

Cabinet

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2022 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Richard Clewer (Chairman), Cllr Laura Mayes (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Jane Davies, Cllr Phil Alford, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Nick Botterill and Cllr Dr Mark McClelland

Also Present:

Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Dominic Muns, Cllr Tamara Reay, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Martin Smith, Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr David Vigar, Cllr Suzanne Wickham, Cllr Graham Wright, Cllr Nick Holder, Cllr Derek Walters and Cllr Christopher Williams

104 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Ashley O'Neill.

105 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 was presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022.

106 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

107 **Leader's announcements**

The Leader made the following announcements:

- [Cost of Living](#)
- Homes for Ukraine

108 **Public participation and Questions from Councillors**

General questions were submitted from the following members of public:

- Mel Boyle – Barrow farm, Chippenham, Future Chippenham and UK100

- Margaret Willmot – Land north of Netherhampton Road, Salisbury
- Dr Gill Anlezark – Responses to consultations
- Dr Celia Beckett – Local Plan Review
- Colin Gale – Local Highway and Footpath Improvement Group and Community Infrastructure Levy
- Susan McGill – Council finances
- Steve Perry – Transport Schemes for Chippenham
- Dr Jimmy Walker – Safety for cyclists in Salisbury, parking issues in Salisbury and the surrounding area

Cllr Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing explained that 66 questions had received written responses which were published on the Council's website prior to the meeting in the agenda supplement, which can be accessed [here](#).

Supplementary questions were asked by:

- Dr Celia Beckett, Chair of Hilperton Area Action Group asked a supplementary question about the Local Plan and the type of information that can be shared with public.
- Colin Gale asked a supplementary question about Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group funding process compared to CIL funding.
- Steve Perry asked a supplementary question about road options in Chippenham and press coverage in the Wiltshire Gazette and Herald.

Cabinet members responded verbally at the meeting, details of which can be accessed at the recording of the meeting [here](#).

In addition to the above public questions, a number of questions and comments were received from:

- Cllr Martin Smith – Air Quality in Wiltshire
- Cllr Ian Thorn – Parking Policy for Blue Badge Holders
- Cllr David Vigar – Homes for Ukraine programme
- Cllr Nick Murry – Traffic studies, active travel schemes and use of Community Infrastructure Levy funding,

The above questions and comments received written responses which were published on the Council's website prior to the meeting in the agenda supplement, which can be accessed [here](#).

Supplementary questions were asked as follows:

- Cllr Martin Smith – additional questions about air quality in Wiltshire
- Cllr David Vigar – Homes for Ukraine

Cabinet members responded verbally at the meeting, details of which can be accessed at the recording of the meeting [here](#).

109 Financial Year 2022/23 - Quarter Two Revenue Budget Monitoring

Cllr Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning presented the report setting out the revenue forecast position for 2022/23 as at 30 September 2022 for the second quarter budget monitoring period.

Cllr Botterill explained that the quarter 2 position provided a clearer picture in relation to the forecasts available for quarter 1. The current forecast indicated an underlying overspend for the year of £13.401m with one off mitigations in place resulting in a net overspend for the year of £3.755m. No proposals were made for this variance however, more certain forecasts would be provided in quarter 3 leading into the final year end position and set out recommendations for any adverse or favourable variance, with the fall back being the utilisation of the reserve held for inflation pressures being experienced during 2022/23.

Cllr Ian Thorn paid tribute to the work undertaken by officers and the Financial Planning Task Group/Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, and commented on the following:

- Reductions in the Education and Skills budget. In response, officers signposted to paragraphs 32-34 of the report, which detailed the reasons for reductions, which in the main was the reduction, since quarter one, in the forecast overspend on SEND Transport.
- Overspends on the Planning budget. In response, The Leader, Cllr Botterill and officers explained that this was due to the need for agency staff to cover existing vacancies, and increased costs associated with Planning Appeals.
- Holding vacancies as a driver to reduce costs and the impact on the delivery of services. In response, officers reported that a number of services were holding vacancies open in order to balance budgets, and this varied across the organisation. Agency staff were also employed where necessary to provide services.
- The sustainability of a Cabinet member being responsible for two major portfolio areas. In response, Cllr Botterill confirmed that he had successfully dealt with multiple layers of complexity in the past and noted that his portfolio areas were sustainable in the long term, especially with the assistance and support of other Cabinet members and officers.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Cllr Pip Ridout, Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group reported that the Committee and Task Group met on the 25th of November 2022 to consider the report. Cllr Pip Ridout reported that Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would be reviewing future Cabinet reports with input from the Financial Planning Task Group. They recognised that, being halfway through the financial year, that this is an improving position from Q1 in terms of the net overspend 2022/23. They explored the reasons for this decrease and were reassured that revenue budgets were being managed effectively. They also considered:

