rates paid by other local authorities in the Southwest, Wiltshire has some of the highest fee levels.

The authorities current average weekly fee rates paid are:

- Residential care: £856.23
- Nursing care: £967.00 (excl. FNC)

The biggest issue facing care home providers are staff recruitment and retention, especially of nursing staff.

c) Assessment of current sustainability of the 18+ domiciliary care market

Wiltshire Council's Home Care Alliance was implemented in October 2018. The 'Help to Live at Home' (HTLAH) Alliance is a dynamic purchasing (DPS) arrangement which allows the Council to work in partnership with a broad provider base. The DPS comes to an end in March 2023.

The HTLAH Alliance focuses on service quality and partnership. Only providers offering a good standard of care as determined not only by the CQC inspection, but also by our own internal quality monitoring processes, can become Alliance partners.

There are 108 providers on the HTLAH Alliance that provide care in 3 distinct zones of operation. Providers can join the Alliance on one of 2 tiers – Tier 1 and Tier 2. They can choose to provide care in any or all of 3 zones.

The rurality of Wiltshire means that home care can be difficult to source in defined parts of the county.

Fee Rates

The UKHCA recommends that £23.20 (for 2022-23) is the minimum hourly rate which Local Authorities need to pay to ensure that home care professionals are paid at or above minimum wage, providers can meet oncosts and running costs, and deliver an acceptable level of profit. On average, English Councils were paying £19.01 per hour. Wiltshire pays on average £22.86 per hour. In the South West, only 3 authorities pay more. Despite the Council paying an average of £22.86, the market is still not sustainable.

Sufficiency of supply to ensure continuity of care.

With the fragility of the market currently, providers are handing back packages for customers that they consider too complex or have challenging behaviour.

This may be further exacerbated by the number of customers with predominantly health-related needs (e.g. IPAP and CPAP ventilation, manual bowel evacuation, tracheostomy care and PEG feeding) who are presented as needing home care, without being assessed as continuing healthcare eligible.

Complexity of packages and the changes to the discharge model mean that customers who would previously have been cared for in a care home are now managed at home. This has the dual effect of requiring highly skilled care workers (e.g., for moving and handling) but also of utilising large quantities of care per package.

Section 2: Assessment of the impact of future market changes between now and October 2025, for each of the service markets

Hospital discharge

We will continue to see an increased demand and complexity as all three acute trusts have agreed their bed capacity plans for 2023/2024. This includes increased demand for domiciliary care following a period of reablement.

As part of the ICB we have planned a reduction in D2A beds and an increase in capacity for long term complex and mental health needs beds over the next 2 years.

Domiciliary Care

Market Change	Impact of Change
Aim to increase Extra Care provision in Wilts	<p>Efficiencies from domiciliary care as could care for more people in one setting.</p> <p>Reduce demand for residential beds and enable people to live in their own homes for longer.</p>
More people to remain in their own homes and receive care	<p>The local authority will require either a greater number of providers or increased levels of staff who have the skills to meet the diversity of need/care required.</p> <p>POCs may be longer, require double handed care.</p> <p>Training will be required to ensure staff have skills to meet need.</p> <p>Local authority will review its own delivery models e.g., its in-house domiciliary care provider, Wiltshire Support at Home, to meet increased demand and complexity of need.</p> <p>The Council will need to look at more innovative care delivery models e.g., the use of micro enterprises and the Voluntary and Community sector.</p>
Increased use of Technology Enabled Care	<p>Increase knowledge and skills of professionals (social care, care homes etc) to work with TEC.</p> <p>Manage demand and supply issues in home care better through increased use of TEC.</p>
Improved support for Carers	<p>The joint Carers strategy is in development which proposes speedier and more equitable access to assessment and support</p>

65+ Care Home Market

Market Change	Impact of Change
Complex care and dementia	<p>May result in smaller providers not being sustainable as they will not have the physical environment to manage complex and high-level dementia needs.</p> <p>Skills gap and training need so that people can care for those with complex care needs – co-morbidities, frailties, and challenging behaviour.</p> <p>The Council will need to review its own delivery models to ensure sufficiency of supply.</p>
Workforce/training	<p>Lack of high-quality training available to providers and can be expensive.</p> <p>The Council will work with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to identify training opportunities.</p>

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Key Strategic Risks

The following key strategic risks have been cited by Wiltshire's providers, ICB colleagues and Council brokerage, operational and commissioning teams. Despite the return asking the Council to detail one singular key strategic risk, we believe that the following are all of equal importance and merit noting.

