

# AGENDA

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**Meeting:** Environment Select Committee

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

**Date:** Thursday 18 July 2024

**Time:** 1.30 pm

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Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Ellen Ghey - Democratic Services Officer of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718259 or email [ellen.ghey@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:ellen.ghey@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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## Membership

Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman)  
Cllr Richard Budden  
Cllr Tony Jackson  
Cllr Mel Jacob  
Cllr Jacqui Lay  
Cllr Dr Brian Mathew  
Cllr Charles McGrath

Cllr Ian McLennan  
Cllr Dr Nick Murry  
Cllr Tom Rounds  
Cllr Iain Wallis  
Cllr Derek Walters (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Stuart Wheeler

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## Substitutes

Cllr Brian Dalton  
Cllr Matthew Dean  
Cllr Ross Henning  
Cllr Jon Hubbard

Cllr Dr Mark McClelland  
Cllr Stewart Palmen  
Cllr Ricky Rogers  
Cllr Bridget Wayman

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## **Public Participation**

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

For extended details on meeting procedure, submission and scope of questions and other matters, please consult [Part 4 of the council's constitution](#).

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# AGENDA

## Procedural Document (Pages 7 - 8)

Standard Scrutiny Questions for Members' Reference

### PART I

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

1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 9 - 30)**

To approve and sign the minutes of the Environment Select Committee meetings held on 20 March 2024 and 4 June 2024.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

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

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chair.

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

#### Statements

If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please register to do so **at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting**. Up to 3 speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item. Please contact the officer named on the front of the agenda for any further clarification.

#### Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution.

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **Thursday 11 July 2024** in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response, questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Monday 15 July 2024**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

6 **Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030** (*Pages 31 - 68*)

Wiltshire Council has not previously developed a Council Cultural Strategy since its formation in 2009.

The Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030 supports the delivery of key priorities set out in Wiltshire Council's 2022-32 Business Plan. It seeks to provide a better connected, stronger creative and cultural sector and a more vibrant and diverse cultural offer, delivered through collaboration with strategic partners, the cultural and creative sector, and communities.

7 **Leisure Strategy and the Warminster Project** (*Pages 69 - 80*)

To receive a report regarding the Leisure Services Review including Warminster, as resolved at the Environment Select Committee meeting on 4 June 2024.

8 **Speed Limit Assessments Task Group Final Report** (*Pages 81 - 92*)

To receive the final report of the Speed Limit Assessments Task Group.

9 **Updates from Task Groups and Representatives on Programme Boards** (*Pages 93 - 96*)

To receive any updates on recent activity for active Task Groups and from Members of the Environment Select Committee who have been appointed as Overview and Scrutiny Representatives on Programme Boards.

10 **Forward Work Programme** (*Pages 97 - 106*)

To note and receive updates on the progress of items on the Forward Work Programme.

Under the revised Overview and Scrutiny (OS) arrangements, there is now a single OS work programme controlled by the OS Management Committee, linked to priorities in the Business Plan.

Therefore, it should be noted that whilst any matters added by Members are welcome, they will be referred to the OS Management Committee for approval before formal inclusion in the Forward Work Programme for the Environment Select Committee.

A copy of the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for the Environment Select Committee is attached for reference.

11 **Urgent Items**

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

12 **Date of Next Meeting**

To confirm the date of the next scheduled meeting as 3 September 2024.

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## Sample Scrutiny Questions

Below are some sample questions for scrutineers to use as a reference and adapt according to the issue or proposal under scrutiny.

Area of Enquiry	Sample Scrutiny Questions
<b>Customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will benefit? Is there a demographic breakdown of those eligible for the service?</li> <li>• Has the proposal's impact on different groups been considered?</li> <li>• How has customer experience informed the proposal?</li> <li>• How can service users give feedback or get involved in designing or reviewing the service?</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What evidence of need is there for the actions proposed?</li> <li>• How has the need been identified?</li> </ul>
<b>Link with wider objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the proposal support the delivery of the council's Business Plan or other relevant strategies?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What assurances can you give that the proposal can be delivered on time / within budget?</li> <li>• Is there a clear action plan for delivery?</li> <li>• What resources are in place to meet the identified need?</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What staff development will be needed and how will this be achieved?</li> <li>• How will the staff be recruited and retained?</li> </ul>
<b>Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What system is in place to monitor performance?</li> <li>• What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?</li> <li>• How will performance indicators be used to inform planning and decision-making?</li> </ul>

Area of Enquiry	Sample Scrutiny Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is the service meeting the needs of Wiltshire residents?</li> <li>• Is performance improving or dipping?</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the expected outcomes of the proposal?</li> <li>• What would success look like?</li> <li>• What would failure look like?</li> <li>• How will you measure the difference the service/change will make?</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a framework in place for risk management?</li> <li>• What are the key risks and what actions will mitigate/reduce these risks?</li> <li>• At what point would the risk be unmanageable? Is there an exit strategy?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will efficiency be measured?</li> <li>• How will processes be reviewed and improvements identified?</li> </ul>
<b>Compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you ensure compliance with regulatory standards?</li> <li>• Do the service standards meet external standards?</li> </ul>
<b>Public awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you raise awareness of the service/changes proposed?</li> </ul>
<b>Benchmarking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well does the council perform compared to comparator authorities?</li> <li>• How well do service users do in comparison to those in other areas?</li> </ul>



## Environment Select Committee

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**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2024 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.**

**Present:**

Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman), Cllr Richard Budden, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Mel Jacob, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Tom Rounds, Cllr Iain Wallis, Cllr Derek Walters (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Stuart Wheeler, and Cllr Stewart Palmen (Substitute)

**Also Present:**

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Nick Holder, Cllr Dominic Muns, Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cllr Tamara Reay (Virtual), Cllr Jonathon Seed (Virtual), Cllr Christopher Williams, and Cllr Robert Yuill

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14 **Election of Vice-Chairman**

Nominations were sought for a Vice-Chairman, and it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee elected Councillor Derek Walters as the Vice-Chairman of the Environment Select Committee.**

15 **Apologies and Membership Update**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Charles McGrath
- Councillor Dr Nick Murry
- Councillor Dr Brian Mathew, who was substituted by Councillor Stewart Palmen

16 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 January 2024 were considered. Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee approved and signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 January 2024 as a true and correct record.**

17 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

18 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

19 **Public Participation**

There were no statements or questions submitted.

20 **Highways Annual Review of Service 2023**

Councillor Nick Holder, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding, alongside Samantha Howell, Director of Highways and Transport, Dave Thomas, Head of Highways Asset Management and Commissioning, and Chris Clark, Head of Local Highways, presented the Highways Annual Review of Service 2023 for consideration.

Members were informed that on 15 March 2024, after the publication of the agenda, the Leader, Councillor Richard Clewer, announced changes to the Cabinet portfolios. As such, it had been confirmed that Councillor Caroline Thomas had stepped down from her role as Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding, with Councillor Nick Holder subsequently taking on the Cabinet Member responsibilities for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding. Cllr Holder thanked Cllr Thomas for her hard work, commitment to benefitting residents, and integrity during her time as part of the Cabinet.

It was highlighted that 2023 had been a challenging year for the Highways Service in respect of the ongoing national resourcing issues, and the volatile and adverse weather conditions impacting on officers' ability to maintain the integrity of the network. Despite this, it was highlighted that further long-term investments had been made into the apprenticeship programme which provided good employment opportunities and added additional resource into the service.

Members were reminded that although an annual review of the service was undertaken and then submitted to the Committee, officers also held bi-monthly meetings to discuss performance relative to prior periods and benchmarks. As the Council were dependent on contractors delivering much of the necessary maintenance work, it was reiterated that their performance and value for money

was monitored through the contract management process and agreed upon KPIs. The importance of high levels of communication and engagement between the Council, Wiltshire residents, Parish and Town Councils, and other partners was emphasised, and it was noted that there would be a focus on how to improve these communication channels and networks to ensure that there was a greater understanding of the Council's procedures and processes within the Highways Service.

Cllr Holder then thanked those officers for their hard work in creating a comprehensive and informative report, in addition to those officers across the service for their continued dedication, hard work in responding to scores of queries received from the public and press on all aspects of the service, and focus on the safety of all road users, be they driver or pedestrian.

During the discussion, points included:

- Members reported concerns from residents with regard to road conditions in both rural and urban areas and noted that some rural roads were not fit for purpose. It was acknowledged that road maintenance was a challenge when accounting for recent extreme weather conditions leading to quicker road deterioration. However, Members felt that strengthening, resurfacing, and road preservation should be prioritised, particularly when considering the continuing effect of climate change.
- Members were pleased to hear that there was a focus on improving communications.
- Freight routes were raised, and officers confirmed that the Local Transport Plan was under review which would include the prioritisation of a review of the Freight Strategy.
- Members highlighted drainage and the backlog of gully clearings, and queried how officers were intending on rectifying the issue. In response, it was noted that prolonged extreme weather had delayed clearings as officers had prioritised responding to the storms affecting Wiltshire. However, Members were informed that additional investment had been received for highway maintenance activities, therefore officers were working with Area Boards to understand local priorities and develop scheduled regimes in order to target local investment in more productive ways. Furthermore, it was highlighted that there was a discretionary clearing service that could be utilised by Parish Stewards, therefore Members were urged to liaise with their respective Town and Parish Councils, LHFIG Officers, and Parish Stewards to request the service if needed.
- Members sought clarification on the figures in the report with regard to resurfacing compared to the number of miles that the network covers. It was confirmed that the figures in the report were accurate, and although officers were managing to complete a relatively small amount of resurfacing each year, they were doing what was achievable with the available budget.

- Officers acknowledged that signage when road maintenance was taking place needed to be clearer, with better reasons as to why and for how long work would be taking place for in order to improve residents' understanding of the highways process.
- It was explained that officers evaluated different innovative techniques for road surfacing through a collaborative framework between officers, consultants, and all contractors to look at the available options for material choices and performances to improve asset management. It was highlighted that within the construction industry, there was a focus on net zero and carbon reduction in the supply of black top type materials and lowering the laying temperatures of materials to reduce the overall impact of carbon which could lead to better performance in the future. As such, all factors were being considered when looking at locations and determining the best materials to use for each area.
- Members raised the issue of water from farming lands running off into roads, exacerbating road deterioration, and queried if farmers could be consulted with to help reduce water levels entering the network. Officers noted that there was a complex legal process with regard to this issue, and therefore a detailed briefing note could be provided to Members outside of the meeting.
- Officers noted that they were content that the conversations between the Council and utility companies were delivering improved outcomes, however these were monitored closely in order to ensure that utility companies were held to account when conducting works across the network.
- Officers welcomed the feedback from Members and emphasised that although there was a lot of resource deployed in responding to Storm Hank, officers were focusing on ensuring clear, open, transparent, and improved communications to residents on what is achievable within an appropriate timescale in the medium to long term.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) Endorsed the Highways Annual Review of Service and confirmed that the performance of the Council's highways contractors has been good during 2023.**
- 2) Welcomed the additional funding provided by the Council for highways activities in 2023.**

- 3) **Acknowledged the extensive programme of road resurfacing and highway maintenance being proposed for 2024-25, and the additional funding being made available by the Council to help support this.**
- 4) **Requested a report on the Highways Service and the performance of the Highway Service's contractors in a year's time.**

21 **Update on the Development of the MyWilts Potholes Reporting Functionality**

Councillor Ashley O'Neill, Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, and Staffing, alongside Mark Tucker, Director of ICT, and Andy Brown, Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Resources, updated the Committee on the development of the MyWilts pothole reporting functionality.

The importance of the app was emphasised in respect of identifying defects, improving resident engagement, and feedback. As such, the issues that had been experienced and raised regularly were acknowledged, but Members were informed that recent fixes had been undertaken to improve the technical issues within the app and the communications surrounding these. A replacement app (scheduled to launch in Summer 2024) was being developed to both address the issues being experienced in the current app, and the way in which the service operates and integrates with the app.

The difficulties associated with ensuring that the app and web-versions of the system worked across different phone operating systems alongside the complex nature of the Council's organisational structure were highlighted. However, it was explained that the developers of the new iteration of the app were Council employees and therefore understood the nuances of the different internal systems and processes and could ensure synchronisation across the service as a whole. Officers noted that they were working hard to deliver a platform that met expectations and took away the current frustrations for users.

Officers presented a series of slides that explained the background of the project, the issues identified, the improvements made to the current app, and the communications between different services to understand internal processes and areas for improvement.

During the discussion, points included:

- Members queried if other Local Authorities were developing similar apps. In response, it was explained that Wiltshire Council had the largest number of surface areas and therefore, more backend systems to link which was where most of the complexity lay. As such, there were not any common libraries/apps that had been developed and although officers

had reached out to other Local Authorities, they did not feel there was an appetite for a cross-sector effort. However, officers had looked at best practice across the country and had applied these to the new design.

- Members noted the reliance on one internal team to deliver the next iteration of the app and highlighted the importance of developing detailed guidance documents should another team need to take over due to unforeseen circumstances.
- It was explained that officers had decided to adopt the industry standard progressive web app technology which used more generic tooling and one code base instead of the current 3 bases to reduce the complexities. It was noted that this may lead to slight differences on the installation methods, but these impacts would be addressed in due course upon completion. However, the skillsets of the developers could therefore be applied as a single approach to provide engineering and development resource in different areas of the Council.
- The importance of a friendly user interface was emphasised, and it was noted that if the targeted Summer 2024 rollout was successful, there may be a period of time in which both apps could run concurrently. Therefore, officers were aiming to offer an early release to Members for feedback which can then be incorporated into the development process to address any early concerns.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) Noted the improvements made to the MyWilts application to provide more information to the public when a case is closed.**
- 2) Noted the roadmap for the planned improvements to the MyWilts application moving forward.**
- 3) Requested an update report after the release of the new MyWilts system in 2024.**

**22 Libraries Development Update**

Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities, Leisure, and Libraries, alongside David Redfern, Director of Leisure, Culture, and Communities, and Claire Dow, Library Staff and Customer Engagement Manager, delivered a presentation regarding libraries development.

It was explained that there were three core areas within the strategy: financial sustainability; contribution to the health and wellbeing of our communities; and environmental sustainability. It was noted that those priorities aligned with the contributions to the wider Council Business Plan and supported other services such as Public Health, Children's Services, and Adult Social Care.

Officers then presented a series of slides which detailed the performance data of the Library Service, the Library Strategy, and how the Council's priorities are being delivered through supporting vulnerable residents, children, and the roll out of Family Hubs as well as different health awareness schemes. The results and recommendations arising from the LGA Peer Challenge were also highlighted alongside the approaches being taken to address those recommendations.

Officers finished by displaying feedback from members of the public on how the libraries across the County had impacted them, and Members were asked to both make suggestions for improvements to officers and encourage their residents to communicate with leisure centre managers directly to provide feedback and establish local relationships.

During the discussion, points included:

- Members congratulated officers on their hard work.
- Members queried the carbon neutrality of rented buildings used for libraries across the County and if different strategies could be implemented to support the Council in meeting its carbon neutrality goals.
- The importance of libraries within communities was emphasised, particularly with regard to supporting those residents who don't have online access and children in improving literacy and numeracy skills. As such, Members highlighted that different departments within the Council should be working in tandem to ensure that all libraries were accessible, such as specific bus routes, to allow all residents to visit the libraries.
- Members raised the 'Library of Things' scheme utilised in different Local Authorities which allowed families to share and access different equipment that may not be affordable. Officers noted that in order to maximise public facing spaces, there were storage limitations for that specific scheme, however a number of libraries offered initiatives such as 'Repair Cafés'.
- The importances of different offerings such as knitting groups and warm spaces was emphasised to help in removing barriers for people in visiting, particularly those who were more vulnerable.
- It was explained that public visiting habits and behaviours had changed nationally which could be as a result of decreased footfall in high streets and cost living concerns, however borrowing rates within the libraries had bounced back to pre-covid levels. Furthermore, there had been a rise in e-book issuing, therefore as part of the Library Strategy, officers were

looking to analyse whether these were by new users or users who also physically visited a library and had done so pre-covid.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) Noted the presentation.**
- 2) Noted the results of the LGA Peer Challenge.**
- 3) Noted the progress on the Library Strategy and requested a further update in due course.**

**23 Leisure Services**

Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities, Leisure, and Libraries, and David Redfern, Director of Leisure, Culture, and Communities, delivered a presentation regarding leisure services.

Officers then presented a series of slides which detailed the core membership growth for all centres alongside the growth of all memberships (including swim schools) for insourced and Wiltshire Council centres for the period October 2021 to February 2024. Namely, that there had been a 31% growth in core membership types since the transition of Places Leisure Centres in October 2021, and a growth of 8% for swim school memberships.

Members were then informed of the financial results of the August Bank Holiday 2023 opening trial in which four sites opened across Wiltshire for limited hours on a single shift basis. It was highlighted that as working Bank Holidays was not a contractual requirement, ensuring that there were enough staff working at each of the sites was the biggest challenge. Despite this, officers were intending on continuing the trial for the full year 2024, excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Years Day.

During the discussion, points included:

- Officers noted that the current strategy was focussing on embedding experience throughout the operational structure by ensuring that the right people were in the right posts within the Leisure Management Team. Furthermore, each site manager had ownership of their site and were responsible for driving targets which was supported by a specific marketing budget which increased agility and could allow more targeted strategies based on individual site needs.



- In respect of the Bank Holiday trial, the four sites were chosen to target the biggest population densities. All staff who worked on those days were thanked by Members.
- It was noted that membership growth would help in understanding financial sustainability in continuing to provide services. Officers highlighted that since the implementation of the strategy, there had been a noticeable boost in staff morale as they had increased ownership and were instrumental in service delivery which had enabled officers to make a universal offer across all centres.
- Once the Oracle financial management system was launched, it was explained that deeper data analysis could be conducted to allow for centre comparisons and more targeted initiatives.
- The Trowbridge Leisure Centre project was raised, and officers stressed that they were prioritising the management of the £10m investment. As such, officers were meeting with various design and planning consultants, and the architects would soon meet with a panel of planning experts to submit a series of proposals. Officers confirmed that the project was still on schedule to be functional in 2026.
- Members welcomed the progress made, the promotion of health and wellbeing within centres, and the outreach model to ensure that more residents could access leisure centres and libraries.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) **Noted the update.**
- 2) **Requested a further update on the Bank Holiday opening trial in due course.**
- 3) **Requested a further general leisure services update when the enhanced financial information became available.**

24 **Updates from Task Groups and Representatives on Programme Boards**

Councillor Tony Jackson, on behalf of Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Climate Emergency Task Group, presented an update on the Task Group since 11 January 2024.

The recent activities of the Task Group were detailed, namely:

- Members met with See Through Carbon on 16 January 2024, a non-profit organisation running a number of pilot projects with organisations and sectors across the world. Members discussed the importance of transparent and low-cost carbon auditing and how See Through Carbon unusually operates without a bank account.
- Members also met with officers on 24 February 2024 to consider the development of the Council's emerging Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Following the meeting, the Task Group were confident that there was a robust plan in place to deliver an effective document.

Councillor Jonathon Seed, Chairman of the Speed Limit Assessments Task Group, then presented an update on the Task Group since 11 January 2024.