- The savings forecasts and whether there is confidence that the savings will be delivered
- How increased demand, in some areas, will mean calling upon the Latent Demand Reserve
- Whether the Council were using agency staff and how those costs were being managed
- How the close management of some contracts were holding down costs
- Why any additional funding raised would be used to support corporate costs
- How income forecasts next year will be improved by taking into account current trends

There were no significant concerns raised by the Management Committee and Task Group and they will continue to monitor the progress of the revenue budget.

Cabinet also noted that the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny recently provided training for Overview and Scrutiny members on effective finance scrutiny. The training was well received, and key messages were:

- Financial uncertainty at a national and global level placed greater responsibility on Overview and Scrutiny to scrutinise the council's financial health and planning regime
- Though we have a well-run council, it is vital not to become complacent. "Councils are only three decisions away from financial peril" and the experiences of some other councils that told themselves everything was fine bear this out.
- The need to avoid 'line-by-line' scrutiny and instead focus on scrutinising the robustness of the council's budgeting process and on looking a year or more ahead to ensure the council is prepared for the challenges ahead.

Cllr Gavin Grant commented on the windfall payment from BT in the delivery of fibre broadband and how else it could have been utilised, and a request for additional detail about the alternative approaches to bridge current shortfalls in required savings of £3.290m. In response, the Leader, Cllr Botterill and officers noted that applying the windfall payment to the transformation reserve, as detailed in the report, was a prudent decision, especially as the first option for the Council is to balance its budget. The windfall payment would help to deliver efficiencies in the medium and long term. All proposals would be considered to manage the need for savings and if necessary, these would be considered by Cabinet to achieve a balanced budget.

Resolved:

Cabinet approves:

- a) the transfer of an additional £0.826m from the Transformation Reserve.
- b) the transfer from the Latent Demand reserve, as detailed in the reserve paragraphs, the timing and value of which span this and the next financial year.
- c) the transfer of the £3.330m of BT Gainshare monies to the Transformation Reserve.

Cabinet notes:

- a) the current revenue budget is forecast to overspend by £3.755m by the end of the financial year.
- b) the current forecast savings delivery performance for the year.

Reason for Decision:

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

To inform Cabinet on the forecast revenue financial position of the Council for the financial year 2022/23 as at quarter 2 (30 September 2022), including delivery of approved savings for the year.

110 Financial Year 2022/23 - Quarter Two Capital Budget Monitoring

Cllr Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning presented the report setting out the Capital Programme for 2022/23 as at 30 September 2022 for the second quarter budget monitoring period.

Cllr Botterill explained that the report included movements from July 2022 and sets out how the programme is forecast to be financed. It provided updates on significant schemes that are planned to be delivered and those that have been reprofiled to future years.

Cllr Ian Thorn commented on the following:

- The reprofiling of the Property Carbon Reduction Programme and Generation and Public Sector Decarbonisation projects and whether these could be prioritised. In response, the Leader indicated that the issue with a number of projects is the speed of delivery.
- Clarification in relation to the transformation review of libraries. In response, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling commented on improvements in the services being offered and how libraries were evolving into local community hubs. He referred to recent reviews successfully undertaken at Market Lavington and Melksham.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Cllr Pip Ridout, Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group reported that the Management Committee and Task Group met on the 25th of November 2022 to consider the report. They noted the reprogramming of capital spend into the following financial year and welcome the focus on re-profiling the forecast spend to bring into in line with actual spend. They considered how the Q2 updates do not include committed spend and therefore understated and the impacts on revenue spend and borrowing. They thanked the Cabinet member and officers for continuing to work on improving the capital budget monitoring.