Workforce

- Providers are competing for the same workforce.
- There are increasing numbers of care staff choosing to leave the sector.
- Significant staff shortages (particularly in domiciliary care) that are the biggest threat to sufficiency. This will further impact not only on customer / staff experience but also on service provider performance. A wide range of factors can drive social care staff to leave, including:
 - Pay and terms and conditions.
 - Career progression
 - Training opportunities
 - Work-life balance
 - Motivation and morale
 - Flexibility at work
 - Organisational culture
 - Leadership

Inflation

Annual contractual uplifts will be applied in April 2023. Uplift mechanisms take into account current inflationary pressures and market factors. We believe this will work towards maintaining the sustainability of the market. Inflation is anticipated to fall by the end of 2023 therefore we don't see this as a significant strategic risk going forward.

Insurance

Care providers have told us that a lack of choice in care sector insurance is causing instability. Insurers are requiring more assurance and demanding a higher premium which could result in providers exiting the market.

New CQC Assessment Process

The CQC are initiating a new assessment process in 2023. Providers are concerned that this that may be time consuming and an additional burden. There is a risk that the rating landscape is changing.

Fees and cost of care

- There was a significant discrepancy between the data submitted in the cost of care exercise by providers and the fees the Council pays as a fair and affordable cost of care. However, there were some flaws with the 2022 Cost of Care exercise as detailed in the published Annex B Cost of Care reports.
- Calculations of fee increases – some historical contracts have fee uplift mechanisms that are no longer fit for purpose. The Council has already reviewed its Home Care uplift mechanism for the new contract and will continue to review its uplift mechanisms on other contracts. In 2023-24, where a contractual uplift mechanism hasn't been deemed suitable by the council, an additional uplift has been awarded.

Pay

- Current pay levels are insufficient to recruit and retain people within the care sector-providers report that support workers are exiting the workforce to seek employment in other sectors.
- Domiciliary care workers may be on zero hours contracts-whilest that may be attractive to people who need flexibility for childcare responsibilities it may be a barrier to others.

Payment to Providers

Our current payment processes are a disincentive to current and prospective providers when offering capacity to the council.

Current Wiltshire Home Care Commissioning Model

- It is time and task rather than outcome focused.
- Although the Council pays on average £22.86 per hour there is no clear expectation regarding the amount that staff should be paid per hour.
- Current home care contract reflects pre COVID arrangements rather than the current environment.

Perception of Care as a Career

- No clear career pathway/progression within the care sector

Section 3: Plans for each market to address sustainability issues, including fee rate issues, where identified.

Note: As part of these plans local authorities should also demonstrate how they complement other strategic documents, such as, but not limited to their Market Position Statements and demonstrate how they have worked with local providers to develop the plans in this section.

(a) 65+ care homes market & 18+ domiciliary care market

Expenditure for 2022/23

The Market Sustainability Grant for 2022-23 of £1,230,568 was allocated as follows:

22.99% - Care Home (residential and nursing) uplifts

73.14% - Home care uplifts

3.87% - Spend on resourcing and implementation activities to support market sustainability.

Plans for funding – 2023/24 & 2024/25

Wiltshire Council will receive £4.269m. There are two elements to funding plans. A proportion of this will continue the progress made in 2022/23 on fees and the additional funding to address discharge delays, social care waiting times, low fee rates, workforce pressures, and to promote technological innovation in the sector.

In addition, this funding will be used to bring all Home Care packages on the Home Care Flexible Framework up to £25.95 per hour in line with The Homecare Associations minimum rate for 2023/24. This will be a significant increase for around 90% of packages. The new Home Care contract that will start in April 2023 will also use this hourly rate as its base rate.

The remainder of the 2023/24 funding will be used in line with the grant conditions to address the items detailed by the DHSC to address the plans detailed in the section below.

(b) Further actions Wiltshire Council plans to take to support market sustainability

During August 2022, the local authority invited home care and care home providers to attend two workshops focused on the Market Sustainability Plan. The workshops were facilitated by the Institute of Public Care (IPC). In addition, monthly Provider forums and Home Care market engagement events have helped us to shape the narrative below to support market sustainability. The Council also has an ambitious transformation programme for Adult Social Care with Market Development as one of the key strands.

