

## Environment Select Committee

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### MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2022 AT KENNET COMMITTEE ROOM.

#### Present:

Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman), Cllr Bob Jones MBE (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mel Jacob, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Charles McGrath, Cllr Dr Nick Murry, Cllr Bill Parks, Cllr Iain Wallis, Cllr Derek Walters, Cllr James Sheppard and Cllr Ricky Rogers (Substitute)

#### Also Present:

Cllr Nick Botterill and Cllr Dr Mark McClelland

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#### 93 Election of Chairman 2022/23

Nominations were sought for a Chairman for the forthcoming year. On the nomination of Councillor Bill Parks seconded by Councillor Dr Brian Mathew, it was,

##### **Resolved:**

**To elect Councillor Jerry Kunkler as Chairman of the Environment Select Committee for the municipal year 2022-23.**

#### 94 Election of Vice-Chairman 2022/23

Nominations were sought for a Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year. On the nomination of Councillor Dr Brian Mathew seconded by Councillor Derek Walters, it was,

##### **Resolved:**

**To elect Councillor Bob Jones as Vice-Chairman of the Environment Select Committee for the municipal year 2022-23.**

#### 95 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Ian McLennan, Councillor Rich Rogers and Councillor Tony Jackson. Councillor McLennan arranged for Councillor Ricky Rogers to attend as a substitute.

#### 96 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2022 were presented for consideration. Councillor Derek Walters requested that a comment he had made about wind farms in response to the Climate Emergency Task Group Update be added to the minutes, and it was;

**Resolved:**

**To approve and sign as a true and correct record of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2022 with the addition of the comments regarding wind power.**

The Chairman noted that the requested visit to the Sands Farm Materials Recycling Facility, documented in the minutes of the previous meeting, needed to be delayed due to ongoing operational issues affecting the waste collection services. The Chairman also noted a delay to the visit the Hills waste management operation as it needed to clear a large backlog of material following the industrial action in March. Provisional dates between 4 and 15 July were being agreed with Hills and further information would be shared with Committee members in due course.

97 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

98 **Chairman's Announcements**

**Recent meetings**

The Chairman commented on meetings he had attended since the last Environment Select Committee meeting in March 2022. The Chairman had attended Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 22 March 2022 and 19 May 2022. The Chairman had received briefings on the following:

- 22 April 2022 - Allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) Fund
- 22 April 2022 - Proposed changes from CATG to LHFIFG
- 6 June 2022 - New Forest National Park Management Plan

In addition, on 19 May 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee received a report regarding proposed changes to how Overview & Scrutiny engages with financial, corporate and organisational matters. The Chairman drew the attention of the committee to the following points:

- Financial Planning Task Group's focus will remain on the council's overall financial position, but will also review, by exception, the financial implications of our biggest contracts.
- Select Committees will continue to focus on the service impacts of proposals, but retain their ability to query and flag any financial concerns they identify, and refer them to OS Management Committee for further investigation as appropriate.

99 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

100 **Update on the Wiltshire Towns Programme**

The update on the Wiltshire Towns Programme was delivered as a presentation, not a report, as set out in the agenda.

The item was introduced by Corporate Director Place, Parvis Khansari. He outlined that the Towns Programme had been in planning for some time but had been delayed by the Covid Grants Scheme. The Director stated that they were now able to roll out the Towns Programme.

Head of Economy and Regeneration, Victoria Moloney, delivered the presentation. This included points such as the importance of the retail sector in Wiltshire, the discussions with Town Councils and key stakeholders, the framework of the programme and existing projects.

