AGENDA

Meeting: **Cabinet**

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

Date: **Tuesday 10 October 2023**

Time: **10.00 am**

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Stuart Figini of Democratic Services, County Hall, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718221 or email committee@wiltshire.gov.uk

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

Membership:

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

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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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Part I

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

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

1   **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

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

To confirm as a true and correct record and sign the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 September 2023.

3   **Declarations of Interest**

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

4   **Leader's Announcements**

To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.

5   **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

This meeting is open to the public, who may ask a question or make a statement. Questions may also be asked by Members of the Council.

Written notice of questions or statements should be submitted to Stuart Figini of Democratic Services at the address committee@wiltshire.gov.uk by 12.00 noon on Wednesday 4 October 2023.

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

6   **Update on the Council's Response to the Climate Emergency and revised Environmental Policy** *(Pages 23 - 68)*

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To receive a report from the Corporate Director, Place.

7   **Wiltshire Council Annual Adoption Service: 2022-2023 Year End Report** *(Pages 69 - 78)*

To receive a report from the Chief Executive.

8   **Commissioning of Carers Support Services** *(Pages 79 - 86)*

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To receive a report from the Chief Executive.

9   **District Specialist Centres and Portage** *(Pages 87 - 134)*

O—

To receive a report from the Chief Executive.

10   **Urgent Items**

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

Part II

Items during consideration of which it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed

None

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

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

Also Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Richard Budden, Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tamara Reay, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Rich Rogers and Cllr Graham Wright

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64 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Nick Holder and Ashley O'Neill.

65 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023 were presented for consideration, and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.

66 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

67 **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made an announcement on council work relating to the cost of living, which would be provided on the council's website.

68 **Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

Six questions had been received for meeting, which were provided in the agenda supplement together with written responses.

Cllr Richard Budden asked a supplementary question welcoming that no RAAC (Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) had been identified through reviews undertaken of the council's estate, and of any updates to the council's risk register.

It was advised that four maintained schools were being surveyed in the coming week for additional checks, and further desktop reviews of the wider asset base to identify any potential areas for assessment. Inclusion within the risk register

would depend on whether there was in fact any identified risk to monitor and mitigate arising from those assessments.

69   Financial Year 2023/24 - Quarter One Revenue Budget Monitoring

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management, and Strategic Planning, presented a report which provided details of the revenue budget monitoring forecast for the first quarter of the financial year 2023/24. This was based on the position at the end of June 2023, and also provided an update on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget gap for the financial year 2024-24 and beyond.

It was stated that Wiltshire's revenue budget position compared favourably with neighbouring and comparator authorities, with a current net overspend of only £0.311m, a variance which could be managed within the financial year. In respect of savings targets only 8% were not currently forecast to be achieved by the end of the year.

Cabinet noted the update and the proposals contained within the report, including several recommendations for budget changes requiring Full Council approval. The pressures on all councils due to cost escalations particularly in Adult and Children's social care, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transport, were noted, with thanks expressed to officers for their prudent management of the financial position.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, endorsed the comments of the Cabinet Member, and expressed no significant concerns with the quarter one update, with the Task Group to focus on the savings position further in quarter two. Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, welcomed the report and update and sought reassurance the council was not overconfident in its position. It was stated that the Cabinet and officers ensured all assessments were realistic and appropriate, and residents could be assured that Wiltshire Council was not in a severe position financially.

Cllr Gordon King, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, congratulated the Cabinet and management team for a good start financially with the quarter one update. He drew attention to ongoing risks such as prevalence of high inflation, vacancy rates among key workers, and undeliverable savings and how these could be managed.

Cllr Botterill drew attention to the report details including £2m having been set aside from earmarked reserves to mitigate inflationary increases, and if this continued further mitigation would be considered. He emphasised the unlikely savings were included within departmental budgets, and so fully accounted for if they were not achieved.

The Leader noted some savings had not been able to be delivered due to legislative changes. He also noted a risk regarding the high needs block override, for provision of children with Special Educational Needs, which was a

national issue. The spending was through the Department for Education not the council, and formed the majority of the overspend for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and as an accounting issue that deficit if counted as part of the council's debt would be more significant, but that the council was taking preventative measures where it could.

Cllr Jon Hubbard offered congratulations on the council's financial position as compared to many other authorities. In relation to Children's Services, he highlighted the early help on issues which was the council's focus in recent years, and the importance of continuing that and taking it forward both to improve outcomes and reduce cost pressures by tacking matters in a preventative manner.

Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children, Education, and Skills, stated that the evidence from council projects showed early intervention worked to reduce pressures on the services and delivered better outcomes, and the Cabinet would continue that focus.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

Cabinet recommended to Full Council:
a) **To move the £0.382m income budget associated with saving from increased retained share of funding from Business Rates for Council Assets from Assets to the Business Rates Retention Scheme in the Funding section; and**

b) **To increase the Government Grants budget in Funding to recognise the additional Market Sustainability Improvement Fund of £2.773m and increase the net budget in Adults by the same amount.**

   These 2 proposals would increase the Council's Net Budget to £469.029m.

Cabinet Approved:
c) **The transfer of £0.772m of Ukrainian funding from the Home Office to be used to support pupils in Wiltshire schools until 31 March 2024;**

d) **the transfer of Education and Skills reserves totalling £0.656m to reflect the estimated usage in year especially where schemes are based on the academic year including joint commissioning with the ICB; and**

e) **the transfer of Families and Children's reserves totalling £0.328m to reflect the estimated usage in year, these all relate to grant funded schemes which straddle more than one financial year.**

Cabinet Noted:
f) **The current revenue budget is forecast to overspend by£0.311m by the end of the financial year;**

g) The current forecast savings delivery performance for the year; and,

h) The updated MTFS position and revised gap of £7.344mby 2025/26.

<u>Reasons for Decision</u>
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 2023/24 as at quarter one (30 June 2023), including delivery of approved savings for the year.

To inform Cabinet on the current position for the setting of the 2024/25 budget, it begins the process and focus for setting plans and resources for providing the services and support that will be essential for the continued delivery of a financially sustainable council and effective, quality public services for the residents of Wiltshire.

Following the vote Cllr King sought additional clarification that the transfer of £0.772m of Ukrainian funding from the Home Office to be used to support pupils in Wiltshire schools until 31 March 2024 was to be used specifically to support Ukrainian children as required by the Home Office grant. The Leader confirmed that was the case.

70   **Financial Year 2023/24 - Quarter One Capital Budget Monitoring**

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management, and Strategic Planning, presented a report which set out the Capital Programme for 2023/24 as at 30 June 2023 for the first quarterly budget monitoring period of the financial year. It included budget movements, revisions to the programme, and forecasts for how the programme would be financed.

It was stated that the current annual Capital Programme forecast as a result of adjustments and reprogramming stood at £189.376m, with total capital expenditure for the first quarter being approximately 14% at £26.047m. There was some impact from delays to implementation of the Evolve programme providing a new Enterprise Resource Planning system for the council, which was due to go live in November 2023. It was anticipated expenditure would increase in future quarters.

Cllr Botterill also drew attention to proposals to invest an additional £10m investment for Highways and Transport, as a result of using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding as part of the Trowbridge Leisure Centre project.

Cabinet noted the update and the proposals contained within the report. The Leader and Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding, provided additional details on the additional funding for Highways in preventative and repair works, as well as Area Boards being able to comment on areas for improvement works once a planned timetable was prepared.
Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, stated that the spending profile for the Capital Programme had improved in recent years but

could be improved further, and welcomed the use of CIL funding and associated increased investment in Highways.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, encouraged any information circulated to Area Boards to be at early stage to enable meaningful feedback. Cllr Thomas stated that Area Boards would be presented a planned schedule as soon as was practicable, noting it would not be a consultation, but the intent was to ensure local priorities received appropriate consideration.

Cllr Gordon King, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, welcomed improvements to the realistic estimates of capital expenditure, but raised concerns that only 14% had been expended in the first quarter. He supported the proposal for increased Highways investment and noted the scheduling of Area Board meetings across several months, for when it was time to circulate the proposed schedule of operations.

Cllr Jon Hubbard sought details of the forecast in relation to Education and Skills which was shown as £26.978m, and if this included money which was reprofiled or if such funds were deducted from the forecast. The Cabinet Member confirmed reprofiled funds were deducted, and referenced a full breakdown for the service area in Appendix B.

Cllr Hubbard asked about the proposed expansion to Abbeyfield School, which proposed to be delayed, and if it was currently at overcapacity. It was stated that in terms of trajectory it was anticipated it would still require expansion in future years, but not as soon, with reference to the School Places Strategy later on the agenda.

Cllr Hubbard also sought details on new education provision in the north of the county, for children unable to attend mainstream or specialist schools, listed as Alternative Provision, and if this would be an addition to the programme. It was confirmed this would be a separate project line in the quarter two report.

Cllr Clare Cape asked if the investment in Highways included maintenance of pavements. Cllr Thomas stated there was some funding through the Department for Transport to assist with that work, and she would seek further information. Together with the Leader she noted the reduced effectiveness of weedkillers, as well the environmental impact if spraying was done routinely.

Cllr Botterill also clarified an addition to the proposals as set out in the report, to approve the application for or receipt of grant income as set out in the appendices.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

Cabinet recommended to Full Council:
a) **The allocation of a £4.4m budget for Education provision in the North of the County to be funded by a mix of capital receipts, earmarked reserves and £1.7m of new borrowing.**

Cabinet Approved:

b) **The allocation of £0.500m budget to be funded by CIL funding for the River Park programme;**

c) **The allocation of £10m CIL funding for Trowbridge Leisure Centre to replace borrowing, with no change in total budget allocation;**

d) **The allocation of £10m budget to Highways and Transport for increased investment to be funded from borrowing released from Trowbridge Leisure Centre; and**

e) **The virement of budget on the Salisbury Central Car Park & Maltings of £0.250m from Millstream Approach Bridge to Coach Park Redevelopment Riverside;**

f) **The grant income applied for and/or received as set out in Appendix C and Appendix D.**

Cabinet Noted:

g) **The additional budgets added to the programme of £17.639m under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**

h) **The removals of £0.396m budget in line with 2023/24 Grant award under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**

i) **The budgets brought forward from future years into the 2023/24 programme totalling £13.876m under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**

j) **The budgets reprogrammed from 2023/24 into future years totalling £69.998m under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**

k) **Budget Movements between Schemes;**

l) **The revised 2023/24 Capital Programme forecast as at quarter one of £189.376m;**

m) **The capital spend as of 30 June 2023 of £26.047m; and**

n) **The change in approach for Stone Circle Housing Company to set MRP aside from 2023/24 for the capital loan.**

Reasons 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 2023/24 capital programme as at quarter one (30 June 2023).

71   **Performance and Risk Report 2023-24 Q1**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council, presented a report updating on the progress against the stated missions in the Council's Business Plan using measures of performance available at the end of the first quarter of the financial year, and risks as available at the time of the report's production.

Cllr Clewer highlighted some areas of concern such as the length of time to undertake Education, Health, & Care Plans, due to the increase in numbers required. He also noted issues with pothole repairs, but had been assured the latest data showed the council was on track, and he would raise through the Integrated Care System concerns relating to NHS Health checks. Other issues raised including addressing demands for temporary accommodation, and in relation to the risk register the high cost of social care.

Cabinet noted the update and the details contained within the report, including an increase in the percentage of children fostered, a reduction in the percentage of 16-17 year-olds not in employment, education, or training, data on affordable housing, and educational outcomes for those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) being above the national average.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, stated the report would be examined in detail at the next meeting of his committee.

Cllr Gordon King, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, stated that the measures and presentation of the report had improved from the first iterations, but it was still sometimes difficult to highlight which parts were significant. In his role as Vice-Chairman of Health Select Committee he shared concerns about delivery of NHS health checks, and the committee was seeking more data from the NHS.

Cllr Richard Budden welcomed the report and urged the use of external benchmarking wherever possible.

Cllr Jon Hubbard sought detail on what pressure or influence could be applied to infrastructure organisations regarding upgrade of electric charging points. The Leader noted references within the Local Plan to charging points, but the accepted the difficulty of providing on street parking charging infrastructure was an issue.

Cllr Clare Cape sought details on data relating to bus journeys, and if there was any impact relating to reduced ticket prices. Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding, stated it was something the council discussed with partner bus companies, and she would inquire further.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

Cabinet agreed and noted:

1) **The updates and outturns against the measures and activities mapped against the Council's priorities;**

2) **The Strategic Risk Summary**

   Reason
   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.

   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.

   Note: A break was then taken from 1145-1150

72 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Charges for Long Term Empty Properties**

   Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management, and Strategic Planning, presented a report detailing proposals to consult on a number of options for a local, means tested Council Tax Reduction scheme to those of working age on a low or fixed income.

   It was explained that following a consultation a report would be considered at the December 2023 meeting of Cabinet.

   Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, commented on the proposals, noting the potential cost or increases in recoverable debts.

   Cllr Gordon King, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, supported consulting on the options within the report.

   It was then,

   Resolved:

   It was agreed:

1) **To delegate to the Director Finance, to go out to consultation on the proposals included in the report;**

2) **To approve an increase in the Council Tax premium charge levied on long term empty properties with effect from 1 April 2024.**

   Reason
   Since 2013 the council has operated two schemes to determine entitlement to Council Tax Reduction (CTR). The scheme for those of pensionable age is a

national scheme and mandated and applies 100% relief to those households. The scheme for those of working age is referred to as the local scheme as a scheme set by the council. Both the administration and the rules of the working age scheme have been heavily impacted by the roll out of Universal Credit which is managed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The local scheme was successfully launched in 2013 and at the time efforts were made to keep the scheme cost neutral. The result was that many working age households were expected to contribute toward their council tax for the first time. Whilst this approach was widely adopted by many local authorities, the impact of changes to the calculation of council tax to allow the inclusion of the Adult Care levy, the impact of Covid-19 and the current cost of living crisis was not anticipated and has resulted in more customers being unable to meet their council tax liability especially low-income households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction.

As a local scheme the council should review the scheme regularly to ensure it meets the priorities of the council and delivers an appropriate level of support for low-income households. Due to the impacts detailed above it is right that the council review the scheme and are required to consult on any changes recommended to the scheme. It is also proposed that changes are made to increase the premiums charged on long term empty properties and adopt the same approach as our neighbouring authorities.

73 **Planning Peer Review Report**

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management, and Strategic Planning, presented a report updating on the findings of the Local Government Association (LGA) Planning Service Peer Review, and setting out the initial response of officers to the recommendations.

It was stated the Peer Review had identified many positive aspects of the council's planning service, but had also identified a number of weaknesses and inefficiencies, including relating to administrative and committee arrangements which were still aligned to or relating to the pre 2009 district council arrangements. He stated some changes recommended would be taking place in the coming months, with others requiring further thought and preparation on the best response to those recommendations, but that change was needed.

The Leader commented that independent experts had provided evidence and reasoning that the set up and way of working within planning needed addressing, and that Members might find some changes challenging. He noted that only a very small proportion of planning decisions were determined by committee.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, on behalf of the Chairman of the Environment Select Committee, noted past scrutiny work involving planning committees in particular, and that the Environment Select Committee would be considering the Peer Review report at its next meeting.

Cllr Gordon King, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, highlighted the high technical knowledge within the planning service teams, but also agreed changes to administration and organisation were appropriate and necessary, fulfilling business plan and corporate objectives, and that five planning committees was not necessarily the most effective arrangement. He suggested improved training offers for town and parish councillors to provide guidance to them could be a useful objective.

Cllr Dr Brian Mathew agreed that the structures could be reformed to deliver greater efficiencies, though also stated some existing structures had strengths.

Cllr Pip Ridout stated she served on two planning committees and spoke to the Peer Review team, and supported many of their recommendations, as well as greater training for parishes.

Cllr Clare Cape highlighted comments in the Peer Review report on involving Members in the Local Plan process.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

It was agreed to note:

1) **The findings of the Peer Review, recognising the challenges that the service faces in order to create one of the best performing planning services in the country; and**

2) **The initial officer response to the recommendations.**

Reason
While it would not normally be necessary to report the findings of a peer review to Cabinet, as no formal decision needs to be made, given the nature of the issues raised, it is appropriate that Cabinet be given the opportunity to consider the Planning service peer review report's recommendations and the intended officer response.

74 **Procurement of Housing Related Support Contract**

Cllr Phil Alford, Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets, and Asset Transfer presented a report seeking delegated approval to proceed with a procurement exercise to re-commission housing related support services to meet the identified needs of single homeless young people and young parents.

It was explained support services reduced the need for temporary accommodation placements, noting Wiltshire currently had no one placed with Bed & Breakfasts, and that the recommissioned service would seek to better distribute the support provision across the county where it was most needed.

There were no other comments, and it was then,

Resolved:

That Cabinet approved:

1) **The commencement of re-commissioning of housing related support services ensuring that there is a balance of housing related support services provided across all customer groups which will reflect the up-to-date needs; and**

2) **To delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfer and the Cabinet Member for Finance to the award of contracts within the approved budget.**

Reason
Housing related support services provide valuable support to a range of customers who are in vulnerable situations and in need of support to enable them to live independently and maintain a tenancy. The existing contracts expire on 31 March 2024. In order to secure new contracts from 1 April 2024 it is necessary to commence a procurement exercise immediately.

75 **Recommissioning of Public Health Services in Primary Care**

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, FM, and Operational Assets, presented a report seeking approval of expenditure of Public Health grant monies over £1m over the five year duration of the Public Health Services in Primary Care contract.

It was explained the contract covered sexual health contraception services and NHS Health Checks, which were statutory requirements, and smoking cessation services. Payment under the contract would be on delivery, meaning if the service did not delivery there would be a financial saving, and a greater cost if over delivering. However, these were considered to be low risk looking at past data and performance.

Cllr Gordon King, as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, welcomed the focus on preventative services. As Vice-Chairman of the Health Select Committee, he stated he had received a briefing from officers and the Cabinet Member, and had indicated further information should be sought for their November meeting regarding NHS Health Checks and safe accommodation funding.

Cllr Clare Cape supported the proposals in the report, and noted there are many other screening programmes to catch diseases at an early stage, and if promoting Health Checks they may be an opportunity to encourage people to undertake other checks.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

That Cabinet approved:

1) **The commencement of a procurement process to commission these Public Health Services in Primary Care;**

2) **Budget spend of up to £4,645,000 over the 5-year duration of the contract;**

3) **To delegate authority to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets to take all necessary steps to commission Public Health Services in Primary Care.**

Reason

The current contract of these Public Health Services is due to expire 31 March 2024, therefore there is the need to recommission these services from 1 April 2024 to avoid any gap in service provision. This is of particular importance as these services have been paused at times during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is a statutory responsibility for Public Health to provide NHS Health Checks and Sexual health contraception services through the Public Health Grant.

Approval of the spend of Public Health grant monies allows for these statutory Public Health services, as well as additional Public Health recommended services to be commissioned and delivered for Wiltshire residents.

76 **Fleet Vehicle Replacement 2023/24 to 2025/26**

Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding, presented a report which recommended use of The Procurement Partnership Limited framework to procure light goods vehicles and specialist vehicles for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26, and to delegate authority to approve the award of contracts to the Director of Highways and Transport.

It was stated that the capital budget of £6.463m had been approved by Council , and the preferred engine type would be electric, unless there are feasibility or other appropriate reasons. Cllr Thomas explained the reasoning behind using the framework as set out in the report, to ensure the capital spend was maximised to support service needs.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, on behalf of the Chairman of the Environment Select Committee, noted the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Environment Select Committee had received a briefing on the proposals and were satisfied risks had been appropriately identified and mitigated.

Cllr Dr Brian Mathew raised whether in some instances methane powered vehicles could be an option. The Cabinet Member noted the report was about the procurement route, and future papers would come to Cabinet regarding Fleet Strategy and the staggering of the replacement programme.

Cllr Thomas also noted that due to delivery timescales for some vehicle types orders would need to be placed quite soon.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

That Cabinet approved:

1) **The use of The Procurement Partnership Limited (TPPL) framework to procure light goods vehicles and specialist vehicles for the period 2023/ 24 to 2025/26 up to a total value of £6.463m.**

2) **That the award of contracts for the vehicles to be delegated to the Director of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Street scene and Flooding.**

Reason
To award a vehicle purchasing contract to The Procurement Partnership Limited (TPPL) for the replacement of 118 vehicles for the period 2023/ 24 to 2025/ 26.

77 **School Places Strategy 2023-2027**

Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children, Education, and Skills, presented a report seeking approval the School Places Strategy.

It was explained that the fundamental aim was to provide places near to where children live, to meet parental preferences as far as possible, to locate schools at the heart of their communities, and to minimize travel to school distances. Details were provided on the number of schools in Wiltshire, the importance of rural school designation, declining birth rates and the associated impact, engagement with schools, and other matters.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chairman of the Children's Select Committee, stated his committee was content with the report. He also noted a comment received in feedback from a parish council raising a concern about secondary schools being asked to host satellite provision on behalf of Special Schools, and sought assurance the Cabinet agreed that such provision was a positive thing and encouraging attendance at mainstream schools was still the aim. Cllr Mayes confirmed it was.

Cllr Gordon King, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, sought details on replacement of school structures, and if this was done with future growth in mind. It was explained sometimes maintenance was required which necessitated replacement, but if expansion was needed the team looked at the data to identify and plan for this.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

That Cabinet approved the School Places Strategy 2023–2027.

Reason
To enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties to ensure sufficient school places and increase opportunities for parental choice.

78   **Domestic Abuse External Grant Allocation 2023-2025**

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, FM, and Operational Assets, presented a report seeking authority to endorse proposals for use against the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funding, to fulfil the functions of the statutory duty on Tier 1 local authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing in safe accommodation.