The recent activities of the Task Group were detailed, namely:

- A scoping meeting on 1 March 2024 in which a presentation was delivered by Councillor Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding, Parvis Khansari, Corporate Director – Place, Samantha Howell, Director – Highways and Transport, and Dave Thomas, Head of Highways Asset Management and Commissioning). A number of areas were considered, including:
  - Background and context to speed limit assessments
  - The current process
  - Recent changes to the process
  - Issues arising from that process
- The Task Group's Terms of Reference were drafted, and a work programme would be developed.

Members queried the level of flexibility with regard to the Department for Transport guidance and if exceptions could be made based on an individual area's needs and community feeling. It was highlighted that one of the challenges was less the guidance itself, but more how the guidance was being interpreted by different Local Authorities; as such, Members wanted to explore and understand the impact that local knowledge had on the current process. It was explained that the Task Group was aiming to help support a system that retained public confidence and operated in a consistent and transparent matter.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was then:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) **Noted the update on the Task Group activity provided above.**

- 2) **Noted the Climate Emergency Task Group's Forward Work Plan in Appendix 1.**
- 3) **Appointed the Membership of the Speed Limit Assessment Task Group as listed in the report.**
- 4) **Approved the Terms of Reference of the Speed Limit Assessment Task Group.**

25 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received the Forward Work Programme for consideration.

There being no questions or comments, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee approved the Forward Work Programme.**

26 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

27 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 4 June 2024.

(Duration of meeting: 1.00 - 4.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Ellen Ghey - Democratic Services  
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## Environment Select Committee

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**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE 2024 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.**

**Present:**

Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman), Cllr Richard Budden, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Mel Jacob, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Tom Rounds, Cllr Iain Wallis, and Cllr Derek Walters (Vice-Chairman)

**Also Present:**

Cllr Ian McLennan (Virtual), Cllr Nick Botterill, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Tamara Reay, Cllr Jonathon Seed (Virtual), and Cllr Graham Wright (Virtual)

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**28 Election of the Chairman 2024/25**

Nominations were sought for a Chairman for the forthcoming year. On the nomination of Councillor Iain Wallis, seconded by Councillor Derek Walters, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee elected Councillor Jerry Kunkler as Chairman of the Environment Select Committee for the forthcoming year 2024-25.**

**29 Election of the Vice-Chairman 2024/25**

Nominations were sought for a Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year. On the nomination of Councillor Richard Budden, seconded by Councillor Iain Wallis, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee elected Councillor Derek Walters as Vice-Chairman of the Environment Select Committee for the forthcoming year 2024-25.**

**30 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Charles McGrath

- Councillor Stuart Wheeler

It was further noted that Councillor Ian McLennan would be joining the meeting remotely.

31 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Chairman explained that the minutes from the previous meeting held on 20 March 2024 would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee alongside the minutes of this meeting held on 4 June 2024.

32 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

33 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman drew attention to the document attached to the Agenda Pack titled "Procedural Document" which listed a number of standard scrutiny questions that could be applied to almost any topic that a Scrutiny Committee may encounter. As such, the Chairman encouraged Members to make use of the document and explained that it would be included for Members' reference in all future Environment Select Committee agendas.

Furthermore, the Chairman noted that the order of the agenda would be amended to accommodate conflicting work commitments; therefore, Agenda Item 11, Updates from Task Groups and Representatives on Programme Boards, would be brought forward and considered before Agenda Item 8, Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL).

34 **Public Participation**

The Chairman announced that a statement had been submitted by Mr Tony Blighe regarding Warminster Sports Centre and invited Mr Blighe to present his statement to the Committee.

Members highlighted that they felt the statement had raised issues that needed further scrutiny and suggested that the matter be included within the Forward Work Programme for the next meeting as a matter of urgency considering the timescales detailed.

## 35 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL)**

Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management, and Strategic Planning, presented a verbal update to the Committee alongside Parvis Khansari, Director – Place, and Nic Thomas, Director – Planning.

It was explained that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) had originally been introduced with the intention to replace Section 106 agreements to provide a more robust and transparent way of yielding development contributions. As a result of the recent Corporate Peer Challenge, it was highlighted that it was crucial that the Council aligned all processes in order to utilise the different investments and resources provided for maximum strategic gain and to have rigorous thought into how the CiL was used.

Officers were undertaking reviews into how investments were allocated; do the procedures meet strategic objectives and are they fit for purpose. The current decision-making process had been identified as impractical due to the irregularity of CiL requests, therefore a more dynamic process was necessary in order to respond to demand. Furthermore, it had been found that there had been instances in which allocations of CiL to schemes had not been fully delivered for a significant amount of time, therefore officers were looking to better monitor CiL and other planning incomes to ensure that timely allocation information was available for Members and officers.

Finally, it was highlighted that officers were reviewing the different rate of funding devolution processes in which part of the CiL income was allocated to Town and Parish Councils depending on the progress of their Neighbourhood Plans. Upon review, it had been noted that it was not clear how or if the funding had been spent, therefore officers were seeking to better understand how best to devolve the funding to Town and Parish Councils equally and fairly, and to improve communications between Wiltshire Council and Town and Parish Councils in respect of CiL allocations to enable more informative and effective discussions and plans.

Finally, officers noted that an internal audit for Section 106 processes was undertaken in 2023 which had led to a number of recommendations that officers were in the process of implementing; one of which being how the Council negotiate and secure funding for contributions from developers. As such, officers were looking to continue reviewing the topic in parallel to the CiL review for a better aligned strategic direction.

During the discussion, points included:

- It was explained that the legislation in relation to allocations of CiL to Town and Parish Councils was laid down by Central Government, therefore the Council was limited in which it could control. However, it was noted that the Government had consulted on significant changes

and reform in the area, therefore if there were any specific concerns and/or suggestions, these could be inputted into any consultations.

- Town and Parish Councils had a less restrictive framework in respect of how or when they spent CiL and Members highlighted the importance of maintaining funding at that level and encouraging Town and Parish Councils to spend CiL on what their communities needed and what they felt was most appropriate. However, it was acknowledged that visibility and transparency of funds at that level was an issue and Members noted that encouraging Town and Parish Councils to be more visible could encourage more effective implementation and value for money. Officers echoed this and recognised that the Council needed to support Town and Parish Councils throughout the process.
- It was further explained that Section 106 agreements were specific to developments and CiL was more targeted at the cumulative effect of developments which developers could not influence; as such, CiL was a strategic investment that could be used in a number of different ways. Previous budget reports showed that CiL had been historically allocated to Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Groups, however it was highlighted that this was at the discretion of Cabinet.
- Officers were congratulated on their approach and thanked for the update.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was then:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) **Noted the update.**
- 2) **Requested the Community Infrastructure Levy Review Report by the end of 2024.**

36 **Update on the Towns Programme App Development**

Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Military-Civilian Integration, Health and Wellbeing, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, and Tourism, introduced the report alongside Victoria Moloney, Head of Economy and Regeneration.

A brief overview of the nine workstreams was detailed as per Paragraphs 12 – 24 of the report, with particular reference to the Explore Wiltshire Trails App, the Explore Wiltshire Events Progressive Web App, and the Vibrant Wiltshire Scheme.



During the discussion, points included:

- It was explained that officers were undertaking a lot of footfall analysis to understand public behaviours and it was noted that the majority of towns were returning to pre-pandemic levels of footfall. It was acknowledged that although the high streets were active, there would be continued shifts over time, therefore it was important that officers understood which towns would maintain footfall and which towns may need alternative strategies. Furthermore, it was noted that a lot of the smaller high streets were still in the recovery stage rather than the newer market patterns of a post-covid landscape. As such, these transition towns would require structural change which was recognised within the programme with officers identifying which towns needed additional support to address those challenges. However, it was highlighted that the most progress was being made with Town and Parish Councils that actively engaged with the programme.
- It was noted that the initial footfall data gleaned provided a snapshot in time, but allowed for a benchmark for those towns who had the biggest retail sectors. As such, monthly reports were developed for each town and officers had trained Town and Parish Councils on how to understand and best use those reports.
- Visit Wiltshire was raised, and it was confirmed that regular meetings were continuing to be undertaken to discuss how all partners and organisations could collectively support the tourism economy. Officers were additionally looking at legacy agreements, structures, and partnership to ensure that best marketing practice was embedded in Town and Parish Councils.
- The importance of events as a powerful driver was highlighted and officers explained that due to the volume of events across Wiltshire, there was not enough resources to include them all within the Explore Wiltshire Events app upon launch. As such, the larger events with links to town centres were currently being prioritised, however it was emphasised that work would continue with Town and Parish Councils and trusted partners to start including smaller events in the future.
- The barriers associated with encouraging the public to use the two apps and visit different areas across Wiltshire were observed, and it was explained that the Explore Wiltshire Events platform would operate as both a mobile app and a website so that the public could also access the site through a browser. Additionally, officers were making use of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and were working with the Highways and Transport Department by investing in Demand Responsive Transport to expand the network and enhance accessibility to towns, services, and employment.
- It was explained that under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund officers were in the process of designing and launching a programme called 'Rural Hubs' which centred on support for rural enterprises to ensure that they

had the ability to access a different kind of support to that of a commercial town centre business.

- Due to the complexity of the landscape, it was acknowledged that bespoke support was needed for those Town and Parish Councils who were less familiar with the different practices' officers were advising and that it would take time to embed these alongside providing the appropriate infrastructure necessary.
- Members commended officers on their hard work and the progress being made, and Members were encouraged to contact officers if they had any further suggestions or feedback.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was then:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) **Noted the update.**
- 2) **Requested a further update in 12 months' time.**
- 3) **Requested that information on footfall data be brought to a future meeting as a Part II item.**

37 **Update on Broadband Provision in Wiltshire**

Victoria Moloney, Head of Economy and Regeneration, updated the Committee on the progress being made in supporting the delivery of broadband provision across Wiltshire.

The background to the programme was briefly detailed as per Paragraphs 2 – 8 of the report, and Members were informed of the £18.8m contract awarded to Wessex Internet to provide approximately 14,500 hard-to-reach premises in South Wiltshire with access to gigabit-capable broadband. Furthermore, the North Wiltshire project remained in the procurement cycle with Building Digital UK in which work was progressing on cross regional connectivity solutions to assess which providers would have the ability to undertake the build. As such, further announcements were expected by the end of the year.

It was highlighted that as Wiltshire had two Project Gigabit contracts for the North and South of Wiltshire respectively, there was the possibility that a few Wiltshire properties would be eligible for a Project Gigabit voucher. Finally, it was explained that conversations were progressing in respect of the Shared Rural Network “not spots” surrounding mobile connectivity by which the main four mobile infrastructure providers share rural infrastructure to ensure

maximum coverage. It was noted that some areas had already been identified and further updates would be reported in the coming months.

During the discussion, points included:

- Members were informed that the decommissioning of the copper network had been postponed until approximately 2027 because the build had not been completed to the level anticipated. However, Members were encouraged to approach officers with specific postcodes they were interested in as officers would be able to identify if they were classified as being eligible for public subsidy or if there was a private build being planned.
- Officers were working with Building Digital UK (BDUK) to confirm which properties would be connected by the private sector and to establish accurate information in order to identify which properties may need to be considered within the public provision if necessary.
- It was explained that once the North Wiltshire contract was confirmed, officers would be able to understand the scale of how many properties would not be covered under the two contracts. Furthermore, the operational plan for South Wiltshire was due to be submitted and approved by September 2024, therefore officers would have a better sense of the gap in provision at that time and could then address accordingly.
- It was noted that there had been related projects in Wiltshire that had taken a non-standard approach to broadband infrastructure, yet it was highlighted that only once the scope of the shortfall had been identified could other technologies be considered. It was further emphasised that the Government looked to suppliers to decide on the most appropriate technologies, with fibre being the current endorsed method.
- Officers noted that powers to enforce were a consistent policy discussion with regard to situations where residents were not eligible for provision through no fault of their own, but further information on this topic could be discussed outside of the meeting.
- Members were encouraged to pass any enquiries to [broadband@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:broadband@wiltshire.gov.uk).
- Officers were thanked for their continued work and commitment to supporting residents throughout the delivery of the project.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) **Noted the update.**
- 2) **Noted the future delivery plans across Wiltshire.**

### 3) Requested an update in 12 months' time.

## 38 Updates from Task Groups and Representatives on Programme Boards

Councillor Jonathon Seed, Chairman of the Speed Limit Assessments Task Group, presented an update on the Task Group since 20 March 2024.

The recent activities of the Task Group were detailed, namely:

- A meeting on 26 March 2024 in which the Task Group looked at the recently revised Department for Transport guidance 'Setting Local Speed Limits' (March 2024). A small number of recent speed limit assessment reports were also reviewed alongside a list of speed limit assessments over the last 18 months provided by the Highways and Transport Department.
- A meeting with AtkinsRealis and Highways Officers on 20 May 2024 to look at the role of external consultants and the compiling of evidence for the development of speed assessments. Particular focus was given to the use of community information, the interpretation of the Department for Transport guidance, the use of collision data, and the consideration of vulnerable road users.
- A meeting on 23 May 2024 with several Chairmen from Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Groups who had requested speed limit assessments in the past 18 months in order to understand their experience of undertaking the assessments.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that the Task Group looked at both accident hotspot data and Wiltshire Council's approach to speed limit assessments in comparison to other Local Authorities in a broader sense rather than particular specifics. Furthermore, it was explained that the Task Group were focussing on the perceived lack of transparency in the investigation and assessment of applications and appeals, particularly in those cases where the results don't meet the expectations of those who apply for them.

Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Climate Emergency Task Group, then presented an update on the Task Group since 20 March 2024.

The recent activities of the Task Group were detailed, namely:

- A meeting on 15 March 2024 in which the Task Group reviewed the consultation process and responses for the Air Quality Action Plan 2024-29. The Task Group welcomed the increase in monitoring and that air quality was improving, but raised other air quality concerns, not created by vehicles such as wood burning stoves and fire pits.

- The Wessex Community Energy Network Event on 16 May 2024 which was attended by the Chairman and explored opportunities to engage with local communities in creating, saving, and sharing energy.

In response to questions regarding further understanding of the issues being explored and relevant schemes such as the Tree and Woodland Programme, Members were encouraged to attend any meetings of the Task Group and provide feedback and suggestions to be considered in the Task Group's Forward Work Plan.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee:**

- 1) **Noted the update on the Task Group activity provided above.**
- 2) **Re-appointed the Climate Emergency Task Group and the Membership listed in the report, with the commencement of the 2024-25 Council year.**
- 3) **Noted the activity of the Climate Emergency Task Group (June 2023 – June 2024) in Appendix 1.**
- 4) **Noted the Climate Emergency Task Group's draft Forward Work Plan in Appendix 2.**

39 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received the Forward Work Programme for consideration.

As per the discussions under Agenda Item 7, Members requested that the Warminster Sports Centre be included within the Forward Work Programme.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee approved the Forward Work Programme, with the inclusion of a report regarding the Warminster Sports Centre.**

40 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

41 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 18 July 2024.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.30 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Ellen Ghey - Democratic Services  
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Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

18 July 2024

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**Subject:** Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024 - 2030

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Richard Clewer – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing

**Key Decision:** No

## Executive Summary

1. Wiltshire is a thriving county with rich and diverse arts culture and heritage.
2. The council provides grant funding support to four strategic arts partners who operate in the county as well as operating both the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre and the Young Gallery in Salisbury through a trust model. Many of our 20 leisure centres and 31 libraries also provide spaces for arts and cultural activity. It also provides additional support to heritage organisations and museums and has either delivered or supported a broad array of arts and cultural events, activities and programmes, as well as investigating in related infrastructure, which has ensured arts and culture enriches the lives of residents.
3. The development of the Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030 has been commissioned by Wiltshire Council (WC), with financial support from the Arts Council England (ACE).
4. The ambition for the Strategy is for it to be an enabling framework built around five pillars: Economy, Identity, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing and Community.
5. The strategy has been developed over a five-month period. In that time extensive research was undertaken including reviewing strategies, data and management plans, benchmarking, and national case studies. There was a detailed mapping exercise to identify key cultural assets. This was combined with a multi-layered consultation and engagement programme.
6. There are three core principles embedded across the Strategy:
  - **Empower others:** Take an enabling approach, working in partnership, co-creating and making things easier for independent action
  - **Environment:** Be ambitious in caring for, and enhancing the natural environment and addressing climate change
  - **Access:** Work towards universal 'cultural entitlement' and ensure all opportunities are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all.
7. The strategy includes the core objectives:
  - Increase the number of people experiencing and creating culture in Wiltshire
  - Increase engagement in arts and cultural activities by diverse audiences, including those who face engagement barriers
  - Enable places to shape their own cultural identity
  - Support good physical and mental health and wellbeing and community

- resilience
  - Use art and culture as a vehicle to revitalise town centres and increase footfall
  - Use art and culture as a mechanism to support economic growth in Wiltshire
  - Enable the creation of a diverse creative workforce for the future
  - Use art and culture to attract greater visitor numbers to Wiltshire and increase tourism
  - Increase engagement with nature and the environment through culture and reduce the environmental impact of cultural activity
8. The Strategy:
- identifies the ambitions and actions for each of the key themes. The strategy includes a detailed action plan that outlines how Wiltshire Council will deliver on this strategy over the short, medium and long term.
  - includes an Evaluation Plan detailing how progress will be measured
  - proposes a governance structure that will drive the delivery of the Strategy.

### **Proposal**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) endorse the Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030.
- (ii) acknowledge the Action Plan that is being proposed.
- (iii) request a report on the delivery of the Strategy in 18 month's time.

### **Reason for proposal**

The Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030 supports the delivery of key priorities set out in Wiltshire Council's 2022-32 Business Plan. It seeks to address key challenges outlined above through a better connected, stronger creative and cultural sector and a more vibrant and diverse cultural offer, delivered through collaboration with strategic partners, the cultural and creative sector and communities.

**David Redfern**  
**Director Leisure, Culture and Communities**



**Subject:** Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024 - 2030

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Richard Clewer – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing

**Key Decision:** No

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### **Purpose of report**

1. To provide the Committee oversight of the Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030

### **Background**

2. Wiltshire Council has not previously developed a Council Cultural Strategy since its formation in 2009.
3. The development of the Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030 has been commissioned by Wiltshire Council (WC), with financial support from the Arts Council England (ACE).
4. The council provides grant funding support to four strategic arts partners who operate in the county as well as operating both the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre and the Young Gallery in Salisbury through a trust model. Many of our 20 leisure centres and 31 libraries also provide spaces for arts and cultural activity.
5. Wiltshire Council provides additional support to heritage organisations and museums and has either delivered or supported a broad array of arts and cultural events, activities and programmes, as well as investing in related infrastructure, which has ensured arts and culture enriches the lives of residents.
6. The county has a rich contemporary culture with three Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations along with a variety of other arts organisations it has several recognised creative clusters in Trowbridge, Salisbury, Malmesbury and Marlborough and specialisms in createch, architecture, publishing and the creative arts.
7. The county has long been a magnet and inspiration for visual artists, writers and musicians, and a place that inspires people to get involved in culture as volunteers.
8. The county is animated year-round by a rich and diverse range of festivals and events that together tell Wiltshire's collective story of cultural tradition and contemporary interests.
9. The strategy places culture and creativity at the heart of Wiltshire's economic and social future and ensure community engagement and ownership. And acts as a vehicle to support the delivery of key priorities set out in Wiltshire Council's 2022-2032 Business Plan.