Officers responded to a number of questions and comments from the Select Committee which included the following areas:

- Whether tourism could be promoted more due to the number of artefacts in Wiltshire. It was explained that the Government's Tourism Recovery Programme scheduled a four year return to normal and that work was being done with Visit Wiltshire off that basis. There would be a focus on structural changes to the marketability and sustainability of tourism in Wiltshire.
- The link between the Towns Programme and other council policies, like active travel. It was clarified that officers were linking to other work groups and ensuring that they met shared aims where possible.
- That the Market Towns Forum would be returning after the pause due to the pandemic. It was outlined that the model may change a bit, moving away from briefings and more towards exercise and discussion. Meetings taking on a specialism focus were also being considered to group similar towns; however officers would not want to restrict who the towns can have discussions with.
- Work being undertaken in Chippenham with the Town Council to understand their priorities and action plan in a similar exercise to the Future Highstreets programmes in Salisbury and Trowbridge. In response to questions the Head of Economy and Regeneration stated that she was happy to ensure that Neighbourhood Plan connects with that. The officer also highlighted that there was a balance to be struck between helping businesses survive in the short term and supporting them to become sustainable looking towards the future.
- There was cooperation and support from other departments within Wiltshire Council and the Economy and Regeneration department would be engaging more going forwards.
- The effectiveness of publicly supported one-off events, for example in Salisbury.
- The next steps of the programme, starting with the creation of an activity generation plan with workshops and advice to support Town Councils, then actioning the plans with funding. Existing business support organisations would be utilised to ensure businesses can

access funding. There was an awareness of potential capacity issues, which were being looked into.

- Concerns over limitation of existing projects to dress up town centres and lack of flexibility to fit support to the specific area due to differing needs. It was clarified that the existing contract was unfortunately a set framework, but that this was not the preferred model going forwards and feedback on what is required by different towns was welcome.
- How the apps would be achieved. It was explained that there would be some automation to pull through events from trusted sources. In terms of the Heritage App that was in the earlier stages and would have community exercises to feed into its development. There was a focus on local voices as a positive factor impacting tourism.
- Differences between issues facing towns, the officer explained that plans for similar settlements were being trialled. The funding would be based on employment and retail numbers, with the focus on the people behind the businesses. The broad range of settlements considered under the Towns Programme was also highlighted.
- The Vacant Units Fund to assist people in finding a location for their business.
- It was clarified that where there are existing organisations in place working to support and improve towns, the Towns Programme would seek to work with those and not attempt to overwrite or replace.
- How best to achieve positive relationships with landlords, such as by being able to demonstrate value of supporting the programmes and present a compelling argument for partnership.
- Air quality and increasing interest in active travel tourism as well as the potential for quick wins, such as air quality benches. However it was also raised that there would need to be a balance between issues that the Towns Programme would tackle.
- Tree planting in towns was being looked at, with some successful projects proceeding.

The committee thanked the Head of Economy and Regeneration for her excellent presentation.

**Resolved,**

**That the select committee,**

- 1. Note the progress on the Wiltshire Towns Fund to date**
- 2. Receive a further update, on progress with the delivery of the programme, in 12 months' time.**

## 101 **Bus Strategy/Bus Improvement Plan**

The Cabinet Member Transport Waste Street Scene and Flooding, Councillor Dr Mark McClelland introduced the report which covered a challenging year in passenger transport. The Cabinet Member outlined that the numbers had

recovered a bit but were still 70/80% of the level prior to the pandemic. The government had extended the Bus Recovery Grant but Passenger Transport still faced issues such as driver shortages and fuel price rises. The committee was also informed that Wiltshire Council had missed out on the latest funding round from DfT but would use the work for future bids. Head of Service Passenger Transport, Jason Salter, clarified that the work would be updated every six months and would use the feedback from the DfT since the report was published.

The Cabinet Member and Head of Service Passenger Transport then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Whether there was an improvement on shortage of drivers impacting services. It was clarified that there was an improvement, but a number of drivers continued to leave the market leading to bus companies running reduced services and unable to expand.
- The importance of buses to the night time economy, for both punters and workers, and coordination between bus and train services.
- Integrated transport and how best to utilise and publicise that.
- It was clarified that Wiltshire Council had received £671,000 just at the start of the pandemic to enhance the bus service throughout the county. However due to the impact of the pandemic it was the money had to be used to support services that were going to cease as opposed to introducing new schemes.
- The issue of reliability of buses as a deterrent for increased use. It was explained that the bus industry recognised that and that within S106 money there was an allocation to improve public transport, although the driver shortage remained an issue.
- Demand Response Transport and consideration of different models of public transport provision. It was explained that an app would be trialled for that in the Pewsey area, but driver shortage remained an issue in expanding services. It was stated that DRT was seen as part of long term strategic planning in Passenger Transport.