It was stated that at present the grant funding was only provided for two years up to 2025, which restricted long term planning. Cllr Blair-Pilling noted support for those suffering domestic abuse and dependents was not as straightforward as providing refuges and provided details of visits to support organisations and partners, including housing associations such as Greensquare, and additional planning relating to the military community. He stated the goal was to help people early on, and to prepare them to be able to move on independently and safely.

Cllr Gordon King, as Vice-Chairman of Health Select Committee, noted the difficulties with longer term planning as a result of the short-term nature of the grant funding, but expressed confidence in the officer team to manage issues.

Cllr Jon Hubbard sought details on the breakdown of costs for the grant proposals, asking whether any allowance had been made for inflation or salary rises. In response it was stated teams were working with providers on costs, and the funding was not in year and would be rolled over, however Cllr Hubbard raised concerns whether the planning was based on first year costs only.

Cllr Hubbard, noting his own work providing counselling for young people and mental health support, and the large impact on young people where there was domestic abuse, encouraged the council to invest or work with local specialist organisations as much as possible, integrating the support that is available, or workers liaising with organisations that offer mental health support.

Cllr Blair-Pilling and officers noted the funding could not address the totality of effects arising from domestic abuse and not all organisations could be involved as a result, however the roles and delivery options would be looked at.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was then,

Resolved:

That Cabinet approved and agreed:

1)   **The £848,998 allocated from the DLUHC fund for 2023-24 (yr 3), and £865,016 for 2024-25 (yr 4) and endorsed the proposals for allocating the grant.**

2)   **To roll any surplus funding to an earmarked reserve.**

3)   **That any further decisions relating to the distribution of this grant are delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Director of Public Health.**

Reason
Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 details the statutory responsibilities of the Local Authority functions relating to the 'provision of support for all victims of domestic abuse and their children, regardless of their relevant protected characteristics, within relevant accommodation' (as defined by the Regulations).

To support the implementation of new duties in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Wiltshire distributed its allocated year 1 funding (£830,051) and year 2 funding (£832,348) to further strengthen the local support offer to victims and their families fleeing domestic abuse and living in safe accommodation. The decision making was underpinned from evidence from the local health needs assessment, an independent review of services including a map and gap, as well as service-user engagement and multi-agency learning.

In December 2022 the government committed a further £127 million to be allocated to local authorities for year three, and £129 million for year four of its continued commitment to invest in domestic abuse services. Wiltshire have been allocated £848,998 for 2023-24 (year 3 funding), and £865,016 for 2024-25 (year 4 funding).

To maximise the opportunities of this additional funding, enhancing the local support offer available to victims and their families in Wiltshire experiencing domestic abuse, Wiltshire requires Cabinet approval to endorse the proposals for the allocation of this funding across the local system.

The proposals seek to build on the learning from projects invested as a result of the funding received in year's one and two and allows for continuation where results have been indicative of positive engagement and improved outcomes for those using the interventions and in receipt of support. Using the funding on the proposals included in the paper will enable valuable work to continue and ensure there are no gaps in service delivery, which could place vulnerable service users at risk.

79   **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 1.10 pm)

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

These minutes were published on 15 September 2023 and came into effect on 23 September 2023.

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

Leader's Announcement
Cost of Living Update
Cabinet – 12 September 2023

Introduction

Cost of Living issues remain a concern for the Council, our partners and the communities we serve. I am proud of the way we have worked, flexibly, bringing together different services and schemes to provide support. We don't know yet the exact nature of the ongoing challenges, nor the support that central government will provide, but I am confident that we will be able to respond quickly, as we have done before, to this changing environment.

Following on from the update I gave Cabinet before the summer, and before talking about the future, I wanted to highlight some of the work that has been undertaken over the last year, and crucially the impact that this has had on individuals:

- Warm & Safe Wiltshire

The Boiler fund project supported a family to replace an oil fuelled heating system that had broken where the family was in receipt of Universal Credit and Disability benefits. The replacement was crucial as the child was homeschooled, and the cold was impacting on the families mental and physical health. After the work was completed, the parent told officers:

''You have given us the best quality of life – I cannot thank you enough. The whole house is lovely and warm, we can completely relax and enjoy it. I didn't realise the impact it was having on my mental health, worry about my son'.

- Libraries

Colleagues in the Data & Insight team analysed feedback collected by Libraries staff to identify the key themes, including that:

Libraries has created a Warm and inviting atmosphere creating a positive customer experience, which could make it easier to access to information.

Gratitude for warm spaces and warm packs provision for the public.

- Boater and Traveller Winter Support Project

Public Health secured funding from the UK Shared prosperity fund and in partnership with Julian House identified boaters and travellers who needed urgent winter support at a time when there was no government funding to support this group. The fund allowed people to receive a mixture of fuel and food vouchers. The following testimony, given to officers, shows the impact it had on one family:

A single parent with a 17-month-old baby girl, they previously worked as a carer and were determined to return to work. They were able to find employment, however after paying for childcare and travel cost, they were only earning the equivalent of £3 per hour. The winter allowance helped them maintain this work over winter whilst providing a warm environment for them and their baby and enabled her to gain promotion.

Household Support Fund 2023-24

As reported previously to Cabinet in March, the Council has been allocated £5,457,313 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This next tranche of the Fund has been provided to support households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food, pay essential

utility bills or meet other essential living costs to help them with significantly rising living costs for the financial year 2023-24.

The Council has learnt a significant amount about how to best utilise this funding, and services across the council will be delivering those most in need to combat food and energy poverty. I am very pleased to say, the charities and the voluntary sector in the county have been successful in bidding for funds from the scheme, to enable them to deliver support to the homeless, older people and those facing domestic violence amongst others. This is a real example of partnership working at its best, and you can read more about [what schemes the HSF supports](#) on our webs.

Libraries and Warm Spaces

I am pleased to confirm that all of our libraries will continue to provide a warm welcome over the Autum and Winter and will be places where Warm Packs will be distributed from October onwards.

FUEL

You will no doubt have heard of the challenges are established FUEL programme faced when a provider pulled out shortly before the summer holidays. I commend the hard work of the officers involved to find alternative providers to ensure that children received healthy food and activities across the summer holidays.

EBSS Scheme

Officers have made the final payments under this government scheme. Stand ready to support the government should another scheme be available, and we hope to make this clear to our local MPs should the opportunity arise.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller & Boater Communities

Many in this community are not eligible for government schemes, with a most not meeting residency requirements event with recent expansions. I am, then, pleased to see that Public Health, working with outreach charity partners, will be providing fuel/food vouchers and energy saving advice from November.

For the future

I am pleased that officers who have been coordinating work, will continue to meet regularly to horizon scan and respond to future issues.

As well as the plans highlighted already, officers will be updating the community directory to ensure that local people can find warm spaces and food providers in their community. This should be updated in the next few weeks.

As part of the 1st tranche of the HSF programme, just over £100,000 has been invested in19 different food settings with the 2nd tranche opening around Christmas time with, approximately, another £100,000 remaining.

I was pleased to report to Cabinet previously that Area Boards had chosen to support schemes in their areas that addressed the Cost of Living issues in their area, and I hope that they will continue to do so.

I will, of course, keep the Cabinet updated.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

10 October 2023

Subject:	**Update on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency and revised Environment Policy**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Nick Holder - Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change**
Key Decision:	**Key**

Executive Summary

At its meeting held on 26 February 2019 Full Council resolved to acknowledge that 'there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030'. Cabinet subsequently committed to make the council carbon neutral by 2030. This report demonstrates that the council is on track to become carbon neutral by 2030.

A commitment was made to provide six-monthly progress updates on actions the council is taking to tackle the climate emergency in Wiltshire. This is the eighth progress report to Cabinet. Significant progress is reported against each of the seven Climate Strategy delivery themes and Appendix 2 sets out trends against key performance indicators (KPIs).

One year on from publishing the climate delivery plans, the KPIs show that the council is currently on track to meet its commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030, despite a post-pandemic rebound in emissions last financial year. This is due to tackling emissions from heating and powering buildings as this is the council's largest area of emissions.

Data for Wiltshire-wide emissions is reported nationally with a two-year lag, so it is not yet clear whether a similar trend will be seen, but existing data shows that county emissions are not reducing in line with our targets (based on our independent report on pathways to carbon neutrality). Transport is still the largest source of emissions in Wiltshire and not reducing significantly. It is a challenging area, but some good strides are being made, for example the Demand Responsive Transport service in Pewsey Vale.

Wiltshire Council continues to show leadership through tackling greenhouse emissions and mitigating other environmental impacts of its own operations. The proposed Environmental Policy (Appendix 1) sets out how the council does this.

It is a noteworthy achievement that the amount of renewable energy produced on the council estate has trebled in the last year from 550,000 kWh in 2021-22 to 1,745,060 kWh in 2022-23. This helps the council to be more self-sufficient in terms of electricity, reduces the council's energy bill and adds more renewables into the electricity system.

Although the council cannot influence all of the greenhouse emissions across the county, we publish KPIs to show the state of Wiltshire's progress, and continue to work with partner organisations to deliver the climate strategy.

This report demonstrates where the council is taking action to address or influence county-wide emissions. This includes working with regional and national organisations, and lobbying government for supportive policies and initiatives.

Proposals

That Cabinet Notes:

1) the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in May 2023, and notes the progress made against key indicators as well as areas of limited progress.

That Cabinet recommends that Full Council:

2) approves the updated Environmental Policy in Appendix 1 and adds it to Paragraph 1.2 of Part 3B of the Constitution for inclusion as part of the Policy Framework.

3) that future climate updates are received annually at its October meeting.

Reason for Proposals

1) To provide Cabinet with an update on actions taken in response to the climate emergency.

2) To ensure the council's Environmental Policy is up to date and has sufficient weight.

3) Moving to annual reporting would be in line with the annual publication of greenhouse gas data, mirror the reporting frequency of other local authorities and reduce the administrative burden on the climate team, enabling them to concentrate on project delivery.

Parvis Khansari
Corporate Director, Place

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

10 October 2023

Subject:	**Update on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency and revised Environment Policy**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Nick Holder - Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change**
Key Decision:	**Yes**

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the eighth progress update on actions taken in response to the climate emergency, update the council's Environmental Policy and propose moving to an annual reporting cycle.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The programme of work to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 will contribute to all four business plan priorities (2022-32) of:

   i) Empowered People
   ii) Resilient Society
   iii) Thriving Economy
   iv) Sustainable Environment

   Specifically, the mission to make Wiltshire a place where 'we are on the path to carbon neutral (net zero)'.

3. The update on the actions taken in response to the climate emergency is structured against the seven delivery themes of the climate strategy. In addition, **Appendix 2** provides an overview of the Key Performance Indicators that track the outcomes relating to the climate strategy delivery plans.

Background

4. The council's Environmental Policy summarises how Wiltshire Council will continue to lead by example to minimise the impact of our own operations and supply chains on the environment whilst encouraging others to do the same. It provides a framework for setting and summarising the council's environmental objectives and targets to improve our environmental performance, all in one place. The policy was last updated in 2015 as a delegated Cabinet member decision. It is not currently included on the council's policy framework.

5. At its meeting held on 26 February 2019 Council debated the following notices of motion:
   12b) Acknowledging a Climate Emergency and Proposing the Way Forward;
   12c) Environment and Global Warming.

6. The council resolved to acknowledge that there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 – recognizing that the council only has direct control over 0.5% of carbon emissions in Wiltshire but can use its democratic mandate and other levers of influence to have an impact on wider emissions. Cabinet has also pledged to make Wiltshire Council carbon neutral by 2030.

7. The minutes of the meeting are available online (see pages 21 to 24). As part of this motion, the council resolved that Cabinet should report to Full Council on a six-monthly basis regarding the actions the council is taking and will take to address the climate emergency. The seventh report was presented to Cabinet in May 2023.

8. A Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group was established by Environment Select Committee in 2019 to develop recommendations to seek to achieve the target of making the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. The task group developed two reports and recommendations covering energy, transport and air quality (see Environment Select Committee papers for 13 January 2021) and planning (see Environment Select Committee papers for 3 March 2021).

9. In November 2021 the Task Group updated its name to the Climate Emergency Task Group and agreed its revised objectives as:

   - 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).
   - 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.
   - 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.

10. The Wiltshire Climate Strategy was approved by Council in February 2022. It sets out a framework for the council's climate programme under seven delivery themes. Page 18 of the strategy document commits us to developing delivery plans with more detail on actions and targets under the areas of focus in the strategy. These were published in September 2022.

Main Considerations for the Council

11. An updated Environmental Policy for the council is set out at **Appendix 1**. This can be included as part of the council's policy framework, alongside other non-statutory plans

and strategies such as our climate strategy. This contributes to action C1.3 of the Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-24.

12. The review process involved updating the policy against the priorities of our Business Plan and drawing on good practice from other councils (eg Devon County Council and South Gloucestershire Council) as well as online guides to gauge content and format. Heads of Service from relevant parts of the council were involved in the review process.

13. The policy can be used to:

    a. show the council's leadership and approach to mitigating the environmental impacts of its operations;

    b. provide a guideline for suppliers to respond to through the procurement process;

    c. provide a guideline for environmental implications to be considered, and included in Cabinet reports;

    d. implement an environmental management standard;

    e. encourage One Council working, by providing a basis for relevant service areas to be proactive in delivering the objectives outlined in the policy.

14. The proposed Environmental Policy replaces the immediate need to develop a Buildings Policy, which the council committed to in delivery plan action C4.3. The Environmental Policy states that the council will aim for new builds, refurbishments and maintenance to be as close to net zero in operation as possible, and encourage retrofit, and make sure council buildings are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Overall progress on the climate strategy delivery plans

15. In October 2022 the Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-2024 and the Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-2024 were agreed and published. These plans set out the immediate actions to help deliver the Wiltshire Climate Strategy 2022-2027. This report updates the council on the progress being made in response to the climate emergency, structured against the seven delivery themes of the climate strategy. Updates will state the delivery plan action reference number where applicable.

16. Different from previous reports, this report now also provides an overview of performance against the key performance indicators (KPIs) that were set out in the above delivery plans. The council has set targets for as many of the indicators as possible. This overview is provided in **Appendix 2**.

17. One year on from publishing the delivery plans some milestones and indicators have needed to be reviewed, and this is made clear in **Appendix 2**. Importantly, the KPIs show that the council is currently on track to be carbon neutral by 2030, despite a post-pandemic rebound in emissions last financial year. County-wide we saw the same post-pandemic rebound, however due to the national emissions inventory reporting intervals we do not yet have data to show whether the whole of Wiltshire's emissions have also subsequently decreased.

18. The baseline for county-wide emissions has been changed to 2020 (from 2014), to mirror the pathway to carbon neutral mapped out by consultants Anthesis in 2022. From 2020 we are also able to track not just carbon dioxide (CO_2) but the additional greenhouse gases methane (CH_4) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), as data for these is now included in the national data set provided by the government Department of Energy Security and Net Zero, DESNZ.

19. The council is delivering against most of the 200+ actions and milestones set out in the delivery plans. In the year since the delivery plans were drafted, restructures and reprioritisation of work programmes means that a small number need to be delayed, or others no longer align clearly to the council's service delivery. Where a key action is delayed this is noted below in the relevant section.

20. A key cross-cutting action (X4.1) is to develop a strategy for offsetting greenhouse gas emissions that cannot be avoided or reduced. This was scheduled to be produced by the end of 2023, and initial work on options has been carried out by consultants Anthesis and staff working groups to inform the strategy. Offsetting residual emissions is a last resort once all possible emissions have been reduced, therefore the climate team is prioritising other deliverables such as developing home retrofit projects, commenting on planning applications and inputting to policy development, and revising the Adaptation Plan. The Offsetting Strategy is still important, as there is a need to plan for offsetting due the long timeframes involved, and the strategy will now be delivered by the end of 2024.

Delivery theme: Carbon Neutral Council

21. The council publishes an [annual report on the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions](#) arising from its own estate and operations as requested by government and as set out in our Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-24 (action C6.2). The emissions included arise from council owned or controlled estate or buildings, council operational fleet, streetlights, business travel, waste generated by the council through its operations, leased vehicles, schools purchasing energy through our energy contract and outsourced waste collection vehicle emissions. The figures exclude full emissions data from schools and academies, social housing and all other outsourced operations.

22. The council's commitment is to be carbon neutral in its own operations (Scopes 1 & 2) by 2030. In 2014-15 Scope 1 & 2 emissions were 23,758 tonnes of CO_2 equivalent and in 2022/23 were 3,568 tCO_2e. This means that council emissions have been reduced below the target for 2022/23 (3750t) ensuring that the council is aligned to the pathway to carbon neutral set out in 2022.

23. The council's GHG emissions fluctuate from year to year due to acquisition and divestment of buildings, change of use of buildings, seasonal weather conditions which affect the need for heating and cooling buildings, and improvements to energy efficiency made during the year. The council is engaged in a range of work to deliver savings in emissions and costs. Examples include rationalisation and improvement of the council's property portfolio, investment in energy efficiency measures within the

remaining estate such as lighting and heating equipment upgrades, investment in appropriate renewable energy technologies and the replacement of street lighting units with LED lights which use considerably less energy. Specific actions are set out in the Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-24.

24. The council is currently installing solar canopies on the car park at Five Rivers Leisure Centre in Salisbury. It is estimated that works will complete by the end of December. The total installed capacity of the solar canopies will be 248 kW and they will reduce electricity bought from the grid to power the leisure centre by more than 10%. Alongside the canopies we are also piloting a solar EV charging unit called a Papilio unit. This will provide 12 charging stations for EVs, powered from solar panels that are incorporated into the roof of the unit. This will be piloted at the site for 3 years.

25. We are planning to roll this approach out to other suitable sites, where building electrical demand and car park layout are suitable, and are in the process of assessing other leisure centres at present.

26. The Energy Team's continued work on property decarbonisation as well as increasing renewable energy generation really stands us in good stead to meet our carbon neutral target and be as self-sufficient as possible in electricity. The amount of renewable energy produced on the council estate trebled in the last year from 550,000 kWh in 2021-22 to 1,745,060 kWh in 2022-23. Electricity consumption was 18,203,879 kWh in 2022-23 so demand reduction and efficiency is also a big part of the work.

27. Wiltshire Council has teamed up with Tusker to make it more affordable for employees to buy an electric car. With the scheme, part of employees' gross salary is exchanged for a non-cash benefit, in this case a fully insured and maintained brand new electric or plug-in hybrid car. The salary is exchanged before income tax and NI are deducted for a fully inclusive package with fleet and manufacturer discounts. The car scheme includes all routine servicing and wear-and-tear maintenance, fully comprehensive motor insurance, annual Road Fund License, European breakdown cover, a home charging point with standard installation, replacement tyres and even lifestyle protections (T8.1).

28. Wiltshire Council's local highways maintenance contractor Milestone has announced the deployment of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil fuel for their fleet operating from the Chippenham Depot. Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is a biofuel derived from plant based oils. It produces less CO2 (and other tailpipe emissions such as NOx, particulates, and carbon monoxide) when combusted than fossil fuels such as diesel. Switching the Chippenham fleet from diesel to HVO will save 150 tonnes of CO2e per year, which is a 90% reduction compared to using diesel. Milestone has sourced GD+ HVO, which is made from waste plant materials. It is certified by the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC) and the Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme (RFAS). (C5.3, C7, G2.1)

29. The council is continuing to roll out carbon literacy training and to date 105 officers have been trained (C2.1). The course is accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project and involves a full day's training plus an assessment, as well as making two work-based pledges relevant to each officer's role to support the council's climate objectives.

Public engagement

30. A statutory consultation ran from July to September for the Air Quality Action Plan. As well as transport contributing over a third of all carbon emissions in Wiltshire, it also releases harmful gases that affect the quality of the air. Wiltshire Council monitors air quality across the county to assess the levels of harmful gases in the local environment. This monitoring has shown that the air quality in Wiltshire is very good but in a few heavily trafficked areas, levels of nitrogen dioxide are too high.

31. Nitrogen dioxide is a product of combustion and in Wiltshire's case the high levels are being caused by emissions from motor vehicles. The biggest contributors are diesel cars. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared around Wiltshire where the nitrogen dioxide levels are excessive. The council is required by law to produce an action plan detailing the measures that will be used to reduce levels of nitrogen dioxide in these locations. By tackling nitrogen dioxide, through measures to reduce pollution from transport, carbon dioxide will also be reduced. This is linked to actions set out under the climate strategy 'transport' delivery theme (e.g. T2, T3, T4, T5, T21, T22).

32. The council produced a summary of its Air Quality Action Plan alongside a more detailed plan to help inform people how it plans to ensure the quality of the air the local population breathes is safe. The plan contains a list of proposed actions and measures that the council will take to improve air quality, more specifically the reduction in levels of nitrogen dioxide in eight areas in the county where levels have been found to be excessive. The Air Quality Action Plan was consulted on at the same time as the draft Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The consultation concluded at the beginning of September and responses will be reviewed and any final changes made to the documents before Cabinet and Full Council approval.

33. The theme of this year's libraries week (2-7 October 2023) is "Go green at the library", contributing to the climate delivery plan action X1.4 to continue to engage residents. There will be themed story times and rhyme times as well as displays in Salisbury and our town libraries covering:

   a. the work we have done to decarbonise our libraries
   b. waste and recycling
   c. Tree Wardens and planting

34. As part of a national pilot being run by the Carbon Literacy Project, carbon literacy training is going to be offered to Wiltshire community groups via the Engagement and Partnerships Team. The team are in the process of finalising the details of the first session which will take place in Autumn 2023 (X1.4)

<u>Adaptation and Resilience</u>

35. Work is progressing on the Salisbury River Park, the council's flagship climate adaptation project. This contributes to delivery plan actions X5, T16, NE1 and NE3. The latest newsletter is available [here](#) and includes a photograph of an otter visiting the site. See also paragraph 50.