### **Main considerations for the committee**

10. Culture is a difficult concept to define, and it means different things to different people. For some, culture is about preserving and sharing customs, beliefs, and a way of life, protecting heritage and history, and preserving it for future generations. For others, culture is a way to reconnect people with the places

- they live, providing a sense of belonging and sharing our passions and traditions with visitors. Culture attracts visitors and inspires reactions. It contributes to our health and wellbeing, it stimulates growth, employment, and development, and it grounds us in our communities, making our city, towns, and villages, places where people want to live, work, and raise a family.
11. For Wiltshire Council, culture is a multifaceted concept. The strategy was built around five key themes.
    - **Economy** - Culture is a central pillar of our approach to economic development, regeneration, and the development of vibrant local communities. It helps us re-imagine the way in which people engage with their towns and encourages long-term and sustainable businesses on our high streets.
    - **Identity** - Culture connects people with the places they live. It helps us discover more about our environment, its history, and its heritage. It also teaches us about ourselves, and our connection with our County.
    - **Tourism** - Culture is also a key component of our offer to visitors, both from the UK, and further afield.
    - **Health and wellbeing** - Culture contributes to both mental and physical health. It helps people get active. It stimulates minds, and encourages healthy, active, and engaged lifestyles.
    - **Community**: Culture brings communities together, whether it's through village fetes, community fairs and festivals.
  12. It is intended for it to be a co-created County-level strategy reflecting the views and input of the sector, relevant partners and communities. It includes a detailed action plan that outlines how Wiltshire Council will deliver the strategy.
  13. However, despite the main positive cultural aspects of the county, there are cultural challenges that the strategy and action plan seeks to address including:
    - There are social and health inequalities in some communities and access to cultural opportunities depends on where you live
    - the scale and geography of the county can make communication and knowledge exchange difficult.
    - The creative and cultural sector is fragmented and fragile and levels of engagement and visitor numbers have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
    - There are issues around raising the aspiration and attainment of young people and the need to ensure that there is more in the cultural offer to inspire and empower them.
    - Wiltshire's identity, economy and future is intrinsically linked with the natural environment and the county is committed to taking an ambitious approach to addressing climate change and enhancing the natural environment in all it does.
  14. Development of the strategy was underpinned by five phases:
    - **Phase 1**: Carry out research that will highlight the challenges and opportunities for developing culture across Wiltshire.
    - **Phase 2**: Establish a governance model to oversee both the development of the strategy and its implementation
    - **Phase 3**: Create an engagement plan and consult with relevant stakeholders to establish local priorities, opportunities and challenges

- **Phase 4:** Support the Project Steering Group to develop the Cultural Strategy – helping to identify a vision and create an action plan, including determining what success will look like and how this will be measured.
  - **Phase 5:** development of the Cultural Strategy.
15. Extensive research was undertaken including reviewing strategies, data and management plans, benchmarking, and national case studies. There was a detailed mapping exercise to identify key cultural assets. This was combined with a multi-layered consultation and engagement programme that included in 22 key stakeholder discussions, 3 workshops (2 face to face and 1 online) and an online survey.
- 772 local people were consulted as part of this process
  - 639 assets were identified and mapped
  - 50+ strategic documents and data sources were reviewed and analysed
16. As well as gathering information, the process aimed to raise awareness of the new Cultural Strategy; build trust with local residents, creative and cultural practitioners and other stakeholders; embed local ownership of the nascent ideas and develop or strengthen strategic partnerships that will help drive forward the Strategy.
17. The Evidence Base and SWOT revealed several key aspects that the Strategy addresses:
- The importance of the natural landscape and the level of ambition around environmental action
  - Balancing the unique identities, needs and independence of each place with the need to work together on shared initiatives that transcend any one organisation
  - A generally high quality of life but with pockets of social and health inequalities in particular communities
  - A vibrant cultural sector that drives health and wellbeing and placemaking, but which is fragmented and fragile. Strong clusters around festivals and events, cultural hubs and visual arts
  - A relatively hidden creative sector which needs support to grow
  - A patchy cultural education offer for children and young people with unclear talent pathways into the creative sector
  - Low value of tourism with numbers that have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
  - Lots of good practice and activity which is not effectively joined up or celebrated
  - A hugely diverse range of partners and people involved in culture with different capacities, resources and objectives and which will require a multi-layered approach
  - Culture cuts across many different council teams, policy areas and partnerships with no central co-ordination
  - Extreme pressures on resources which makes it essential to find ways of working with others to deliver shared goals.
18. The strategy has been developed upon on the seven pillars of Identity, Health and wellbeing, Community, Economy, Tourism, Communicate and Connect, with each pillar having an outcome for 2030 beyond.
19. The strategy's vision states that Wiltshire will be:
- a vibrant beacon of culture
  - a place of creativity, celebration and connection
  - a place where culture supports health and happiness

- a place where young people and creative enterprise can flourish
  - a place where economic growth is stimulated through distinctive and vibrant places where people want to visit, live, work, and raise a family
  - a better-connected place where culture is the heartbeat of every village, town, city and landscape.
20. There are three core principles embedded across the Strategy:
- **Empower others:** Take an enabling approach, working in partnership, co-creating and making things easier for independent action
  - **Environment:** Be ambitious in caring for, and enhancing the natural environment and addressing climate change
  - **Access:** Work towards universal 'cultural entitlement' and ensure all opportunities are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all.
21. The strategy's core objectives include:
- Increase the number of people experiencing and creating culture in Wiltshire
  - Increase engagement in arts and cultural activities by diverse audiences, including those who face engagement barriers
  - Enable places to shape their own cultural identity
  - Support good physical and mental health and wellbeing and community resilience
  - Use art and culture as a vehicle to revitalise town centres and increase footfall
  - Use art and culture as a mechanism to support economic growth in Wiltshire
  - Enable the creation of a diverse creative workforce for the future
  - Use art and culture to attract greater visitor numbers to Wiltshire and increase tourism
  - Increase engagement with nature and the environment through culture and reduce the environmental impact of cultural activity.

### **Environmental impact of the proposal**

22. The Climate Change team were included on the Key Stakeholders 1-2-1 meetings and have been involved in the follow up stakeholder workshop.
23. The environment and climate change consideration are embedded in the strategy via one of the three core principles of Environment: Be ambitious in caring for, and enhancing the natural environment and addressing climate change
24. The Cultural Strategy will support how arts and cultural activity can be delivered in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.

### **Equality and diversity impact of the proposal**

25. The research undertaken as part of the development of the Cultural Strategy has indicated that there are gaps in the accessibility of arts and culture. Therefore, one of the underpinning principles is to 'Work towards universal 'cultural entitlement' and ensure all opportunities are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all'
26. The Strategy seeks to:
- increase engagement in arts and cultural activities by diverse audiences, including those who face engagement barriers.

- Use arts and culture to address issues of health inequalities faced by certain residents
  - Support the placing shaping agenda that help to foster a sense of collective identity.
  - Support aspirations and attainment of young people related to the cultural sector. With the potential to focus on the young military population and families in the Tidworth area.
27. Any project arising directly from the Cultural Strategy will follow the Wiltshire Council's guidance on Equality Impact assessments (EqIA) to considering how decisions made and services delivered affect people who share protected characteristics and will implement accordingly.
28. Equalities Impact Assessment for projects linked to the delivery of the Strategy will be evolving and developed to ensure projects address these key issues.

### **Risk assessment**

29. There is likely to be reputational damage to the Council in the event the Cultural Strategy is not approved and taken forward given that its development is included in the Business Plan. There could also potentially be public outcry from the arts and cultural sector.
30. The Strategy Action plan that has been developed will need a One Council approach to ensure its successful delivery. Therefore, services will need to be fully onboarded.
31. It will be essential to monitor how the council's finances and priorities may affect the ability to successfully deliver the aims and outcomes.

### **Financial implications**

32. Wiltshire Council has developed the strategy with the assistance of consultants FEI who have been funded by financial assistance from Arts Council England and the Wiltshire Towns Programme.
33. Future delivery of the Strategy will initially include primarily Leisure, Culture and Communities officers time and use of Arts service budget to deliver elements such as the Cultural Assembly until the Cultural Strategic Partnership has been established.
34. Key members of the Cultural Strategic Partnership will include the Council's four Arts Partners who received annual funding from the Arts Service budget.
35. Projects indicated on the action plan will be assessed on a project-by-project basis to assess whether it could be funded through council budget or will need to be external grant funded before any project proceeds.

### **Legal implications**

36. The development of the Strategy has included a varied consultation that includes 772 people from council services, arts and cultural organisations and individuals, schools and residents.
37. Approval of the Cultural Strategy is being sought in line with the Council's constitution including budget and policy framework, the Financial Regulations and the procurement and contract regulations and in accordance with any statutory requirements imposed on the Council.
38. Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with Subsidy Control and grant funding conditions, where appropriate.

## **Conclusion**

39. The Wiltshire Culture Strategy places culture and creativity at the heart of Wiltshire's economic and social future and ensure community engagement and ownership. And acts as a vehicle to support the delivery of key priorities set out in Wiltshire Council's 2022-2032 Business Plan.
40. The Strategy will be reviewed for endorsement by Cabinet on 15 July 2024.
41. Following this Environment Select committee it will then proceed to Full Council on 24 July 2024 for formal adoption.

**David Redfern**  
**Director Leisure, Culture and Communities**

Report Author:

**Tamzin Earley**  
Arts and Funding Manager

8 July 2024

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## **Background papers**

Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030

## **Appendices**

Appendix B – Wiltshire Cultural Strategy Action plan  
Appendix C – Wiltshire Cultural Strategy Evaluation plan

# **Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030**

Connecting through creativity

DRAFT

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## 1. Foreword

To be added by Leader post adoption

## 2. Introduction and context

Wiltshire is an exceptionally varied county with a rich tapestry of distinctive places set in an ancient and dynamic landscape. Wiltshire is home to the World Heritage Site of Stonehenge and Avebury, three National Landscapes – North Wessex Downs, Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs and the Cotswolds – and the New Forest National Park, all linked through vibrant connected green and blue infrastructure. Salisbury Plain exemplifies the multiple layers of use and identity so typical of Wiltshire, being simultaneously an important area for biodiversity, farming and military activity so integral to the county's identity. Our history as a place for creativity and innovation, connection to nature and living, working and celebrating alongside each other stretches back thousands of years and is symbolised by our iconic white horses carved into a landscape shaped by a huge range of custodians over time.

Wiltshire is a patchwork of over 250 villages and towns and the historic cathedral city of Salisbury. Each have their own distinctive characters, histories and identities. From ancient Lacock, the home of English photography, to the modern super-garrison town of Tidworth where a quarter of the population are under 15 years old, from the vibrant music, literature and visual arts of Corsham to the rich and unique calendar of colourful festivals and fairs in Devizes, and from the modern market town of Trowbridge with its thriving tech cluster to the lively market town of Chippenham, the county has been shaped into places made distinctive through culture.

Wiltshire's heritage is constantly being reinvented and made relevant through engagement with communities and contemporary ideas, led by organisations including the National Trust, English Heritage, Salisbury Cathedral, Wessex Archaeology, the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Wiltshire Museum and Salisbury Museum.

Wiltshire also has a rich contemporary culture with three Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations - Wiltshire Creative, Wiltshire Music Centre and Pound Arts - and arts organisations such as Trowbridge Town Hall Arts, Devizes Outdoor Celebratory Arts (DOCA), Kandu Arts, Folio Arts and the Last Baguette Theatre Company. Wiltshire has several recognised creative clusters in Trowbridge, Salisbury, Malmesbury and Marlborough and specialisms in createch, architecture, publishing and the creative arts. The county has long been a magnet and inspiration for visual artists, writers and musicians, and a place that inspires people to get involved in culture as volunteers.

The county is animated year-round by a rich and diverse range of festivals and events that together tell Wiltshire's collective story of cultural tradition and contemporary interests. There are 95 festivals including Salisbury International Arts Festival, WOMAD, Verve Festival, Chalke History Festival, the Westbury, White Horse Soapbox Derby, the Pewsey Carnival (which has been running since 1898),

the Urchfont Scarecrow Festival and the Devizes Confetti Battle (dating back to 1913).

Despite all these strengths there are challenges. There are social and health inequalities in some communities and access to cultural opportunities depends on where you live. The scale and geography of the county can make communication and knowledge exchange difficult. The creative and cultural sector is fragmented and fragile and levels of engagement and visitor numbers have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. There are particular issues around raising the aspiration and attainment of young people and the need to ensure that there is more in the cultural offer to inspire and empower them. Wiltshire's identity, economy and future is intrinsically linked with the natural environment and the county is committed to taking an ambitious approach to addressing climate change and enhancing the natural environment in all it does.

This is Wiltshire Council's first Cultural Strategy, and it seeks to address these challenges through a better connected, stronger creative and cultural sector and a more vibrant and diverse cultural offer, delivered through collaboration with strategic partners, the cultural and creative sector and communities. The Strategy has been developed through an extensive research process which analysed over 100 data sources, conducted four national case studies and mapped 639 cultural assets. The consultation process engaged with 772 local people during March and April 2024 in conversations, via workshops and through a public survey.

### Key Statistics

- Population of 510,400 with 47.2% living in rural areas, including smaller towns, villages, hamlets or isolated dwellings <sup>1</sup>
- 3,255 square kilometres
- 253 towns and parishes
- 173 town halls
- 164 community groups
- 134 Areas of Special Scientific Interest
- 95 annual festivals and events
- 53 outdoor assets
- 50 museums
- One County Archive and Local Study centre
- 30 libraries
- 23 performing arts venues
- 22 visual arts galleries and studios
- 18 historic houses and gardens
- 17 Artsmark schools
- Eight White Horses
- Five National Landscapes (Cranbourne Chase, North Wessex Downs, West Wiltshire Downs, Cotswolds and New Forest National Park)
- Three Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations
- One World Heritage Site
- International Visitor spend was worth £92 million to the economy in 2019 (Visit Britain)

<sup>1</sup> Calculated using [2011 Rural-Urban Classification](#)

- Stonehenge was the most visited attraction with 977k in 2022
- Creative industries account for 5% of employment and 10% of businesses

## 2.1 What we were told

“A vibrant range of cultural events that represent the many and varied communities in the county, where providers are given the investment to do what they do best - engage and work with Wiltshire residents to increase their wellbeing and enrich their lives through learning, sharing, actively engaging with Wiltshire's amazing cultural heritage that has the capacity to bring everyone together through a shared joy of history.”

“A way of life that is simply celebrated”

“Accessible, wide ranging, exciting, ground-breaking.”

“Part of everyday life.”

“Wiltshire punches well above its weight in offering arts, culture and heritage - it just needs to publicise it better both locally and nationally.”

“We want to see a thriving ecosystem of partnerships amidst increasingly dwindling resources and the climate crisis doing bold stuff because we have to.”

‘How do we coordinate people having more, better, accessible high-quality fun?’

## 2.2 Definition of culture

Culture means many things to many people, and we take it to mean all those places, practices, activities and objects whose origin lies in human creativity, whether past or present.

It includes all arts, culture, creative practices, and heritage – built, natural and intangible such as local customs and traditions. It encompasses festivals and events, arts centres and arts development, music venues, community hubs for culture, libraries, museums, creative industries, archives, heritage sites and activities, the historic environment and the open public spaces where cultural events can happen.

For Wiltshire Council, culture is understood through five key themes:

- Economy - Culture is a central pillar of our approach to economic development, regeneration, and the development of vibrant local communities. It helps us re-imagine the way in which people engage with their towns and encourages long-term and sustainable businesses on our high streets
- Identity - Culture connects people with the places they live. It helps us discover more about our environment, its history, and its heritage. It also teaches us about ourselves, and our connection with our county
- Tourism - Culture is a key component of our offer to visitors, both from the UK, and further afield
- Health and wellbeing - Culture contributes to both mental and physical health. It helps people get active. It stimulates minds, and encourages healthy, active, and engaged lifestyles

- **Community:** Culture brings communities together, whether it's through village fetes, community fairs and festivals.

### 3 Our vision – connected through creativity

Wiltshire will be a vibrant beacon of culture where the joys of curiosity, community, nature and heritage help imagine new futures and improve the quality of life for everyone. Our vision is for Wiltshire to be a place of creativity, celebration and connection, inspired by the rich diversity of our surroundings, powered by culture, driven by purpose, and united in action.

By 2030, our vision is for a better-connected place where culture is the heartbeat of every village, town, city and landscape. Through creativity, shared experiences, a collective commitment to our environment and access for all, we aim to foster a sense of belonging that resonates with everyone. Wiltshire will be a place where culture supports health and happiness, where young people and creative enterprise can flourish and where economic growth is stimulated through distinctive and vibrant places where people want to visit, live, work, and raise a family. We want all residents in Wiltshire to enjoy the benefits that culture brings including those who face additional barriers to cultural engagement and creative participation.

### 4. Our principles

The strategy is built on three shared principles, which everyone will be encouraged to adopt:

- **Empower others** - Take an enabling approach, working in partnership, co-creating and making things easier for independent action.
- **Environment** - Be ambitious in caring for and enhancing the natural environment and addressing climate change
- **Access** - Work towards universal 'cultural entitlement' and ensure all opportunities are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all

#### 4.1 Summary of our pillars and outcomes

There are seven pillars to our strategy, and each has an outcome for 2030 and beyond.

- **Identity** - Wiltshire will be a national leader in connecting people to the natural landscape through culture, and where the rich diversity of its different towns, villages, cities and landscapes encourages creativity, curiosity, and discovery
- **Health and wellbeing** - People in Wiltshire live full, healthy and enriched lives through developing their creativity and taking part in sociable cultural activity
- **Community** - People in Wiltshire live in cultural communities with distinctive, sustainable cultural hubs and vibrant high streets. There is a year-round calendar of festivals and events that attract people from across the county and beyond and which operate in an environmentally responsible way

- **Economy** - Everyone has the opportunity to develop the cultural and creative skills they need to flourish in life. Wiltshire is the natural place to grow creative and cultural enterprises of all types
- **Tourism** - Wiltshire is a place where everyone is invited. There is something for everyone amongst its rich natural beauty and vibrant cultural offer so go explore
- **Communicate** - Wiltshire has a thriving and connected cultural ecosystem where learning is shared, and success is captured and celebrated
- **Connect** - Cultural leadership in the county is dispersed, collaborative and collegiate, based on unity of effort and freedom of action working towards common goals.

## 4.2 Summary of our core objectives

The objectives we want to achieve through our cultural strategy are:

- Increase the number of people experiencing and creating culture in Wiltshire
- Increase engagement in arts and cultural activities by diverse audiences, including those who face engagement barriers
- Enable places to shape their own cultural identity
- Support good physical and mental health and wellbeing and community resilience
- Use art and culture as a vehicle to revitalise town centres and increase footfall
- Use art and culture as a mechanism to support economic growth in Wiltshire
- Enable the creation of a diverse creative workforce for the future
- Use art and culture to attract greater visitor numbers to Wiltshire and increase tourism
- Increase engagement with nature and the environment through culture and reduce the environmental impact of cultural activity

## 5 Our priorities

### 5.1 Identity

There is a need to balance the unique identities, independence and opportunities of each place with the huge gains which will come from working together on shared initiatives that transcend any one organisation or place.

We know:

- Engaging in local arts and cultural activities is valuable in fostering a sense of collective identity, space for interaction and shared experience and thus contributes towards people having a stronger attachment to place.<sup>2</sup>

Our ambition is:

- We want Wiltshire to be a national leader in connecting people to the natural landscape through culture, and where the rich diversity of its different towns, villages, cities and landscapes encourages creativity, curiosity, and discovery.