**Resolved:**

**That the select committee,**

- 1. Notes the outcome of our Bus Service Improvement Plan funding bid, that we have made an Enhanced Partnership and that we are seeking alternative Funding Streams.**
- 2. Notes that we are progressing work on implementing our successful Rural Mobility Fund bid.**
- 3. Notes that we have committed our Supported Bus Services Fund to secure routes that would otherwise have ceased to run.**

4. **Notes that we are contributing to the development of Local Transport Plan 4.**
5. **Notes that costs related to the passenger transport sector continue to rise significantly, contributed to by the lack of available drivers.**
6. **Notes that passenger numbers are only at around 75% of pre covid levels in Wiltshire.**
7. **Receive a further update, at a date to be determined, about progressing the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Enhanced Partnership.**

## 102 **Active Travel**

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member Transport Waste Street Scene and Flooding, Councillor Dr Mark McClelland who stated Wiltshire Council's ambition for more active travel and highlighted the existing schemes.

The following points were addressed by the Cabinet Member and officers:

- Wiltshire Council was not awarded any grant funding within tranche three but would be submitting for future rounds of funding.
- That officers met with cycling groups, but early engagement was especially important.
- The LCWIPs were going to consultation shortly and would then sit within the local transport plan.
- The best way to communicate about the schemes to ensure that it is clear that money is not diverted from other areas of Wiltshire Council but comes from specific national grants.
- The need for updated maps and complete cycle routes. Officers clarified that connected cycle routes were the long-term plan but required more funding to deliver.
- The need for multiple approaches to support active travel using a combination of speed limit reduction, cycle paths, training riders to be more confident on the roads. Officers clarified that whilst speed assessments to lower the speed limit could take time they were necessary as changes to the speed limit had to be enforceable.
- The need for better data on the rights of way network.
- How to avoid landowners blocking cycle routes. Officers outlined that they were looking at longer term leases.
- Bike charging for electric bikes, it was clarified that consultation would begin on a scheme in Salisbury.
- Officers clarified that night working for when road works were required for new active travel schemes was often not an option as it would take a much longer period of time to complete the works.

- The Cabinet Member agreed to write to the secretary of state regarding a national overview of the active travel routes developing across the country.
- That there was no current data on the by ways or immediate plans to collect it as resources would need to be diverted.

**Resolved:**

**That the select committee,**

- 1. Welcomes the work being undertaken on active travel and the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP).**
- 2. Notes the establishment of the Active Travel Steering Group.**
- 3. Recognises the potential for increased active travel through the development of a strategy in connection with the development of LTP4.**
- 4. Ask the Cabinet member to write to the Secretary of State to encourage the development of a national approach to cycle routes and joining up routes across local authority boundaries.**
- 5. Receives a further update on active travel in 12 months' time.**

**103 Climate Emergency Task Group**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Task Group, who provided an update on the work of the Climate Emergency Task Group since March 2022. The Chairman outlined that the Task Group had met with the Woodland Trust and Avon Needs Trees, as well as British Army Sustainable Briefing.

In response to questions in was clarified that Wiltshire Council was looking at where best it could place trees, solar farms and wind farms. It was stated that Wiltshire Council was engaging with network distributors to ensure adequate grid capacity for more solar farms. The Chairman of the Task Group also explained that Ash dieback was being monitored when the impact of new tree planting was considered. The difficulty in converting Task Group work to policy was also raised.

The Chairman of the Task Group stated that they would be happy to start a conversation surrounding the use of biogas and the potential to integrate that with collection of food waste.

The Committee thanked the Task Group for all their work.

Councillor Wallis left the meeting at 12:50.