Cllr Gavin Grant commented on the reprofiling of £78m of capital schemes to future years and the remaining £191m in the Capital Programme for 2022/23. In response, officers explained that Capital Schemes were captured within a new process, which influenced their reprofiling and the new process of assessing schemes would be applied to reviewing the remaining capital schemes. Cllr Grant also asked for clarity about the inclusion of £5m funding for Stone Circle Companies. In response, officers explained that this was part of the £10.8m loan to the Stone Circle Companies.

Cllr Tony Jackson asked about repairs to Warminster squash courts. In response, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling agreed to discuss this further after the meeting.

Resolved:

Cabinet notes:

- a) the additional budgets added to the programme of £1.748m under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- b) the movement of £78.816m of budgets into future years under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- c) the removal of £0.451m from the capital programme under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- d) budget movements between schemes;**
- e) the revised 2022/23 Capital Programme as at Quarter 2 of £191.908m and**
- f) the capital spend as at 30 September of £47.454m**

Cabinet approves:

- a) the movement of £0.800m budget from the centrally held Corporate budget to Depot & Office Strategy to cover inflationary increases for Hindon Stagger Salt Depot**

- b) to recommend to Full Council to approve an increase in the Capital Enhancement budget of £0.516m to enable the refurbishment of an existing Family Contact Centre to be funded by increased capital receipts.**

Reason for Decision:

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

To inform Cabinet on the financial position of the Council on the 2022/23 capital programme as at Quarter 2 (30 September 2022)

111 **Financial Year 2022/23 - Mid Year Treasury Management Review**

Cllr Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning presented the report which provided information about the performance of the Council up to 30 September 2022 against the parameters set out in the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23.

The Cabinet noted the following:

- The Council has not taken out any new PWLB borrowing during 2022/23
- Projected underspend in respect of interest receivable/payable of £1.265m, against budget
- No breaches of any of the Council's performance indicators for the period
- The Council has breached the counterparty monetary limit for an investment held with Handelsbanken (35 day notice account).

Cllr Ian Thorn commented on the current level of borrowing compared to the maximum amount of borrowing allowed. In response, officers raised no concerns about the level of borrowing, approved by Full Council in February 2022.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Cllr Pip Ridout, Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group reported that the Management Committee and Task Group met on the 25 November to consider the report. It was acknowledged that managing the council's investments and borrowing is now more challenging, and the assumptions behind not borrowing further in this financial year and the risks involved in borrowing to lend to Stone Circle were understood. They did not raise any significant concerns.

Cllr Gavin Grant commented on the Council borrowing £80m in March 2022 and asked for the detail of interest rates at that time in comparison to current rates and the impact on the Council. In response, officers explained that there were 4 amounts of £20m borrowed at interest rates of 1.95%, 1.98%, and 2 at 2%. This is in comparison to the prevailing rate of 3.5%. It was noted that the Council was now investing surplus cash at a more favourable rate.

Cllr Dr Brian Mathew and Cllr Clare Cape commented on their concerns in relation to the Council investing £10m in Qatar. The Leader and Cllr Botterill explained that investment decisions had a level of risk and decisions are taken about investments within those clear risk defined boundaries which are annually approved by Full Council under the Treasury Management Strategy.

Resolved:

- a) that the contents of this report are in line with the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23.**
- b) the performance of the Council's investments and borrowings against the parameters set out in the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23.**

Reason for Decision:

To give members an opportunity to consider the performance of the Council in the period to 30 September 2022 against the parameters set out in the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23.

112 **Q2 Corporate Performance and Risk**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing presented a report which provided an update on performance and emerging targets against the stated missions in the Council's Business Plan 2022-32 for quarter two, along with a summary of strategic risk.

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

Cllr Ian Thorn commented on the following:

- Concerns about the Educational Gap: Phonics and KS4 performance targets. In response, the Leader also stated his concern about the performance of the two targets. There was a need to understand the context and the plans to address these targets, through further detailed scrutiny by the appropriate Select Committee. The Deputy Leader confirmed that representatives of the Council attended the Wiltshire Learning Alliance and reported that expertise from well performing schools is shared to help improve the performance of all Wiltshire schools.

- The regional cluster target was welcomed.
- Voter turnout in Neighbourhood Plan Referendums and Unitary By-Elections and how the Council could influence turnout figures. In response, officers indicated that it was always the wish for more voter engagement although Council influence in these areas was limited, however officers would reflect further on those areas where the Council had an influence.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that due to the Management Committee meeting earlier in November, it hadn't been able to review the report at a formal meeting. However, he confirmed that the Select Committee Chairs had all considered the indicators within their committee's remit.