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<sup>2</sup> The value of arts and culture in place-shaping (2019) Wavehill

We will:

- Co-ordinate and initiate landscape-scale cultural projects ensuring that culture is embedded from the start (Appendix A: Action Plan: 1.1)
- Support places to develop their own cultural narrative statements by sharing best practice and providing templates for co-creation (Appendix A: Action Plan: 1.2)
- Co-ordinate themed programming and joint planning and promotion across the county, starting with literature, visual arts and heritage (Appendix A: Action Plan: 1.3)
- Shape places through culture making good use of the public art guidance and other opportunities through planning gain. (Appendix A: Action Plan: 1.4)

Links to:

- ACE Outcomes: A Creative and Cultural Country and Cultural Communities
- Wiltshire Council: Resilient Society, Thriving Economy, Sustainable Environment.

## 5.2 Health and wellbeing

Wiltshire has a great quality of life, but health outcomes can vary hugely amongst different communities and in different places. It is important to encourage people to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and physical health by inspiring them to get active and connect with others. Arts and culture have been shown to have a transformative effect on health and happiness and there is a growing interest in Creative Health.

We know:

- Scientists have found that those who engaged in crafts during middle and old age were 45% less likely to develop mild cognitive impairment.<sup>3</sup>

Our ambition is:

- People in Wiltshire live full, healthy and enriched lives through developing their creativity and taking part in sociable cultural activity.

We will:

- Increase engagement and awareness of Creative Health through briefing sessions, workshops and advocacy (Appendix A: Action Plan: 2.1)
- Support social prescribing working with GPs and cultural partners from across the county (Appendix A: Action Plan: 2.2)
- Engage Public Health via a cultural workshop and identify opportunities to embed culture in community conversations, consultation and commissioning (Appendix A: Action Plan: 2.3)
- Harness our key assets in the natural environment, heritage and libraries to support universal access to creative health opportunities (Appendix A: Action Plan: 2.4).

Links to:

- ACE Outcomes: Cultural Communities

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thebestofhealth.co.uk/health-conditions/dementia/arts-crafts-prevent-memory-loss/>

- Wiltshire Council: Empowered People, Resilient Society.

## 5.3 Community

Wiltshire is home to some exceptional cultural venues that serve as important landmarks and cultural development hubs for their community, and which bring life to the high street. We want every community to have the hub they deserve. We want to do more to support cultural volunteers and ensure the ongoing sustainability of the joyous and eclectic mix of festivals and events which celebrate place and drive significant social and economic benefits through increased audience diversity.

We know:

- If people feel proud of the places they live, they are more likely to engage in other civic areas and activity including volunteering.<sup>4</sup>

Our ambition is:

- People in Wiltshire live in cultural communities with distinctive sustainable cultural hubs and vibrant high streets. There is a year-round calendar of festivals and events that attract people from across the County and beyond and which operate in an environmentally responsible way.

We will:

- Support new and existing cultural hubs working with cultural organisations and communities to increase investment and sustainability (Appendix A: Action Plan: 3.1)
- Champion Cultural Volunteers through promoting best practice, providing training and profiling culture within wider volunteering strategy and activity (Appendix A: Action Plan: 3.2)
- Work with festivals and events to encourage them to network, collaborate and take a leading role in improving environmental sustainability (Appendix A: Action Plan: 3.4)
- Run a workshop with Council Environmental Health and Licensing officers and the sector to improve guidance and develop toolkits (Appendix A: Action Plan: 3.4).

Links to:

- ACE Outcomes: Cultural Communities, Creative People
- Wiltshire Council: Resilient Society, Thriving Economy, Sustainable Environment.

## 5.4 Economy

The vitality of our creative economy relies on our cultural vibrancy and on improving the flow of talent, ideas and skills across and beyond the county. Cultural education is the foundation of both, and we want to ensure that all young people can develop their potential and creative passions through access to culture and a creative education throughout their lives. We want to make the creative and cultural sector

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<sup>4</sup> Townscapes: Pride in Place (2022) Bennet Institute of Public Policy

more visible and better connected, helping it to grow through targeted support, advice and resources.

We know:

- The creative industries and cultural sector combined contributed almost £160 billion to UK GVA in 2022. Creative Industries are growing faster than the UK economy as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

Our ambition is:

- Everyone has the opportunity to develop the cultural and creative skills they need to flourish in life. Wiltshire is the natural place to grow creative and cultural enterprises of all types.

We will:

- Seek to ensure a cultural education for all by working with schools to increase the number of ArtsMark and ArtsAwards, consulting with young people to understand more about their needs and by building links between the creative and education sectors (Appendix A: Action Plan: 4.1.1)
- Develop a Young People's Arts and Culture Forum (Appendix A: Action Plan: 4.1.2)
- Help creative businesses to grow by recognising the richness of the whole of the cultural and creative ecosystem (Appendix A: Action Plan: 4.2)
- Attract new creative businesses by providing attractive and affordable spaces and providing support programmes for creative start-ups (Appendix A: Action Plan: 4.3).

Links to:

- ACE Outcomes: Creative People, A Creative and Cultural Country, Cultural Communities
- Wiltshire Council: Thriving Economy, Resilient Society, Empowered People.

## 5.5 Tourism

Wiltshire boasts some major attractions and has a huge variety of honeypot sites within its boundaries. Stonehenge attracts around a million people per year and the county is an exceptionally attractive film and event location. We want to raise the profile of Wiltshire internationally and encourage visitors and residents to explore all the county has to offer year-round, encouraging active and sustainable travel wherever possible.

We know:

- Culture enhances our profile overseas. Culture in the UK ranked fourth in the world in the Nation Brands Index driven by its interesting and exciting contemporary culture and rich cultural heritage.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-and-digital-sector-gva-2022-provisional>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.visitbritain.org/research-insights/uks-image-overseas> Nation Brands Index (2023)



Our ambition is:

- Wiltshire is a place where everyone is invited. There is something for everyone amongst its rich natural beauty and vibrant cultural offer, so go explore.

We will:

- Develop a Visitor Economy Strategy that recognises the key role that the cultural and creative sector play in growing a sustainable visitor economy (Appendix A: Action Plan: 5.1.1)
- Work more closely with our strategic partners and the operators and stewards of key sites to support the impact of tourism, events and film (Appendix A: Action Plan: 5.2)
- Grow the Explore Wiltshire and Event Wiltshire apps as a cultural resource and cultivate culture ambassadors who can curate recommendations and itineraries (Appendix A: Action Plan: 5.3)
- Develop the Wiltshire Marque and roll out to include makers and artisans. The Wiltshire Marque will give individual businesses a distinctive 'Wiltshire' banner under which to sell their goods, promoting Wiltshire as a quality food destination and helping customers identify Wiltshire produce. (Appendix A: Action Plan: 5.1.3)

Links to:

- ACE Outcomes: Cultural Communities
- Wiltshire Council: Thriving Economy, Sustainable Environment.

## 5.6 Communicate

Wiltshire is blessed with a huge variety of cultural activity delivered in a range of different ways, but the size, geography and transport infrastructure of the county can make it hard to navigate. Improving communication was a key request across all of our consultation. We want to do more to profile good practice and encourage networking, knowledge exchange and collaboration. We want to work together to make the case for culture and celebrate our successes.

We know:

- 96% of Wiltshire residents we surveyed rate Culture as important or extremely important to their lives.

Our ambition is:

- Wiltshire has a thriving and connected cultural ecosystem where learning is shared and success is captured and celebrated.

We will:

- Expand and promote the Arts in Wiltshire blog so that it is aligned to the themes of the cultural strategy and provides the sector with a voice (Appendix A: Action Plan: 6.1)
- Run an annual Cultural Assembly every autumn to showcase best practice and provide networking opportunities (Appendix A: Action Plan: 6.2)

- Capture and celebrate value by developing a shared evaluation framework so that we can better make the case for culture. (Appendix A: Action Plan: 6.3)

Links to:

- ACE Outcomes: Cultural Communities
- Wiltshire Council: Thriving Economy, Resilient Society.

## 5.7 Connect

Culture in Wiltshire is created by a wide range of organisations and diverse groups of people, located in different parts of the county. Culture reaches broadly across many of Wiltshire Council's different service areas, functions and partnerships. Wiltshire Council wants to work through these partnerships and play a greater co-ordinating role, enabling the county's independent spirit to thrive whilst amplifying impact and making better use of resources.

We know:

- In 2021/22 61.6% of people in Wiltshire attended an arts event, museum or gallery or spent time doing an arts activity compared to 60.2% nationally.

Our ambition is:

- Cultural leadership in the county is dispersed, collaborative and collegiate, based on unity of effort and freedom of action working towards common goals.

We will:

- Develop a county-wide Strategic Partnership bringing together key cultural organisations in Wiltshire (Appendix A: Action Plan: 7.1)
- Work with Area Boards and Town and Parish Councils to encourage the development of local cultural partnerships and plans, aligning investment priorities (Appendix A: Action Plan: 7.2.2)
- Bring Council officers from across the organisation together into a Council Culture Forum to share progress and knowledge on a regular basis (Appendix A: Action Plan: 7.3.1)
- Seek to increase inward investment in culture across the county (Appendix A: Action Plan: 7.4).

Links to:

- ACE Outcomes: Cultural Communities
- Wiltshire Council: Thriving Economy, Resilient Society.

## 6 Evaluation

We have developed a detailed evaluation plan (Appendix B) to measure progress against our seven core objectives. Some baselines and targets have been established through our evidence base and others will be developed in the initial year.

We will use the following methods to evaluate and report on our progress:

Data collected and shared at a national level which enables us to compare our progress with other local authorities and includes:

- [Visit Britain](#) - Day visits and overnight stays
- [Active Lives survey](#) - Children and adults engagement with arts and culture, sport and volunteering
- [Lottery investment](#) - Amount of funding invested in the county
- [ONS survey](#) - Levels of Wellbeing and Life Satisfaction
- [Nomis](#) – Labour market and census

Data we produce each year for our [Community Area Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) which brings together 140 indicators spanning 10 topics including communities, recreation and culture and which enable us to compare needs and progress across the 18 different Community Areas.

We will include questions around culture in Public Health and Community Engagement surveys, starting with the Youth Engagement Consultation planned for 2024.

We will include questions about engagement with, and perception of, culture in Resident and Visitor Surveys.

We will conduct a high-level online Sector Survey health-check to capture key information from the sector to measure progress and shape ongoing support.

We will bring impactful examples of good practice to life via case studies, commissioned articles on the Arts in Wiltshire blog and through the annual Cultural Assembly.

The Arts in Wiltshire blog will evolve to be an archive of stories, case studies and annual reports over time. We will undertake regular subscriber surveys to ensure that the blog remains relevant.

The mapping exercise will be repeated in 2029 as part of the development process for the next strategy.

We will produce update reports for key Council meetings including Executive Leadership Meetings, Cabinet, the Health and Wellbeing Board and for distribution via the Community Area Boards.

## 7 Governance and delivery

This Strategy has been developed by Wiltshire Council through consultation and is envisaged as being a Strategy that can be owned and delivered by different stakeholders.

The Strategy has been developed to align with the priorities and work-plans of Wiltshire Council and its key strategic partners, and to deliver the outcomes of key stakeholders such as the DCMS, Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Overall leadership will be provided by a Wiltshire Council Steering Group which will include senior officers from Leisure, Culture and Communities and Economic

Regeneration. Co-ordination will be undertaken initially by the Arts and Funding Manager until additional resources can be identified.

We have developed a detailed Action Plan (Appendix A) which sets out how Wiltshire Council will deliver the Strategy, and which identifies lead officers and partners inside and outside the Council.

Actions are identified as being short, medium or long-term priorities using the following definitions:

- Short-term: Already underway or can be within 3-6 months, via existing or newly aligned resources
- Medium-term: To be undertaken within 1-2 years; may require additional planning, fundraising and resources
- Long-term: To be realised over a 3-6 year timescale for more complex work programmes.

We will encourage our key stakeholders to identify where they can align or develop activity which supports the delivery of the outcomes of this strategy. We will

co-ordinate this through our leadership of the Connect theme and its three layers of cultural partnership working:

- The Strategic Partnership Group will include the National Trust, English Heritage, National Landscapes, the Canal and River Trust, Natural England, the Environment Agency, National Highways, Salisbury Cathedral, a representative from the funded arts organisations and Wessex Archaeology. This will be convened and chaired by Director of Leisure, Culture and Communities. This group will meet twice a year
- Once they are established, the place-based cultural partnerships will become part of the Cultural Assembly Steering Group. This will be convened and chaired by the Arts and Funding Manager. This group will meet three times a year.
- The Council Forum will include officers from Culture, Heritage, Libraries, Communities, Economic Regeneration, Engagement and Partnerships, Planning, Natural and Historic Environment, Licensing, Public Health, Families, Children and SEND. This will be convened and chaired by Head of Development, Leisure Culture and Communities This group will meet four times a year.

We will utilise these fora to build consortiums and partnerships to develop new projects and bid for major funding when the opportunities arise.

We will capture and share progress through our leadership of the Capture theme through the Arts in Wiltshire blog, the Cultural Assembly and shared evaluation framework.

## 8 Appendix

Appendix A: Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030: Action plan

Appendix B: Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030: Evaluation plan

Appendix A : Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2030: Action plan									
<b>Theme 1: Identity</b>									
<b>Outcome</b> Wiltshire is a national leader in connecting people to the natural landscape through culture. The rich diversity of its different places encourages creativity, curiosity, and discovery									
<b>Key Objectives</b> Increase the number of people experiencing and creating culture in Wiltshire									
<b>Actions</b> Enable places to shape their own cultural identity									
Potential activity	Timescale	Lead - see key	Wiltshire Council	Partners	Links to				
1.1 Initiate and co-ordinate landscape scale projects	1.1.1 Co-ordinate information about all major landscape projects that include cultural activity currently under-way: A303, Salisbury River Park, National Forest and add to the Regeneration website	Short	VM/ TE	Economic Regen, Climate and Environment, Planning, WHS Manager	National Landscapes, National Trust, English Heritage, National Highways/ Wessex Archaeology, WHS, Natural England				
	1.1.2 Explore potential for developing new arts and cultural projects - test with the Council forum and Strategic Partners Forum to identify priorities and approaches	Medium/ Long	TE	Economic Regen, Climate and Environment, Planning	National Landscapes, National Trust, English Heritage, National Highways/ Wessex Archaeology, WHS, arts partners	7.1	7.3	5.2	
	1.1.3 Encourage National Landscapes to sign up to the NL Art in Landscapes strategy	Short/ Medium	LT	Climate and Environment	National Landscapes				
1.2 Support places to develop their own cultural statements	1.2.1 Present the Cultural Strategy to all places via Area Boards and Town and Parish Councils and communicate via the quarterly Town Team newsletter	Short	DR	Engagement & Partnerships	Town and Parish Councils, Area Boards, Anchor cultural place-partners				
	1.2.2 Invite places to submit their own response to how they will deliver on the themes and outcomes of the Cultural Strategy as part of the reporting on Activity Generation Grants	Short/ Medium	VM/ TE	Engagement & Partnerships, Heritage, Economic Ren, Planning	Town and Parish Councils, Area Boards, Anchor cultural place-partners				
	1.2.3 Help to guide these so that they are aligned with other local plans (neighbourhood plans, local resilience plans / emergency plans, climate action plans) and include environmental impacts	Medium/ ongoing	RS/ VB	Engagement & Partnerships, Culture, Heritage, Economic Regen, Planning		7.2.1			
1.3 Co-ordinate themed programming	1.3.1 Initiate thematic tags in the Explore Wiltshire app	Short	TB	Culture, Heritage, Climate and Environment,	Town and Parish Councils, Area Boards, cultural partners				
	1.3.2 Call together three open space meetings of all cultural partners (Literature, Visual Arts, Heritage) to explore options for cross-promotion	Short/ Medium	TE/ TB	Culture, Heritage, Engagement & Partnerships	Town and Parish Councils, Area Boards, cultural partners	5.2.2			

	1.3.3 Consider thematic areas in work to increase marketing or promotion	Medium/Long	VM	Culture, Heritage, Engagement & Partnerships	National and regional audience partners, cultural partners			
1.4 Shape places through culture	1.4.1 Use the public art policy and Section 106 to support place-making through culture for both landscape scale projects and community scale ones	Short/ongoing	TE	Culture, Heritage, Economic Regeneration, Planning, Climate and Environment	Local cultural partnerships and forums			
<b>Theme 2: Health and wellbeing Outcome</b>								
<b>People in Wiltshire live full, healthy and enriched lives through developing their creativity and taking part in sociable cultural activity</b>								
Key Objectives Increase engagement in arts and cultural activities by diverse audiences, including those who face engagement barriers Support good physical and mental health and wellbeing and community resilience								
Actions Potential activity Timescale Lead - see key Wiltshire Council Partners Links to								
2.1 Increase local engagement and awareness of Creative Health	2.1.1 Collate briefing information about Creative Health working closely with local partners and engaging with national partners and best practice	Medium	TE	Communities, Heritage, Public Health, Libraries	Key local sector partners: Well City Salisbury, Wiltshire Music Centre (Celebrating Age). National Academy for Social Prescribing, National Centre for Creative Health, Arts Council England			
	2.1.2 Run Creative Health briefing session to share findings and initiate a call for evidence and scope ideas around priorities of these themes: social prescribing, targeted community work, universal access	Medium	TE	Communities, Heritage, Public Health, Libraries	Cultural partners, health partners, community partners			
	2.1.3 PH to incorporate information on county-wide Creative Health initiatives in to their regular report to Health and Wellbeing board	Medium	KD	Culture, Heritage, Communities, Public Health	Health and Wellbeing Board			
	2.1.4 Work with partners to identify funding to support a range of pilot projects across the Creative Health theme	Medium/Long	TE	Communities, Public Health, Heritage, Libraries	Cultural partners, health partners, community partners			
2.2 Support pilots and the roll out of social prescribing	2.2.1 Engage with Chippenham Social prescribers project and capture evaluation	Short	TE	Public Health, Economic Regeneration				
	2.2.2 Investigate how to work with Primary Care providers to support the wider adoption and roll out of the Chippenham Social Prescribing project in to other areas	Medium/ongoing	TE	Public Health	Well City Salisbury, cultural partners, health partners			