**Resolved:**

**That the committee,**

- 1. With the commencement of the 2022/23 Council year, re-appoints the Climate Emergency task group and the membership listed in the report.**
- 2. Notes the update on the Task Group activity provided above.**
- 3. Notes the activity of the Task Group (June 2021/June 2022)**
- 4. Notes the Task Group's draft forward work plan and that bio-gas and the Local Transport Plan are added to the plan**

104 **Forward Work Programme**

**Resolved:**

**To approve the Forward Work Programme, subject to any additional items agreed by Committee at today's meeting.**

105 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

106 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Environment Select Committee will take place at 10:30am on 13 July 2022.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.54 pm)

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## Environment Select Committee

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### MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2022 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

#### Present:

Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman), Cllr Bob Jones MBE (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Mel Jacob, Cllr Dr Nick Murry, Cllr Bill Parks, Cllr Rich Rogers, Cllr Iain Wallis, Cllr Derek Walters, Cllr James Sheppard and Cllr Stewart Palmen (Substitute)

#### Also Present:

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cllr Kevin Daley, Cllr Dr Mark McClelland, Cllr Tamara Reay and Cllr Graham Wright

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#### 82 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Charles McGrath and Cllr Dr Brian Mathew.

Cllr Stewart Palmen substituted for Cllr Dr Brian Mathew.

#### 83 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

The minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 12th January 2022 were approved and signed.

#### 84 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 85 Chairman's Announcements

Recent meetings

The Chairman commented on meetings he had attended since the last Environment Select Committee meeting in January 2022. The Chairman had attended Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 25 January & 8 February 2022. The Chairman and the Vice Chairman received a briefing on 1 March on an impending Cabinet Member decision for approval to form an Enhanced Partnership and Scheme with local bus operators as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

86 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

87 **Recycling**

The report was introduced by Cllr Dr Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member Transport Waste Street Scene and Flooding. He firstly expressed his disappointment with the bin strike and how it had overshadowed good news about the new collection rounds resulting in savings and improved recycling rate leading to more income from recycled materials.

Martin Litherland, Head of Waste Management, summarised the key parts of the report. This included the new mixed dry recycling scheme introduced in 2020 and the strong performance of the waste and recycling services during the pandemic, despite increased pressure on the service. Future plans for the service included proposed battery recycling scheme and collection of small electrical items as a response to an increase in the number of waste fires. In response to the Environment Act 2021 there are plans for a deposit return scheme, weekly food waste collection and free of charge garden waste collection.

Questions and comments on the report followed which included the following points:

- Contamination of recycling materials and how to reduce it. Contamination is measured by the service and a video of the recycling plants and how they work is being considered to improve the understanding of how to correctly recycle. Councillors also noted the importance of education in schools and suggested signage on bin lids to improve recycling habits.
- That plant performance is monitored, and recirculation of material would be commencing soon with the aim to improve performance. As well as this the separation discs would be replaced to reduce gaps and catch more small items to improve efficiency.
- Waste miles and how best to measure them was looked at closely and factored in when looking at contracts.
- Food waste and the changes needed in Wiltshire due to the Environment Act 2021. Officers clarified that most food waste currently goes to produce energy at the Westbury plant. As a result, there would be a need to assess the impact on removing food waste from the waste stream and consider the optimum time for food waste collection to be added.
- The role of waste vehicles in lowering Wiltshire Council's carbon emission. Officers explained that they were considering the most appropriate time to decarbonise the waste fleet, bearing in mind the importance of efficiency and reliability. A hybrid approach could be taken with EV for local collections and different options for longer distances. It was highlighted that the service had managed to reduce the number of waste vehicles from 149 to 121.

- Cllr Tony Jackson paid tribute to the outstanding work of the waste team. He also drew attention to the Warminster biogas facility and questioned whether it could be used in a pilot scheme for food waste collection. Officers were unsure of a trial as such but would keep discussion open.
- The implications for Wiltshire Council of introducing free garden waste collections. Figures on what is currently spent and what is currently earned from garden waste were requested.
- Whether the improved recycling income was sustainable or likely to drop back to pre-2020 levels. Officers predicted that it would not return to pre-pandemic levels and that the Environment Act 2021 should maintain good prices, though forecasts take account of some degradation.

Resolved:

That the Committee,

- a) Note the findings of the report, particularly in relation to the impacts of the Covid pandemic on waste service performance since the implementation of a new kerbside recycling scheme.
- b) Note the actions planned to help reduce the contamination of kerbside collected Mixed Dry Recycling.
- c) Note the future developments that may arise under the Environment Act 2021.
- d) In upcoming updates receive information on communication strategies; the emerging future waste collection plans and their impacts including costs and the overall carbon emissions of recycling.
- e) At a future convenient time visit the Materials Recycling Facility (MFR) at Calne.