36. Over the next few months, the council's [Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#) is being reviewed (X5). Originally scheduled to be updated by December 2023, staff capacity has meant that work has been delayed. In the meantime national guidance and a toolkit have been published meaning that our approach and timeline has altered. New adaptation actions will be co-developed with various council teams that will increase the resilience of service areas to future climate impacts. An update will now be delivered by Summer 2024.

Delivery theme: Transport
<u>Electric vehicle charging infrastructure</u>

37. The UK Government carried out a [consultation](#) in Spring 2023 on the final proposals for a world leading zero emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate, helping to accelerate the UK's transition to net zero. Local authorities have a vital role to play in ensuring the future charging network continues to grow to support electric vehicle (EV) uptake.

38. The Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund will help local authorities in England significantly scale up the delivery of local charge points, enabling more residents, especially those without off-street parking, to switch to EVs. Wiltshire Council was allocated £393,600 capability funding in August 2023 which is available across financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. The council has also been provisionally allocated up to £3,889,000 capital funding which will be delivered in two tranches and is available in either financial year 2023/24 or 2024/25. As a critical enabler, capability funding will ensure local authorities have dedicated staff to undertake the planning and delivery of charging infrastructure, while capital funding will support chargepoint purchase and installation costs. This contributes to delivery plan area of focus T4 and KPI T3.

39. The next steps involve advertising in Autumn 2023 for a new team dedicated to EVs. This team will develop the overarching EV strategy for the council as well as the specific element funded via LEVI – the focus of which is on street parking for those who don't have any off-street options at their homes.

40. Since the previous report in May 2023 the council has been [replacing and installing new EV chargepoints](#). In addition, the council's offer of funding for town and parish councils to explore installing EV chargepoints has resulted in the maximum 35 applications and feasibility studies being carried out for the locations selected. This will significantly increase the number of electric vehicle chargepoints that are available to the public, and encourage uptake of electric vehicles (T4, C5.2).

<u>Public transport</u>

41. Wiltshire Council is launching five new Wiltshire Connect bus services and several revised services in the Pewsey Vale. The new services will launch in phases over the coming months and include both on-demand and semi-flexible buses, which can pick up and drop off passengers where they want to go, when they want to get there (T7).

42. On-demand services allow passengers to book the bus from a stop of their choosing in the service area to their destination at a time to suit them, either by booking through a smartphone app or by phone. Semi-flexible services are halfway between a standard timetabled bus service and an on-demand bus, in that they follow a timetable, but can take detours and have some flexibility to pick up and drop off people who have booked in advance.

43. The services are being funded for 4 years by a £1.2m grant from the Government's Rural Mobility Fund following a successful bid by the council. All the services are being run by Salisbury Reds but will feature the green Wiltshire Connect branding. The smartphone app has been developed by Ioki. The council has also worked in partnership with Great Western Railway to highlight the improved connectivity with Wiltshire Connect and the rail network at Bedwyn and Pewsey.

44. Wiltshire Connect buses will cost £2 for adults for all journeys until 31 October, and then £2-£2.50 for adults from 1 November 2023 to 30 November 2024, depending on the length of the journey. Following that, the standard fares for all journeys will be £2 or £3 for adults. Children and young people aged under 21 pay a half fare of £1 or £1.50, depending on the length of the journey. Ten journey tickets are also available for both adults and young people at a reduced rate.

<u>Active travel</u>

45. Wiltshire Council partnered with Sustrans to create an active travel toolkit for secondary schools to raise awareness of climate change, air quality, and the impact of transport. The self-led resource includes workshops that schools can use to promote walking, cycling and other forms of sustainable travel. The toolkit is available online on the [Right Choice website](#), and information and links shared with school business managers. (Delivery Plan action T13)

46. In June 2023 the council submitted an application to UK100 for their 'Local Power in Action' programme which offered four local authorities the opportunity for bespoke support and knowledge sharing to accelerate progress towards their net zero goals. The council was not successful in this bid, however it is still committed to the bid's theme, which was to reinvigorate interest in developing school travel plans in order to deliver its climate and health ambitions. The council would like to see all schools in Wiltshire having an adopted travel plan, and without the UK100 support, seeks to start working on this using existing resources, whilst looking for additional funding. (Action X3 & T13, KPI X5)

47. In June/July people in Wiltshire were asked for their views on [cycling and walking plans](#) in Chippenham, Devizes and Trowbridge. The three Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) set out proposals for cycling and walking networks in each town, and highlight how these networks will be improved and connected to make it easier and safer to walk and cycle in the towns. The aim of the LCWIPs is to deliver infrastructure that will enable and encourage more trips to be made on foot or by bike, and help to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and cut carbon emissions. (Action T3, KPI T5)

48. They will also be used to inform the planning process where relevant, and future funding from the Department for Transport for active travel schemes will be linked to the walking and cycling schemes in each published plan. The council has already consulted on the draft county-wide Wiltshire LCWIPs and a Salisbury LCWIP. By the end of 2025 the council intends to develop LCWIPs for Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Calne, Corsham, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Melksham, Royal Wootton Bassett, Tidworth, Warminster and Westbury.

49. Wiltshire Council has been awarded £978,000 from Active Travel England's Active Travel Fund 4 (ATF4) to create three new cycling and walking routes in the county. The three schemes are a pedestrian footbridge as part of the Salisbury River Park project; a cycling link between Devizes Road, Hilperton, and the A361/Elizabeth Way Roundabout; and an Amesbury to Larkhill cycle link. (Action T14)

50. In Salisbury, the pedestrian footbridge, which will cost £458,000, will link the coach park to Central car park, and will be completed by April 2024 as part of the first phase of the project. The Hilperton scheme, which costs £320,000, will link to the existing shared use paths and head along Trowbridge Road, with the existing footway widened to create a shared use path for both pedestrians and cyclists. It is expected to be completed in 2024. The £200,000 for the Amesbury to Larkhill cycle link will fund the development and design of a scheme along Countess Road. These three schemes are part of a wider list of priority schemes identified by the council. The council will now seek alternative funding sources for the other priority schemes.

51. Salisbury River Park is still on track to complete in April 2024 and will bring 650m of new and improved cycling routes, 1,600m of new and improved footpaths, 600 new trees, 2ha of habitat created and biodiversity improved, and increased resilience to climate change.

52. Construction work for Salisbury Fisherton Gateway commenced at the end of July and is expected to be completed in summer 2024. The improvement works include widening pavements, introducing new street lighting, enhancing landscaping, improving street furniture and wayfinding, and introducing continuous footpaths at junctions to enhance pedestrian priority. We will also be providing cycle parking and six street trees.

53. Salisbury Station Forecourt design work concluded in August and has been submitted to Network Rail for the final round of approvals. The earliest construction start is anticipated to be early 2024. The scheme will improve access for pedestrians and cyclists into and around the forecourt, as well as provide a new bus interchange and passive provision for EV charging meaning that the underlying infrastructure is in place to allow simple installation of charging points in the future (Action T12).

Delivery Theme: Housing and the Built Environment
<u>Retrofit</u>

54. A bid for Home Upgrade Grant (phase 2) was completed at the start of this year (actions B6 & B7) which resulted in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero awarding Wiltshire Council £3.623m in April to improve the energy efficiency of between 175 and 210 owner-occupied homes in Wiltshire, subject to household income levels. Eligible properties are those which are not connected to mains gas, have an EPC band D-G and where energy efficiency measures specified within the funding can be delivered within the cost caps and modelling confirms an improvement in the EPC band is achievable.

55. A team has been established to deliver this project, funded by the grant, and posts recruited to during Q1.

56. The project data analytics have been completed to map the eligible households in Wiltshire and to understand the energy measures required. This information has informed the procurement strategy, specifications and communications approach. A fabric first approach will be taken, and the local data analysis demonstrates that common measures include cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, ventilation, smart measures such as heating controls and low carbon heating technologies. There is limited funding for solar panels, double glazed windows and external wall insulation.

57. Procurement planning has started, and we are engaging with potential suppliers. Marketing and customer engagement is due to start during October and retrofits are expected to start taking place during the autumn and through to March 2025.

58. A bid was submitted to the Innovate UK Fast Followers programme to look at the systemic barriers to net zero progress (B5, B6, B7). The bid built on the council's experience with energy efficiency retrofit for low income households, extending out to 'self-funding' residents. It aimed to learn from experience so far, especially in relation to engaging with the electricity network operator on grid capacity, which is a key barrier to retrofit at scale, and to achieving net zero goals across the board. In addition, building up the supply side in terms of installers and skills for retrofit is another challenging area the project aimed to work on. The bid was not successful, however as mentioned above similar themes regarding supply are incorporated in the HUG2 project mentioned above, and the council continues to engage with Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks to understand grid capacity constraints and plan for future development and net zero measures.

59. The council home retrofit programme (B1) continues to deliver and the process of retrofitting properties to reduce their onsite carbon emissions and has so far installed 243 measures, including ASHP, Solar Panels, wall and loft and floor insulation, upgraded hot water cylinders and high heat retention storage heaters. However, whole-house retrofits have not been possible while the programme has experienced contractual issues. The contracts have now been re-tendered and the measures that have been delivered will stand us in good stead to progress towards the targets set out in the delivery plan (see Appendix 2 for more detail).

Local Plan Review

60. The spatial planning team has worked very hard to produce the Wiltshire Council Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft 2020-2038, dated July 2023, which has now been approved by Cabinet and Full council to proceed to public consultation. This round of public consultation will be the opportunity for all interested parties to have their say on the document and its policies/proposals. The climate team has worked alongside colleagues to formulate the new policies designed to ensure new developments during the plan period will support the transition to net zero. These include a brand new overarching Addressing Climate Change policy designed to be far reaching to address many of the themes that go to the heart of tackling climate change; an updated sustainable construction policy requiring new build residential to achieve zero carbon in operation; an updated renewable energy policy that goes beyond standalone renewables to also address integrated technologies on existing buildings; and a further new policy to require Embodied Carbon Assessments for major developments. These all sit within the wider planning policies, many of which relate to important climate mitigation and adaptation measures. This contributes to the 'Homes and Built Environment' delivery theme, and B3 in particular.

Design Guide

61. The climate team has continued to work in collaboration with the council's urban design team on the Wiltshire Residential Design Guide. The final draft is being prepared, following public consultation which included a consultation webinar and drop-in session. Due to considerable interest, the consultation period was extended to 14 August 2023. All comments received during the consultation period are being taken into account and the document changed where necessary in response. Subject to adoption, the document, that contains 'Sustainability and Climate Resilience' as one of its three golden themes, will be a material consideration in future planning decisions by Wiltshire Council. (T5.3, NE1.2).

Climate change and development management

62. The climate team has also been ramping up its activity within the development management service, seeking to drive up awareness of climate change with applicants and other stakeholders utilising existing policy and guidance hooks at local and national levels. Input has focused on major development, renewable energy schemes, and the council's own applications. Between November 2022 and July 2023 (inclusive) the climate team responded to over 100 planning/pre-

planning consultations. This has resulted in many developers being supported and encouraged to improve their schemes in relation to climate change impacts. Moreover, it is an important communication tool to publicly raise awareness of how our existing and future built environments will need to evolve to address climate change. The positive impact is exemplified by the climate team supporting Wiltshire College (Lackham campus) proposals for roof mounted solar panels, enabling the planning team to balance the positive climate action and associated co-benefits with heritage implications (B9.2).

Neighbourhood Planning

63. The climate team has worked positively and constructively with neighbourhood planning groups through the formal public consultation process. This stream of planning policy is another opportunity to increase the awareness of climate change and help communities take positive climate action through planning for climate mitigation through to climate resilience. The climate team has commented on six draft neighbourhood plans so far in 2023 (B9.2).

New social housing

64. Housing association Magna, Wiltshire Council and Dorset-based manufacturer Rollalong joined forces last year to tackle the housing crisis using modular building methods. They have pledged to build nearly 1,000 new affordable homes by 2026. Magna and Wiltshire Council have now taken another step towards that goal by placing orders for Rollalong to manufacture 109 new, modular homes for five sites across two counties.

65. Of these 109, Wiltshire Council will create 83 new affordable homes across three sites within the county. Rollalong uses precision engineering techniques to manufacture high-quality modern homes as modules in its factory near Wimborne Minster. These are then transported, fully fitted with kitchens, bathrooms and electrics, to sites where they will become attractive, energy efficient homes. Modular manufacturing has potential to deliver much-needed new homes faster and more sustainably than traditional brick housebuilding.

66. Overall, the process generates less waste and has a lower carbon footprint. It also creates less disruption to local people, with fewer deliveries to site over a shorter time. The partners' latest range of modular house types are built to be 'net zero in use', in line with the Government's proposed Future Homes Standard, which will require new homes built from 2025 to produce 75-80% less carbon.

67. The all-electric homes will be heated by air-source heat pumps, with a thermally efficient fabric retaining warmth and helping residents keep their energy bills lower. The homes can be tailored to the local, often rural setting, with a range of house types and finishes influenced by customer feedback. The partners also have the only modular approach in the UK accredited by the National House-Building Council (NHBC) able to 'step and stagger' terraces of houses so that they have more visual variety.

68. In addition to the low carbon modular building, there are other ways that the council's new build social housing programme is contributing to the council's carbon neutral goal. Part L building regulations mean that no new gas systems are put into new units, and energy efficiency requirements mean that new builds are likely to be at least EPC B (See Figure 8 in Appendix 2). Where the council is building on council land, the council is more able to influence that the buildings are designed to be net zero carbon in operation. (B2)

Delivery theme: Natural Environment

69. Wiltshire Council is one of 48 individual local authorities who has benefitted in receiving allocations from a £14 million funding pot from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs enabling us to work with our local communities to develop a tailored nature recovery strategy for the area (NE1.3).

70. The council will be responsible for preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Wiltshire and Swindon, under section 105 of the Environment Act 2021. With the best ways to support nature recovery depending on local geography, Local Nature Recovery Strategies will help communities map out the action needed in their area to restore nature working closely with local stakeholders, from farmers to school children. When put together they will be a key way of meeting our England-wide nature recovery targets. The council now has a new nature recovery officer who will be engaging with key stakeholders and the community over the next 12 months with a view to having a Local Nature Recovery Strategy in place in late Autumn 2024.

71. Following a successful bid for almost £300,000 from a Government fund, the council is relaunching the national Tree Warden scheme in the county. The Tree Warden Scheme is a national initiative led by the Tree Council, and the council is looking to recruit volunteer Tree Wardens in each Wiltshire town and parish area as well as across the Borough of Swindon. Tree Wardens will work with Wiltshire Council Woodland Officers and act as local tree champions who help plant, promote and protect trees in appropriate locations in their local area. (NE3.2)

72. Projects that Tree Wardens can be involved in could include:

- Arranging local tree planting days
- Watering and caring for local trees
- Working with the local authorities and community groups to plant and care for street trees
- Rejuvenating local woodlands
- Raising funds and finding land for tree planting projects
- Going into local schools to talk about the value of trees

More information about the Wiltshire tree warden scheme can be found at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/trees-and-woodland-in-wiltshire.

73. The funding for Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council will also be used to help deliver tree planting targets over the next two years that will see planting of 111ha of trees in the 2023-24 and a further 222ha in 2024-25. Four Woodland Officers have been recruited and are working to deliver these targets. The majority of these will be delivered through community and private landowner initiatives, working with partners such as the Woodland Trust, and Forestry Commission to develop bids for funding.

74. The delivery plan action NE4.2 milestone was to produce a Tree and Woodland Planting Strategy by 2023. With the woodland planting team being established only in early Summer 2023, and the need to focus on setting up Tree Wardens and planting during the winter 2023/24, the Tree and Woodland Strategy timeline will be shifted to 2024.

Delivery theme: Energy

75. Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council are working with iChoosr, independent experts in group-buying, to run a second Solar Together scheme, following the success of the first scheme in 2022 (E8.1).

76. The first round of the scheme launched in May 2022, and resulted in 1,047 installations across Wiltshire and Swindon consisting of almost 9,900 solar panels and over 800 storage batteries to a total of 705 households. The total installations are estimated to deliver over 18,500 tonnes of carbon reduction over 25 years. This equates to roughly 10,000 cars off roads for a year.

77. After a competitive bidding process managed by Solar Together, Scheme 2 launched on 5 June 2023, where people could register for free by 11 August 2023, and were then be sent their recommended provider and costs, with no obligation to proceed with the installation. 691 customers have accepted their recommendation so far which is lower than the equivalent stage on Scheme 1. Due to the timing of Scheme 1 (beginning in June 2022) coinciding with the increase in cost of energy and the announcement of zero VAT on solar panels in April 2022, it attracted a much higher level of interest than anticipated. However, it is expected that there will be a lower drop out rate in Scheme 2.

78. To register, residents must either own their own house or have permission from the landlord to install solar panels. Small and medium-sized enterprises (non-domestic) and Commonhold Associations meeting this requirement can also participate.

79. The initiative offers solar panels with optional battery storage and electrical vehicle (EV) charge points, as well as offering battery storage for those who have already invested in solar panels and are looking to get more from the renewable energy they generate and increase their independence from the grid. People can also select whether they would like to discuss options to divert solar energy to power the immersion heater in their hot water tank if they have one.

80. Solar Together operates on a group-buying approach, with the core principle that coming together as a group provides enhanced buying power and allows the approved providers to offer a better price than individual homeowners might get from entering the market alone. Please see **Appendix 3** for further details regarding Scheme 1.

Delivery theme: Green economy

81. Wiltshire Council launched a new £1.35m grants scheme called Invest in Wiltshire to encourage businesses in the county to improve and expand their enterprises. The grants must be used by businesses by March 2025 to improve productivity by buying new equipment, machinery or digital infrastructure; or improving premises and creating workspaces. All applications must show that they will create new jobs or better paid, more skilled jobs; and they must also help the business to decarbonise, for example, by reducing carbon-based energy usage or becoming more energy efficient (G3). The total funding available for Invest in Wiltshire grants is £1.35m. The funding has been provided with £350,000 through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and £750,000 via the Rural Prosperity Fund.

Delivery theme: Waste

82. The council's Climate Strategy and Household Waste Management Strategy both contain clear commitments for the council to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and ensure that waste is managed in accordance with the nationally recognised waste hierarchy (eg, prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, other recovery, disposal). Carbon emissions are associated with transportation of waste, as well as the waste process itself, and following waste hierarchy also aligns with the carbon hierarchy i.e. by increasing recycling and composting, and reducing waste going to landfill, GHG emissions will also be reduced (as 'Resources and Waste' delivery plan actions, and KPIs R1, R2 and R3).

83. In 2022/23, Wiltshire landfilled 15.6% of the total household waste collected (32,515 tonnes). During the same period, 40% (83,451 tonnes) was sent for recycling, composting or reuse, and a further 44.4% (92,585 tonnes) was diverted from landfill using waste treatment and energy from waste facilities.

84. The council and its contractors have worked to ensure that 98% of the waste collected for recycling, composting or reuse was managed within the UK. This reduces the carbon impact of waste haulage as this material did not need to be exported from the UK.

85. New rules enforced by the Environment Agency from 1 January 2023 mean that councils need to ensure all Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating is collected, stored and transported separately from other wastes, and must be disposed of by incineration rather than sent to landfill. The fabric and padding used in many upholstered seating items are treated with flame retardant chemicals. These are now known to contain Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) which can be harmful to human health if these enter the wider environment.

86. In Wiltshire, these items are typically collected through the household recycling centre network, kerbside collections of large household items and clearance of fly tipping. Between January and July 2023, a total of 948 tonnes of POPs waste has been collected and sent to energy from waste facilities instead of landfill, saving 403 tonnes of CO_2e.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

87. The Climate Emergency Task Group has been involved in the development of the Climate Strategy and delivery plans as well as scrutinising key pieces of work. The Task Group will be meeting to discuss this report on 9 October 2023.

Safeguarding Implications

88. The impacts of climate change are amplifying safeguarding issues and falling heavily on vulnerable people both globally and in the UK.

89. Evidence suggests that vulnerable demographic groups experience disproportionate effects on their health outcomes from climate related impacts.

90. This includes young children, babies and older people who are particularly affected by extremes in temperature and the disruption caused by severe weather such as flooding[1]. People with physical or mental health problems have a lower ability to act due to physical constraints or a lower awareness of their circumstances. People with low personal mobility or living in areas with lower accessibility of services tend to have less ability to respond and recover because it may take them longer to help themselves or to seek and receive help from others.

Public Health Implications

91. Climate change and public health are inextricably linked. Having a climate strategy which looks to reduce carbon emissions in Wiltshire will have a significant and positive impact on the health of the population. Actions from implementing the strategy will improve health outcomes for all residents and help reduce health inequalities. Better home insulation will not only reduce emissions but also provide healthier homes for some of our most vulnerable people. Active travel schemes will help increase levels of physical activity, connecting people to their local communities and potentially leading to improved air quality through reduced car use. Local food production will decrease food miles, benefiting the environment, whilst providing healthier choices.

Procurement Implications

92. Project leads will be engaging with Procurement directly and in line with the council's procurement policy.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

93. One of the key principles is for the Climate Strategy to be equitable, ensuring the transition to low carbon, climate resilient future is fair.

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[1] Socially vulnerable groups sensitive to climate impacts | Climate Just

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

94. This report sets out the council's response to environmental and climate change considerations following the acknowledgement of a climate emergency and agreement by Full Council to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030.

Workforce Implications

95. Replacement of our fleet with electric vehicles where possible and encouraging staff to use the new bikes being provided for short journeys will require changes to ways of working. We have also started rolling out carbon literacy training to staff.

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

96. If Cabinet and Council continue to receive updates twice a year, there will be less capacity for project delivery as compiling this report requires considerable time and effort from the climate team and other key delivery teams across the council. Other councils and organisations produce an annual rather than six monthly report.