2.3 Embed culture in all PH community consultation, co-creation and commissioning	2.3.1 Scope out pipeline of potential consultations where culture can be included as a question - starting with School Health and Wellbeing Survey	Short	KD	Culture (TE), Public Health, Engagement & Partnerships			
	2.3.2 PH to incorporate arts into service development, commissioning and communication.	Medium	KD	Public Health, Heritage, Libraries	Sector lead: Wiltshire Music Centre (Celebrating Age). Cultural partners, community partners		
	2.3.3 PH to provide a training session on JSNA/CAJSNA to the arts sector to support with evidence based funding bids	Short/ Medium	MR	Culture (TE), Public Health, Heritage,	Cultural partners, community partners		
	2.3.4 PH to raise awareness through campaigns to promote staying safe in the natural environment i.e. sun safety, tick awareness	Medium / Long	KD	Public Health	Cultural partners, community partners		
2.4 Harness key assets to support universal access to creative health	2.4.1 Include call out for examples of Natural Wellbeing in Creative Health call out and work with key strategic partners to embed health in all projects	Short/ Medium	TE	Public Health, Heritage, Climate and Environment,	National Landscapes, National Trust, English Heritage, Wessex Archaeology, WHS, Town and Parish Councils, Area Boards	2.1.2	1.1.2
	2.4.2 Include and profile Libraries , History Centres and musuems in the Creative Health call out and process	Short/ Medium	RB/ TB	Culture (TE), Public Health,		2.1.2	
	2.4.3 PH to utilise the natural environment within commissioned services to support wellbeing of residents.	Medium	KD	Public Health, Heritage, Climate and Environment,	National Landscapes, National Trust, English Heritage, Wessex Archaeology, WHS, Town and Parish Councils, Area Boards		
<b>Theme 3: Community Outcome</b>							
<b>People in Wiltshire live in cultural communities with distinctive sustainable cultural hubs and vibrant high streets. There is a year-round calendar of festivals and events that attract people from across the County and beyond and which operate in an environmentally responsible way.</b>							
Key Objectives Use art and culture as a vehicle to revitalise town centres and increase footfall							
Actions Potential activity Timescale Lead - see key Wiltshire Council Partners Links to							
3.1 Support new and existing cultural hubs	3.1.1 Support growth and sustainability for the 4 existing cultural hubs and 2 heritage hubs and continue to offer regular support and advice via regular meetings	Short/ ongoing	DR	Culture, Heritage	Wiltshire Creative, Trowbridge Town Hall Arts, Wiltshire Music Centre, The Pound Arts, Wiltshire Museum, Salisbury Museum	3.5.1	
	3.1.2 Scope out potential for new/ improved cultural and heritage venues as part of town centre visions planning.	Medium/ ongoing	VM	Culture, Heritage, Planning, Engagement & Partnerships	Westbury Town Council. Other town and parish Councils, Area Boards, cultural partners	1.2.2	
	3.1.3 Support the mobilisation of City Hall Salisbury by the market via Savills	Short	TE	Economic Regen, Planning	Salisbury Cultural Pillar		

	3.1.4 Support museums in their fundraising and development efforts (including Devizes Assize)	Short/ongoing	HP	Culture, Heritage, Planning, Engagement & Partnerships	Wiltshire Museum, Devizes Town Council, other cultural partners such as DOCA			
	3.1.5 Investigate the possibility of improving the Young Gallery as part of the wider Library improvement plan and Salisbury Cultural Quarter development	Short/medium	RB	Culture, Economic Regen, Planning	Salisbury Cultural Pillar			
	3.1.6 Implement the library capital development programme with a view to improving their flexibility for wider cultural use	Short/ongoing	RB	Culture, Heritage, Economic Regen,	Cultural partners			
	3.1.7 Ensure that relevant programmes for business support are available to the cultural and creative sector, giving recognition to different formations such as CICs, Charities etc.	Short/ongoing	TE	Culture, Heritage, Engagement & Partnerships	Cultural partners			
3.2 Develop a strand of support for Culture Volunteers	3.2.1 Ensure that cultural sector is represented in the planned workshop between Wiltshire Council and Wessex Community Action and included in the VCS Strategic Framework	Short	RS	Libraries, Communities, Heritage, Engagement & Partnerships, Public Health	Cultural partners, Town and Parish Councils, Area Boards, Wiltshire Community Foundation, Community First, Wessex Community Action			
	3.2.2 Signpost to best practice for recruiting and retaining cultural volunteers and importance of diversity (including SW Musuem Dev Young Gallery and Libraries).	Medium	RB	Culture, Heritage, Engagement & Partnerships	Cultural partners, Wiltshire Community Foundation, Community First, Wessex Community Action			
	3.2.3 Consider running an award for culture volunteers - possibly as part of the Wiltshire Life Awards or as part of the Cultural Assembly	Long	TE	Libraries, Communities, Heritage				
	3.2.4 Promote wider support for volunteers to the cultural sector and encourage them to make use of VCS resources including the Wiltshire Together website	Short/ongoing	TE	Communities, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Engagement & Partnerships	Wiltshire Community Foundation, Community First, Wessex Community Action			
	3.2.5 Collate resources and links on good governance for arts and culture boards.	Medium/ongoing	RS/ TE	Culture, Heritage, Engagement & Partnerships	Arts Council England			
3.3. Support Festivals and Events to grow and innovate	3.3.1 Consider development work on festivals and events as part of the visitor economy strategy	Medium/Long	VM	Culture, Heritage, Communities, Environment, Highways and Transport				



	3.3.2 Promote sustainable event production resources - consider commissioning an environmental production toolkit	Medium/Long	VB	Culture, Heritage Economic Regen, Environmental Health, Cimate and Environment, Highways and Transport	Cultural partners, Vision 2025, A Greener Festival, Arts Council England			
3.4 Improve processes for licensing and production of outdoor events of all types - including filming	3.4.1 Run a workshop with the licensing and environmental health team to identify challenges and opportunities around event production. Include sector rep	Short/medium	TE	Economic Regen, Environmental Health, Highways and Transport	Cultural partners			
	3.4.2 Develop a user-friendly guide to putting on events for WC website - work with sector to develop this	Medium	TE	Economic Regen, Environmental Health, Highways and Transport	Lead: DOCA and major event partner			
<b>Theme 4: Economy</b> <b>Outcome</b> <b>Everyone has the opportunity to develop the cultural and creative skills they need to flourish in life. Wiltshire is the natural place to grow creative and cultural enterprises of all types.</b> <b>Key Objectives</b> Enable the creation of a diverse creative workforce for the future Use art and culture as a mechanism to support economic growth in Wiltshire <b>Actions</b> Potential activity Timescale Lead - see key Wiltshire Council Partners Links to								
4.1 Cultural education for all	4.1.1 Promote ArtsMark and Arts Awards to all schools	Short/ongoing	TE	Families, Children and SEND	Cultural sector			
	4.1.2 Investigate the possibility to consult with young people to understand more about their culture needs and ambitions - via the School Health and Wellbeing Survey	Short / Medium	TE/ KD	Public Health, Engagement and Partnerships				
	4.1.2 Develop a Young Peoples Arts and Culture Forum	Medium/ongoing	TE	Libraries, Families, Children and SEND	Cultural sector			
	4.1.3 Work with Creative and Cultural organisations and Wiltshire College to develop creative pathways for young people - seek funding	Medium/Long	TE	Culture, Heritage, Engagement & Partnerships	Town and Parish Councils, Area Boards, Cultural sector			

	4.1.4 Look to try and develop a bridge between schools and the cultural sector (building on CEDP and music hub) and with targetted opporunities for SEND	Medium/Long	DR	Culture, Heritage, Engagement & Partnerships, Families, Children and	Key orgs: Wiltshire Creative, Wiltshire Music Centre, Trowbridge Town Hall Arts. Music Connect Wider cultural sector			
	4.1.5 Seek to have culture as a regular agenda item on the Youth Council agenda	Short/ongoing	DR	Culture				
	4.1.6 Advocate to embed high quality ( professionally delivered) cultural provision for young people on all service agreements and commissions relating to children, young people and families	Medium/Long	DR	Families, Children and SEND, Public Health				
4.2 Strengthen existing creative businesses	4.2.1 Identify any relevant creative and cultural sector priorities within work on the Economic Strategy	Short/ongoing	VM	Culture	FSB, Salisbury BID, Trowbridge Chamber of Commerce			
	4.2.2 Recognise the link between cultural vibrancy, quality of life and economic vitality in all economic regeneration policies	Short/ongoing	VM	Culture, Planning				
	4.2.3 Seek to include charitable companies (that employ people) and freelancers as important parts of the creative and cultural sector	Short/ongoing	VM	Culture				
	4.2.4 Support the work of Tech Trowbridge and promote other opportunities for networking across the county	Medium/ongoing	VM	Culture	Tech Trowbridge, Town Hall Arts Trowbridge			
	4.2.5 Build partnerships with neighbouring universities and explore the potential for increasing the number of knowledge exchange and transfers with Wiltshire based companies	Medium/Long	VM	Culture	Tech Trowbridge, FSB, Salisbury BID, Trowbridge Chamber of Commerce, Wiltshire College, creative businesses			
	4.2.6 Identity opportunities to deliver sector specific skills development for the heritage sector	Medium/ongoing	HP	Culture				
4.3 Attract and grow new creative businesses	4.3.1 Seek to encourage suitable and affordable spaces for creative start-ups and co-working space via the Enterprise Network	Medium/ongoing	VM	Culture, Heritage	Wiltshire College, FSB, Trowbridge Chamber of Commerce			
	4.3.2 Actively promote the county as a location for creative businesses	Medium/ongoing	VM	Culture	FSB			
	4.3.3 Seek to develop programmes to support new enterprises and freelancers working with Wiltshire College and other providers	Long/ongoing	VM	Culture, Heritage	Wiltshire College			
<b>Theme 5: Tourism</b>								
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Wiltshire is a place where everyone is invited. There is something for everyone amongst its rich natural beauty and vibrant cultural offer so go explore.</b>							
<b>Key Objectives</b>	Use art and culture to attract greater visitor numbers to Wiltshire and increase tourism							
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Potential activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead - see key</b>	<b>Wiltshire Council</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Links to</b>		
5.1. Support cultural tourism	5.1.1 Develop a Visitor Economy Strategy - ensure this links to the cultural strategy and recognises cultural tourism	Short	VM	Culture, Heritage				
	5.1.2 Deliver the Towns Team Programme and identify opportunities to continue activity post April 2025	Short/ongoing	VM	Culture, Heritage				
	5.1.3 Develop the Wiltshire Marque and roll out to include makers and artisans	Short/Medium	VM	Culture, Heritage				
	5.1.4 Encourage cultural partners to work with food and drink providers on joint promotion efforts	Medium/ongoing	VM/ TE	Culture, Heritage				

5.2 Work with Strategic Partners on tourism, events and film	5.2.1 Convene major strategic partners and attractions owners to explore shared ambitions around culture and tourism		DR/ VM	Economic Regeneration, Culture, Climate and Environment	National Landscapes, National Trust, English Heritage, WHS, Longleat, Natural England	1.1.2	7.1	
	5.2.2 Consider options for setting up a film office with these partners	Short/ Medium	VM	Economic Regeneration, Culture	National Landscapes, National Trust, English Heritage, WHS, Longleat,			
	5.2.3 Map out key events and opportunities and challenges around events - liaise with Environmental Health Highways to address issues	Medium/ Long	VM	Economic Regeneration, Culture, Environment, Highways and Transport	National Landscapes, National Trust, English Heritage, WHS, Longleat,			
5.2 Grow the Explore Wiltshire and Event Wiltshire Apps as a cultural resource	5.2.1 Actively market the app to cultural partners	Short/ ongoing	TE	Heritage, Libraries, Economic Regeneration, Engagement and Partnerships	Cultural partners			
	5.2.2 Encourage strategic use of tagging to support clustering	Short/ ongoing	VM	Culture	Cultural partners	1.3.1		
	5.2.3 Curate customer journeys and recommendations and embed in app	Medium/ ongoing	TE	Heritage, Economic Regeneration, Engagement and Partnerships	Cultural partners			
5.3 Cultivate resident 'tourists'	5.3.1 Ensure that data seeks to captures visits across the county as well as from into the county	Medium/ ongoing	VM					
	5.3.3 Encourage cultural providers to collect postcodes	Medium/ ongoing	TE	Culture, Heritage	Cultural partners	2.1.5		
<b>Theme 6: Capture, Communicate and Celebrate</b>								
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Wiltshire has a thriving and connected cultural ecosystem where learning is shared and success is captured and celebrated.</b>							
<b>Key Objectives</b>	Increase the number of people experiencing and creating culture in Wiltshire							
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Potential activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead - see key</b>	<b>Wiltshire Council</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Links to</b>		
6.1 Expand and promote the Arts in Wiltshire blog	6.1.1 Conduct a readers survey to understand more about how the blog is used and valued	Short	TE	Comms				
	6.1.2 Develop a marketing strategy for the blog, making use of Wiltshire Council resources and reach	Short	TE	Comms				
	6.1.3 Reorganise the structure to support the framework of the Cultural Strategy including rebranding to include heritage	Short	TE	Comms				
	6.1.4 Commission special features on case studies and guest writers - linked to the strategy themes	Short/ ongoing	TE	Comms				

	6.1.5 Relaunch the Blog alongside the Strategy	Short	TE	Comms			
	6.1.6 Develop a social media campaign to support the blog	Medium/ ongoing	Te	Comms			
6.2 Run an annual Cultural Assembly	6.2.1 Work with a small steering group of key cultural partners / key WC officers to curate the first Cultural Assembly - along the themes of this strategy	Short	TE	Economic Regeneration, Heritage, Public Health, Engagement and Partnerships, Climate and Environment			
	6.2.3 Deliver the first Cultural Assembly/ launch the Strategy	Short/ Medium	DR	Culture, Economic Regeneration, Engagement and Partnerships, Comms			
	6.2.3 Evaluate and plan for next one - with steering group	Medium/ ongoing	TE	Economic Regeneration, Heritage, Public Health, Engagement and Partnerships, Climate and Environment			
6.3 Capture and celebrate value	6.3.1 Develop a shared evaluation framework for use by all cultural partners that supports the aim of this strategy. Include measurements around access and environmental impacts. Make a requirement of funding and support/ permissions at county and town / place level	Short/ Medium	PP	Libraries, Economic Regeneration, Public Health, Climate and Environment, Engagement and Partnerships	2.1.5		
	6.3.2 Encourage a consistent approach to case studies and vox pops which can be shared via the blog	Short/ Medium	PP	Libraries, Comms			
	6.3.3 Collate figures and key stats and share via an annual report	Medium/ ongoing	TE	Culture, Regeneration, Comms			
	6.3.4 Consider developing an annual awards ceremony/ gala event as part of the Cultural Assembly	Medium/ Long	DR	Culture, Regeneration, Comms			
<b>Theme 7 : Connect Leadership, Governance and Delivery</b>							
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Cultural leadership in the county is dispersed, collaborative and collegiate based on unity of effort and freedom of action working towards common goals</b>						

Key Objectives		Increase the number of people experiencing and creating culture in Wiltshire							
Actions	Potential activity	Timescale	Lead - see key	Wiltshire Council	Partners	Links to			
7.1 Develop a County-wide Strategic Partnership	7.1.1 Convene major strategic partners for culture and tourism (Links to 5.2)	Short/ongoing	DR	Economic Regeneration, Culture, Climate and Environment	National Landscapes, National Trust, English Heritage, WHS, Longleat, Natural England, Salisbury Cathedral	5.2	1.1.2		
	7.1.2 Develop ToR								
	7.1.3 Meet four times per year								
	7.1.4 Evaluate and assess membership and ToR annually								
7.2 Strengthen local cultural place partnerships	7.2.1 Provide feedback on individual places cultural frameworks and identify areas for collaboration and knowledge exchange	Medium/ongoing	PP	Heritage Economic Regeneration, Libraries, Climate and Environment		1.2.2			
	7.2.2 Work with Area Boards and Town and Parish Councils to improve impact of funding streams - for example consider aligning criteria to the overall cultural strategy and local cultural framework. Incentivise using funding for leverage. Consider multi-year and cross county programmes.	Medium/Long	PP	Culture, Economic Regeneration, Engagement and Partnerships					
	7.2.3 Provide opportunities for local people to engage in culture more-through encouraging local cultural 'town hall' meetings around specific calls to actions such as public art projects or information on county-wide initiatives	Medium/Long	PP	Culture, Economic Regeneration, Engagement and Partnerships, Planning					
7.3 Develop a Council culture forum	7.3.1 Convene key officers involved in delivering this cultural strategy to meet quarterly	Short/ongoing	PP	Heritage, Economic Regeneration, Engagement and Partnerships, Planning, Climate and Environment, Public Health, Environmental Health and Licensing, Libraries, Families, Children and SEND					
	7.3.2 Map the key reporting structures and meetings and ensure that culture is included in all key agendas	Short/ongoing	TE						

	7.3.3 Ensure regular updates on the Cultural Strategy to Cabinet	Short/ ongoing	TE				
7.4 Seek to increase investment in culture	7.4.1 Protect current levels of investment in cultural organisations	Short/ ongoing	DR				
	7.4.2 Identify and make bids to secure public funding to support projects emerging from this Strategy	Medium/ ongoing	TE	Heritage, Economic Regeneration			
	7.4.3 Seek to identify potential private partners for projects emerging from this Strategy	Medium/ ongoing	VM	Culture, Heritage, Economic Regeneration, Climate and Environment			
	7.4.4 Seek to increase budgets for culture via increased income (film, events, rents ) and planning gain so that county wide funding programmes can be launched that support the delivery of this Strategy	Medium/ ongoing	DR/VM	Culture, Heritage, Economic Regeneration, Climate and Environment, Planning, Engagement and Partnerships			
	7.4.5 Develop a funding guidelines /pack for arts and cultural organisations		TE				
	7.4.6 Seek to increase resources for culture - increasing by 1 FTE post to cover public art as part of a wider Cultural Development Officer post	Medium/ Long	DR	Culture, Economic Regeneration, Planning			
	7.4.7 Look at innovative means of supporting culture via trusts, asset transfer, spin outs, shared services and partnerships with neighbouring authorities	Medium/ ongoing	TE	Culture, Economic Regeneration, Planning			

TE	Tamzin Earley	Arts and Funding Officer, Culture
LT	Lynn Trigwell	Head of Climate and Environment
DR	David Redfern	Director - Leisure, Culture and Communities
VM	Victoria Maloney	Head of Economic Regeneration
KD	Katie Davies	PH Principal Health Improvement
RB	Rebecca Bolton	Service Manager Libraries
HP	Heather Perry	Conservation and Museums Manager
VB	Victoria Burvill	Climate Manager
RS	Rhys Schell	Service Manager - Engagement and Partnerships
TB	Terry Bracher	Heritage Service Manager
PP	Paul Pritchard	Head of Development

Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2024-2023 Action plan timeline			Year 1 2024/25			Year 2 2025/26			Year 3 2026/27			Year 4 2026/27			Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
			Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
			Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Theme 1: Identity Outcome</b>																	
<b>Wiltshire is a national leader in connecting people to the natural landscape through culture. The rich diversity of its different places encourages creativity, curiosity, and discovery</b>																	
Key Objectives			Increase the number of people experiencing and creating culture in Wiltshire Enable places to shape their own cultural identity														
Actions			Potential activity														
			Timescale														
1.1 Initiate and co-ordinate landscape scale projects			1.1.1 Co-ordinate information about all major projects Short														
			1.1.2 Explore potential for developing new projects Medium/ Long														
			1.1.3 National Landscapes to sign up to the NL Art in Landscapes strategy Short/ Medium														
1.2 Support places to develop their own cultural			1.2.1 Present the Cultural Strategy to all places Short														
			1.2.2 Invite places to submit their own response Medium/ Long														
1.3 Co-ordinate themed programming			1.3.1 Initiate thematic tags in the Explore Wiltshire app Short														
			1.3.2 Open space meetings Short/ Medium														
			1.3.3 Dedicated marketing and promotion campaign for thematic areas x3 Medium/ Long														
1.4 Shape places through culture			1.4.1 Implement public art policy - ongoing Short/ ongoing														
<b>Theme 2: Health and wellbeing Outcome</b>																	
<b>People in Wiltshire live full, healthy and enriched lives through developing their creativity and taking part in sociable cultural activity</b>																	
Key Objectives			Increase engagement in arts and cultural activities by diverse audiences, including those who face engagement barriers Support good physical and mental health and wellbeing and community resilience														
Actions			Potential activity														
			Timescale														
2.1 Increase local engagement and awareness of Creative Health																	
2.2 Support pilots and the roll out of social prescribing			Please note actions pending														
2.3 Embed culture in all PH community consultation, co-creation and																	
2.4 Harness key assets to support universal access to			2.4.1 Call out for projects Short/ Medium														
			2.4.2 Profile Libraries/ Heritage in the Creative Health call out and process Short/ Medium														
<b>Theme 3: Community Outcome</b>																	
<b>People in Wiltshire live in cultural communities with distinctive sustainable cultural hubs and vibrant high streets. There is a year-round calendar of festivals and events that attract people from across the County and beyond and which operate in an environmentally responsible way.</b>																	
Key Objectives			Use art and culture as a vehicle to revitalise town centres and increase footfall														
Actions			Potential activity														
			Timescale														
3.1 Support new and existing cultural hubs			3.1.1 Ongoing support for 4 existing cultural hubs and 2 heritage hubs Short/ ongoing														
			3.1.2 Scope out potential for new/ improved cultural and heritage venues Medium/ ongoing														
			3.1.3 Support the mobilisation of City Hall Salisbury Short														
			3.1.4 Support museums in their fundraising efforts Short/ ongoing														
			3.1.5 Improve Young Gallery Short/ medium														
			3.1.6 Implement the library capital development programme Short/ ongoing														
			3.1.7 Actively target business premises support to the cultural and creative sector Short/ ongoing														
3.2 Develop a strand of support for Culture Volunteers			3.2.1 Ensure cultural sector is included in planned workshop Short														
			3.2.2 Signpost to best practice Short														
			3.2.3 Consider running an award for culture volunteers Long														
			3.2.4 Embed culture in volunteer strategy Short/ ongoing														
			3.2.5 Collate resources and links on good governance for arts and culture boards. Medium/ ongoing														
3.3. Support Festivals and Events to grow and innovate			3.3.1 Consider commissioning a festivals and events strategy Medium/ Long														
			3.3.2 Promote sustainable event production resources Medium/ Long														
			3.3.3 Seek to test and launch environmental sustainable travel options Medium/ Long														
3.4 Improve processes for licensing and production of outdoor events of all			3.4.1 Run a workshop with the licensing and environmental health team Short/ medium														
			3.3.2 Develop a user-friendly guide to putting on events for WC website Medium														







Appendix B: Wiltshire Cultural Strategy 2023-2030: Evaluation plan  
Evaluation Plan Final

Theme	Outcome	Main Objectives	Indicator	How to measure it	Baseline if known	Target
Identity	Wiltshire is a national leader in connecting people to the natural landscape through culture. The rich diversity of its different places encourages creativity, curiosity, and discovery.	Increase engagement with nature and the environment through culture and reduce the environmental impact of cultural activity	More people engage with environmental sustainability as result of their cultural activity	Resident Survey / Question included in Evaluation Framework	To be established	Increase of 5% yoy from baseline
			More cultural producers recognise the importance of environmental action and strive to improve their environmental responsibility	Number of Environmental actions taken by organisers - Sector Survey	To be established	Increase each year
		Enable places to shape their own cultural identity	Places develop their own cultural statements and embed culture in their Neighbourhood Plans	Number of Neighbourhood Plans that include Culture	To be established	Increase each year
			More people rate Culture as important or very important	Resident Survey	2024 Survey: Extremely important (74%) and Important (22%)	Increase each year
Health and wellbeing	People in Wiltshire live full, healthy and enriched lives through developing their creativity and taking part in sociable cultural activity.	Support good physical and mental health and wellbeing and community resilience	More people report better health and wellbeing as a result of cultural activity	Resident Survey / Question included in Evaluation Framework	To be established	Increase each year
			Culture is identified as a mechanism in public health projects	Public Health report	Case studies highlighted and shared	Increase in number of targetted culture proects supported via PH
			Happiness scores improve	ONS	Average 7.35 (2022-23)	Happiness and wellbeing is improved overall - case studies illustrate how culture has supported specific communitues
			Health profile of Wiltshire improves	Community Insight	Various metrics to be considered in general popaulation and in targeted groups	Health and wellbeing is improved overall - case studies illustrate how culture has suported target communities
Community	People in Wiltshire live in cultural communities with distinctive sustainable cultural hubs and vibrant high streets. There is a year-round calendar of festivals and events that attract people from across the County and beyond and which operate in an environmentally responsible way.	Use art and culture as a vehicle to revitalise town centres and increase footfall	Increase in footfall when events and other activity are taking place	Footfall monitoring	To be established	Increase by 5% in targeted araes
			More people report that they are happy with the cultural provision on offer locally	Resident Survey / Question included in Evaluation Framework	2024 Survey: 55% said that there was not enough on offer locally	Decrease to 25% by 2030
			Increase in cultural assets	Mapping to be repeated in 2029	639 assets identified in 2024 mapping	Increase by 10% by 2029
			Decrease in number of empty shops	Occupancy rate	To be established	Decrease
			Increase in number of festivals and events and a spread both across the year and county	Analysis using Event App data	To be established	More events, more evenly distributed
Economy	Everyone has the opportunity to develop the cultural and creative skills they need to flourish in life. Wiltshire is the natural place to grow creative and cultural enterprises of all types.	Enable the creation of a diverse creative workforce for the future	More young people engaging with culture and reporting a positive experience	Young Persons survey	To be established (Include question in survey planned for 2024)	Increase each year
			More young people taking part in creative work experience and apprenticeships	Schools/ College Survey	To be established	Increase each year
			Increase in the number of Artsmark school	Arts Award website	2023: 17 schools	Increase by 2-3 each year (double by 2030)
			Increase in the number of Arts Awards	Survey of Arts Awards Centres	To be established	Increase each year
		Use art and culture as a mechanism to support economic growth in Wiltshire	Increase in the diversity of creative organisations and boards	Sector Survey - conducted every 2 years	To be established	Increase each year
			Increase in number and productivity of the creative and cultural sector in Wiltshire	NOMIS (Ec Regen) Sector Survey	Metric to be established	To be defined by Economic Regeneration Strategy
			Increase in public funding for arts and culture	Arts Council/ National Lottery website	2022-2023: £5,832,365 (Lottery) including £1,042875 Arts and £427,890 Heritage	Increase each year
			Increase in levels of sponsorship in arts and culture	Sector Survey	To be established	Increase each year
Tourism	Wiltshire is a place where everyone is invited. There is something for everyone amongst its rich natural beauty and vibrant cultural offer so go explore.	Use art and culture to attract greater visitor numbers to Wiltshire and increase tourism	More people come to the county because of the cultural offer/ specific events	Audience Survey/ Survey Via App data/ Question included in Evaluation Framework	To be established	Increase each year
			Number and spend of day/ overnight visitors	Visit England reports	2021-2023: 35.5m visits and £1.036m spend	To be defined by Tourism Strategy
			Total economic impact of tourism	NOMIS (Ec Regen)	To be established	Increase each year
			Increase in engagement with the apps by visitors and residents	Via App data (Ec Regen)	To be established	Increase each year
			Increase in positive press/ social media coverage of culture in Wiltshire	Analysis via Strategy updates	Case studies highlighted and shared	
			Communicate	Wiltshire has a thriving and connected cultural ecosystem where learning is shared and success is captured and celebrated.	Increase engagement in arts and cultural activities by diverse audiences, including those who face engagement barriers	More people take part in arts and culture
The diversity of those taking part is more representative of the county and targets those who face engagement barriers	Audience Survey/ Question included in Evaluation Framework/ Case Studies	To be established				To be more representative of the county demographic
People facing barriers to engagement report positive experiences of culture	Sector Survey and Case studies	Case studies highlighted and shared				Improved quality of offer
More people are aware of what's on offer across the county	Arts in Wiltshire Blog sign ups/ App data	To be established				Increase each year
Connect	Cultural leadership in the county is dispersed, collaborative and collegiate, based on unity of effort and freedom of action working towards common goals.	Increase the number of people experiencing and creating culture in Wiltshire	Increase in postive perceptions of the cultural offer in Wiltshire	Resident Survey	To be established	
			Increase in the number of cultural volunteers	Resident Survey	To be established	Increase each year
			Venues and events report increases in audience and participant numbers	Sector Survey - conducted every 2 years	Case studies highlighted and shared	Increase each year
			Increase in the number of people engaging with Libraries	Community Insight/ Library Survey	2024: 24% have a library card	To be defined by Library Strategy
			Increase the number of partners involved in culture	Analysis via Strategy updates	To be established	To be established
Increase in investment levered and enabled by Wiltshire Council	Analysis via Strategy update	To be established	To be established			

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Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

18 July 2024

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## Leisure Strategy and the Warminster Project

### Leisure Services

#### Executive summary

In Environment Select Committee meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup> 2024, a statement from a member of the public about the Warminster Project was received. It was agreed that the Director of Leisure, Culture and Communities would be invited to the next meeting to discuss the overall strategy for leisure, and to reply to some of the more specific comments made in the statement.

#### Proposal

That the committee:

- a) Are re-informed about, and understand the strategy for leisure, alongside the framework for decision making.
- b) Are provided with the response from the Director of Leisure, Culture and Communities on the public statement made at 4<sup>th</sup> June ESC around the specific project in Warminster and have the opportunity to ask questions as appropriate.

#### Reason for proposal

For a full response to be provided to committee by the appropriate officer following the 4<sup>th</sup> June meeting in relation to comments on the Warminster Project for the fitness suite relocation and expansion.

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# Leisure Strategy and the Warminster Project

## Purpose of report

1. To discuss leisure strategy more generally and how this relates to a statement made by a member of the public at the June meeting of the committee about the Warminster project.

## Background

2. The Director of Leisure, Culture and Communities presented to this committee in March 2024 and noted the work on improving the sustainability of the service, mainly through increased fitness memberships.
3. Leisure is a non-statutory service. Many local authorities have made the decision to reduce their leisure offer when faced with budget difficulties. In some instances, local authorities have ceased to deliver leisure services entirely. Wiltshire Council is bucking this national trend, principally by rigorously focussing on improving financial sustainability, but also by demonstrating the significant role the provision of high-quality leisure services plays in improving population health.
4. A key aspect of Wiltshire Council's mission is to ensure residents "... are empowered to live full, healthy and enriched lives", including the ability to "stay active", while the council's guiding themes include prevention and early intervention and improving social mobility and tackling inequalities.
5. As such, the structure for Leisure, Culture and Communities includes a direct link with Public Health to ensure all services provide the greatest health benefit to the Wiltshire population and support delivery of the Council's prevention agenda.
6. The Leisure, Culture and Communities Service Plan details several priorities that investment in Warminster Sport Centre will support, including:
  - *Ensure our leisure centres, libraries and other buildings are fit for purpose and accessible to all, are well maintained and financially sustainable and support the Councils target to achieve Net Zero by 2030.*
  - *Increase sports and physical activity participation amongst all Wiltshire residents but specifically those that face the greatest barriers to participation, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to stay active.*
  - *Align all services areas with Public Health priorities to empower healthy and safe behaviours and to give everyone the opportunity to 'start well'.*
7. The £10.6m capital budget allocation is being used to modernise centres. Any investment is assessed against its ability to improve financial sustainability, to maximise income, and to support public health objectives, with significant due diligence undertaken. It has not been allocated to simply maintain existing facilities.

## **Main considerations for the committee**

8. This report will now set out the comments made by the member of the public and respond to each one appropriately.

### **Comment 1:**

**As a council taxpayer in Warminster I am concerned that the investment in Warminster Sports Centre has not been properly considered and is a waste of taxpayers' money.**

9. The first thing considered in any investment decisions is what will achieve the most probable growth in physical activity participation across the whole population.
10. Experience, and data analysis combined indicate that gym memberships, which include options for swimming and group exercise, offer the best opportunities for growth.
11. £10.6M of capital funds are delegated to the Director of Leisure, Culture and Communities for adaptations that offer the best return on the above as approved by full council on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
12. To ensure decision making for monies spent (the public purse) is robust i.e. achieves the best possible growth and public health outcomes, a series of groups have been set up as consultees, each with terms of reference.
13. Project Group – involves the council's Capital Build and Leisure Operations teams in scoping the inception of leisure investment projects driven by potential growth.
14. Project Delivery Group – considers each project and their validity. Chaired by the Director of Leisure, Culture and Communities and attended by the Head of Service for Capital Build (and team), Head of Service Development, Head of Service Leisure Operations (and team), Communications. This team takes questions from the LCC Capital Projects Board.
15. Leisure, Culture and Communities (LCC) Capital Projects Board – act as final consultees for leisure investment pipeline projects. Consists of the Deputy CEO, Corporate Director for Place, Director of Public Health, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Libraries, Communities and Public Health, Head of Capital Projects, Head of Service Development.
16. A key consideration in determining how best to improve the membership base and improve financial sustainability, is the residual difference between the current fitness membership base and the latent fitness demand for each facility. Latent demand assesses the current desired demand for a service or activity, that is not fulfilled due to certain constraints. In the case of leisure services this is insufficient fitness provision. Use of latent demand data enables leisure providers to grow participation outcomes, commercial returns and social value, resulting in a data-driven return on investment and commercially sustainable facilities that reflect local need.

17. Table 1 below demonstrates the link between this market data prediction and the successes achieved in increased memberships in our centres that have received investment over the past ten years. Each site shows an increase in membership from initial opening in excess of predicted latent demand and following capital investment. This translates as increased revenue, improved health outcomes for residents and more individuals engaging in physical activity.

Facility	Date Opened	Membership at opening	Latent Demand	Current Membership
Springfield	Aug 14	791	1,114	1,662
5 Rivers -Salisbury	Nov 15	1,929	2,490	3,185
Nadder - Tisbury	Aug 16	138	383	447
The Vale - Pewsey	Oct 18	272	444	882
Calne	Nov 20	556	1,361	952
Melksham	Aug 22	499	1,895	2,293

18. Table 2 below illustrates latent demand and opportunities to increase fitness memberships at Wiltshire Council facilities which are yet to benefit from capital investment. The table shows the potential to nearly double memberships at Warminster Sports Centre with the right investment.

Facility	Membership position: 1 Jan 2024	Latent demand (2015)	Latent demand estimate (2022)	Difference from Jan 24 to Latent Demand
Trowbridge (CPLC / TSC)	1029	2925	3101	2072
Olympiad Leisure Centre	1054	2796	2964	1910
Bradford on Avon Pool	47	586	621	574
<b>Warminster Sports Centre</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>1013</b>	<b>477</b>
Devizes Leisure Centre	906	1268	1344	438
Durrington pool	171	558	591	420
The Activity Zone	581	923	978	397
LRC & Westbury Pool	456	804	852	396
Lime Kiln Leisure Centre	554	808	856	302
Tidworth Leisure Centre	627	870	922	295
Marlborough Leisure Centre	590	805	853	263
Amesbury Sports Centre	297	405	429	132

19. The figures above clearly show that Warminster has a need for investment to achieve its' latent demand potential.
20. Many years of commercial experience within the Leisure and Capital Build teams, and data obtained from previous investment projects, indicate that this is best achieved by upgrading and enlarging the fitness offering, as demonstrated in table 1.
21. Where data indicates the greatest need for investment, which provides the best outcomes relating to financial sustainability and increased participation in physical activity by upgrading and enlarging fitness provision, Leisure, Culture and Communities work alongside colleagues from the capital build team to develop suitable programmes of work that are within budget constraints.
22. Design work undertaken in relation to Warminster Sports Centre highlighted the most cost-effective means of improving the fitness offer would require relocating the fitness studio into the space currently used as squash courts. The work also



includes developing the existing fitness studio space as a secondary studio and community space and upgrading the current group exercise space. Relocating the fitness studio to the ground floor will improve access to those residents who have mobility issues and make the space more inclusive.

23. The 2023 Sport England Active Lives Survey highlights that participation in squash in England continues to decline and since the pandemic 10% of core regular squash players (playing twice a week) have not picked up their racket again.
24. The 2024 Sport England Active Lives Survey shows that, overall squash participation is in decline, experiencing an average annual decrease of -4.2% since 2016.
25. Table 3 below provides examples of the number of publicly operated squash courts in a selection of local authority areas and highlights the size of each population. Wiltshire Council provide significantly more squash courts than neighbouring authorities:

Local Authority	Courts	Population Approx 000s
S Gloucestershire	8	283
BANES	2	192
Swindon	2	234
Barnsley	1	245
Oldham	0	242
Wiltshire	24	510

26. Table 4 below shows the current usage of squash facilities across all Wiltshire Council sites between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The table demonstrates that the one operational court at Warminster Sports Centre is vastly underused, and that better use could be made of this space to generate income and to benefit more individuals.

Facility	Courts	Bookings	Available Bookings	Occupancy	Rackets Members
Devizes	2	3,264	14,316	23%	23
Five Rivers - Salisbury	3	4,643	24,282	19%	133
Claredon - Trowbridge	2	1,557	13,536	11%	4
Leighton - Westbury	1	704	6,417	11%	1
Springfield - Corsham	2	1,329	14,550	9%	8
Activity Zone - Malmesbury	1	571	7,158	8%	2
Olympiad - Chippenham	3	1,693	22,527	8%	2
<b>Warminster</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>7,119</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7</b>
Marlborough	1	472	6,768	7%	3
The Vale - Pewsey	1	370	6,885	5%	7
Amesbury	1	302	5,793	5%	3
Lime Kiln – Royal WB	1	359	7,392	5%	
Castle Place - Trowbridge	1	283	6,573	4%	3
Tidworth	4	1,010	26,448	4%	11

27. Table 5 below shows that the proportion of income generated by fitness in the 2023/24 leisure budget was 33%. At Warminster Sports Centre this was 29% of total site income. The total overall income generated in the 23/24 leisure budget is £15.524m. Of this, £5.135m was generated through fitness. Warminster Sports Centre’s fitness income was £197k. The proportion of overall income generated by squash in the 2023/24 leisure budget was 1% and this is the same at Warminster Sports Centre. The total squash income in the 2023/24 leisure budget was £130k and the total squash income was £4.7k at Warminster Sports Centre.

	Total	Fitness	Squash
All leisure sites Income 2023/24	£15.524m	£5.135m	£130K
Warminster Income 2023/24	£685,004K	£197K	£4.7K

28. Warminster Sports Centre has a membership of circa 809; the total number of racket members is 8, this equates to less than 1% of the total membership at the site.

29. Investment to expand and improve the fitness offer at Warminster Sports Centre has the potential to increase memberships by circa 500 on site. The average yield per member is circa £30. Once the full potential of the of the project is realised it has the potential to generate additional income of circa £180k per annum. This figure does not take in to account the additional social value realised through this investment including benefits relating to social care and the NHS.

30. The overall number of courts available at Wiltshire Council facilities will not be impacted by the Warminster investment project. Although one court will be displaced at Warminster Sports Centre, a second court will be made operational at Leighton Recreation Centre, ensuring that the number of locally available courts remains the same. Providing two operational courts at Leighton will enable local clubs to deliver competition squash.

**Comment 2:  
The proposal, which has been approved, is to invest £1 to £1.5 million to double the size of the gym by demolishing the two squash/racketball courts.**

31. There is only one functional court at Warminster Sports Centre. The amount of usage on the one functioning court, and the associated costs to bring the second court back into action, did not justify any investment in squash provision at the facility, particularly given the proximity of nearby squash provision at Leighton Recreation Centre. Rather than demolishing the existing structure, the

project will repurpose the space to provide an improved fitness offer. Once this is done there will be no provision for squash at Warminster Sports Centre.