## 88 **Grass Cutting Policy 2022/23**

The report was introduced by Cllr Dr Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member Transport Waste Street Scene and Flooding. He emphasized the need for balance between areas requiring a lot of trimming and areas to facilitate growth and wildflowers.

Adrian Hampton, Head of Highway Operations, outlined the key points covered in the report. This included that the main highways cut would be in August but that reviews would take place throughout. He gave examples of Local Councils such as Pewsey, Devizes and Salisbury that now run their own grass cutting arrangements as part of Wiltshire Council's drive to enable local communities to set their own priorities. He explained that to maintain wildflower verges the cut and collect process that is needed produces a bit more carbon, so there is sometimes a compromise between biodiversity and carbon reduction. The main focus of the report was to manage the right land in the right way.

Officers responded to a number of questions and comments from the Select Committee which included the following areas:

- The junction at Knook joining the A36 from B390 was raised as an area that had been reported multiple times as needing reactive cutting to improve visibility. It was clarified by Officers that this area was maintained by National Highways and the reports were passed on to them to action.
- Cllr Parks thanked officers for the report but raised concerns about rural verges on narrow country roads and what the financial implications were for highways service plan to manage them. It was explained that there would be financial implications but tracking the exact change in cost was not possible right now due to the change in contractor and change in traffic management costs.
- The possibility for Parish Councils to buy highways services through CATG's to cut verges more on the rural roads. The Head of Highway Operations advised caution over top up services due to a need to understand the implications of extra work on carbon emissions.
- The frequency of hedge cutting if fast growth causes issues. It was clarified that hedges are cut more than once a year if highways flag it as a safety issue. In terms of footpaths, rights of way are a reactive service and respond to reports through the app.
- Details of how the service delegation works with Town Council's taking on responsibility for the grass cutting service on their land, not including highway land.
- Calls for improved engagement with Parish Councils, specifically in rural areas where the cutting of verges can have an impact on safety for pedestrians.
- Whether there was a way to prevent double paying for maintenance of green spaces as some end up paying precept and costs for a management company. Officers clarified that this related more to planning but that they would pass on those comments.

Resolved:

That the committee:

- a) Note the grass cutting arrangements for 2022 and the background to the provision.
- b) When receiving future updates that they include information on engagement with local communities, rural parish roadside grass cutting and the overall carbon impacts and costs.

## 89 **Climate Emergency Task Group**

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Task Group, who provided an update on the work of the Climate Emergency Task Group since January 2022. The Task Group welcomes the Climate Strategy and urged

that it should be a green thread that runs through all council decision making. It was also stated that the Task Group await further detail on the delivery of the strategy and that they have raised the issue about county farms.

An update was requested on the bulk buy solar panels scheme to make it cheaper for individuals to fit solar panels on their homes. It was explained that the programme had been approved but was progressing slower than expected due to mixed feedback from other councils that adopted it. These issues have been raised with the provider and it is expected that a few thousand households would engage with the scheme. Cllr Dr Nick Murry suggested the council work to try to help public engage with reliable installers.

There was a query over the lack of provision in the budget to replace trees removed due to ash dieback. This was suggested as something for the Cabinet Member for Climate Change to explore.

It was stated that onshore wind was the cheapest source of electricity and that there was no mention of how Wiltshire would promote implementation of it in the Green/Blue Strategy. In response to this query it was clarified that it had not yet been possible to commission a report on wind power in Wiltshire for a contractor to be appointed due to high demand. However, the intention was for this to be done as soon as possible.

Resolved:

That the committee,

- a) Note the update on the Task Group activity provided.
- b) Note the Task Group's draft forward work plan.

90 **Forward Work Programme**

Resolved:

- a) To approve the Forward Work Programme, subject to any additional items agreed by Committee at today's meeting

91 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

92 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Environment Select Committee will take place at 10.30am on 14 June 2022.