Cllr Gavin Grant commented on the 'We have the Right Housing' measure and the figures in relation to the increase in the number of people on the housing register and delivery of affordable housing. In response, Cabinet Members explained that the process for joining the Housing registered had been improved.

Resolved:

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

Reasons for decision:

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

For the first time, targets are now starting to be included. The Strategic Risk Summary captures and monitors significant risks facing the Council, in relation to in-service risks facing individual areas and in managing its business across the authority.

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

113 Socially Responsible Procurement Policy

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning presented a report detailing proposals to support the introduction and adoption of a Socially Responsible Procurement Policy in the Council's procurement process.

Cllr Botterill explained that the Policy is in response to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 which came into force on 31 January 2013 and requires public authorities to have regard to economic, social, and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts; and for connected purposes. It was noted that consideration of the Act is embedded in the Council's procurement and commissioning processes and the Policy enabled the Council to adopt a formal approach to social value. The report indicated that the Policy aimed to provide an overarching framework and unified approach and identified five priorities that represented the Council's values and beliefs. This would ensure the Council maximises the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being that it delivers through its procurement activity.

Cllr Ian Thorn welcomed the initiative and commented on the following:

- Referenced a recent discussion by Cabinet on procurement process for a New Term Highways contract and asked how the objectives of the Policy were factored into the Council's ambitions and impacting decisions made. In response, officers described the processes leading to discussions on these matters and the use of toolkits suitable to the procurement situation which led to appropriate decisions based on the category of spend.
- A concern that the new approach would lend itself towards favouring larger organisations, with local and smaller organisation unable to bid for contracts due to their inability to demonstrate ethical procurement impacts. In response, officers referred to the Wiltshire first approach detailed in the appendix to the report and the prioritisation of local organisations.
- Referred to the five priorities and how they would be employed during the procurement process. In response, the Leader and officers confirmed that all the priorities held equal importance and how they were employed would depend on the type of contract being considered.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Management Committee considered the draft Policy at its meeting on 15th November 2022 and supported the introduction of a Policy to help drive social value into the council's procurement activities. The Management Committee pointed out that there was no information within the policy to specifically outline benefits, timescales, requirements, how the council would buy better or how the potential impact would be measured. There was also some concern raised that the policy might limit the choice of who the Council could outsource to if the policy was over-prescriptive. Given this, the Committee resolved to receive a further item on implementation of the Policy in the New Year, specifically looking at how the impacts of the Policy will be measured and evaluated and the Socially Responsible Procurement Toolkits.

Cllr Dr Brian Mathew commented on the time difference between the Act coming into force and the adoption of the Policy. In response, Cllr Botterill confirmed that consideration of the Act has been embedded in the Council's

procurement and commissioning processes for many years and the Policy enables a formal approach to social value.

Cllr Clare Cape referred to the interpretation of the Policy aims as detailed in the report. In response, Officers confirmed that the Policy is overarching and would have regard to the aims during the procurement process.

Resolved:

- a) Support the introduction and adoption of a Socially Responsible Procurement Policy in our procurement processes**
- b) Endorse the five key priorities identified in the Policy, which include:**
 - **A Wiltshire first approach**
 - **Local training and employment**
 - **Partners in the community**
 - **Green economy and sustainable environment**
 - **Ethical procurement and well-being focus**
- c) Note the proposed governance arrangements within Appendix 1**
- d) Endorse that the Director of Procurement, in consultation with the Corporate Director Resources/Deputy Chief Executive, can make appropriate amendments to ensure smooth implementation of the policy in line with changes in business needs**
- e) Agree that the Portfolio Holder for Finance – Commissioning and Procurement acts as the Council’s social value champion**
- f) Note the development of a Social Responsibility Toolkit to support both suppliers and commissioners to maximise the delivery of social value**
- g) Endorse awareness of the Council’s social responsibility objectives to ensure that suppliers and contractors are clear about what we want them to deliver**
- h) Support the development and implementation of a Socially Responsible Procurement Delivery Plan for inclusion in tender documents so that suppliers, providers, and contractors can set out how they will support implementation of the policy**
- i) Endorse the adoption of a social value impact reporting system to measure and evaluate the qualitative and quantitative benefits delivered through procurement activity**

Reason for Decision:

The policy is in response to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 which came into force on 31 January 2013 and requires public authorities to have regard to economic, social, and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts; and for connected purposes. Consideration to the Act is embedded in our procurement and commissioning processes at Wiltshire Council, however, this policy will ensure a formal approach to social value.