**Comment 3:**

**An FOI request revealed that the justification for enlarging the gym hinges on a figure for "latent demand" leading to the assumption that doubling the size of the gym would double membership income. The latent demand figure was provided by Pulse Fitness, the company that would benefit from selling their gym equipment to the Sports Centre if the plan goes ahead.**

32. Latent demand is not an assumption but is calculated following a four-step process which includes identifying the catchment for a particular facility, understanding the population and demographics of those within the catchment and the mapping of other similar provision within the local area. This insight is then used to estimate the demand for a facility, utilising further insight from approximately 7,000 fitness facilities in the UK and their members.
33. Latent demand for Wiltshire Council facilities was not produced by Pulse Fitness, it was commissioned by Pulse Fitness from a company called the Leisure Database Company, who in turn use data from Experian, a multinational data analytics and consumer credit reporting company who provide data, analytics and technologies to support businesses to develop new opportunities.
34. As the table 1 above demonstrates, our latent demand calculations have been a good predictor thus far in providing the evidence for our fitness expansion projects.
35. The Director of the Leisure Database Company has offered to appear in front of scrutiny if required to take the committee through their workings.
36. There are 50+ years of commercial experience in the leisure team of delivering such projects, which have always delivered an increased financial return.
37. For robustness and transparency, Wiltshire Council commissioned a new report directly with the Leisure Database Company for an up-to-date Latent Demand figure for Warminster Sports Centre. The report was published on the 26/06/24 and stated latent demand had now risen to 1020.

**Comment 4:**

**There are already four other gyms in Warminster: Harridges, Bishopstrow, Snap Fitness and CrossFit (Crockerton). It would seem that the private sector has made adequate provision for gyms in the area and there is no evidence that the investment would draw users away from these other gyms. There are however, no other publicly available squash/racketball courts available in the town. The purpose of local government is, surely, to fill the gaps left by private enterprise rather than trying to go into competition.**

38. The table below shows the price points of the gyms noted. These facilities will be suitable for specific demographics within the local area, while Wiltshire Council's offer will be accessible to the general population with concession rates available to those groups who may otherwise be unable to access fitness facilities.

**Table 6: Price Points of Other Gyms in the Area:**

Facility	Pricing Policy	Description
Bishopstrow	Annual membership only - £1,250 plus a £175 joining fee.	High End spa facility
Harridges	£45 per calendar month	Gym and classes - target heavy lifting
SNAP (currently on the market for a sale)	£26.99 per month but must pay a full year of fees £323.88 at sign up no joining fee when using this option. Lowest monthly direct debit is £34.99 plus a £30 joining fee.	Gym and classes only – 24 hour model
Cross fit (Crockerton)	£70 per calendar month	Specialist Fitness Model
Wiltshire Council	Membership available from £24 per calendar month plus a £25 joining fee for all new joiners. The rate quoted is for Fitness Zone Membership (gym and swim) at the Concession rate. The council also has a range of P&P options which are made extremely inexpensive for vulnerable residents.	Gym, Swim and Classes – inclusive with a range of price points

39. The committee need to be aware that Snap Fitness is currently up for sale.
40. The investment in the council facility is not only to deliver greater numbers but also helps to safeguard against competition from these other gyms.
41. The other gyms are private sector and solely focus on profit margins, not the delivery of public health outcomes.
42. The council gym must be competitive to remain in existence but also delivers on other social objectives that the private sector does not, i.e. Active Health, Inclusive Equipment, Adapted Price Points to ensure the vulnerable are accommodated.
43. There is one other publicly available squash court in Warminster at the Warminster School, although it has limited accessibility.
44. There is one public court at Leighton Recreation Centre only a few miles away from Warminster. As part of this work, it is our intention to make a second court available at Leighton.

**Comment 5:**

**Warminster residents and users of the Sports Centre have not been consulted on the plan, neither have the Town Council or Kingdown School, which has 1,600 pupils and is located next door.**

45. In accordance with the timescales and evidence review the proposed plans were taken to the Warminster Area Board on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024, where plans were well received.
46. There is no legal requirement to consult on the types of proposed changes and there is no statutory or common law duty to consult on these changes. The common law duty arises where, for example, the council makes a promise to consult, or the council has consulted on previous similar cases or for other reasons of fairness. There has been no promise in this instance, and we have not done so on previous similar investment projects. The council may also

decide to consult where officers are not satisfied all the relevant factors are known, but this is not the case here as the decision has been made based on the relevant data and in compliance with relevant policy and procedures.

47. The Warminster Centre Manager has met with the Head of PE of the school to agree operational requirements during the term of the project, so the school are fully informed and engaged in the project.
48. In addition, the Warminster Centre Manager had a conversation with the Head of PE in September 2023 when a school development was announced. The building works will take place in 2025 and will have a small studio mainly for drama, an additional changing room and a small gymnasium area. These facilities will not be available to the public.
49. The role of local government is very broad, particularly in a large unitary authority such as Wiltshire, and its role is to maximise the opportunities for health and wellbeing to as many people as possible.

#### **Comment 6.**

**The goal of making the gym more accessible to disabled people could be achieved by installing a lift, but this has been dismissed out of hand with no costings undertaken. Extending the existing gym across the roof has also been dismissed in a similar manner.**

50. There is already access to the first floor by way of a seated lift via the stairs. Placing the fitness suite on the ground floor will facilitate better access to more people, particularly those with limited mobility. This will enable leisure to provide an enhanced Active Health programme and encourage greater use. Building over a flat roof would cost significantly more to deliver. Assuming it was even feasible to deliver this, additional floor loading, infrastructure for the gym and additional costs for the lift would be required and this would negate the financial aspects of the business case. The council must ensure value for money in delivering projects of this type. This will include minimising infrastructure changes and maximising participation to match maximise the value of the investment.

#### **Comment 7.**

**The two squash/racketball courts at Warminster are of the expensive, competition-grade glass backed type. Glass backed courts allow competitions to take place and allow coaching to be undertaken with one coach between two courts. They also provide a more amenable and social experience for players. At a meeting at the Sports Centre David Redfern asked "what is so special about glass backed courts?" indicating that the Council is not aware that the plan involves destroying a premium asset.**

51. Courts are categorised as:
  - a. Hardback, without viewing
  - b. Hard back with viewing
  - c. Hard back with glass door
  - d. Glassed back
  - e. Full Perspex court

All courts can be used for most activities including coaching, competitions and recreational play. Higher level competitions do require a viewing area to enable Marking and Refereeing, however this does not require glassed backed courts as it is recognised that a viewing balcony is sufficient. County leagues and national competitions use a combination of available courts for this type of activity.

England Squash qualified coaches have the skills to coach on all court types, these skills are evaluated during their qualification exams.

A glassed back court is a bonus for social activity, which can be facilitated in viewing galleries or elsewhere when required.

#### **Comment 8.**

**Only one court has been available for use in recent years, which makes club nights difficult and competitions impossible. Councillor Tony Jackson has made excellent progress with the PE department at Kingdown School to enable squash coaching for pupils, but this can only proceed with two courts available. The second court could be refurbished for a tiny fraction of the proposed £1 to £1.5 million expenditure.**

52. The new gym will provide opportunities for the children of the school that squash courts are not able to, and our data and evidence on children's fitness memberships, circa 3,000 across the county, would corroborate this.
53. The second court could be made available for a smaller proportion of the project expected spend, but the usage on it, and the cost, is very likely to not justify the spend based on all current intelligence as outlined above.

#### **Comment 9.**

**David Redfern has stated that activities at the Sports Centre are actively promoted with the exception of squash and racketball. There is no signage at the Centre to indicate the presence of squash courts. A poster for a squash club in the reception area was moved to the squash courts where it is only seen by people using the courts. The squash courts are not listed on RacketPal, an app that connects players. It also appears that the Council have not accounted for the expected upsurge in squash due to its inclusion in the 2028 Olympics.**

54. The comment made in full as per the above was that with limited marketing and promotional capacity, and spend, the leisure service focuses on those areas that they know have best chance of return.
55. Despite the regular decline of squash over several decades Wiltshire is committed to safeguarding minority sports where the evidence is supportive.
56. Wiltshire will develop a built facilities plan that will address the provision of squash as part of its' ongoing drive towards achieving the greatest physical activity participation statistics.

**Comment 10:**

**Shortly before the closure of the squash courts was announced, the Sports Centre created a "RacketZone" membership which allowed free use of courts for a monthly fee. Insufficient time was allowed for the effect of this membership to be assessed. No consideration has been given to trialling the inclusion of free or heavily discounted use of squash courts in other membership plans.**

57. The introduction of the Racketzone membership at Warminster Sports Centre was in December 2023 and this was in line with several other facilities. A membership had been trialled at Five Rivers in the first instance and was introduced at other facilities periodically over the following 18 months.
58. In the last 7 months, 8 Racketzone memberships have been sold at Warminster Sports Centre.
59. A rackets add on membership was piloted at Five Rivers to address a specific issue, this option is available at a premium rate. The Racketzone membership was introduced which offers a good value option for badminton and squash players as a result there is no reason to add further discounted use.

**Comment 11:**

**In summary, given that the plan involves the expenditure of up to £1.5 million and the demolition of a valuable asset, I ask the committee to scrutinise whether sufficient evidence has been gathered from stakeholders and whether due consideration has been given to alternatives. In your deliberations, it seems reasonable that the evidence for latent demand be dismissed, given that it was generated by Pulse Fitness, a company that would benefit from the plan.**

60. Committee is asked to consider the full response provided in this report when scrutinising our high-level strategy for leisure and the responses to the member of the public.

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**Wiltshire Council**

**Environment Select Committee**

**18 July 2024**

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## **Final Report of the Speed Limit Assessment Task Group**

### **Purpose of the report**

1. To present the findings and recommendations of the Speed Limit Assessment Task Group for endorsement by the Select Committee and referral to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding for response.

### **Background**

2. At the Environment Select Committee (ESC) on 11 January 2024 it was agreed to create a task group to look at Wiltshire Council's speed limit assessment process. This issue had previously been referred to the select committee by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) on [15 November 2023](#).
3. Traffic authorities, in this instance Wiltshire Council, can set local speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest a speed limit which is lower than the national speed limit. To determine whether a change is appropriate an independent speed limit assessment is undertaken. Most assessments recommend some form of change either to the speed limit or through the implementation of other safety measures. However, concerns have been raised by members and local communities about how assessments interpret national guidance and the use and analysis of the evidence.
4. The aim of the task group was to produce a report with recommendations that help support a speed limit assessment system that has public confidence and is operated in a consistent and transparent manner.

### **Terms of reference**

5. The following terms of reference for the task group were endorsed by the Environment Select Committee on 20 March 2024:
  - a) To support a review of the Speed Limit Assessment process.
  - b) To review the current processes.
  - c) To consider the following areas and to make recommendations on how:
    - Speed limit assessments can support a safe system approach i.e., safe vehicle, road use, speeds, roads, and post-crash response.
    - Speed limit assessments can help develop public confidence in road safety measures.

- Relevant evidence and guidance are used during a speed limit assessment.
- Local needs and conditions are examined during an assessment.
- Community views and feedback, including those of relevant local services e.g., police, are considered and how these are weighted and seen to be taken into account with other relevant criteria.
- Community impacts are considered.
- Lessons can be applied from the current pilot programmes.
- Final decisions are reported to local communities.

d) To make recommendations to the Environment Select Committee by 18 July 2024.

## Membership

6. The task group comprised the following membership:

Cllr Helen Belcher OBE  
 Cllr Johnny Kidney  
 Cllr Jonathon Seed (Chairman)  
 Cllr Martin Smith

Cllr Derek Walters  
 Cllr Bridget Wayman

## Methodology

7. The task group received evidence from the following witnesses:

**Cllr Caroline Thomas** (former Cabinet Member for Transport Street Scene & Flooding)  
**Cllr Nick Holder** (Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene & Flooding)  
**Parvis Khansari** (Corporate Director – Place)  
**Sam Howell** (Director – Highways & Transport)  
**Dave Thomas** (Head of Highways Asset Management & Commissioning)

**Kevin Bishop** (Group Engineer, AtkinsRéalis)  
**Emily Jones** (Framework Manager, AtkinsRéalis)  
**Cllr Ross Henning** (Chairman, Chippenham LHFIG)  
**Cllr Ruth Hopkinson** (Chairman, Corsham LHFIG)  
**Cllr Ashley O’Neill** (Chairman, Calne LHFIG)  
**Cllr Graham Wright** (Chairman, Stonehenge LHFIG)  
**Liz Watts**, Monkton Farleigh

8. Additional information was provided by:

**Kirsty Rose**, Principal Engineer Manager  
**Gareth Rogers**, Traffic Engineering Manager

9. The task group met seven times, as demonstrated in the following table:

<b>Date (2024)</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>
1 March	Scoping meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed terms of reference</li> <li>• Background and context to assessments</li> <li>• Current process</li> <li>• Changes to assessments</li> <li>• Emerging issues</li> </ul>
26 March	Department of Transport (DfT) guidance and speed limit assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to DfT guidance (revised 17 March 2024)</li> <li>• Examples of speed assessment reports</li> <li>• List of speed limit reviews in the last 18 months</li> </ul>
20 May	AtkinsRéalis/Senior Highways Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of independent external consultants</li> <li>• The technical assessment process</li> </ul>
23 May	Local Highways & Footway Infrastructure Groups (LHFIG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of Local Highway &amp; Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) of speed assessments</li> </ul>
11 June	Draft recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial draft recommendations</li> </ul>
20 June	Monkton Farleigh speed assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging a speed assessment</li> </ul>
1 July	Final report draft meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the final report and recommendations</li> </ul>

10. Alongside receiving evidence from the witnesses detailed above, the task group also considered other sources of evidence (see the 'Evidence' section of this report)

11. The task group's preliminary findings and recommendations have been shared with the Executive and witnesses.

### **Who sets speed limits?**

12. The Department for Transport Circular, [Setting Local Speed Limits](#) (DfT March 2024), sets out guidance as a basis for assessments of local speed limits. Speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed.

13. The overall speed limit framework, including the setting of national limits for different road types, is the responsibility of the government. The three national speed limits in England are:
  - the 30mph speed limit on roads with street lighting (sometimes referred to as restricted roads);
  - the national speed limit of 60mph on single carriageway roads;
  - the national speed limit of 70mph on dual carriageways and motorways.
14. These national limits are not, however, appropriate for all roads. Local traffic authorities can set local speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest a speed limit that is different from the relevant national speed limit.
15. The right speed limits should be used in the right places.
16. Speed limits are only one element of speed management. Local speed limits are not set in isolation and are part of a package with other speed management measures including:
  - engineering and road geometry that respect the needs of all road users and raise the driver's awareness of their environment,
  - education,
  - driver information,
  - training and publicity.

#### **What is the difference between a speed survey and a speed limit assessment?**

17. Traffic surveys use equipment placed on carriageways which collects data 24 hours per day over a seven-day period on the speed and volumes of vehicles.
18. A speed limit assessment is an evidence-based review of a speed limit on a specific section of road to determine the appropriate maximum limit. It considers collision data, local evidence, the road environment, and an assessment of speed data.

#### **What is the speed assessment process?**

19. Speed limit assessments can be requested by members of the public via their town or parish council using a [Highways Improvement Request Form](#) on Wiltshire Council's website. Requests are then considered by the relevant [Local Highways & Footways Improvement Group](#) (LHFIG) in conjunction with Highways officers and then referred to one of Wiltshire's eighteen [Area Boards](#) for approval. Requests are prioritised.
20. Assessments can also be undertaken in response to new developments such as housing or commercial sites.
21. Part of the process is an independent speed assessment conducted by AtkinsRéalis, see below. The assessment includes a costing of any recommended actions.

22. The outcome of that assessment is discussed with Highways Officers. The final report is then shared with the LHFIG. Final approval for a speed limit change is given by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene & Flooding. Speed reductions require a [Traffic Regulation Order](#) (TRO); a process that can take several months to complete.
23. A speed assessment costs £3,100 (2024/25), with costs covered either by the LHFIG or the town or parish and sometimes a combination of both.

## **Evidence**

24. The task group drew upon the following evidence when developing its conclusions and recommendations.

## **Speed limit guidance**

25. In January 2013 the Department of Transport published a circular [Setting Local Speed Limits](#) (circular 01/2013) which assists local traffic authorities in setting local speed limits.
26. In March 2024 this guidance was revised to align with the Department for Transport's [Plan for Drivers](#) (October 2023). This updates some of the evidence used in the guidance but also emphasises the need to balance the benefits with the disadvantages of changing a speed limit.
27. The updated guidance helps ensure appropriate and consistent speed limits, which contribute to:
  - reducing the number of road deaths, as well as casualties overall;
  - tackling pedestrian and cyclist casualties in towns and cities;
  - improving the safety on rural roads; and
  - reducing variations in safety from area to area and road to road.
28. [Village speed limits](#) had separate guidance until the introduction of [Setting Local Speed Limits](#) in 2013. The council also has its own guidance on [20mph limits and zones](#).

## **Speed limit assessment summary data**

29. The task group was provided with a list of 49 speed limit assessments undertaken or in progress between 2022/2024. Of the 36 completed, 25 led to some form of action being recommended to address issues identified; this was not always a speed reduction.

## **Speed limit assessment reports**

30. Speed limit assessments are now reported using a standard template. The task group saw examples of completed reports relating to:
  - A420 Bumpers Farm, Chippenham to county boundary
  - B30389 Teffont

- B4039 Burton
- A30 Firsdown (see below)
- Orcheston
- East Chisenbury & Coombe
- Bradford on Avon, Ashley Road
- Bratton Road, West Ashton
- Manor Hill, Purton
- Upper Seagry
- Barrow Green/Hill Rise, Chippenham
- Bradford Road, Atworth
- Bratton Village

31. Reports can include the following sections:

- Introduction and background
- Data collection
- Site observations
- Journey time data
- Traffic speeds and volumes
- Collision data
- Local concerns
- Analysis
- Recommendations and costs.

32. The task group also reviewed the following assessments, which were undertaken before the introduction of the template (pre-2021):

- Great Durnford
- Monkton Farleigh
- B4040 Easton Grey
- Mere
- Water Eaton
- B3083 Berwick St James
- A345 Netheravon
- Horton Road, Devizes
- Frome Road, Southwick
- Park Lane, Corsham
- Leafy Lane, Box
- Lacock

33. Also considered was an example of how a speed assessment is initiated. This was an email to AtkinsRéalis with supporting information attached, in this specific case, a pedestrian safety report from the parish council.

34. Assessments contain a number of different pieces of information, see below.

### **Speed limit assessment – speed data**

35. The task group saw two examples of spreadsheets used to analyse speed data during a speed assessment on the A30 at Firsdown and at Monkton Farleigh. The

spreadsheet is an adaptation of the DfT [Local Speed Limit Schemes: Appraisal Tool](#).

36. This calculates the:

- average annual daily traffic (AADT) i.e., the number of vehicles passing a given point.
- average section time calculator i.e., the average time a vehicle travels between two points.
- mean speed i.e., speed between the two given points as the total sum of values in the sample divided by the number of values in the sample.