Fee Setting

- We will continue to engage with the market through our work on Market Sustainability to better understand what the Fair Cost of Care should be on the basis of what is a suitable rate for providers to cover the cost of delivery and make a reasonable return on operations and what is affordable for the local authority, recognising our responsibility to steward public money and will be influenced by the amount of funding made available by government and its conditions.
- We want to work towards a fair cost of care that is built on sound judgement, evidence and negotiation and critically one that is affordable through the funding provided by Government to implement and manage the Adult Social Care reforms, which have now been delayed until October 2025.

Recruitment and Retention

The Council, in conjunction with other South West ADASS authorities will relaunch its Proud to Care initiative. Working with Health Education England and our providers, we will focus on making social care careers more attractive, rewarding and sustainable.

- We will work with the ICB to develop training opportunities for care sector workers across BANES, Swindon & Wiltshire Council
- We will promote the BSW Academy, an inclusive initiative that will help to unite and develop the BSW Partnership's entire 34,000 strong workforce by investing in leadership, learning, innovation, improvement and inclusion across the ICS.
- We will continue to promote and support the Joint Wiltshire Care Partnership and BSW Care Workforce recruitment and retention scheme.
- We will continue to promote the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon & Wiltshire Care Skills Partnership (BSWCSP) to
 - Support Independent, Voluntary and Private sector (IVP) adult care employers and Registered Managers (RMs) to access learning and development for RMs and their staff.
 - Provide advice and support on adult training courses with regard to grants and funding which may be available to staff.
 - Provide advice and support to anyone who would like a career in adult social care regarding traineeships and apprenticeships.

Working Together with Providers

- We will continue effective, regular and transparent dialogue with our providers, especially in challenging times.
- We will continue to provide a single 'one stop shop' for providers through the Provider Oversight Team
- We will work with providers to develop value based commissioning models and will implement the Provider Assessment & Market Management Solution (PAMMS) in partnership with them to allow regional Quality assurance.
- We will move from paying net to gross and implement a new provider payment portal to ensure timely and accurate payments.
- We will continue to deliver our Trusted Assessor Model which is managed by Wiltshire Care Partnership and look at its possible expansion.
- We will continue to develop our information services and integrated brokerage service to include a service for self funded customers to support section 18(3) of the Care Act 2014

Strategic Plans

- **Accommodation Strategy** - We will develop an Accommodation Strategy which will outline Wiltshire Council's older adults' future accommodation aspirations, our future approach, demand and gaps in the market.

- **Carers Strategy** -we have developed a draft strategy which addresses the needs all age carers.
- **Dementia Strategy** - We will develop a joint dementia strategy, which will outline how we will ensure we will have high-quality and equitable services to support people with dementia and carers of all ages through their dementia journey.
- **Technology Enabled Care Strategy** – This strategy is being developed in tandem with carers., housing and operational teams.
- **Aging Well Strategy** – We will develop an Aging Well Strategy which will enable us to understand and respond to localised need and interests of older people.
- **Older Adults Market Position Statement (MPS)** – We will refresh our current MPS.

Home Care Flexible Framework

- On the 1 April 2023 the Council's Home Care Flexible Framework will come into effect, replacing Wiltshire's current Help to Live at Home model. The introduction of the Flexible Framework will see the transition from 3 large zones to 15 smaller more manageable zones that will reduce provider travel time, address issues in rural hard to reach areas and enable providers to better plan their recruitment within geographical areas.
- The Flexible Framework will run for a period of 3 years and will enable us to pilot new and innovative approaches within Wiltshire.
- Due to the increased fragility of the home care market the Flexible Framework will enable the Council to take a revised approach to support and stabilise the market. This will give additional time to co-produce with communities, providers, and voluntary and health sector partners and pilot different concepts in a planned way, taking into consideration the challenges and informed by the 2022 Cost of Care exercise.
- We will explore inhouse provision of domiciliary care to support and sustain the market.

Block and Framework Beds

Under the Wiltshire Care Home Alliance, we will go out to tender during 2023-24 for

- Block Nursing Care beds
- Framework Residential and Nursing beds

To address the identified shortage of contracted block bed capacity in Salisbury and its surrounding local areas to reduce the volume of spot beds the council.

Payments to Providers

- A high level project group has been established which will continue to develop timely, consistent processes to improve payments. Good progress has already been made, and the Council continues to work with providers on this important issue.

Community & Voluntary Sector (CVS)

- We will map out the services that Wiltshire's VCS provide which could potentially reduce the volume of non-regulated care and support that our current home care providers are delivering to free up capacity within the home care market.
- We will look to micro providers and small enterprises to offer a more diverse range of care and support in the community in order to maximise capacity and increase choice and control.
- We will pilot a strengths-based approach that will take a different approach to how we review people's care and support.