(Duration of meeting: 10.35 am - 12.16 pm)

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# Wiltshire Towns Programme

Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council

Parvis Khansari, Corporate Director for Place

Victoria Moloney, Head of Economy and  
Regeneration

# Wiltshire Towns Programme

- Town centres have faced a number of concurrent challenges over the previous years, including:
  - Impact of Covid-19 and related shifts in shopping patterns
  - a historic reliance on a shrinking retail offer which is vulnerable to changing consumer habits such as opportunities for online shopping and out of town retail
  - long term empty units/high levels of occupant turnover and a shrinking retail offer driven by the rise in on-line shopping; absentee landlords; mixed quality redevelopment and conversions into living space; and, in some instances, problems of anti-social behaviour.



# Wiltshire Towns Programme

- Retail supports approximately 20,000 jobs in Wiltshire and is a top 3 sector by employment and specialisation. This does not include services, leisure (including food and drink), or tourism businesses which are located on the high street and are also affected.
- After the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, one study judged that close to half of Britain's retail businesses carried a significant risk of failure.
- Following an initial rise in spending in Q1 2022, retail spend fell 35% in April. This was balanced by an increase in leisure spending.

In light of this challenge and recognising the contribution of these sectors to Wiltshire's economy, Wiltshire Council allocated £1M a year between 2021-2025 to support activity on the high street, providing meaningful support to grow businesses, support employment and transform Wiltshire's high streets to meet the needs of the local community.

# Wiltshire Towns Programme

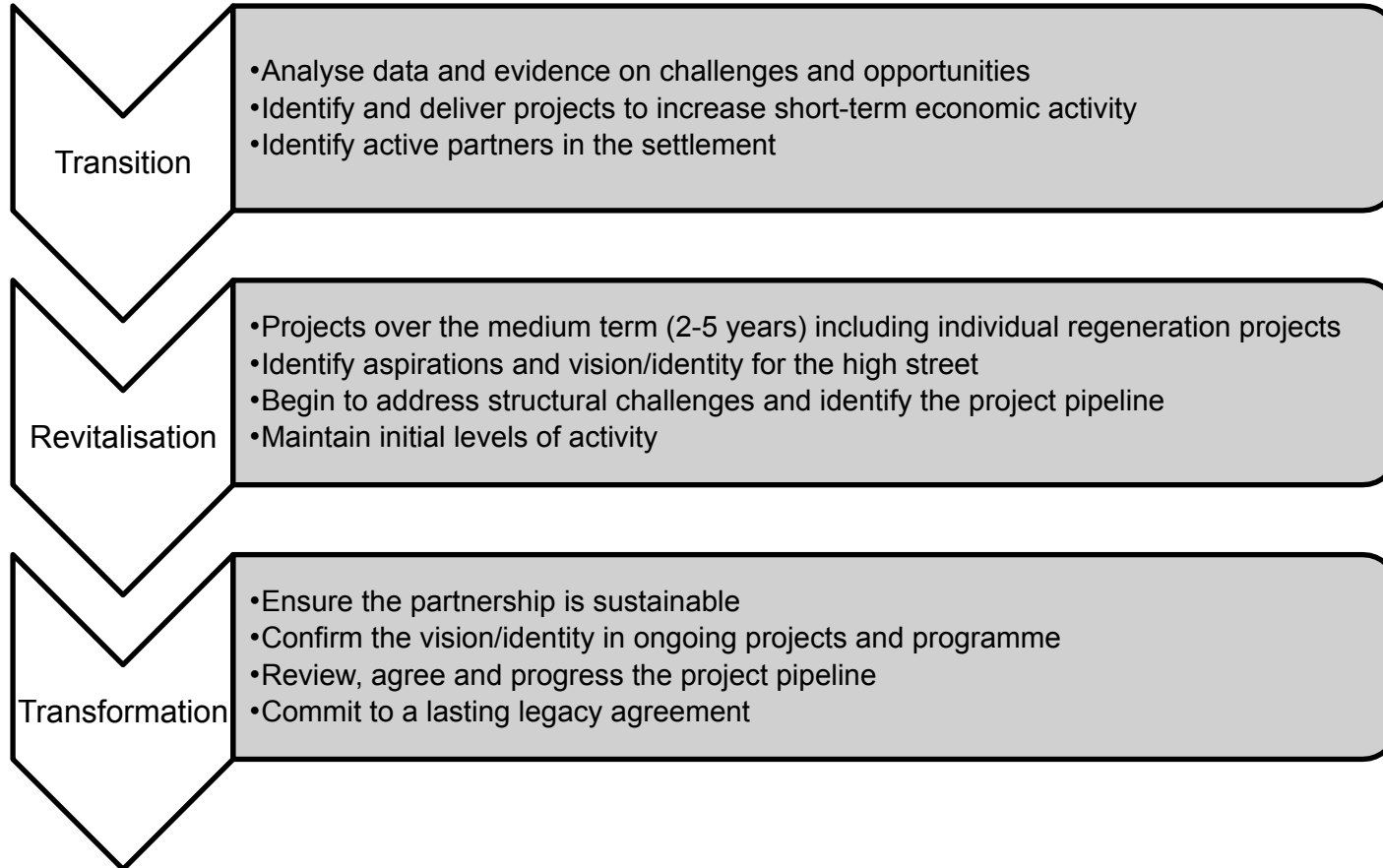
*The Institute of Place Management identified 25 factors that most influence the vitality and viability of the high street*