### **Speed limit assessment – road environment**

37. Many of the assessment reports refer to the road layout with reference to houses, bends, hills, depressions, and the type of road and whether it narrows or widens. This information is given significant weight particularly its perceived impact upon driver behaviour.

### **Speed limit assessment – other road user information**

38. Assessment before the introduction of a standardised report often did not include any information except collision data, numbers of road vehicles and speed data with each given a three to four sentence assessment.

39. The DfT guidance *Setting Local Speed Limits* states the following, that:

*'....different road users perceive risks and appropriate speeds differently, and drivers and riders of motor vehicles often do not have the same perception of the hazards of speed as do people on foot, on bicycles or on horseback. Fear of traffic can affect people's quality of life and the needs of vulnerable road users must be fully taken into account to encourage these modes of travel and improve their safety. Speed management strategies should seek to protect local community life.'*  
(DfT guidance *Setting Local Speed Limits* para 33)

40. Reports after the introduction of a report template are more comprehensive and often consider other road users, though not always. However, it is not clear how this information is gathered, what that information looks like or how it is analysed.

### **Speed limit assessment – collision data**

41. Statistics for road traffic collisions capture a collision when at least one person is injured, and which is then reported to the police. Collision data is used to establish the number of collisions in the speed assessment area over a six-year period. The use of personal injury collisions is universal across the United Kingdom, not only in the assessment of speed limits but also in identifying schemes to improve highway safety. Damage only and 'unrecorded' incidents are not assessed.

42. The DfT guidance *Setting Local Speed Limits* states the following, that:

*A study of types of crashes, their severity, causes and frequency, together with a survey of traffic speeds, should indicate whether an existing speed limit is appropriate for the type of road and mix of use by different groups of road users, including the presence or potential presence of vulnerable road users (including people walking, cycling or riding horses or on motorbikes), or whether it needs to be changed. Residents may also express their concerns or desire for a lower speed limit and these comments should be considered. ((DfT guidance Setting Local Speed Limits para 24)*

43. The task group did not look at collision data in detail but concentrated upon what was collected and how and what it was used for.

### **A345 Netheravon speed trial**

44. The task group saw evidence relating to a speed trial at Netheravon which followed an unsuccessful attempt to request a speed limit reduction. The trial involves using SIDs (Speed Indication Devices) which are temporary roadside vehicle activated signs which display speeds in real-time.
45. When placed along specific sections of the A345 some initial findings from the trial suggest it began to lower the speed of vehicles to around or below the target of 40mph.

### **Monkton Farleigh speed assessment**

46. The task group heard evidence from Monkton Farleigh, where a speed assessment had been successfully challenged in 2020.
47. The discussion covered the collection and use of local information, engagement with AtkinsRéalis, Highways officers and the parish council. The Department for Transport guidance was discussed, specifically the interpretation of local information.
48. The assessment was challenged using the technical data i.e., collision data, average speeds, number of vehicles included in the report. The importance of seeing the raw data was stressed as this allowed a challenge focusing upon how robust this specific assessment process had been i.e., the sections identified, the distances between measured points, the counting of traffic flows.
49. Though not used at Monkton Farleigh the perceived limitations when assessing vehicle speed limits using the [Solomon curve](#) and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile were discussed. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85% of the drivers perceive it to be an appropriate speed for the environment.
50. Following this specific assessment and an internal review, changes were made to the wider process, notably the adoption of a new reporting template.



## Conclusions

51. Speed limit assessments are important in creating a safe road environment. Local communities and all road users, not just car drivers, have strong opinions about the safety of the roads in their area. A balance must be struck between all those views, keeping people safe and the traffic flowing.
52. The task group suggests there are several steps to creating a process that is transparent and that can retain public confidence. These are:
- Explain the policy and process.
  - Standardise the process.
  - Capture and use all the relevant evidence.
  - Publish the data with the recommendations.
  - Create a challenge process.
53. The guidance provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) is broadly framed and can be read in differing ways. It is left to local transport authorities as to how to apply it; how it is variously interpreted across the country is testament to that fact. Without a clear local policy statement from the council this can create the sense that speed limit assessments are applied inconsistently undermining confidence in the process. A policy statement should be developed and published. Speed limit assessment reports should also refer to the policy document and how the DfT guidance has been applied.
54. Local perception from the public and local elected members does not seem to be captured or reported in a systematic way. Understandably, technical speed information, such as traffic flows and average/mean speeds are given more weight than other information. How any balance between the hard data, collected on the roads, and the 'softer' local intelligence is achieved is not clear, but the DfT guidance states that both should be considered. The recent introduction of a standardised report structure has been an improvement in terms of consistency and clarity. However, not all reports seen by the task group include the section regarding '*Local concerns.*' This could leave the impression that they were not considered. This section should be mandatory for all reports, even where they report that no local concerns were received.
55. Local evidence is an element of a balanced process. However, there is currently no clear guidance as to what evidence is useful nor how it should be provided for the purposes of the assessment. The task group heard that where additional information was provided by the community, particularly photographs and surveys, then this could influence the outcome. A standardised process for obtaining local information should be developed to ensure that all admissible evidence is captured.
56. When hearing about the challenge to a speed assessment at Monkton Farleigh it was clear that access to all the technical data was crucial. This allowed residents to see how the data was analysed and how the recommendations were supported (or not) by the evidence. Some newer speed assessments reports state that '*the full survey data can be made available upon request.*' All survey data should be provided with each report in future.

57. Most speed assessments result in some form of action, though this is not always a speed reduction. However, there are potentially more cost-effective measures that could be investigated *before* a speed assessment is undertaken. The Netheravon trial, though still ongoing, seems to provide a template for more creative and effective approaches. Guidance about alternative options should be available to help underpin decisions made by LHFIGs.
58. A more transparent speed limit assessment process would lead to fewer assessments being questioned in future. There is currently no formal process for challenging a speed assessment report. This does not mean that assessments have not been successfully challenged in the past. What must be developed now is an open, consistent, and clear process for challenging an assessment outcome based upon the evidence.
59. The task group were concerned about a significant failure of the process and analysis in the Monkton Farleigh speed assessment conducted in 2020. More generally the use of the Solomon curve and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile in assessing the impact of road speed has been called into question. The task group did not have time to look in depth at that issue but felt it needed to be mentioned in this report.
60. It was also not within the remit of the task group to look at the cost of speed limit assessments. It is an expensive process, particularly for parish councils. However, these recommendations will hopefully allow for clearer decision making and for assessments that demonstrate better value for money.
61. Changes have been made which have begun to improve the speed limit assessment process. The task group makes its recommendations in the light of those changes, to further improve the speed limit assessment system so that it holds public confidence and is operated in a consistent and transparent manner.

## **Proposal**

62. To endorse the report of the Task Group and refer it to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding for response at the Committee's next meeting.

## **Recommendations**

### **That the Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene & Flooding:**

- 1. Develops a publicly available policy statement covering speed assessments, including:**
  - a) The purpose of speed assessments**
  - b) Alternatives to a full assessment**
  - c) How to initiate an assessment**
  - d) The criteria and guidance used to make an assessment**
  - e) The assessment process (data collection, analysis, feasibility, consultation, implementation, and monitoring)**
  - f) The decision-making procedure**

2. Provides guidance on the types of information to be submitted with a speed assessment request.
  3. Ensures that the 'Local concerns' section and an analysis of all DfT assessment criteria of the speed assessment report is always published with the final assessment reports and is completed fully.
  4. Provides the full traffic survey data with each speed assessment report.
  5. Issues guidance to LHFIGs regarding alternatives to undertaking a speed assessment.
  6. Creates an open, evidence-based appeals process for challenging speed assessment outcomes.
  7. Reports on progress with implementing the recommendations to the Environment Select Committee in January 2025.
- 

**Cllr Jonathon Seed, Chairman of the Speed Limit Assessment Task Group**

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**Appendices**

None

**Background documents**

None

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## Wiltshire Council

### Environment Select Committee

18 July 2024

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### Climate Emergency Task Group

#### Background

1. The Climate Emergency Task Group (CETG) is a standing task group reporting to the Environment Select Committee. The task group's initial terms of reference were endorsed by the Select Committee on 3 September 2019 and were revised on 9 November 2021.
2. The task group has produced two reports with recommendations:
  - Energy and Transport & Air quality (29 September 2020)
  - Planning (13 January 2021)
3. At its meeting on 14 June 2022 the Select Committee approved the continuation of the task group 2022/23.
4. The task group's last update to the Select Committee was on [4 June 2024](#).

#### Membership

5. The membership of the task group from April 2024 is as follows:

Cllr Clare Cape  
Cllr Sarah Gibson  
Cllr Jacqui Lay  
Cllr Dr Brian Mathew  
Cllr Dr Nick Murry  
Cllr David Vigar  
Cllr Ian Wallis  
Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman)

#### Terms of Reference:

6. The task group's revised terms of reference were endorsed by the Environment Select Committee on the 9 November 2021. These are:
  - a) To help shape and influence the development of Wiltshire Council's programme (in all relevant areas) for meeting its objective of making Wiltshire Council carbon neutral and seeking to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 (excluding the geographical area administered by Swindon Borough Council).

- b) To scrutinise the delivery of this objective through the Climate Strategy (2022-2027) and its delivery plans, as well as key plans, policies, and programmes, such as the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Including the way in which the Council is measuring progress and how it is performing and reporting against baselines.
- c) To provide recommendations on other aspects of decarbonising the county including partnership working and community-led approaches as well as acting as a national role model.

## **Recent Activity**

### **Tree & Woodland Strategy (28 June 2024)**

7. The task group received a briefing about the emerging strategy, which covered the following:
  - Why woodlands trees and hedgerows?
  - Policy background
  - Aims and objectives
  - Strategy structure
  - Strategy targets
  - Trees as an asset
  - Who will use the strategy
  - Timetable for Delivery
8. To increase the Wiltshire's tree cover to 17% by 2045 422 hectares of new woodland would need to be planted per annum or approx. 675,000 trees per year (Climate Strategy Delivery Plan for Wiltshire 2022-2024).
9. The task group asked about how the entire tree, woodland and hedgerow programme is being communicated more widely. How the strategy fits with the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans, and the council's use of its own estate. Also, how the strategy would be funded.
10. The task group welcomed the strategy but would encourage the council to implement it as soon as possible.
11. The task group will continue to monitor the strategy and has asked a number of follow up questions.

## **Forward work plan**

12. The Climate Emergency Task Group forward plan is attached at Appendix 1.

## **Proposals**

**That the select committee:**

1. Notes the update on the Task Group activity provided above.
  2. Notes the Climate Emergency Task Group's draft forward work plan, see Appendix 1.
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**Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Climate Emergency Task Group**

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## APPENDIX 1

### Climate Emergency Task Group – Forward Work Plan

12 July 2024	<p><b>Climate Audit</b> Briefing regarding an audit undertaken to assess whether the council has the structures, processes and governance in place to deliver carbon neutral ambition.</p>
13 September 2024	<p><b>Annual update on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency</b> Assessment of performance against Climate Strategy.</p>
18 October 2024 (tbc)	<p><b>Climate Delivery Plan</b> The development of new delivery plans for the Climate Strategy.</p>
October 2024 (tbc)	<p><b>Climate Change Adaptation Plan</b> To review the council's draft plan.</p>
2024	<p><b>Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUGS2)</b> Update on the government funded programme for retrofitting.</p>
2024	<p><b>Bio-diversity Net Gain</b> Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a new planning policy with the potential to change the face of nature recovery in England.</p>
2024	<p><b>Local Transport Plan</b> To understand the future strategy in particular active travel, electric vehicles charging.</p>
2025	<p><b>Carbon Offsetting Strategy</b> Update on the development of the strategy.</p>
tbc	<p><b>Soft Plastic Recycling</b></p>
tbc	<p><b>Alternative fuels</b></p>
tbc	<p><b>Biogas</b> To explore the potential for biogas as a replacement for natural gas and use in vehicles.</p>



## Environment Select Committee Forward Work Programme

Last updated 24 June 2024

<b>Environment Select Committee – Current / Active Task Groups</b>		
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>Final report expected</b>
Climate Emergency Task Group	September 2019	Standing
Speed Limit Assessments Task Group	1 March 2024	18 July 2024

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details / purpose of report</b>	<b>Associate Director</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Report Author / Lead Officer</b>
3 September 2024	Waste Management Strategy: Annual Review	As resolved at ESC 25 July 2023 to receive a further annual review in 2024.	Sarah Valdus (Director – Environment)	Cllr Dominic Muns	Martin Litherland (Head of Service Waste Management)
3 September 2024	Economic Strategy	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 23 November 2022 on the economic development portfolio.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Richard Clewer	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)
3 September 2024	Rights of Way	To receive a report, as requested by ESC 25 July 2023, regarding rights of way. To include issues of maintenance and access, updates to the definitive maps and engagement with volunteer groups.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Nick Holder	Chris Clark (Head of Local Highways)
3 September 2024	Streetscene contract	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 19 September 2023 the committee will receive an update on the Streetscene contract.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Nick Holder	Adrian Hampton (Head of Highway Operations)

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details / purpose of report</b>	<b>Associate Director</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Report Author / Lead Officer</b>
3 September 2024	Milestone contract	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 19 September 2023 the committee to receive an update on the first year of the Milestone contract to include key performance indicators including carbon reduction, savings, and outcomes targets. Will include updates on gully clearing and potholes.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Nick Holder	Dave Thomas (Head of Highways Assets & Commissioning)
3 September 2024	Potholes	To receive an update as requested by ESC 19 September 2024.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Nick Holder	Dave Thomas (Head of Highways Asset Management & Commissioning)
3 September 2024(tbc)	Executive response to the final report of the Speed Limit Assessment task group	Response from the Executive to the recommendations of the task group.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Nick Holder	Dave Thomas (Head of Highways Asset Management & Commissioning)
3 September 2024	Passenger Transport Service Update	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 19 September 2023 the committee will receive an update on the Passenger Transport Service.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Tamara Reay	Jason Salter (Head of Service Passenger Transport)

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details / purpose of report</b>	<b>Associate Director</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Report Author / Lead Officer</b>
3 September 2024	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Cllr Graham Wright  Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)
12 November 2024	Wiltshire Housing Development Partnership	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 7 November 2023 the committee will receive an update.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Phil Alford	Richard Walters (Head of Service – Major Projects)  Claire Moore (Housing Enabling Lead)
12 November 2024	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 23 November 2022 on the economic development portfolio.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Richard Clewer	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)
12 November 2024	Homeless Strategy 2019-2024	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 8 November 2023, the select committee will receive an update report in 12 months' time.	Emma Legg (Director – Adult Social Care)	Cllr Phil Alford	Nicole Smith (Head of Housing)

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details / purpose of report</b>	<b>Associate Director</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Report Author / Lead Officer</b>
12 November 2024 (tbc)	Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) Review	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 4 June 2024, the select committee will receive a full report by the end of 2024.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Nick Botterill	Nic Thomas (Director of Planning)
12 November 2024	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	As discussed at meeting with the Cabinet Member (20 Oct 2023) the select committee to receive a report on the Plan.	Sarah Valdus (Director – Environment)	Cllr Dominic Muns	Lynn Trigwell (Head of Natural & Historic Environment)
12 November 2024	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Cllr Graham Wright  Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)
21 January 2025	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Cllr Graham Wright  Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)
4 March 2025	Highways Annual Review of Service 2024	As resolved at ESC 20 March 2024, to receive a further annual report in 2025.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Nick Holder	Dave Thomas (Head of Highways Assets & Commissioning)

Meeting Date	Item	Details / purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Report Author / Lead Officer
4 March 2025	Revised Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document - Draft for adoption		Sarah Valdus (Director – Environment)	Cllr Dominic Muns	Lynn Trigwell (Head of Natural & Historic Environment)
4 March 2025	Libraries Development	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 20 March 2024 to provide an update including progress on the Library Strategy.	David Redfern (Director Leisure Culture and Communities)	Cllr Ian Blair Pilling	
4 March 2025	Leisure Services	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 20 March 2024 the committee will receive a further update that includes the outcome of the continued public holiday pilot and further enhanced financial information.	David Redfern (Director Leisure Culture and Communities)	Cllr Ian Blair Pilling	
4 March 2025	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Cllr Graham Wright  Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)

Meeting Date	Item	Details / purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Report Author / Lead Officer
June 2025	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)
July 2025	Wiltshire Programme Town	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 4 June 2024, the select committee will receive an update in 12 months time.  To include a Part II item regarding town's footfall data	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Richard Clewer	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)
July 2025	Broadband Provision in Wiltshire	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 4 June 2024, the select committee will receive an update in 12 months time.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Ashley O'Neill	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)
July 2025	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)
tbc 2024	MyWilts app potholes reporting functionality	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 20 March 2024 the committee will receive an update on the implementation of the new MyWilts app.	Mark Tucker (Director ICT)	Cllr Ashley O'Neill	

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details / purpose of report</b>	<b>Associate Director</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Report Author / Lead Officer</b>
tbc	LHFIG Review	To receive an update report on the implementation of the Local Highway & Footway Improvement Groups (LHFIG)	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Nick Holder	Dave Thomas (Head of Highways Asset Management & Commissioning)
tbc	Planning transformation programme	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 19 September 2023 the committee will receive updates on the planning transformation programme.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Nick Botterill	Nic Thomas (Director of Planning)
tbc	Private sector renewal strategy	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 8 November 2022, the select committee will receive an update report when appropriate.	Emma Legg (Director – Adult Social Care)	Cllr Phil Alford	Nicole Smith (Head of Housing)
tbc	Minerals & Waste Plan	As discussed at meeting with the Cabinet Member (18 Oct 2023) the select committee to receive a report on the plan.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Nick Botterill	Nic Thomas (Director of Planning)
tbc	Parking Strategy	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 6 December 2022 on the highways and transport portfolio.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Caroline Thomas	



<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details / purpose of report</b>	<b>Associate Director</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Report Author / Lead Officer</b>
tbc	Active Travel	As resolved at the select committee meeting on 14 June 2022, the committee will receive a further update. (Deferred from July 2023)	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Caroline Thomas	Spencer Drinkwater (Principal Transport & Development Manager)
tbc	Leisure Strategy	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 12 October 2023 on the leisure and libraries portfolio.	David Redfern (Director Leisure Culture and Communities)	Cllr Ian Blair Pilling	
tbc	Review of the Waste Delivery Plan	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 20 October 2023 on the leisure and libraries portfolio.	Sarah Valdus (Director – Environment)	Cllr Dominic Muns	Martin Litherland (Head of Service Waste Management)
tbc	Local Plan	As discussed at meeting with the Cabinet Member (18 Oct 2023) the select committee to receive a report on the plan after the consultation processing.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Nick Botterill	Nic Thomas (Director of Planning)
tbc	Housing Development Strategy	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 21 November on housing, development management and assets.	James Barra (Director Assets)	Cllr Phil Alford	

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details / purpose of report</b>	<b>Associate Director</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Report Author / Lead Officer</b>
tbc (late 2025)	Review of the Housing Allocations Policy	As recommended by the Housing Allocations Policy Task Group and agreed by the Executive 11 January 2024	Emma Legg (Director Adult Social Care)	Cllr Phil Alford	Nicole Smith (Head of Housing Migration & Resettlement)

<b>Information briefing</b>					
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details / purpose</b>	<b>Associate Director</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member</b>	
tbc	Environment Act 2021	To receive a (series of) briefing regarding the implications of the Environment Act.			