The policy places a particular focus on the three National Procurement Policy drivers; creating new business, new jobs, and new skills; tackling climate change and reducing waste; improving supplier diversity, innovation, and resilience.

By delivering this Socially Responsible Procurement Policy, Wiltshire Council intends to meet its requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and the National Procurement Policy Statement by setting out Wiltshire Council's overarching framework for the delivery of the policy, taking into consideration the wider associated legislative and policy driven requirements and importantly, delivery of the Council's own commitments set out in the Business Plan Principles 2022 - 2032.

Wiltshire Council's vision is to create strong communities. Social Value is how we, the council, in collaboration with our supply chain partners, can actively add benefits to our community and measure the positive impacts on the wellbeing of our economic, social and environmental activities, in order for the county of Wiltshire to thrive and prosper.

This policy ensures that Wiltshire Council maximises the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being that it delivers through its procurement activity.

114 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 1.25 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Stuart Figini of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718221, e-mail stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk

Briefing for Cabinet – 29 November 2022

Cost of Living Update

As detailed in the update to Full Council in October, we are focusing on three principal areas to meet the Cost of Living crisis, namely support for: Businesses, Our Staff and the People in our communities.

As stated in previous updates, this is a rapidly moving situation. For example, the government announced yesterday that under the expanded ECO+ scheme, people whose homes have an energy efficiency rating of D or below, and who have not yet been supported by an existing scheme, will be able to get help whether they are in private, rented or social housing.

The government has [published proposals](#) for consultation with a view to having the appropriate legislation in place after Christmas to allow the scheme to start in the Spring 2023.

Information and Support

To help staff, the public and partners to keep up to date with the latest support, the Council has created an extensive list of resources on our [dedicated Cost of Living page](#). This includes links to information for sources of national and local support.

Additionally, officers have proactively worked with colleagues and community groups, to create an [interactive community directory](#) that allows people find out what warm spaces and community food providers are in their immediate local area.

The directory has been created using information collected by the council to establish what support is already up and running in the county and will be regularly updated.

The directory also includes information on what additional facilities and services are provided at each location with the aim of ensuring people feel welcome and enable more people to overcome barriers to them accessing information and support.

Wiltshire Council libraries will themselves officially become warm spaces for people this winter, providing a warm and friendly welcome to support anyone who needs help. In addition, our dedicated friendly library staff will be working with Warm and Safe Wiltshire and The Rural Communities Energy Support Network to assist residents seeking basic energy advice and make referrals to experienced energy advisors in all but its smallest libraries.

All libraries will be able to signpost people to community partners and agencies that can support people through the rising cost of living. Libraries will also be collection points for Warm Packs, which includes a hot water bottle and blanket, for anyone who would benefit from some free essentials. This is an extension of the crucial role that our librarians already play in helping people access information and services.

As well as existing customer contact channels, the Council is planning how to use the existing Wellbeing Hub line to help people find the right support and will be further promoting this soon.

Support for Businesses and Schools

The Enterprise Network (set up by the Council) is hosting a series of webinars designed to provide start up and small businesses with the right help, support and advice to guide them through the current economic challenges. You can find out more about the Take TEN series and to join the webinars or watch the recordings at their website: www.theenterprisenetwork.co.uk/support/cost-of-doing-business

The Council is working with the Federation of Small Businesses, the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Business West, local Chambers of Commerce and other business representative groups, to ensure available advice and support is well communicated and aligned. In addition, the Council is continually monitoring the impact of current cost pressures to identify particular sectors or businesses at risk.

The Council has been notified of a further support scheme for residents and businesses that use alternative fuels, such as heating oil. Non-domestic (business) premises will be included, and work is underway to identify where this support may be required.