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

97. Reducing the frequency of these reports may be perceived as a negative step by those who are keen to hold the council to account in its progress to tackle the climate emergency. This will be mitigated by continuing to issue press releases to announce key progress and listing them on the council's climate emergency webpage. Climate projects will also continue to be communicated via social media.

Financial Implications

98. In response to the climate and ecological emergency and the resolution made by Council to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral, a Sustainable Environment is a key principle of the Council's Business Plan.

99. As part of the Budget Setting process, Revenue and Capital budgets have been updated to deliver against this objective, this includes continued investment, new investment and savings and covers the programmes listed in the report above.

100. To date spend that contributes to delivering against the carbon reduction programme totals £32.966m Capital and £1.809m Revenue. Investment has been committed for 2023/24 and future years totalling £70.334m Capital and £8.263m Revenue. In addition, grant bids have been successful for a further £0.295m and will be added to the relevant programme in due course. The tables below provide detail at programme level.

Table 1 – Capital Programmes

CAPITAL	Previous Years Spend £'m	2023/24 Budget £'m	Future Years Budget £'m	Total £'m
HRA - Housing Energy Efficiency Programme	0.868	6.105	45.652	**52.625**
LED Programme	12.998	-	-	**12.998**
Salisbury River Park Scheme	6.178	0.900	-	**7.078**
Fleet - Carbon Neutral Fleet / Electric Vehicles	0.288	2.179	0.200	**2.667**
Local Authority Treescape Fund - BOA	0.035	0.035	0.026	**0.096**
Property Carbon Reduction Programme	3.636	2.064	4.700	**10.400**
Park & Ride Solar Panel Canopies	0.006	0.450	3.044	**3.500**
				-
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Projects	5.181	0.024	-	**5.205**
Passenger Transport RTPI	0.341	0.354	-	**0.695**
Active Travel Fund	3.435	0.978	-	**4.413**
Home Upgrade Grant 2	-	1.780	1.843	**3.623**
Total Capital	**32.966**	**14.869**	**55.465**	**103.300**
Grant	21.649	2.817	1.869	**26.335**
S106/CIL	-	0.500	-	**0.500**
Borrowing	10.449	5.447	7.944	**23.840**
HRA	0.868	6.105	45.652	**52.625**
Total Financing	**32.966**	**14.869**	**55.465**	**103.300**

Table 2 – Revenue Programmes

REVENUE	Previous Years Spend £'m	2023/24 Budget £'m	Future Years Budget £'m	Total £'m
National Bus Strategy	0.127	0.179	-	**0.306**
Better Bus Fund - Bus Service Enhancements	0.053	0.619	-	**0.672**
Rural Mobility Grant	0.123	1.082	-	**1.205**
COMF - Warm & Safe Wiltshire	0.500	-	-	**0.500**
Public Health - Warm & Safe Advice Service	-	0.085	0.170	**0.255**
Additional Investment in Gully Emptying	-	0.333	0.667	**1.000**
Climate Change and Sustainable Living Book Collection	0.002	-	-	**0.002**
Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy	0.097	0.687	1.566	**2.350**
Salisbury Plain SAC (Stone Curlew)	-	0.070	0.150	**0.220**
New Forest Recreation Management Project	-	0.189	0.561	**0.750**
River Avon Special Area Conservation	0.123	0.727	-	**0.850**
Dedicated Climate team	0.753	0.322	0.706	**1.781**
Solar Together Grant	0.031	0.031	0.119	**0.181**
Total Revenue	**1.809**	**4.324**	**3.939**	**10.072**
Grant	0.836	1.996	0.289	**3.121**
S106/CIL	0.220	1.673	2.277	**4.170**
Revenue Budget	0.753	0.655	1.373	**2.781**
Total Financing	**1.809**	**4.324**	**3.939**	**10.072**

Table 3 – Successful Grant Bids

Bids	Total £'m
Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (Revenue)	**0.295**
Total Bids	**0.295**
Grant	**0.295**
Total Financing	**0.295**

101. The Pathways reports by Anthesis consultants published in May 2022 set out anticipated costs and benefits to the council and to the Wiltshire economy of delivering carbon neutrality. As detailed, this will require additional investment over and above the current commitments shown above. The emerging Fleet Strategy which seeks to deliver a carbon neutral position for 2030 for all council vehicles will require further capital investment in vehicles and infrastructure to achieve its objective.

Legal Implications

102. There are no legal implications arising from this report. The council will be responsible for preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Swindon and Wiltshire, under section 105 of the Environment Act 2021.

Options Considered

103. The council could continue to use the current Environmental Policy from 2015, however it is now out of date and no longer reflects best practice. The council could also choose not to add it to its Policy Framework, however doing this will give it weight and ensure the involvement of Full Council in any future updates.

104. These updates could continue to be provided to Cabinet and Council twice a year, however the resource implications of doing this are not negligible and detract from the time available to deliver climate projects.

Conclusions

105. Since Full Council resolved to acknowledge that there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030, a number of areas of work have been progressed and continue to progress as set out in this report.

106. The council is currently aligned with its pathway to carbon neutral. Wiltshire-wide emissions are largely not within the control of the council but the council is focussing on areas it can have an influence and impact, and reporting progress to provide leadership and a basis for partnership working.

107. A revised Environmental Policy is proposed for adoption, in order to provide a basis for the council to mitigate its impact on the environment and to show leadership to its partners and suppliers.

Sarah Valdus, Director - Environment

Report Author: Victoria Burvill, Climate Manager, victoria.burvill@wiltshire.gov.uk, Tel: 01225 713362

20 September 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Environmental Policy 2023-25
Appendix 2 - Key performance indicators and data
Appendix 3 - Solar Together report, scheme 1 (2022-23)

Background Papers

None

Appendix 1: Environmental Policy 2023-2025

This Environmental Policy draws on existing strategies to summarise how Wiltshire Council will minimise the impact of our own operations and outlines how we anticipate all services will deliver against our environmental standards. The policy sets out how our expectations for partners and suppliers to work with us to minimise environmental impacts.

Wiltshire Council is a unitary authority located in the South West of England and has responsibility for a wide range of activities including planning, waste management, highways, and social care. This policy sets out how we will manage the environmental impacts associated with our services, ensuring that as a minimum we conform to all applicable laws, regulations, codes of practice, and corporate standards. Demonstrated by the priorities of our [Business Plan,](#) Wiltshire Council understands its responsibility in responding to the global climate and ecological emergencies. We aim to be [carbon neutral by 2030](#) in our Scope 1 and 2 emissions and to continue to understand and reduce our Scope 3 emissions.

Relevant strategies which have informed this document include: [Green and Blue Infrastructure strategy,](#) [Climate Strategy](#) and [Delivery Plans,](#) [Air Quality Strategy,](#) [Waste Management Strategy,](#) emerging [Local Plan,](#) [Wiltshire Design Guide,](#) emerging [Tree and Woodland Strategy,](#) and [Local Transport Plan.](#) Performance against these will be monitored through internal audit, corporate and service delivery plans, and regular updates to Council.

What we are going to deliver:

Circular Economy and Waste - Promote and implement waste management strategies and services aimed at working towards a circular economy and achieving zero avoidable waste in accordance with the council's adopted Household Waste Management Strategy, with a focus on waste reduction and consuming less by managing demand (e.g., single-use plastics) and using our resources more efficiently. Encourage and enable staff and suppliers to reuse and repurpose resources, and 'design-out waste'. Design and create services and systems with the concept of creating building blocks that can be re-used in other areas. Correctly use, store, and dispose of wastes (including wastewater) and hazardous materials.

Transport – Reduce emissions and the impact of fleet vehicles and staff travel on the environment by developing and promoting a range of sustainable, clean, and low-carbon transport options, flexible working practices, route optimization, and telemetry.

Water - Ensure effective monitoring, risk assessments, and sustainable practices are put in place to manage water usage, improve efficiency, and safeguard water quality.

Biodiversity and Natural Environment - Halt the loss of and increase biodiversity, key habitats, and tackle nutrient pollution of water courses, by only using pesticides if absolutely necessary where practical alternatives are not available. Plan our mowing and highways maintenance regimes to enhance green and blue infrastructures, allowing regeneration of soil, biodiversity, and habitats. Support the council's carbon neutral ambitions by using nature-based

carbon capture solutions where possible (e.g., woodland planting or creation of green spaces). Aim to increase planting and management for biodiversity on council sites.

Built & Historic Environment – Ensure the council's new buildings, developments, refurbishments, and ongoing maintenance are as close to operational net-zero carbon as possible and encourage retrofit of existing council buildings. Incorporate measures to adapt to the impacts of climate change in our buildings and their surrounding environments. Conserve and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of historic and cultural interests. Encourage the use of active travel and provision of green spaces to improve both physical and mental wellbeing of staff, residents, and visitors.

Energy - Reduce our energy demand, consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions. Increase energy efficiency and the use of low carbon technologies. Increase renewable energy generation, continue to use electricity from the green tariff, and continue to explore the use of other green energy supplies. Apply a robust energy management system, linked with the [Carbon Neutral Council Plan.](#)

Air Quality and Air Pollution – Conserve and enhance air quality by leading local Air Quality Management work with a range of partners, as well as reducing air pollution through the transition to clean fuels to heat and power the council's buildings and fleet.

Communication and Embedding Environmental Issues and Opportunities - Raise awareness of environmental issues amongst staff, elected members, and the public through the provision of information and training. Use carbon literacy training to enable communities, councillors, and staff to learn about climate change causes, solutions, and consequences (e.g., flood risk, droughts) and make sure it is integrated into council services and wider activities in the community. Showcase what the council is doing, in order to lead by example on managing our environmental impacts. All proposals to Cabinet and Council include consideration of impacts on the environment and any necessary mitigation.

Commissioning and Procurement – Work with services, suppliers, external partners, and communities to ensure that the principles of sustainable development, economic, social value, and environmental well-being and impacts, are integrated into the commissioning and procurement of goods and services. Encourage our contractors to demonstrate their shared commitment to the delivery of our environmental objectives.

Appendix 2: Progress on Climate Delivery Plans.

August 2023

1. Overview of Key Performance Indicators

The Climate Strategy Delivery Plan (2022-2024) and the Carbon Neutral Council Plan (2022-2024) are monitored by reporting on specific actions and milestones that contribute to delivery of the Climate Strategy (2022-2027), as well as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are listed at the end of each plan.

In addition to the indicators listed we have now defined targets for most of the indicators in the delivery plans. These reflect the most ambitious scenario shown in the 'Pathways to carbon neutral' reports completed by Anthesis consultants in 2022.

As stated in the Climate Strategy Delivery Plan, the list of KPIs will be kept under review and developed over time. Indeed it has been necessary to review some of the indicators due to availability of data.

Few of the county-wide measures (marked with an asterisk) are within the control of Wiltshire Council; most depend mainly on others. However, we feel it is important to keep reporting all metrics as they show how the county as a whole is progressing towards net zero, and can form a basis for work with and by organisations operating within Wiltshire.

We have changed the baseline for county-wide emissions to 2020, to mirror the pathway to carbon neutral mapped out by consultants Anthesis in 2022. From 2020 we are also able to track not just carbon dioxide (CO_2) but the additional greenhouse gases methane (CH_4) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), as data for these is now included in the national data set provided by government (DESNZ, formerly BEIS data). These three greenhouse gases account for 97% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. Wiltshire-wide emissions data comes from the UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas statistics (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero).

Because this is the first time we are reporting on some of these KPIs, data is not available for previous years. In these cases we will use the current year as a baseline and look at the trends going forward.

Importantly, the KPIs show that the council is currently on track to be carbon neutral by 2030 in relation to the council's direct emissions (Scope 1 and 2), returning to a decreasing trend, despite a post-pandemic increase in emissions last financial year. Please see the council's annual greenhouse gas emissions report for more information. County-wide we saw the same post-pandemic increase, however due to the national emissions inventory reporting intervals we do not yet have data to show whether Wiltshire's emissions have also decreased, though this is expected.
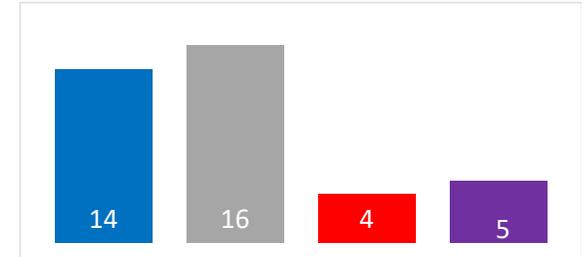
The following section sets out the key performance indicators in table form.

Table 1. Wiltshire Council Climate KPI Scorecard - 2022/23

Of the 39 indicators on this scorecard 13 (33%) were ranked as positive and 20 were ranked as stable or no data.

Arrows show the direction of travel in the most recent reporting period.
Blue is an improving change, red a worsening change. Grey is postive, but limited or not quite on target. Purple shows data not available yet.

Red rext indicates a change or addition since the Delivery Plans were published in Oct 2022

Bar	Value
Blue	14
Grey	16
Red	4
Purple	5

Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
Carbon Neutral Council Plan									
C1. * Wiltshire Council's carbon footprint, (Annual GHG return t CO2e)	3750t for 2022/23 (overall target carbon neutral by 2030)	4401	5275	**3568**	Mar-23	Annual	↓		Despite the rebound in emissions due to post-lockdown activity in 2021/22 we are now back on track for our emissions reduction pathway. The targets have been set to be in line with the pathway to carbon neutral (Anthesis report 2022). **See Figures 1 and 2.**
C2. Carbon intensity of pension funds investments, as reported in line with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (Weighted Average Carbon Intensity across WPF portfolios in tCO2e / m£)	Decreasing. Carbon neutral by 2050	153	144	**191**	Dec-21	Annual	↑	Long term data not available	Wiltshire Pension Fund reports annually and tracks carbon intensity. Recent increase is due to a move to two new portfolios which are initially higher carbon intensity but will support transition to low carbon economy over time.
C4. * Number of EV charge points at council sites	20% annual increase year on year	76	76	**90**	Aug-23	Annual	↑	Long term data not available	The council has been replacing and adding new chargepoints at council sites. This has resulted in an 18.5% increase, which brings us close to target.
C5. * Renewable energy generated on the council estate (kWh)	Council to be as self-sufficient as possible in terms of electricity consumption and generation	450,135	550,000	**1,745,060**	Mar-23	Annual	↑		The council has increased renewables generation on its sites (primarily through rooftop PV and heat pumps), to decrease costs and emissions. We produced 9.7% of the electricity we consumed in 2022/23. **For more info see Figure 3.**
C7. * Tonnes CO_2e saved through energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on the council estate	TBD	-74	-330	**955**	Mar-23	Annual	↓		This indicator tracks the carbon saved through the council's Property Carbon Reduction Programme. Significant emissions and cost savings are being made, and keeping the council on its carbon reduction pathway.

Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
C8. * Number of staff completing carbon literacy training	Bronze carbon literacy award by July 2023; Silver carbon literacy award by end 2025 (15% staff, 750, certified carbon literate)	N/A	N/A	**105**	Aug-23	Quarterly	→	Long term data not available	Training started Jul-22. Capacity and availability of staff to run the training, and new software being introduced to the council, could delay delivery. Target has been amended to be more realistic, based on experience since programme started.
C9a. * Energy consumption (kWh) of gas used in corporate buildings	TBD.	19,419,716	23,498,757	**18,203,879**	Aug-23	Annual	↓		Gas usage is decreasing with the drive to electrify heating of council buildings, whereby low carbon electricity from renewable energy can be used.
C9b. * Energy consumption (kWh) of electricity used in corporate buildings	TBD.	11,221,079	19,285,323	**18,930,706**	Aug-23	Annual	↓		Overall we should be aiming to decrease electricity demand. However, electricity use is likely to go up due to heating moving from gas and onto electricity. This shows the importance of remaining on a green electricity tariff with zero emissions.
Cross-cutting indicators									
X1. Total territorial GHG emissions for Wiltshire in kt CO$_2$e. Figures now include CH4, NO2 & CO2	2880kt for 2021; 2550kt for 2022	3367	2961	**3226**	2021	Yearly with 2 year time lag	→		The long-term trend of the county's emissions (X1), and the component elements (X2, X3 and X4), is that GHG emissions are decreasing. However, the most recent data for emissions until end of 2021 shows the rebound effect as the county recovered from Covid related lockdowns. 2019 is a more meaningful comparator than 2020.
X2. Total transport GHG emissions for Wiltshire in kt CO$_2$e (territorial). Figures now include CH4, NO2 & CO2	1054kt for 2021; 933 kt for 2022 (based on transport emissions as % of total)	1,317	1055	**1180**	2021	Yearly with 2 year time lag	→		Going forward we will adjust the baseline to 2020 and introduce interim targets, which reflect the Anthesis pathway to carbon neutrality. Additional greenhouse gases are included in the new national data set from 2020, whereas previously only carbon dioxide was reported. **Please see Figures 4 and 5.**
X3. Total homes GHG emissions for Wiltshire in kt CO$_2$e (territorial). Figures now include CH4, NO2 & CO2	643 kt for 2021; 569 kt for 2022 (based on homes emissions as % of total)	716	698	**720**	2021	Yearly with 2 year time lag	→		Targets mirror the Pathways to Carbon Neutral 'high ambition' curve.

Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
X4. Total Industry, commercial and agriculture GHG emissions for Wiltshire in kt CO$_2$e (territorial). Figures now include CH4, NO2 & CO2	1190 kt in 2021; 1054 kt for 2022 (based on emissions as % of total)	1,350	1259	**1333**	2021	Yearly with 2 year time lag	(red right arrow)	(trend line)	
X8. Website and social media engagement in response to climate campaigns (Total click-throughs on climate-related posts)	Consistent level of engagement in relation to posts and press releases	N/A	2,500	**2,401clicks**	Mar-23	Yearly	(blue right arrow)	Long term trend data not available	Social media campaign was carried out during 2021-22 (#WiltsCanDoThis) and data shows this was successful. The most popular posts were related to composting, and home energy efficiency measures including Solar Together. #LetsSortIt campaign started in Feb 2023 to help improve recycling and has been very successful. Climate-specific messaging will be re-invigorated to provide constant ideas, info and support.
Reach (reflects times a post is read)		N/A	149.8k	**115.5k**	Mar-23				
Engagement rate (reactions to a post in relation to views)		N/A	1.36%	**1.28%**	Mar-23				

Transport Delivery Theme

Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
T1. Number of passenger trips on both the commercial and supported bus network	7,905,000 (trips per annum, by Q4 22/23)	N/A	6,490,975	**7,354,680**	Mar-23	Yearly	(grey up arrow)	Long term trend data not available	Bus trips are increasing, in line with national trends.
T2. Air quality: number of annual exceedance of NO2 (nitrogen dioxide) over 40 µg/m3 target in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)	No exceedances (NO2 remains below 40 µg/m3) and aiming to revoke AQMAs	3	5	**2**	Dec-22	Yearly	(blue down arrow)	Long term trend data not available	DEFRA require 3 years data 10% below the 40ug/m3 objective or 5 years below the objective, in order to revoke an air quality management area. Emerging Air Quality supplementary planning document (SPD) will help to manage pollution, particularly from traffic.
T3. Total number of EV charge point locations in Wiltshire (all publicly available charging points including those owned by the council)	Increasing in line with SW average (48 per 100,000 population for April 2023);	147 total; 29 per 100,000	179 total; 36 per 100,000	**210 total; 41 per 100,000**	Apr-23	Yearly	(grey right arrow)	(trend line)	The number is increasing, however the previous good progress is falling behind South West benchmark. During 2023, the council's EV charging infrastructure plan will lead to 70 new chargepoints. **For more information see Figure 6**
T4. * Cycle Training: Number of children and adults trained through Bikeability	TBD	1047 (COVID)	3251	**3195**	Aug-23	Yearly	(grey right arrow)	Long term trend data not available	Government encourages us to increase to 80% of school children participating in Bikeability in 2023/24. In 2022/23 we achieved 55% of Y6 and capacity will be an issue.

Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
T5. * Local Cycling and Walking Plans (LCWIPs) produced (cumulative total)	16 produced by 2025	N/A	2	**5**	Aug-23	Yearly	⬆	Long term trend data not available	The latest three LCWIPs have been out for consultation and responses are being considered. All LCWIPS can be viewed online.
Homes and the Built Environment Delivery Theme									
B1. Number of households contacting the Warm and Safe service	Proposed target: To continue to offer a service to low income households on saving energy and money. Numbers are for information only, to show interest and need for the service.	1510	2191	**2146**	Mar-23	Yearly	➡	Long term trend data not available	We are aiming to continue to offer a service to low income households on saving energy and money. Since 2020 the Warm and Safe service has helped 5847 households with their queries on energy efficiency and bills.
B2. * Council homes retrofitted for energy efficiency/renewable energy (cumulative total)	500 homes per year. 10 year programme to retrofit all council homes to EPC B by 2030	N/A	57 (at Feb 22 update)	**90**	Oct-22	Annual	⬆	Long term trend data not available	The programme has experienced contractual issues and reduced staff capacity, with main maintenance contracts being re-tendered. Despite no full house retrofits being delivered in recent months, the programme has continued to deliver measures such as insultation, heating / hot water and PV, which will stand us in good stead to progress towards our target . The milestone / target of 500 homes per year will need to be reviewed in light of delivery rate to date.
B3. * Number of new zero carbon council homes delivered	296 by 2025/26	N/A	N/A	**Construction scheduled, but none completed to date**	Aug-23	Annual	➡	Long term trend data not available	In addition to 296 planned zero carbon homes, further council homes are being built and acquired from the market. All new build council homes will be at least EPC B. Where the council has control, the aim is for council homes to be designed as zero carbon in operation.
B4. EPCs certificates rated A to C / all EPCs registered that year (rolling 3 year average) for all dwellings in Wiltshire (%)	Increasing, and above SW benchmark (48%)	48 (2018-2021)	49 (2019-2022)	**52 (2020-2023)**	Mar-22	Yearly	⬆		We use a three year rolling average to show a longer term trend, as EPC ratings can fluctuate over the shorter term. The increasing percentage of EPCs rated A, B & C show the trend that energy efficiency is increasing. The target for Energy Performance Certificates at levels A-C increases over time in line with the South West benchmark at any snapshot in time. This year the South West is at 48%. **See Figure 7.**

Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
B5a: Energy efficiency of new dwellings: EPC B and above in Wiltshire. (% total EPCs registered that year)	Increasing, and above SW benchmark (84%)	90	88	**88**	Mar-22	Yearly			New dwellings are likely to be EPC B and above, due to the requirements of building regulations.
B5b: Space heating demand for new homes in Wiltshire per dwelling (kWh/m2/year)	Decreasing, and below SW benchmark (92)	89	92	**91**	Mar-22	Yearly			A comparison of this indicator for new dwellings, with B6b for existing dwellings, shows the significant improvement in new dwellings in relation to the lower amount of energy needed to heat them. **See Figure 10.**
B6a: Energy efficiency of existing dwellings: EPC C and above in Wiltshire. (% of total EPCs registered that year)	Increasing, and above SW benchmark (45%)	40	43	**48**	Mar-22	Yearly			Improving trend, and in line with the South West average. **See Figure 9 for more info.**
B6b: Space heating demand for existing homes in Wiltshire per dwelling (kWh/m2/year)	Decreasing, and below SW benchmark (254)	264	270	**249**	Mar-22	Yearly			A small decrease in the energy needed to heat existing homes may show that energy efficiency measures are being retrofitted. However, this data is not for all homes, only for those that have an EPC. **See Figure 10.**

Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
Natural Environment, Food and Farming Delivery Theme									
NE1: Tree canopy cover as a percentage of total land area of Wiltshire: Trees within woodland (%) and Trees outside woodland (TOW) (%)	Increase total tree cover from 14% to 17% by 2045	N/A	N/A	**14% (9%Woodland; 5% TOW)**	2019 (baseline)	Yearly	N/A	Long term trend data not available	National tree coverage target has been set through the Environment Act. This is a long term target so data will not be available regularly. Instead the council will monitor trees and hectares planted – indicator NE2 has been added to track this.
NE2: Hectares of trees planted in Wiltshire. (Includes woodland (0.5ha or more); trees outside woodland (individual trees or areas <0.5ha; hedgerows)	Plant 422ha or 675,000 trees per year on average in the period 2022-2045. 111 Ha during winter season 2023/24. 222 Ha during winter season 2024/25	N/A	N/A	**0 recorded to date**	Aug-23	Yearly	Not yet monitored	Long term data not available	GAPS team will be tracking hectares of planting, hedgerows, and individual trees. Data not yet available. Team has been set up, recruiting Tree Wardens and setting up monitoring system.
Energy Delivery Theme									
E1a: Renewable energy capacity in Wiltshire (MW): installed capacity	Minimum 978MW by 2027, 1197 by 2030 (from Anthesis pathways report)	578	579	**583**	Dec-21	Yearly with 2 year time lag			Renewable energy is steadily increasing, with at least 583 MW installed capacity. Additional capacity is in the pipeline, which we can see from the planning applications data, however sometimes these are not built for a long time. **See Figure 11 for more info**
E1b: Renewable energy capacity in Wiltshire: capacity with planning permissions (appeal granted, Planning permission granted or Under Construction) (MW elec – snapshot at time of report)	For information only	N/A	N/A	**662**	Aug-23	Yearly snapshot	No target - for info only	Long term data not available	
E1c: Renewable energy capacity: awaiting planning determination (MW – snapshot at time of report)	For information only	N/A	N/A	**367**	Aug-23	Yearly snapshot	No target - for info only	Long term data not available	

Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
E2. Annual renewable energy generation - Wiltshire (MWh)	For information only	608,745	620,216	**573,248**	Dec-21	Yearly with 2 year time lag	⬇		Total renewable generation in 2020 contributed 31% of our electricity consumption, and 6% of our total energy consumption. **See Figure 12 for more info**
E3. Number of solar panel, battery and EV charger installations through the Solar Together scheme	750 installations per scheme	N/A	N/A	**Total 705 households. 631 solar; 74 battery; 99 EV chargepoints**	Aug-23	only reported when there is an active scheme	✓	N/A	Solar Together Scheme 1 complete and achieved over 700 installations, almost hitting our target of 750 installations. Estimated carbon reduction of over 18,500 tonnes of over 25 years. For more information see **Appendix 3**.

| Measure description	Target	Previous two quarters or years		Latest position	Latest report	Frequency	Direction of Travel	Trend	Comment
Green Economy Delivery Theme									
G1. Emissions from Wiltshire Council's key suppliers in CO2e	Target not yet defined								Data not yet available, however the council is working with key suppliers who have a baseline and will be reporting carbon intensity of their contracts.
Resources and Waste Delivery Theme									
R1. Amount of household waste (kg of waste produced per household)	880kg at end of March 2024 (Q4)	966.9	970.6	**915.6**	Mar-23	Annual	↓		The long term trend is that household waste has been reducing in Wiltshire since 2017.
R2a. Proportion of household waste managed, by destination: Recycled or composted (%) ('recycling rate')	45% or above	42.3	42.2	**40**		Annual	↓		The recycling rate is decreasing, and in contrast more waste is being processed through energy from waste (landfill diversion) while landfill stays roughly level but above the desired target. The 'Let's sort it' campaign has been raising awareness about sorting recyclables and reducing contamination in order to increase recycling rates.
R2b. Proportion of household waste managed by: Landfill diversion (%)	Above 42%	41.5	39.1	**44.4**		Annual	↑		
R2c. Proportion of household waste managed by: Landfill (%)	Below 13%	16.3	18.7	**15.6**		Annual	↓		
R3. Impact of waste management services on GHG emissions (carbon and methane emissions from waste management services, including fleet in t CO2e)	TBD. Currently establishing baseline and monitoring.								A great deal of analysis has been done to establish a baseline. Analysis is ongoing to understand emissions from the entire process of household waste management and define the indicator and target. Emissions from household waste management services do not neatly fit into the council's Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions and are therefore best tracked separately.

2. Further information on key trends

2.1 Carbon neutral council.

This indicator tracks greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the council's operations. The target of carbon neutral relates to Scopes 1 and 2 only, which are the direct emissions. For more information and a breakdown of what is included please see the Annual GHG Emissions Report.

The target for the council's emissions to be 3750 tonnes CO_2e by 2022/23 has been achieved and puts us back on track in relation to our pathway to carbon neutral, as assessed in 2022 by consultants Anthesis.
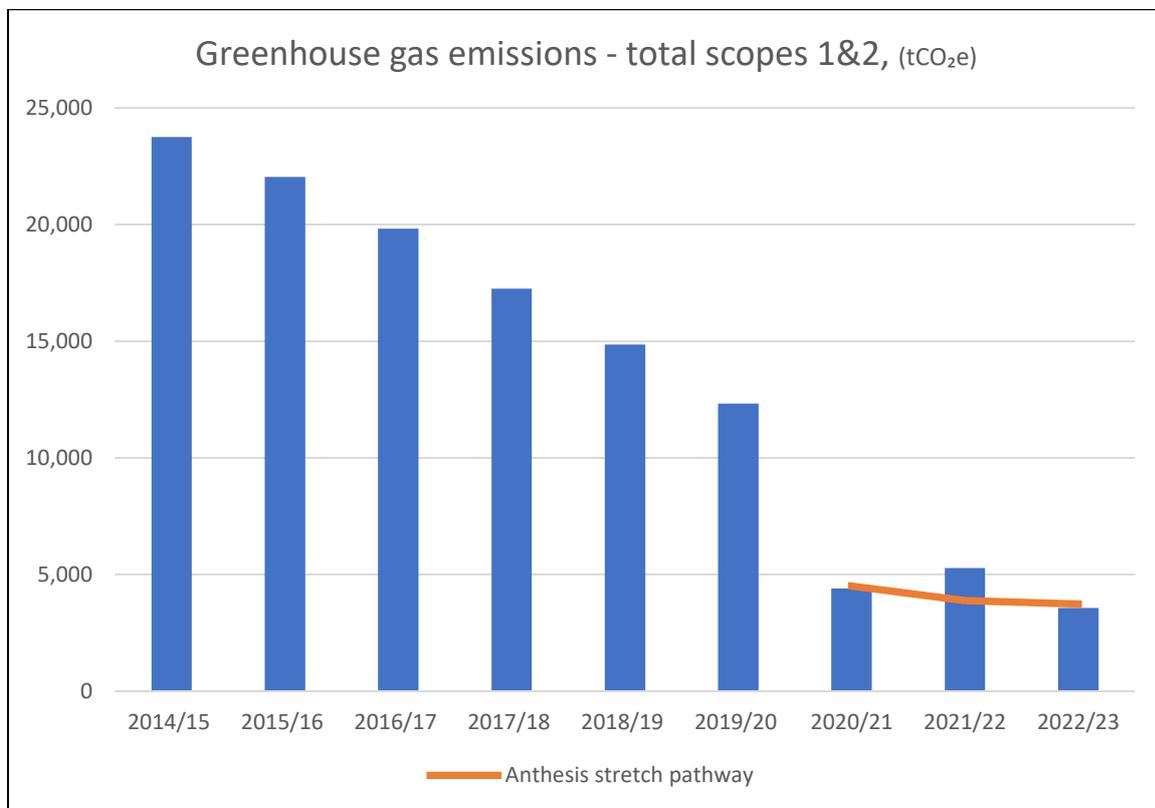
Figure 1. C1 – Wiltshire Council emissions
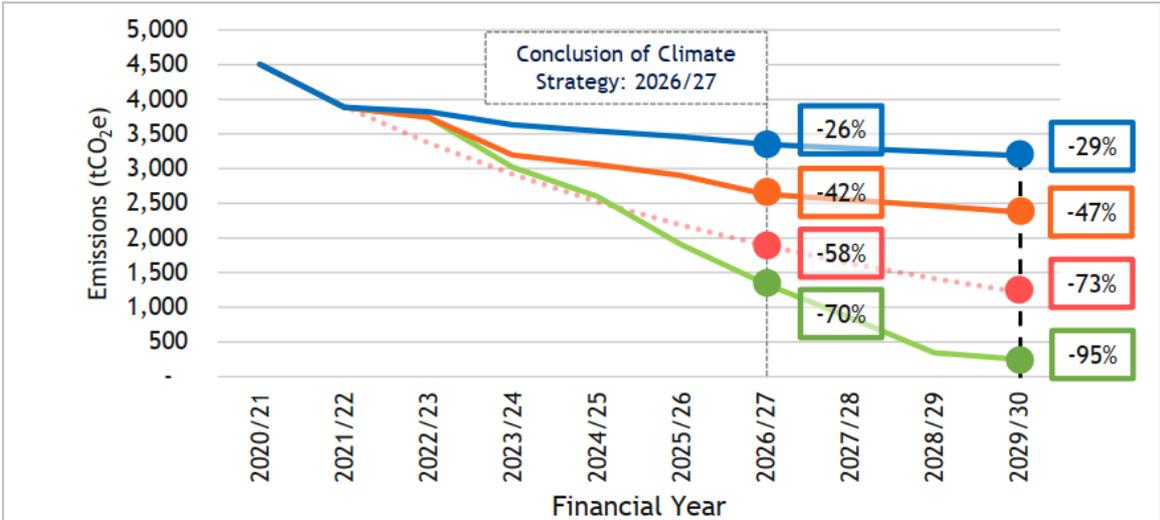
Figure b: Emissions reduction pathways for Wiltshire council

Business-as-usual (BAU): Buildings: Assumes the council delivers only projects that are currently in delivery stages (as at the end of 2022) or have been completed since the 2020/21 baseline. Transport: Assumes the council replaces all "smaller" vehicles with electric vehicles (EV).

Pipeline: Buildings: Assumes the council delivers projects that are currently in delivery as well as those that are in planning, fundraising and application stages. Transport: Assumes the council replaces all "small" and "medium" vehicles with EV, with HGVs on biofuels.

Stretch: Buildings: Assumes the council successfully delivers all pipeline projects as well as the longlist of potential projects identified in Phase 1 of the Corporate Carbon Reduction Programme and additional behaviour change and heating technology retrofits. Transport: Assumes all vehicles replaced by EV.

Paris-aligned carbon budget: Annual reduction rate for area-wide carbon budget, applied to council's own emissions.

Figure 2. Pathways to carbon neutral for Wiltshire Council.
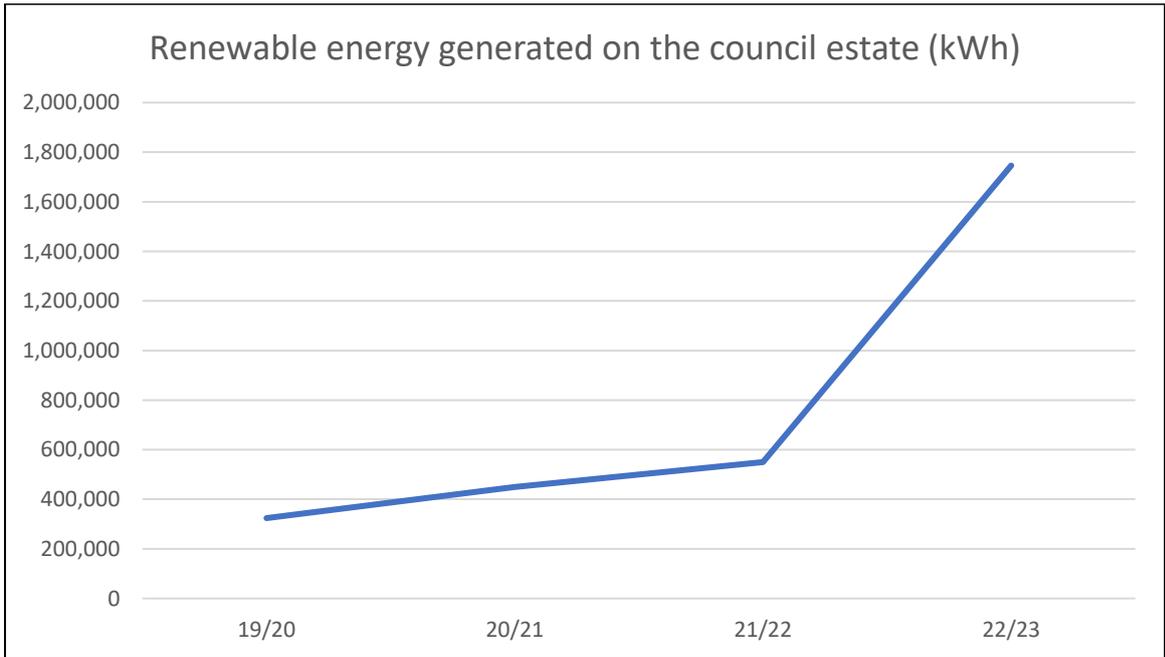
2.2 Renewable Energy

Figure 3. C5 - Renewable energy generated on the council estate

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The council has worked hard to increase renewables generation on its sites (primarily through rooftop PV and heat pumps), to decrease costs and emissions

Total electricity consumption by the council was 18,203,879 kWh in 2022-23, so we produced 9.7% of the electricity we consumed. The electricity that we buy is from renewables so is counted as zero carbon emissions
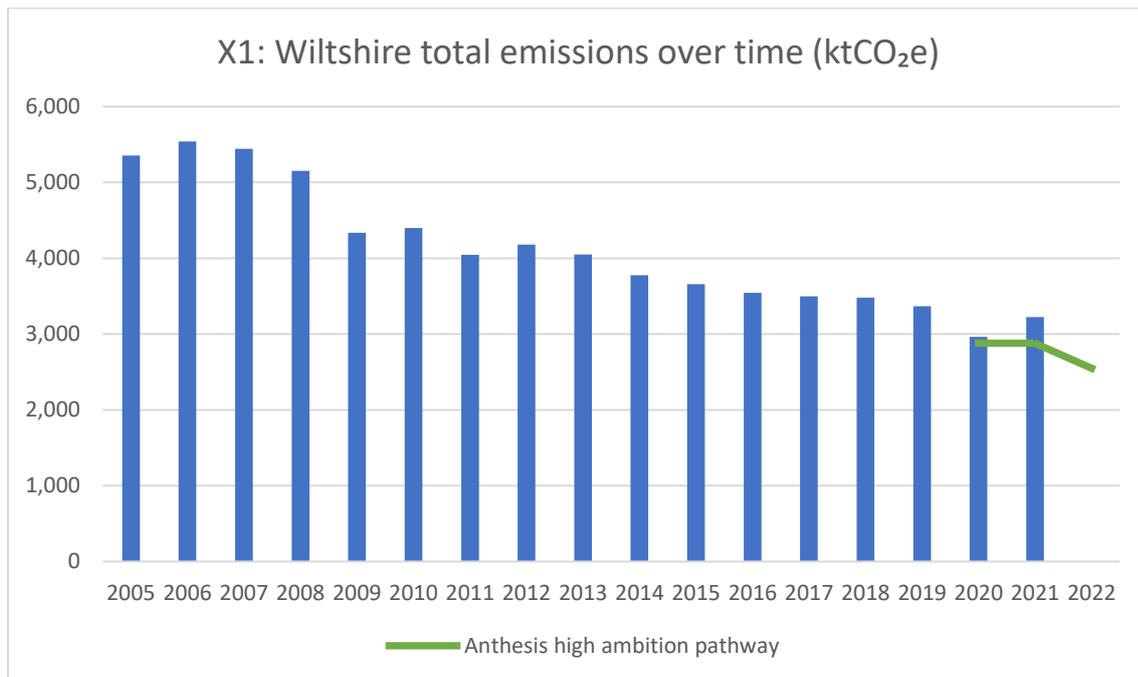
2.3 Wiltshire emissions.

X1: Wiltshire total emissions over time (ktCO$_2$e)

— Anthesis high ambition pathway

Figure 4. Graph of Wiltshire emissions

Figure b: Possible percentage reductions in emissions for Wiltshire along the pathways compared to 2019 levels. Red dotted line indicates Paris Agreement aligned reductions.
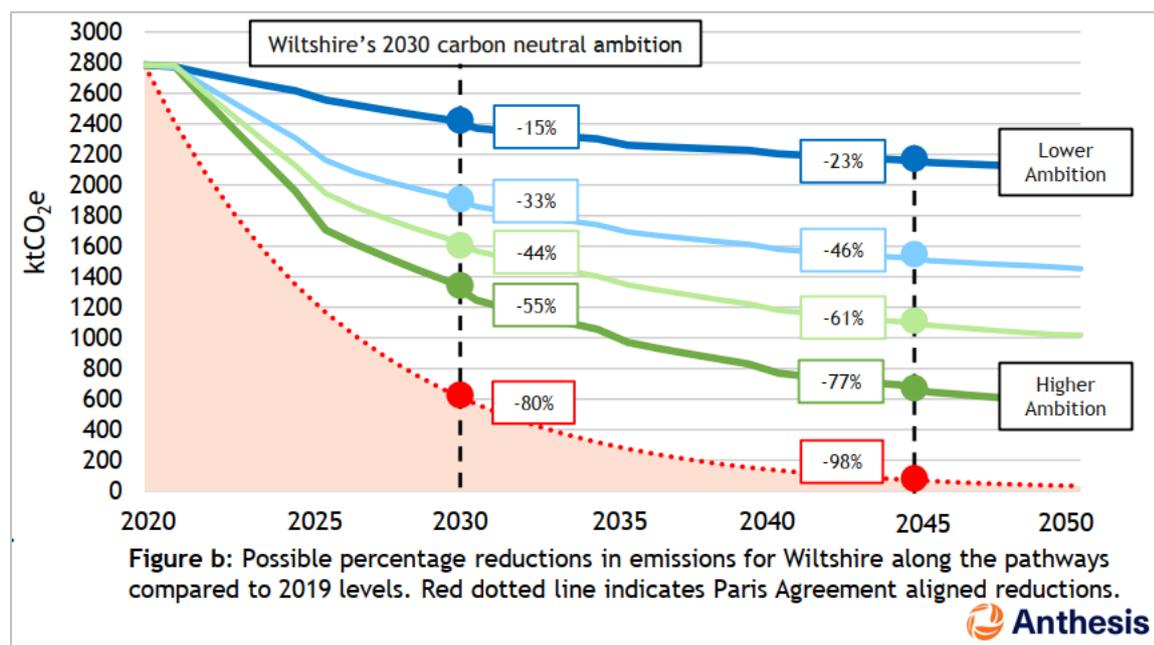
Figure 5. Graph showing various pathways towards carbon neutral.

Figure 4 shows Wiltshire's actual emissions alongside the 'high ambition' pathway to carbon neutral. Figure 5 shows all the pathways that were modelled by consultants Anthesis in 2022. The county emissions data is only available up to 2021 and shows a recent rise in emissions despite a positive longer-term trend. Between 2020 and 2021, greenhouse gas emissions increased in 358 out of the 374 local authorities in the UK (96%). This is consistent with the increase in overall UK emissions in 2021, which increased by 5% largely due to COVID-19 restrictions easing and colder temperatures increasing the use of heating in buildings.

The data will next be reported in June 2024 for the calendar year 2022, which will show whether emissions have decreased to bring Wiltshire back on track towards being carbon neutral.