*How much influence each factor has on the vitality and viability of town centres/high streets? In other words, **what matters?***

*How much local control there is over each factor? In other words, **what can you do about it?***

TH	Management	Experience	Retailers	Physical	Programme
IPM 25 Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience</li> <li>Appearance</li> <li>Necessities</li> <li>Walking</li> <li>Accessible</li> <li>Safety/Crime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity</li> <li>Place Marketing</li> <li>Markets</li> <li>Experience</li> <li>Appearance</li> <li>Non-Retail Offer</li> <li>Retail Offer</li> <li>Innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail Offer</li> <li>Anchors</li> <li>Merchandise</li> <li>Attractiveness</li> <li>Barriers to Entry</li> <li>Adaptivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Necessities</li> <li>Walking</li> <li>Accessible</li> <li>Recreational</li> <li>Space</li> <li>Liveable</li> <li>Redevelopment</li> <li>Functionality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision and Strategy</li> <li>Data and Analysis</li> <li>Place Management</li> <li>Networks and Partnerships</li> <li>Functionality</li> </ul>
AIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring the existing aspects of the town centre are well managed and maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driving a quality experience for residents and visitors</li> <li>Delivering new experiences to drive consistent footfall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting small-medium Wiltshire businesses to access the high street and its opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reduce vacant or space in town centres and deliver sustainable mixed-use centres which attract residents and visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build an understanding of local high streets, and developing sustainable models of place leadership</li> </ul>

# Wiltshire Towns Programme



# Wiltshire Towns Programme

## **Transition Stage: Existing Projects**

- a) Footfall Data: working with town councils to provide data
- b) Town Centre Spaces: short-term support to create appealing high streets, through provision of facilities, green spaces, street dressing.
- c) Digital Training: Fewer than 20% of Wiltshire's high street businesses have a social media presence. This provides training for businesses on creating and maintaining a digital presence.
- d) What's on in Wiltshire App: Officers are working to develop the What's on in Wiltshire App, a platform to bring together events and activities that will attract visitors into one convenient location.

# Wiltshire Towns Programme

## Proposals

Vibrant Wiltshire	Funding to support new businesses opening on the high street and existing businesses to upgrade their offer and become more resilient.	500,000
Business Support	Support for businesses in receipt of grants to access good advice and ensure business plans are robust and tested	50,000
What's on in Wiltshire App	Events app with supporting marketing activity to support residents re-accessing the high street	80,000
Heritage App expansion	Increasing performance of heritage app and expanding county wide	80,000
Town Centre Strategy	Work to develop masterplans and projects for principle settlements	50,000
Pipeline Development	Funding to support developing a pipeline of projects to support further bidding activity, with particular consideration for workspaces	150,000
Staffing, monitoring and evidence	Resource to support the programme across the number of settlements and manage projects, monitor progress and develop evidence on what works	100,000
Generating Activity Programme	Fund for TCs to bid into to create activity on the high streets, looking at events, marketing and promotion, supporting new businesses and increasing the access for the local community.	300,000
Wiltshire Visitor Promotion	Campaign to promote Wiltshire as a destination to our residents and catchment area and bring footfall back to the high street	150,000