As part of the carbon reduction work, School Leaders are being encouraged to sign up to the [Energy Sparks](#) programme which can help them get on top of their energy bills and find ways to reduce costs. We are also supporting council-maintained schools with a grant to access their half hourly smart meter data for a year to give them the data they need to make informed choices. This is on top of existing financial and energy efficiency advice we providing to our educational partners

Support for Staff

As well as ensuring staff have access to wellbeing and support resources, including new Mental Health Advocate scheme, the Council will review policies and processes as appropriate, and will consider how staff can be flexibly deployed to meet emerging need.

Targeted Support in the Community

The Council has been administering the Government's national Household Support Grant Scheme (HSF) designed to support those most in need across England, to help with the significantly rising living costs in the period up to the end of March 2023. The money can be used to support households in the most need who would otherwise struggle with energy, food and water bills, particularly those who may not be eligible for the other support that the Government has recently made available but who are nevertheless in need.

The council was awarded £2,728,656 in total and has worked with partner agencies to allocate the money and ensure it gets to those who need it most. Payments began in October and are continuing to be made. People do not need to apply to Wiltshire Council as those eligible will be identified and contacted.

The Council was also award £877,050 for a discretionary energy rebate scheme that ran until November. The number of applications to the scheme was lower than

anticipated, just under 1200 awards were made originally, so officers proactively identified a further 9500+ low-income pensioners who had received the original energy rebate scheme but had not received any additional support e.g. from the HSF. 6500 of these pensioners will be paid £70 direct, as we have their bank account details, and the remaining will receive a credit in their council tax accounts.

The Council has been notified of a further support scheme for residents and businesses that use alternative fuels. We await further details on how this will be implemented.

Wiltshire Council has also provided funding to support Wiltshire Community Foundation and partners to deliver the Surviving Winter campaign which provides practical and financial help for people living in fuel poverty. From 1 November, people who are in receipt of means-tested benefit and are aged over 65 or suffer from a long-term health condition, may be eligible for assistance including fuel vouchers and a range of advice. For more information about eligibility and the help available contact Warm and Safe Wiltshire on 0800 038 5722 email warmandsafe@cse.org.uk

Funding is also being provided to Age UK Wiltshire for provision and delivery of hot meals to isolated elderly residents who are unable to meet the cost of this service themselves; for further information contact Age UK Community Meals on 01793 279606

Support during the holidays

Wiltshire Council will be delivering its successful Holiday Activity and Food (FUEL) programme again this winter. The programme provides children eligible for benefits related free school meals, refugees, those currently in the care system and those referred by a professional service with access to free high quality activities, nutritious meals and food education during the school holidays.

The FUEL programme is delivered with funding from the Department for Education and will run from Monday 19 December – Thursday 22 December. Eligible families will be able to sign up by following the application link listed on our website: [FUEL programme - Wiltshire Council](#)

The application window is open now until December 11, so please sign up early to avoid disappointment.

The camps provide the opportunity for all participants to take part in a range of enriching activities including structured sports, arts and crafts, STEM activities, laser tag, circus skills, robotics and much more. Participants also will take part in nutritional workshops and be provided with a hot lunch each day.

Two FUEL Christmas camps specifically for young people with special educational needs and/or a disability will also place at Springfield Community Campus in Corsham and at Five Rivers Health and Wellbeing Centre in Salisbury and individuals will be able to take part in activities such as dodgeball, dance, new age kurling, cricket and boccia. Further information and sign-up details are also available

on the FUEL webpage. There is more on the council's YouTube page: [HAF summer case study 2022 - YouTube](#)

For further information about the Holiday Activity and Food Programme in Wiltshire please email fuelprogramme@wiltshire.gov.uk

Working with Partners

As part of our continuing work with our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners, Wiltshire Council is helping to promote the Wiltshire Community Foundation's [Cost of Living Appeal](#) through our networks.

Building on the work of previous appeals where people who can afford to are encouraged to donate any surplus winter fuel allowances, the wider community is being asked to help generate vital funds to help grassroots voluntary groups and charities in Swindon and Wiltshire who are supporting families and individuals in the face of escalating rent, food and energy prices.

The money raised through this joint appeal will fund a new grants programme to support projects which are keeping people fed and warm and provide additional practical support and advice to help people cope throughout this period of great hardship

You can donate to the appeal [here](#) or call the donation line on 01380 738989 from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

This opportunity came out of dialogue with leaders in the sector, and we will continue to meet with our partners, including through the Wiltshire Public Service Board and the Military Civil Integration Board, to share information with the aim of coordinating our efforts.