- We will review our use of Direct Payments and PAs to give people more choice and personalisation and will seek to pilot things such as Individual Service Funds (ISF) and Prepayment cards to provide people with greater choice.
- We will explore alternative models of care and support. By utilising Technology Enabled Care (TEC) services, we will seek to replace elements of POCs through the use of TECs, and in turn reduce demand on more traditional services, such as home care and residential placements to promote independence and enabling us to target our workforce resources more effectively over the coming years.

Incentives and New Delivery Models

The Council and ICB are currently exploring several incentives and options for new delivery models that could help alleviate pressures on the domiciliary care and care home market.

The Council is also looking at non-fee-based incentives to encourage care workers to Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

28 March 2023

Subject: Household Support Fund

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling - Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the Household Support Fund 2023 – 2024 as the grant exceeds £500,000 as determined by the Council's constitution.

Wiltshire Council has been allocated £5,457,313 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Fund is being provided to support households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs to help them with significantly rising living costs for the financial year 2023-24.

Proposals

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

1. notes the content of this report.
2. to delegate the payment criteria of the grant to the Corporate Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer), Corporate Director for People and Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets.

Reason for Proposal

To inform Members of the Household Support Fund allocation Wiltshire Council has been awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

**Terence Herbert
Chief Executive**

28 March 2023

Subject: Household Support Fund

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets

Key Decision: Key

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of round 4 of the Household Support Fund 2023 – 2024. Wiltshire Council has been allocated £5,457,313 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Fund is being provided to support households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs to help them with significantly rising living costs for the financial year 2023-24.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposal is relevant to the following mission statements laid down in the Council's [Business Plan 2022 to 2032](#):
 - Prevention and early intervention
 - Improving social mobility and tackling inequalities
 - Understanding communities
 - Working together

Background

3. Previous Household Improvement Funds have been allocated and distributed over separate 6-month periods since 2021. Each fund allocation has had a slightly different spend criteria and focus of support.
4. The greatest allocations in the previous fund rounds have been focused on the provision of free school meals during school holidays and to low-income households where the resident/s are over 65 years.
5. £842 million has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to provide support to households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs (in exceptional cases of genuine emergency), to help them with significantly rising living costs.
6. The funding is being provided by The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London

Boroughs), under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer the scheme and provide assistance to households most in need.

7. This funding covers the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 inclusive. Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in the accompanying grant determination and guidance.
8. The expectation is that the Fund should primarily be used to support households in the most need; particularly those who may not be eligible for the other support government has recently made available but who are nevertheless in need and who require crisis support. The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people.

Types of Support

9. The Fund should primarily be used to support energy bills for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking, or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders. It can also be used to support water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, as well as for sanitary purposes and sewerage. Energy bills may be of particular concern to low-income households during the period of the Fund.
10. The Fund can also be used to support households with the cost of food and essential costs related to energy, food and water such as warm clothing, blankets, the purchase of equipment such as fridges, freezers, ovens, slow cookers. The Fund can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this need.
11. The Fund can be used to support wider essential needs not linked to energy and water should Authorities consider this appropriate in their area. These may include, but are not limited to, support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, , essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle, or paying for fuel.
12. The Fund may be used to provide supplementary advice services to award recipients, including debt and benefit advice, where Authorities consider this appropriate.
13. Reasonable administrative costs incurred by the council may be funded by the Fund. This includes reasonable costs incurred administering the Fund and will be required to be reported to DWP as part of the management information and analysis of spend in April 2024 (see delivery plans section below)
14. The Fund can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this need.

Delivery of the scheme

15. Authorities have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers or cash to households, making direct provision of food and goods, or issuing grants to third parties.

16. Every area must operate at least part of their scheme on an application basis enabling residents to have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support. Authorities should offer application-based support throughout the duration of The Fund, either continuously over the majority of The Fund Period or in regular intervals throughout the scheme.

Communications about the scheme

17. It is mandatory for Authorities to reference that the grant is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions or the UK Government in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases.

18. It is mandatory for Authorities to make public their plans for The Fund, including how and when they intend to deliver the application-based portion of their scheme. This should be through a website page dedicated to the Fund headed with 'Household Support Fund' on their Authority website. This webpage must be easily accessible for residents and outline the Authority's plans for funding, including with details of who is eligible in the area, as well as how and when residents might be able to apply for the application-based element of the scheme. Links to the Government's Cost of Living Hub should be included, as well as a specific reference that the grant is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions or the UK Government.