## Generating Activity

To increase capacity and support immediate work to encourage people back to the high street, officers are working with town councils to develop and fund activity generation plans to:

- Drive footfall and spend to town centres
- Reach a wider catchment, with a focus on new audiences and inclusion
- Support an increased retail, community and social function that encourages visits during the day and evening.
- Support perception of the town centre as a place that will create a convenient and attractive destination for both local residents and visitors
- Extend the visitor season for town centres – providing support through quieter periods.

# Generating Activity

Town	Shop Numbers	Employment Measure	Total Generating Activity and Current Activity Fund
Salisbury	452	45075	45000
Trowbridge	283	21925	45000
Chippenham	244	21340	45000
Devizes	212	11450	30000
Warminster	191	19485	30000
Melksham	127	11295	30000
Marlborough	160	10095	27000
Calne	90	5250	20000
Corsham	81	9145	20000
Westbury	80	4490	20000
Royal Wootton Bassett	109	8145	17000
Bradford on Avon	87	7175	17000
Amesbury	82	8885	17000
Malmesbury	79	8340	17000
Pewsey	59	3130	10000
Cricklade	29	1610	5000
Tidworth	29	2043*	5000
Tisbury	26	1831*	5000
Ludgershall	23	1620*	5000
Mere	23	1285	5000
Wilton	21	2465	5000
Downton	12	845*	5000

# Vibrant Wiltshire Programme

The programme will support the development of currently underutilised or vacant spaces located in Wiltshire market town centres. The focus will be on bringing new types of uses into the area, strengthening and diversifying the current High Street offer.

## **High Street Business Start Up Grant**

- This grant will provide funding to businesses looking to open in a currently empty retail unit in the high streets. The aim of the grant is to bring empty retail premises back into use and the grant range is anticipated at £2,500 to a maximum of £10,000. Exceptional circumstances will be considered.

## **Business Diversification Grant**

- It is important for a high street business to be able to adapt and diversify to survive. This grant will be available to high street businesses and is anticipated to provide a range of funding from £500 to £10,000. Applicants will need to set out a clear proposal for support.

Successful applicants will also have access to additional business support to assist them in developing their plans and becoming future proof



## Visitor Promotion

What's on in Wiltshire App: Officers are working to develop the What's on in Wiltshire App, a platform to bring together events and activities that will attract visitors into one convenient location.

Heritage App Trails: provision of free heritage trails to drive footfall

In addition, the programme will support a promotion campaign that focuses on generating additional visits and spend to our towns and high streets, and restoring consumer confidence. The campaign would focus on these priorities:

- To encourage locals to visit Wiltshire towns and high streets.
- To drive additional visitors and spend, achieving a ROI
- To improve sector productivity by increasing visits to our towns and high streets during key off season and shoulder season periods.
- To provide a campaign platform that Wiltshire tourism and hospitality businesses can get involved with via a 'Residents Campaign' initiative, that builds longer-term demand.

# Pipeline Development

Where high streets are most significantly exposed to a decline in retail, it will be necessary to plan for and encourage multi-use spaces that maintain community facilities while being commercially viable. Under the Towns Programme, officers will work to develop plans and projects where sensible, based on a combination of challenge and opportunity.

In addition, to successfully bring in capital funding for transformative schemes, a project pipeline is required that would allow officers to adapt to short bidding windows and any forthcoming opportunities. Under the banner of the Wiltshire Towns Programme, we propose providing support to develop the pipeline, including outline design, costings and resourcing for green-book business case development.

# Future Strategies and Workstreams

Officers will consider a number of workstreams that will link the high street to its wider economic or spatial impact including:

- a) Public Art and the High Street
- b) Design and the High Street
- c) A Wiltshire Food and Drink Strategy (including the Wiltshire Marque and shop local/low carbon produce)
- d) Evening and Night-time Economy
- e) Workspaces on the High Street

These strategies will be progressed as projects emerge.

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