2.4 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
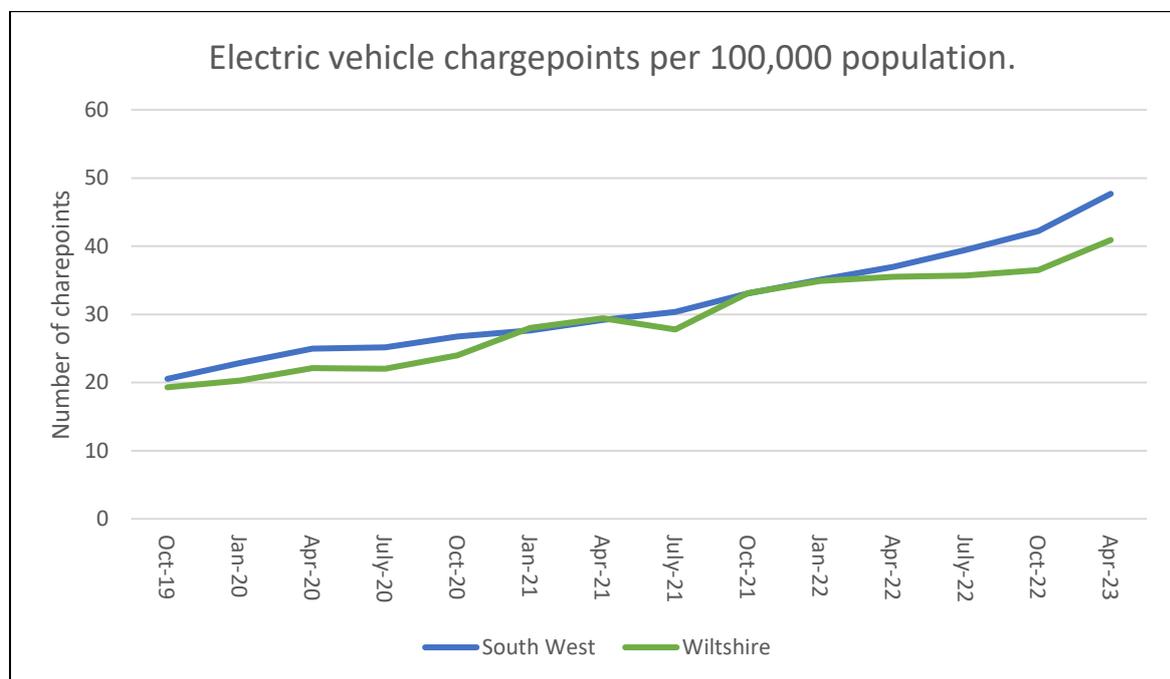
Figure 6. Public EV chargepoints

Public electric vehicle chargepoint numbers have continued to increase due to the Wiltshire Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan, though starting to drop behind the South West benchmark in 2022

Since the last data release in April 2023, the council has been installing and replacing chargepoints which will increase the total by 70 chargepoints. Please see paragraph 39 of main report for more information.

2.5 Solar Together

The Solar Together programme resulted in 705 solar panel installations, and 99 EV chargepoints at private homes across all areas of Wiltshire. The target was 750 solar installations, which was not quite achieved, however this was the first scheme of its kind in

Wiltshire and it was difficult to predict the outcome. For more information about the scheme please see Appendix 3.
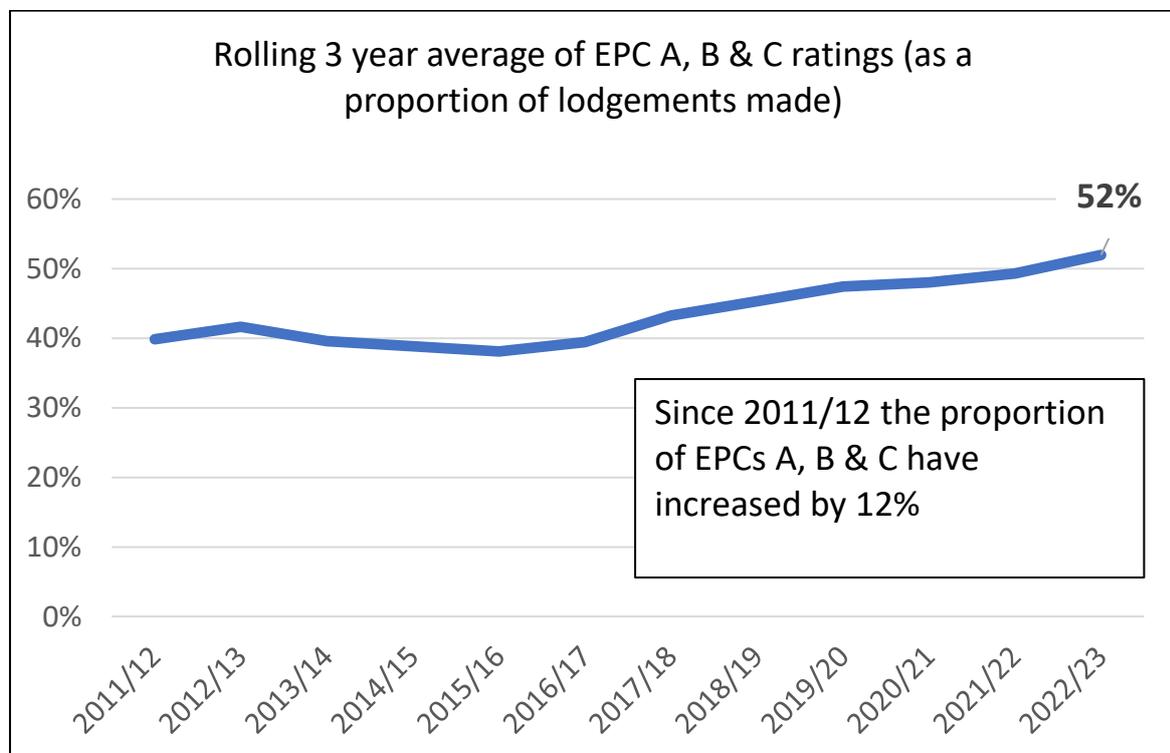
2.6 Energy efficiency of homes in Wiltshire

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) are a proxy indicator for energy efficiency. They are not a perfect indicator as some homes could be highly rated (A) and still have high energy usage to heat the home. The data set also tracks 'space heating demand' which shows how much energy it takes to heat the property (kWh / m^2).
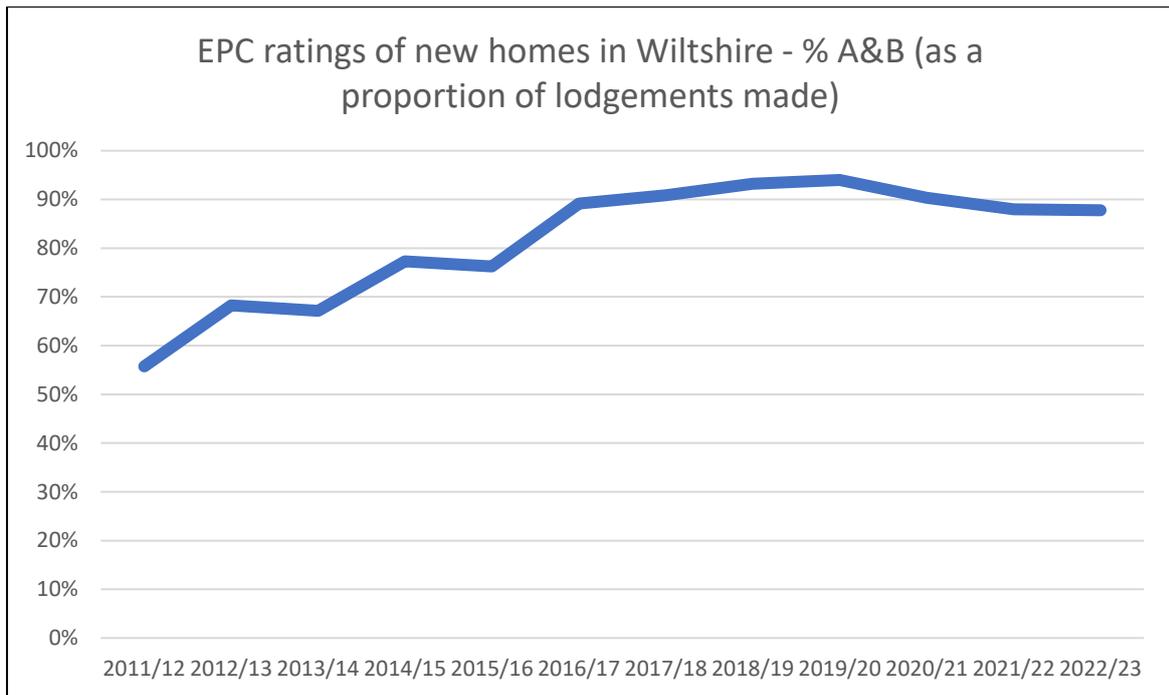
The EPC dataset provides the total number of EPC lodgements during the time period, and indicators B4, B5a and B6a show the proportion of those lodgements that are a certain EPC rating.

The EPC register does not hold data for every domestic and non-domestic building or every building occupied by public authorities in England and Wales. Buildings only require an EPC when sold, let or constructed. Some homeowners will have an EPC done to show that they qualify for a certain grant. The recent government grants that have been targeted at retrofitting homes with the lowest energy efficiency may mean that those homes are more likely to have had an EPC assessment done, which would skew the proportion towards lower ratings (D and below).

Due to the reasons explained, EPC data can fluctuate, so KPI B4 uses a rolling three-year average in order to show a longer-term trend.

Rolling 3 year average of EPC A, B & C ratings (as a proportion of lodgements made)

52%

Since 2011/12 the proportion of EPCs A, B & C have increased by 12%

Figure 7. B4 – Proportion of EPC lodgements that are A,B and C rated.

Figure 8. B5a - EPC ratings of new homes - % of EPCs registered annually that are A & B

Current building regulation requirements are likely to mean that a new build should be at least EPC B, so we have tracked performance through this indicator. This shows new builds are achieving a relatively consistent high percentage (above 80%) at EPC A or B. This indicator reflects the issue that EPCs can go up and down, as it is the percentage of EPCs that are registered in any given year.
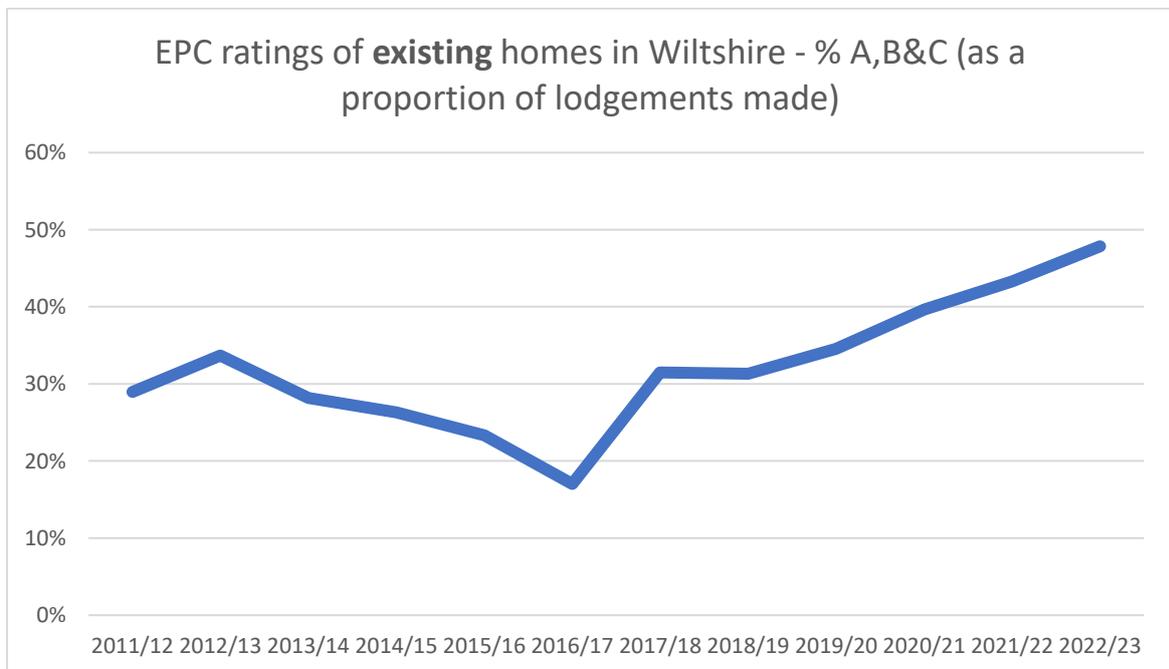
Figure 9. B6a - EPC ratings of existing homes. % of EPCs registered annually that are A, B & C

This indicator looks at existing homes and it is noticeable that the % of higher rated EPCs is much lower than those for existing homes, reinforcing that the focus should be on making

existing homes more energy efficient. The trend goes up and down but is gradually increasing.
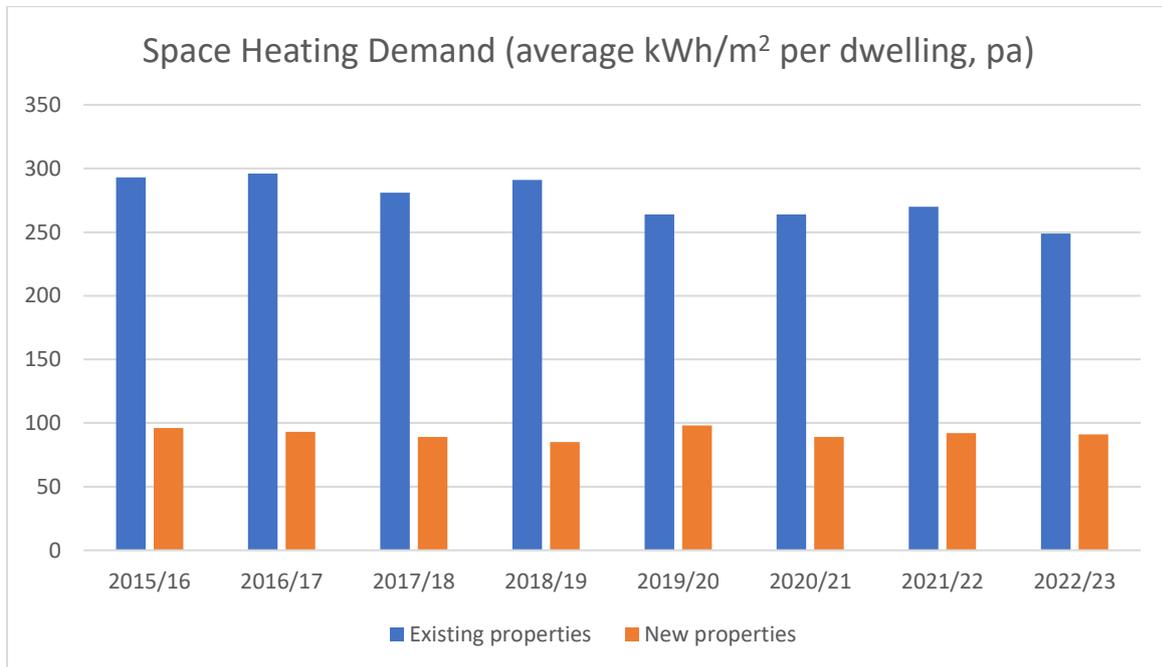

Figure 10. B5b and B6b: - Comparison between space heating demand for new and existing dwellings.

This graph shows clearly that new properties need significantly less energy to heat them than existing properties. While the council has made positive steps to ensure the draft Local Plan includes policies to require new development to be net zero carbon in operation, there is still a huge challenge to tackle the emissions from existing properties.

2.7 Renewable energy generation & capacity.

Indicator E1 'renewable energy capacity in Wiltshire' shows that we had 583 MW of installed capacity in 2021. Installed capacity (in MW) is the peak theoretical amount of energy that the installations could produce per hour. In reality, generation is lower and depends on factors such as weather. In the chart below, the 3 comparator local authorities that have higher levels of renewable capacity have significant output from wind turbines.
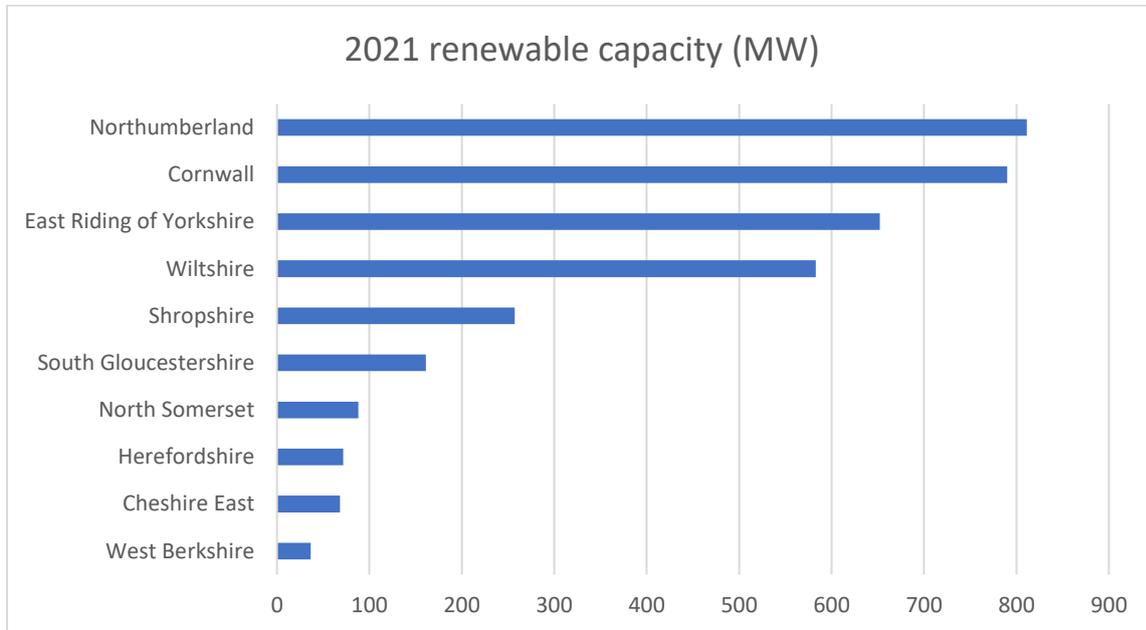
Figure 11. Renewable energy installed capacity in Wiltshire (KPI E1), in relation to comparator local authorities
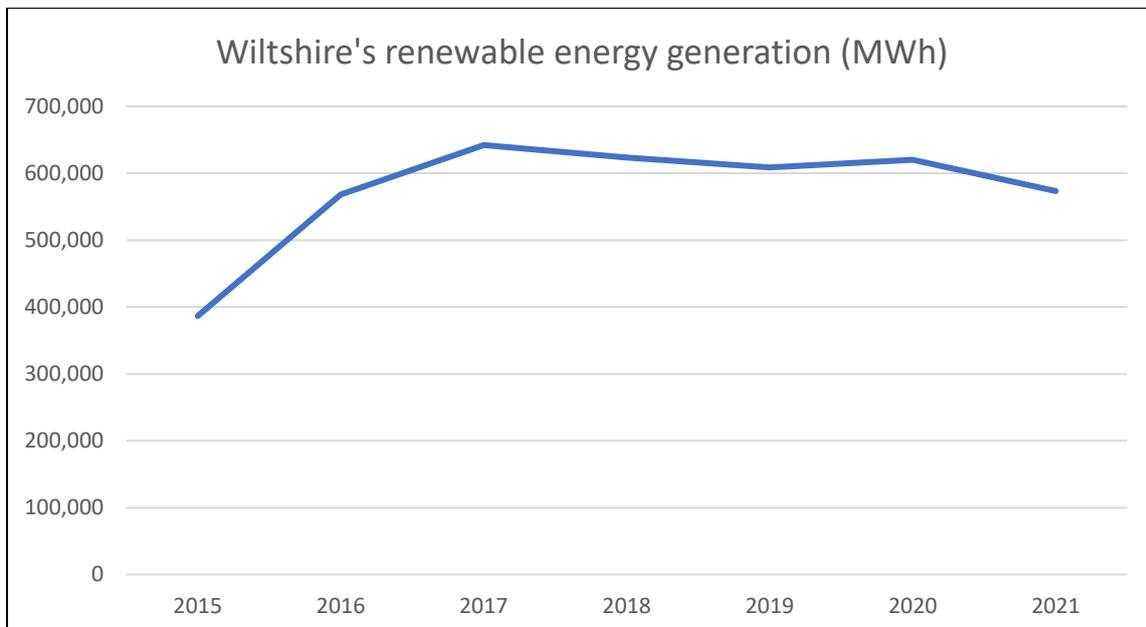
Figure 12. E2 Renewable energy generation

There was a noticeable downturn in renewable energy generation in 2021. One factor could be weather, and our analysis shows that Cornwall also had a similar downturn, however it is

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not possible for us to know the reason at the moment. To put renewable energy generation in context, in 2020 total renewable generation was 620,216 MWh and this contributed 31% of Wiltshire's electricity consumption, and 6% of total energy consumption.

3. Amended KPIs

In Table 1 above, text in red shows where KPIs have been amended. This is usually to clarify what is being tracked. Information about targets has also been added to most KPIs since they were first published in September 2022.

The KPIs X5, X6, X7, C3a and C3b all related to tracking the number of bids the council submits, those that were successful and how much funding they brought in. The council's Finance directorate tracks successful bid amounts and it is reported in the Financial Implications of the main Cabinet Report paragraph 97 rather than being included in this appendix. Unsuccessful bids are reported on in the main report.

Table 2: Funding-related KPIs now reported as part of the financial implications

X5. * Number of funding bids submitted (in support of Climate Strategy - county-wide objectives)
X6. Number of funding bids successful (in support of Climate Strategy objectives county-wide projects)
X7. Amount of external funding secured in support of Climate Strategy objectives
C3a.* Amount of external funding bid for (£) (relating to council emissions)
C3b. See below. Amount of funding secured (£) (relating to council emissions)

Appendix 3 - Solar Together Scheme 1 report

The first Solar Together Wiltshire and Swindon scheme in 2022-23 was successful, overachieving against expectations on almost all KPIs.