Delivery plans

19. Authorities are required to complete a delivery plan to outline their intentions for The Fund, clearly setting out their priorities and approach for use of the Fund, and to demonstrate the ways in which they intend to allocate their funding.

20. Authorities are required to send the delivery plan to DWP by 17 May 2023. At the end of The Fund the authority will be required to provide a summary of spend against the final delivery plan with this due at the same time as the final Management Information (MI) in April 2024.

21. Delivery plans must be signed off by the Section 151 Officer and responsible Cabinet Member before submission to DWP.

Reporting and Payment

22. Authorities are required to make four Statements of Grant Usage and Management Information returns outlining grant spend and the volume of awards.

MI return	Reporting period: from	Reporting period: to	Deadline
Interim 1	1 April 2023	30 June 2023	21 July 2023
Interim 2	1 April 2023	30 September 2023	20 October 2023
Interim 3	1 April 2023	31 December 2023	26 January 2024
Interim 4	1 April 2023	31 March 2024	26 April 2024

23. Grant payments will be made to authorities in arrears on receipt of a fully completed and verified MI return.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

24. The Household Support Fund is a government led scheme with funding criteria set by government. This report to Cabinet provides Members with an overview of round 4 of the Household Support Fund 2023 – 2024 and there has been no engagement with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or Select Committees.

Safeguarding Implications

25. There are no safeguarding implications from administering the Household Support Fund 2023-2024.

Public Health Implications

26. This fund will help to provide support to vulnerable and low-income households in Wiltshire. By utilising data from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and council data sets we can ensure that resources are targeted where they are most needed with the aim of reducing inequalities across our population.

Procurement Implications

27. There are no procurement implications from administering the Household Support Fund 2023 - 2024

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

28. The equalities impact of the proposed decision is believed to be low against all criteria on the Equalities Risk Criteria Table and, therefore, a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

29. There are no perceived negative impacts on environment and climate change from the Household Support Fund.

Workforce Implications

30. There are no perceived adverse implications on the employees working on the administration of the Fund and it is expected that existing staff will administer the Fund.

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

31. The Council must submit a delivery plan to DWP by the 17th May to comply with the conditions of the Household Support Fund. It is, therefore, good practice to provide this report as an overview for Cabinet and to request the delegation included in the proposals for transparency. If the delegation is not approved there could be delays in the administering the Fund and making payments to those households most in need.

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

32. The Household Support Fund does not require a decision to be made at this stage. Due to the requirements set out by DWP for reporting and to ensure there is not a delay for administering the scheme and making payments to those in need, the proposal is made for delegation of the payment criteria of the grant to the Corporate Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer), Corporate Director for People and Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management , and Operational Assets.

Financial Implications

33. The DWP set out requirements for reporting, which are included above in the body of the report, As grant payments will be made to authorities in arrears on receipt of a fully completed and verified MI returns there is a risk that the DWP may consider some of the payments made by the council to not be in line with the criteria and, therefore, may not reimburse the council for these payments. This will be mitigated by setting out the criteria for payment, ensuring the criteria is met and undertaking appropriate control processes, such as validation of any applications made through the application process.
34. As grants payments will be made to the council in arrears the council will lose the interest that would have been earned on the cash value of payments made until the reimbursement is received, however, this is not considered to be significant due to the four reporting periods for the year and the relatively low interest rates and the expected value of the payments.
35. Reasonable administrative costs incurred by the council may be funded by the Fund. It is expected that existing staff will support the administration of the Fund and their costs will be reclaimed and included within the summary of spend and in the Statements of Grant Usage and Management Information returns. It is also expected that any additional administrative costs such as IT costs and the cost of making payments will also be included within the summary of spend and be reclaimed from DWP.

Legal Implications

36. There are no specific legal implications arising from the proposal, however the Council will need to ensure compliance with any grant conditions and ensure any subsidy control requirements are met.

Options Considered

37. Due to the nature of the grant requirements of the Household Support Fund, no other options are required to be considered at this stage.

Conclusions

38. It is recommended that the Cabinet notes the contents of this report and delegate the spend of the grant to the Corporate Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer), Corporate Director of People and Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets.

Lucy Townsend, Corporate Director for People

Report Author: Rachel Kent, Consultant in Public Health,
Rachel.kent@wiltshire.gov.uk

28 March 2023

Background papers

[1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024: Household Support Fund guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024: Household Support Fund Grant Determination 2023 No 31/6496 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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