Registration Results:
The initial registration rates exceeded all expectations with a registration rate of 10.9% in Wiltshire (based on Direct Mail (DM) volume of 57,551) and 8.4% in Swindon (based on DM volume of 45,375), compared to a benchmark expectation of 3.5%. There were 10,175 registrations in total (see Table 1 below for further breakdown by type and council). Figure 1 shows Wiltshire Registrations by Community Area in Scheme 1.

Table 1 – Breakdown of registrations by council area.

Council area	Total Registrations (Solar PV & Retrofit Battery)	Solar PV Registrations	Retrofit Battery Registrations
Wiltshire	6,323	5,689	634
Swindon Borough	3,852	3,639	213
Total	**10,175**	**9,328**	**847**

When respondents were asked 'how did you hear about the scheme' 70% said they heard about the scheme via the direct mail letter or leaflet, demonstrating the ongoing importance of this communication channel for registrations.

Acceptance Results:
1,774 customers accepted an offer from Solar Together Wiltshire and Swindon. Within Wiltshire Council 1,077 participants accepted the offer for Solar PV with 583 (54%) of these choosing to add optional battery storage to their solar PV package at the point of acceptance; an additional 122 customers accepted an offer for retrofit battery storage. Overall, 88% of participants across the scheme opted to add a battery to their solar panel installation following the survey. This indicates an extremely high appetite for battery storage and an increasing resident focus on self-consumption.
Also, 28 SME participants within Wiltshire Council and 10 SME participants within Swindon Borough Council accepted their offer.
At the end of the decision period 1,690 of the 1,774 total participants who had accepted their offer paid their deposit, resulting in a 5% drop-off from the acceptances which is within expectations.

Decliner feedback & Drop-out Results:
1,599 participants within Wiltshire and Swindon did not accept their offer and actively selected a decliner reason. Cost being higher than expected was the top decliner reason with 46% (472 participants) from Wiltshire and 48% (278 participants) from Swindon selecting this option.
The dropout rates for Scheme 1 were higher than Solar Together's benchmark of 25%, with an overall drop-out rate of 37% (195 cancellations/531 paid) in Swindon and 39% (448 cancellations/1,159 paid) within Wiltshire. iChoosr stated that dropout rates for all 2022 schemes were higher than previous years, with reasons attributed to resident's financial situation changing due to the cost-of-living crisis, and the energy crisis leading to a higher registration uptake from a wider demographic unlikely to go ahead with an actual installation. iChoosr hope to see dropout rates improve across future schemes.

Installation Results:
There were 1,047 installations across Wiltshire (712) and Swindon (335), and Figure 2 shows Solar Together Wiltshire Installations by Community Area. The 1,047 installations consisted of 948 Solar PV and 99 retrofit battery storage only. See Tables 2 & 3 below for further breakdowns.

Table 2 - Solar PV estimated install breakdown by Council.

Council area	Accepted	Total Installations	Panels Installed	Tonnes CO_2 reduction in Year 1	Installed CO_2 reduction over 25 years (tonnes)
Wiltshire	1,041	638	6,779	518	12,949
Swindon Borough	497	310	3,074	232	5,794
Total	**1,538**	**948**	**9,853**	**750**	**18,742**

Table 3 - Breakdown of retrofit battery storage only (adding storage to an existing PV installation) by Council.

| Council area	Total no. retrofit battery installations	Total KWh Installed Battery	Total Investment (£)
Wiltshire	74	376	405,318
Swindon Borough	25	129	131,873
Total	**99**	**505**	**537,191**

Customer Satisfaction Results:
There is a high level of customer satisfaction with over 80% of customers saying that they would recommend Solar Together to their friends and family. Complaint volumes throughout the scheme were low, with 65 customers in total (3.6%) contacting Solar Together, which was below their expectation of a 10% forecast. The largest driver of complaints was the installers' communication and iChoosr is working on providing greater support to installers in Solar Together to combat this going forward.

The scheme has delivered total private resident investment in renewables of over £7.5 million in Wiltshire Council and over £3.6 million in Swindon Borough Council, a total of over £11 million. iChoosr therefore estimate that the installations delivered through 2022 Solar Together Wiltshire and Swindon will deliver over 18,500 tonnes of carbon reduction over 25 years (Table 2). This equates to roughly 10,000 cars off roads for a year.

It is worth noting that the councils do not pay iChoosr for any services, rather the council directly pays for the promotion required under the scheme (e.g., direct mail and staff project management costs) and it is expected that most or all these upfront costs will be recovered. iChoosr receive a fee from the winning supplier for each solar installation completed and pass some of this back to the councils. The amount per installation is determined by the total number of installations.

Figure 1 Solar Together Wiltshire Registrations by Community Area in Scheme 1.
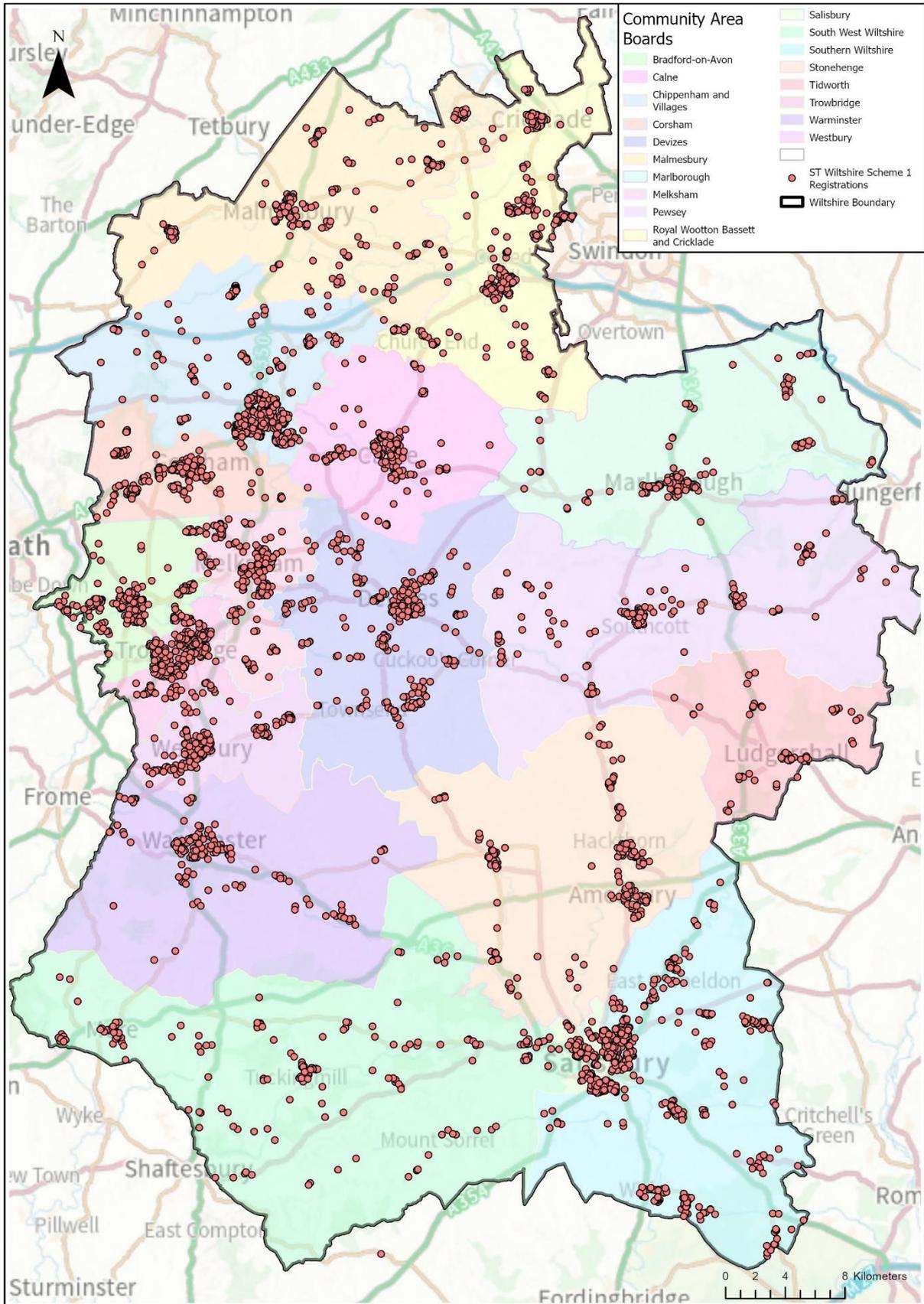
Figure 2 Solar Together Wiltshire Installations by Community Area in Scheme 1.
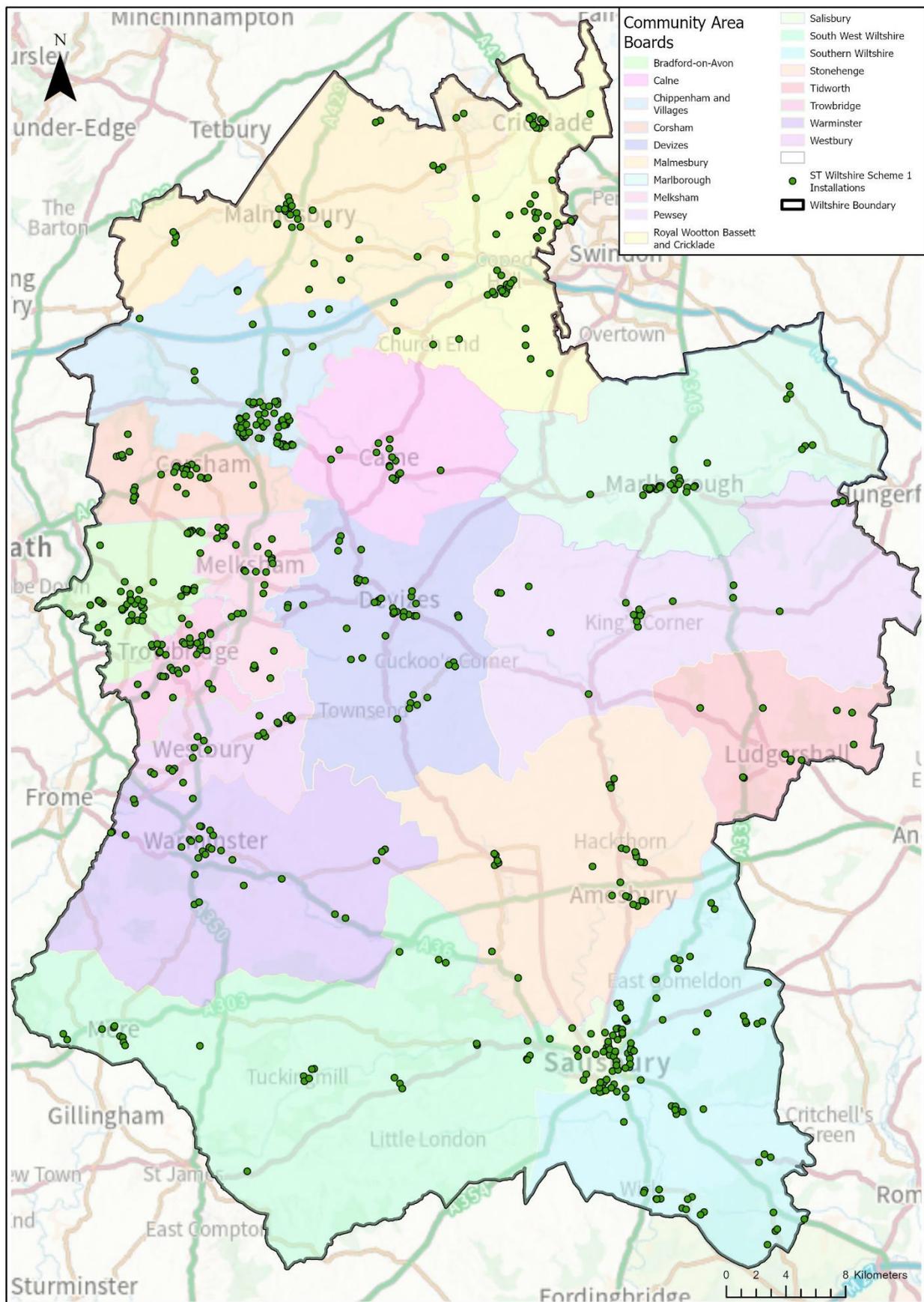
Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

10 October 2023

Subject: **Wiltshire Council Annual Adoption Service: 2022-2023 Year End Report**

Cabinet Member: **Councillor Laura Mayes - Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, and Skills**

Key Decision: **Non-Key**

Executive Summary

It is a statutory requirement that Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service provides a year-end report to the Council in relation to the child's journey to adoption. It describes the management arrangements, outcomes, priorities, and finances for the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adoption West (AW), is commissioned to provide defined adoption services, and has responsibility for recruiting, assessing and approving adopters for our children. Adoption West is registered with Ofsted and has a separate inspection.

In this reporting period, 80 adopters were approved, this is a slight reduction on the previous year where 87 adopters were approved (85-95 target). However, there are fewer children waiting for adoptive homes than the number of families approved which means the demand can be met. As of 31 March 2023, there are 64 approved adopters waiting for a match. 36% of adopters approved in 2022/23 are available to adopt siblings, which exceeds the target range of 25-35%, a 15% increase on the previous year.

The focus for Adoption West is to recruit adopters for older children, those with additional needs, children from black and minority ethnic communities and larger sibling groups.

Nationally over the last nine years there has been a gradual decline in adoption being the outcome for children leaving care. In Wiltshire, the rate has remained relatively stable, ranging between 11-14%. Where adoption is the right permanence plan for a child, this is pursued by the Council and predominantly endorsed by the Court.

Comparative performance for local authorities is via the National Adoption Scorecard which, for Wiltshire, shows that performance remains strong. There are some fluctuations related to the commitment to deliver permanence via adoption for some children, despite factors which may make it more challenging to find a match, which impact on timeliness performance. Progressing the right permanence plan for a child will always remain the priority.

The national three year scorecard data is not yet published (due by the end of this year) and therefore comparator data is not currently available. Wiltshire has local reporting and therefore continues to have visibility of performance, but is unable to make comparisons against other authorities performance due to the lag in published data.

The three key scorecard measures each local authority Adoption Agency uses are as follows:

- A10: the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family:

The estimated figure for 2022-23 is 491 days, up on the previous year at 369. The target is 300-380 days.

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

The estimated figure for 2022-23 is 162 days, a slight increase from 145 in 2021/22. The target is 140-160 days.

- A20: the average time between entering care and placement order:

The estimated figure for 2022-23 is 283, a minor increase from the 282 days in 2021/22. The target is 210–230 days.

These measures on the surface indicate a decline, however those children outside of target have been reviewed to ensure the reason for delays are reasonable, and to determine whether there are practice improvements required to increase timeliness. For all children outside of targets, all delays were purposeful and in the child's best interests, or outside of the Local Authorities control. Where improvements could be made via the performance of courts, these are highlighted at the Family Justice Board. 4 children (1 sibling group) representing 25% of the total cohort was outside of timescale for reasons relating to their best interests; and 11 children (2 sibling groups) representing 69% of the total cohort were outside for reasons not within the Local Authority's control.

Whilst local measures show a decline, Wiltshire continues to perform well nationally and has robust quality assurance mechanisms in place to analyse practice outside of target ranges. Adoption performance remains strong, as evidenced within the data and quality review of individual children's experiences through routine audit. Annual target setting takes place to ensure targets remain appropriate, with a review of the targets taking place at the Performance and Outcomes Board on 05 September.

Adoption performance is reported quarterly to the Director of Families and Children's Services and to the Performance and Outcomes Board, chaired by the Corporate Director for People (DCS) and attended by the Cabinet Member.

Proposal

Cabinet is asked to approve the report and that the contents of it are considered against the Corporate Parenting Strategic Priorities for children in care to have a loving home, good relationships, and be respected.

Reason for Proposals

Wiltshire Council is an Adoption Agency registered with Ofsted. The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards (25.6) and 2013 Statutory Guidance (3.93 and 5.39) describe the information that is required to be reported to the executive side of the local authority, on a six-monthly basis, to provide assurance that the adoption agency is complying with the conditions of registration whilst being effective and achieving good outcomes for children. A report to Cabinet is prepared annually.

Adoption West is subject to separate scrutiny arrangements through its own Scrutiny Board.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

10 October 2023

Subject:	**Wiltshire Council Annual Adoption Service: 2022-2023 Year End Report**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Laura Mayes - Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, and Skills**
Key Decision:	**Non-Key**

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides a year-end report to Cabinet regarding the performance of Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service, alongside a consideration of the effectiveness of Adoption West. It is a requirement of the condition of registration, as described in the 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards and 2013 Statutory Guidance, that Cabinet is satisfied the Adoption Agency complies with the conditions of registration, is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children.

2. Cabinet received an Annual Report regarding the Adoption Service in October 2022, covering the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. This report relates to the full year 2022/23 reporting period.

3. This report includes information regarding the management and performance of Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service and the Adoption Scorecard, relating to children who require adoptive families and those who are placed; the disruption of placements and children where the plan for adoption changes. It also includes summary information about the recruitment and approval of adopters by Adoption West and the work of the Adoption West Panel. It should be noted that details of the performance of Adoption West as an organisation can be accessed in that organisation's annual report.

4. It is recommended that the contents of this report are for approved.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

5. Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service contributes to a central priority as set out in Council's Business Plan 2022-2032; namely to protect those who are most vulnerable and provide permanent homes for children in care.

6. Wiltshire Council remains an adoption agency because it retains responsibility for children requiring adoption. Adoption West has responsibility for the recruitment, assessment and approval of adoptive families, family finding and adoption support.

Background

7. Adoption is a route to provide permanence for children who are no longer able to live safely with their parents or other family members. This is achieved through the provision of quality adoptive placements for Wiltshire's children where a decision has been made that adoption is in their best interest.

8. The fundamental requirement is that children are placed with families who have been assessed as being suitable to adopt. A recommendation of suitability is made by the Adoption West Panel, and this is ratified as a decision by that organisation's Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Through this process, there is rigorous assurance that approved adopters can provide safe, secure and enduring family placements for this vulnerable group of children. In turn, this allows them to grow, develop and thrive in a nurturing, supportive and loving family environment, removed from the stigma of being looked after by the local authority. To do this, there must be an appropriate range of enduring adoption placements to meet the assessed needs of children who need permanent adoptive families. These families must promote stability, safety and positive outcomes for children by working in partnership with all agencies, as required.

9. The legislative basis of this work is the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the accompanying 2005 Regulations.

10. The Local Authority, through reporting to Cabinet, must be assured of regulatory compliance and effectiveness through performance monitoring, challenge and improvement planning.

11. Adoption West has the responsibility to recruit, assess and approve adopters for children. This includes those who can provide permanence for children who may be considered 'harder to place'. This group includes older children, sibling groups, and children with additional needs and disabilities.

12. Adoption West is a Regional Adoption Agency: a partnership of six local authorities. It provides adoption services in line with government requirements, from the point of expression of interest to adopt, through to assessment and approval at panel and beyond, to Adoption Support.

Main Considerations for the Council

13. The main consideration for the Council is to be assured about statutory compliance and the effectiveness of the Adoption Service.

14. Wiltshire has set local performance targets in addition the national scorecard data, and this is the first reported year. In Wiltshire 16 children were made subject to adoption orders in 2022/23.

15. A10: 32% (5/16) children adopted moved in with their adopters in less than 380 days from entering care.

16. A2: 69% (11/16) children adopted were matched with an adoptive family within 160 days of the Local Authority receiving authority to place a child.

17. A20: 44% (7/16) children adopted were made subject to a placement order below 230 days from the date of coming into care.

18. These children's journeys have all been reviewed and the reasons for delays are not practice related or generally within our control i.e. relate to protracted care proceedings, the impact of additional assessments being ordered within the court arena, family members coming forward to be assessed at a late stage, and positively assessed family members withdrawing prior to final orders and/or placement. Given the significance of adoption for birth families, it is understandable that when family members present late in proceedings the Court and all those involved will want to make every effort to ensure families are assessed and considered as a kinship carer for a child.

19. There remain challenges with care proceedings concluding within the 26-week timescale, due to a number of factors outside of the Local Authority's control as described above. These challenges are subject to continued scrutiny via the Wiltshire Family Justice Board and Nationally informed by research findings, National reviews and DfE innovations which Wiltshire is at the forefront of.

20. Wiltshire are the regional lead in DfE Research: The National Pre-Proceedings Data Set project which should better enable us to measure the effectiveness of Pre-Proceedings and in turn improve delivery and timeliness for children at risk of going into the court arena.

21. Wiltshire have also recently (July 2023) been successful in a bid with the DfE to involve the Childrens Guardian (CAFCASS) prior to the first Case Management hearing in a care proceedings case, with the overall aim to seek to reduce the use of experts in proceedings and the overall length of proceedings. The shortening of care proceedings will have a direct impact on the timeliness of adoptions.

22. Overall, this demonstrates continued commitment to secure permanent arrangements for all children where adoption is in their best interests, even though it could take longer to find an adoptive match. To ensure continued progress and improvement, careful attention will be given to all aspects of adoption work that remain the responsibility of Wiltshire Council Adoption Service, whilst ensuring, through governance arrangements and challenge, the effectiveness of Adoption West.

23. Management arrangements and staffing within the Council are compliant with Regulations in terms of qualification and experience. The Director of Children's Services (DCS) has overall responsibility for aspects of adoption retained by the Council. Reporting to the DCS is the Director with responsibility for the Families and Children's Service. The Head of Service for Support and Safeguarding and one of their Service Managers ensure the effectiveness of overall adoption provision; this Service Manager is the designated link with Adoption West. The Service Director for Adoption West came into post in July 2018, this provides strength and clear accountability with an opportunity to develop and enhance the strategy for improvement and ensure best outcomes for children.

24. The Director of Families and Children is the Adoption West company Director and sits on the Board of Directors. Adoption West is subject to a Scrutiny Committee that reports into Children's Select Committee.

25. Only three children were placed outside of the Adoption West area, either to be placed with siblings or to ensure a cultural match; both good reasons for placing outside of the area. Adoption West have however sought support/advice from the National Adoption Recruitment team regarding the recruitment from within BME communities across the region and are developing an action plan to address the issue.

26. In 2022/23, two rescissions of ADM decisions that children should be placed for adoption were made, where the plan for the child moved away from adoption (six in the previous year).

27. During 2022-2023 there have been no adoption placement disruptions and no placement breakdowns. This demonstrates strong matching.

28. Early Permanence (EP) is one of the DfE's aims in the 2021 National strategy: Achieving Excellence Everywhere. Adoption West has taken the lead in the South West. Of the 80 household approvals in 2022/23 56% of these adopters will consider Early Permanence. Increasing EP carers should see a positive improvement for children in the timeliness of their adoption journey and achieving permanence.

29. Adoption West will be involved in a new project which is due to be implemented in June 2023 'the South West Project for children with disabilities' Working with Oxford University. The Aim of this project to look at bespoke models of recruitment for children with a disability.

30. The Adoption West Adoption Panel complies with Regulations. This is important assurance as children who are the responsibility of Wiltshire Council are matched with adopters at these panels. The panel is chaired by a suitably skilled and experienced Independent Chair who ensures that the functions of panel are delivered effectively. There are Agency Panel Advisers from Adoption West to ensure that the panel is always adequately supported. To ensure that panels are quorate, there is an Adoption West central list of panel members established which includes members with direct experience of adoption, including adopters, and those who have been adopted.

31. To comply with Regulations, all Panel members, including the Chair, receive annual appraisals which consider their effectiveness as panel members and any areas for development. There is an annual training day and Chairs meet regularly with the Panel Advisors to discuss operational and developmental matters relating to the panels' work and consistency, making any changes and improvements as required. There are regular liaison meetings between Council managers and Adoption West managers and the Panel Advisor.

32. The average duration of Care Proceedings for Wiltshire 2022/23 was 33 weeks, this is an improvement from 36.9 weeks in March 20221/22; and significantly lower than the national CAFCASS figure for 2022/23 which is 44 weeks. Through robust tracking, we know that there are key factors beyond the control of the

Local authority impacting on timeliness. The Care Proceedings Case Manager (CPCM) has specific oversight of adoption from pre-proceedings.

Safeguarding Implications

33. This service is delivered in accordance with Wiltshire Children's Services Policy and Procedures. The local authority has clear and effective safeguarding procedures in place for children and vulnerable adults. The partnership with Adoption West is regulated and Adoption West has the appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. There are no safeguarding implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications

34. The risk of poor health and wellbeing outcomes is known to be greater for children looked after. Safe and high-quality environments provided by adoption placements are, therefore, an opportunity to mitigate these risks and improve long term outcomes for these children and young people.

Procurement Implications

35. There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

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

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

37. There are no implications arising from this report.

Workforce Implications

38. There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

39. The Performance and Outcomes Board will meet on 05 September 2023 to consider this report prior to the report being presented to Children's Select Committee on 21 September 2023 and the Adoption West Scrutiny Task Group on 27 September.

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

40. This report is for approval; no decisions are being requested.

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

41. This report is for approval; no decisions are being requested.

Financial Implications

42. The service has been managed within budget, and therefore no financial implications arise from this report.

	2022-23 Budget (£ Million)	2022-23 Year End Final Spend (£ Million)	Variance (£ Million)
Adoption Support and Allowances	0.465	0.363	(0.102)
Adoption income	-	(0.068)	(0.068)
Contractual Payment: Adoption WEST	0.806	0.845	0.039
Total	**1.271**	**1.140**	**(0.131)**

Legal Implications

42. It is a requirement of registration as an Adoption Agency that the Executive of the Council receive regular written reports regarding the effectiveness, compliance and management of the Agency. It is agreed that this is in the form of an annual report, ensuring that legal requirements are met. There are no additional legal implications arising.

Options Considered

43. This report is for approval; no decisions are being requested.

Conclusion

44. Recent years have seen considerable change within the sphere of adoption with the introduction of RAAs and a focus on improving adoption performance nationally. At the heart of this is the belief that, for some children, adoption is the best route to legal permanence, security and the opportunity to achieve their potential. Wiltshire Council is committed to monitoring and improving service delivery where necessary for these children, with robust local measures in place to oversight practice.

45. Adoption practice in Wiltshire is strong, as evidenced within this report; and where timeliness is impacted, the reason for this is known and scrutinised.

Jen Salter, Director - Families & Children

Report Author: Pier Pritchard, Katrina Mcjannet pier.pritchard@wiltshire.gov.uk, katrina.mcjannet@wiltshire.gov.uk

30 August 2023

Appendices
None

Background Papers
None

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

10 October 2023

Subject:	**Commissioning of Carers Support Services**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, and Inclusion**
Key Decision:	**Key**

Executive Summary

This paper sets out a commissioning plan for Carers Support Services from 2024 – 2027 and seeks agreement to go out to tender for these services.

Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Integrated Commissioning Board currently jointly fund Carers Support Services through a pooled budget arrangement.

The current contract is due to end on the 31st of March 2024

Proposals

Cabinet is asked to approve:

1) The Carers Support Service Commissioning Plan for a 3-year service commencing in 2024 -2027 and with a 2-year extension option. And,

2) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, and Inclusion, following completion of the necessary competitive procurement exercise, to award the contract and take such other necessary steps to achieve the outcomes and objectives set out in this report.

Reason for Proposals

The existing All Age Carers Support Service Contract has been in place for 6 years and is due to expire on the 31 March 2025. There is no option to further extend the contract.

The service specification which has been in place now for 6 years and needs refreshing based on extensive co production of the new strategy and delivery plan.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

10 October 2023

Subject:	**Commissioning of Carers Support Services**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, and Inclusion**
Key Decision:	**Key**

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to note and approve the need to tender for, and award, a new contract for a service that will offer support to carers of all ages across Wiltshire.

2. Carers support is currently provided under a contract which has been in place now for 6 years operating with the same service specification. The contract is due to end on the 31 March 2024, and there is no ability to further extend this contract.

3. A new service specification has been drafted which has been informed by carers, changes in the market, the impact of Covid-19 on carers, learning from the last five years, and the need to ensure better identification and support for young carers.

4. Carers are a large diverse group of people. Their needs are extremely varied and complex. They are a resource and asset upon which care, and support systems depend. There is therefore a strong economic case for supporting and investing in carers support services due to the enormous contribution they make to supporting the overall health and social care system.

5. Failure to support carers would not only result in poor outcomes for the carer and the cared for person but could also have negative implications on areas such as education, housing, primary and secondary health, and social care services.

6. Most people who have caring responsibilities are proud to be a carer. They are caring for people they know and care deeply about. However, to successfully undertake their caring responsibilities they need support and guidance, which will enable them to also live a life of their own.

7. The current carers support service is a jointly commissioned service with health and the new service will continue to be jointly commissioned with the BSW Integrated Care Board.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

8. The Council has a statutory duty to assess and meet the needs of carers who meet the eligibility criteria set out in The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

9. These two Acts improved and extended carers rights to assessment and support to meet their eligible needs.

10. The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 require Local Authorities to adopt a whole system approach, whole Council, whole family approach, co-ordinating services and support around the person, child, and their family. It requires that the impact of the care needs of an adult or their family, including children are taken into consideration.

Background

11. Carers Support Services have been jointly funded since 2010.

12. The service was last tendered, and a contract awarded in 2018.

13. The current contract is for an all-age carer support service and the new service will also be an all-age service.

14. The list of principal services under the current contract include:

- Improving carer awareness across health, social care, education, and the wider community, recognising that people do not always know what they need or what is available to support them and that carers may not identify with the term as carer.

- Operating a reduce, prevent, and delay model including information, advice, intelligent signposting, and onward referral.

- Increasing carer involvement and ensuring that the voice of carers is heard when decisions are made about how their own needs and the needs of those they care for are met.

- Undertaking Care Act compliant carers' assessments for 18+ carers. This is a two-level function: primarily undertaking health and wellbeing assessments that result in an reduce, prevent, and delay outcomes in 80% of cases and a secondary function of 'Carer Assessments' that are likely to lead to the provision of services, usually through a Direct Payment or brokered direct service.

- Undertaking health and wellbeing assessments for parent carers;

- Undertaking young carer and parent carer transition assessments.

- Organising organised carer breaks and activities that are an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation and who share the same interests and help to build a network of peer support.

- Enabling carers to access training to support them to provide care and support, maintain their own wellbeing and build resilience.

- Providing emotional wellbeing support

- Supporting opportunities for carers to get into volunteering, which adds value to the service as well as an opportunity, particularly for those whose caring role has ended and who are seeking a return to employment.

- Administering and supporting registration to the carers' emergency card scheme

15. The current service provider up until April 2023 sub-contracted support for individual young carers including the provision of young carer break activities to a different

provider. The plan is to not have sub-contracting arrangements for the new service, but to encourage partnership or consortium bids through the competitive tendering process.

16. Under the terms of the existing contract the provider is required to 'add value' to services by reducing, preventing, and delaying needs. They are also required to add value by raising funds from other sources such as trusts, grants, and community fundraising to contribute to the available funding for delivery against the service specification. This requirement will remain in the new contract.

17. The service is funded from a carers' pooled budget under a section 75 agreement between health and social care. The carers' pooled budget forms part of the Better Care Fund and is aligned with the BCFs vision of ensuring care is delivered as close to home as possible.

18. The new commission will seek to build on achievements made to date and will look to improve outcomes for young carers and young adult carers, improve carer journey pathways particularly for young carers and those carers who receive a statutory carers assessment.

19. The new contract will also support the development of more meaningful key performance indicators which the current service provider has been keen to develop to better demonstrate value for money.

Main Considerations for the Council

20. There is a pooled budget available within the Better Care Fund from which to commission this service. This is shown as **Appendix 1**.

21. The Council currently outsources its responsibility under the Care Act (2014) Section 10 statutory carer's assessments to the current service provider. The intention is for the Section 10 assessments to remain outsourced as part of the new service.

22. If a new Carers Support Service were not to be commissioned the Council would need to internally resume this statutory responsibility, which would have resource and TUPE implications.

23. If the procurement process results in a new supplier/suppliers winning the contract TUPE will apply. The ending of the relationship with the current supplier will also need to be carefully managed.

24. The existing Joint Carers Strategy will need to be updated in 2023 and having a new supplier/suppliers in place to work with commissioners, carers and the Carers Partnership Forum will ensure that a new Strategy can be developed which addresses local priorities for development and sets out the Council's aspirations for supporting carers.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

25. Health Select Committee received a presentation on the Draft All Age Carers Strategy and Delivery Pan 2023-2026 on 4th July 2023.

Safeguarding Implications

26. The contract that will be awarded will contain robust safeguarding measures in line with Council policy.

27. A representative from the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership Board attends the Wiltshire Carer Partnership Forum. This Partnership Forum will work with commissioners and carers to ensure that actions are agreed and taken to meet the outcomes set out in the existing and any new Wiltshire Carers Strategy.

Public Health Implications

28. A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.

29. The 2011 Census found that in Wiltshire there were:

   - 47,608 people who said they provided unpaid care.
   - 42% of carers were men and 58% women.
   - 2,723 carers were aged 24 and under (5.8% of the Wiltshire population).
   - 11,876 carers were aged 65 or over (25.1% of carers in Wiltshire).

30. The 2021 Census data produced by the Office of National Statistics shows that the population in Wiltshire has increased by 8.4% from around 471,000 to 510,400. The largest population increases being in age groups 55-59, 70-74, 75 to 79 and 90 plus, which all show population increases of over 30%. There is currently no new census data specifically relating to carers in Wiltshire as yet.

31. Unpaid care has increased at a faster pace than population growth because of such things as the Covid pandemic, an ageing population with people living longer with more complex conditions which means that more and higher levels of care are needed for longer.

32. In 2018 the Department of Health & Social Care produced the 'Carers Action Plan 2018-2020'. This document said that 'A sustainable social care system for the future is simply not possible without focusing on how our society supports carers'. Coronavirus has applied even more pressure to our health and social care systems in Wiltshire, which means that now more than ever, there is a need to recognise, support and value carers.

33. Caring responsibilities can be difficult and stressful. Taking on the physical and emotional demands of supporting a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental ill health, or addiction problem can lead to significant negative impacts on carers physical and mental health and wellbeing, education, and employment potential, which in turn can lead to poor quality of life outcomes for carers.

34. Without appropriate support a carers effectiveness can be affected which leads to the admission of the cared for person to hospital or residential care.

35. 84% of carers surveyed for the 2013 State of Caring Survey said that caring has had a negative impact on their health and carers attributed their health risk to a lack of support.

36. There is increasing prevalence of 'sandwich carers' – those looking after young children at the same time as caring for older parents. This term can also be used much more broadly to describe a variety of multiple caring responsibilities for people in different generations.

37. Providing appropriate support to carers can help to avoid carer breakdown. It can result in better physical and mental health outcomes, and this can lead to better quality of life outcomes.

Procurement Implications

38. The services will be procured in line with Procurement Regulations and Policies.

39. There is a joint budget in place for the service.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

40. The procurement of Carers Support Services by the Council will support equitable access to services for carers. The specification for the service will state that the successful supplier/suppliers will be expected to demonstrate use of local resources and provision of services which take account of the diverse needs of the Wiltshire carer population.

41. A full equalities impact assessment was undertaken in respect of the current joint All Age Carers Strategy. The new supplier/suppliers will work with commissioners, carers, and the Carers Partnership Forum to carry out a new full Equality Impact Assessment as part of the development of a new Carers Strategy for Wiltshire.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

42. The new service supplier will be asked to consider the Climate Change Act (2008) with regards to carbon reduction as part of their service delivery model e.g., delivering services closer to people's homes therefore reducing the need to travel.

43. Services will be delivered from existing facilities and venues so there will be no environmental impact on biodiversity, landscape, built heritage, archaeology and flooding, or greenfield sites.

44. The proposed 3 plus 2-year contract will ensure business continuity and provide the opportunity for the supplier/suppliers to develop closer community involvement in the delivery of services in the future.

Workforce Implications

45. TUPE may apply when awarding this contract. This will be managed through the procurement process e.g., the need to transfer relevant information between the outgoing and incoming suppliers.

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

46. Unpaid (family) carers play a vital role in supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals with a disability or illness. This care often comes at the expense of unpaid carers' own wellbeing, with negative effects on the carers' physical and emotional health, finances, and social activity. Without agreement to commission a new Carer Support Service support services will end on the 31st of March 2024 in line with the contract, and carers' wellbeing could be further affected by the lack of such services.

47. Directly supporting carers will reduce the likelihood of carer breakdown. A preventative approach is better for the local economy. This is because by meeting the needs of the carer, the requirement for health/social care funded services reduces.

48. Evidence shows that caring can have an impact on educational attainment. By working to support young carers their life chances could be improved, which in turn will benefit the national/local economy.

49. If a new support service is not commissioned the statutory responsibility for undertaking adult carers assessments will remain with the Council and this will have resource implications and TUPE may apply which will impact on Council HR and Legal Services.

50. Carers quality of life and mental health could be further impacted if opportunities to engage with other carers and break activities are not offered.

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

51. The procurement process may be burdensome for the current supplier. To alleviate some of this burden regular communication has been taking place with the current supplier so that they can plan effectively for the tender process.

52. A Market Engagement Event is planned for September which will provide all potential suppliers with the opportunity of understanding what will be required of the new service and provide an opportunity to ask clarification questions about the tender process.

53. The opportunity to tender will be advertised through the Southwest Procurement Portal. This means that all potential suppliers will receive information at the same time.

Financial Implications

54. A pooled budget is managed by Wiltshire Council on behalf of the Council and the Integrated Care Board. The funds sit within the Better Care Fund. There is a Section 75 Agreement (NHS Act 2006) which covers the legal and financial governance of this arrangement.

55. The Carers Pooled Budget also commissions support for Carers through the Wiltshire Citizens Advice Service. There is no impact on this service.

Legal Implications

56. The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 improved and extended carers' rights to assessment and support to meet their eligible needs (including parent carers and young carers). Adults and carers have similar rights to an assessment on the appearance of needs.

57. Section 2 of the Care Act 2014 outlines the Council's duty regarding 'preventing needs for care and support'. Section 1(2) states that 'A local authority must provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities, or resources, or take other steps, which it considers will …(b) contribute towards preventing or delaying the development by carers in its area of needs for support …(d) reduce the needs for support of carers in its area'.

58. Local Authorities must meet their duties to identify, assess and support young carers, young adult carers and their families. They need to proactively identify all young carers. They must make sure that the assessment process meets the criteria set out in the legislation. They must make sure that they join up the work of children's services and adult services so that young carers and young adult carers benefit from professionals working together. The new service will include responsibility for transition assessment.

59. Due to the value of the contract a full tender process needs to be followed to secure services.

Conclusions

60. Cabinet are requested to approve:

   a) The Carers Support Service Commissioning Plan for a 3-year service commencing in 2024 -2027 and with a 2-year extension option; and,

   b) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, and Inclusion, following completion of the necessary competitive procurement exercise, to award the contract and take such other necessary steps to achieve the outcomes and objectives set out in this report.

Andy Brown, Corporate Director, Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer)

Report Author: Georgia Tanner, Transformation Programme Lead,
Georgia.Tanner@wiltshire.gov.uk

31 August 2023

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

10 October 2023

Subject:	**District Specialist Centres and Wiltshire Portage**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Jane Davies - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion**
Key Decision:	**Key**

Executive Summary

Wiltshire Council currently commissions services from five charities across the county known as District Specialist Centres (DSC) and Portage to provide specialist Early Years support for children with SEND. The DSCs are specialist nurseries / pre-schools that provide specialist early years education for children with SEND. Portage provides a home visiting education service to 75 early years children with SEND each week.

District Specialist Centres (DSC) and Portage assist Wiltshire Council in meeting the requirements set out within the SEN Code of Practice to meet the statutory duty of ensuring accessible provision is available for children under five years with SEND.

The current contract ends on 31 March 2024 following a two-year extension. Going forwards we propose to divide the two services into two contracts, a DSC contract and a Portage contract. The tendering for the two contracts will be staggered with the Portage contract starting 1 April 2024 and the DSC contract starting 1 September 2024.

This paper is requesting investment in these services because the way they have been commissioned historically has meant that the contract funding has remained static since 2014 and has not kept pace with demand and inflation.

By increasing investment in these services it will help to keep pace with demand and inflationary pressures and ensure the continued delivery of these services to our early years Wiltshire Children with SEND. This investment in early intervention is supported by the 'The Investing in Early Intervention Report' (May 2022) as it states that 'Theory, and to a certain extent research evidence on early intervention, suggests that if you intervene early and support young children with learning disabilities you can change their developmental trajectory and reduce the gap in outcomes between children with learning disabilities and other children'.

Proposals

This report recommends Cabinet agree the following proposals:

Cabinet is asked to approve

1. District Specialist Centres and Portage to be purchased under separate tender processes with separate specifications, contract management and KPI's.

DSC - Re-tender the service, award and conduct implementation and TUPE before the 31st August 2024 using a codesigned specification that meets the challenges arising and needs of early children with SEND. The contract length will be for five years with an option to extend the contract for a further five years, giving a maximum contract length of 10 years.

Portage - Re-tender the service, award and conduct implementation and TUPE before the 31st March 2024 using a codesigned specification that meets the challenges arising and needs of early children with SEND. The contract length will be for five years five months with an option to extend the contract for a further five years, giving a maximum contract length of 10 years.

2. During the life of the contract to propose and introduce a new DSC provision within the Tidworth area to meet the need of the families in the area. This contract will synchronise with the length and terms of new DSC contracts.

3. Cabinet to agree to the financial envelope set out in tables 15 and 16.

4. That officers continue to undertake to prepare and complete the tender programme, award and implement a new contract for both services.

5. To delegate authority to approve and award a new contract and future extensions and all associated documents to the Director of Commissioning, Corporate Director People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion

Reason for Proposals

1) District Specialist Centres (DSC) and Portage assist Wiltshire Council in meeting the requirements set out within the SEN Code of Practice to meet the statutory duty of ensuring accessible provision is available for children under 5 years with SEND.

2) Development of service to meet the needs of Wiltshire children with SEND

3) Cabinet is asked to authorise the method outlined to complete a tender process that delivers value for money through the new contract.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

10 October 2023

Subject:	**District Specialist Centres and Wiltshire Portage**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Jane Davies - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion.**
Key Decision:	**Key**

Purpose of Report

1. This report requests cabinet approval for the proposal to commission Specialist Early Years SEND support from District Specialist Centres and Wiltshire Portage. These are to be commissioned via a tender exercise.

2. It requests additional investment in order to:

   - 'level up' due to funding remaining the same over a 10 year period
   - Meet increased demand for support, evidenced through increased EHCP requests for 0-5 years and our SEND data which highlights that the majority of EHCP starts begin in transition years to primary for Mainstream and MSS
   - Early intervention with families and children whose needs are met early in local mainstream nursery provision are more likely to transition to mainstream school. DSC & Portage support mainstream to meet needs through outreach work.

3. It outlines the reasons why it is recommended that District Specialist Centres and Portage are to be purchased under separate contracts through two tenders.

4. Cabinet is asked to authorise the method outlined to complete a tender process that delivers specialist early years support to children with SEND.

5. To authorise the development of a DSC provision in the Tidworth area during the length of the contract

6. To delegate authority to approve and award a new contract and future extensions and all associated documents to the Director of Commissioning, Corporate Director People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

7. The proposal is relevant to the following priorities and objectives laid down the Council's Business Plan:

The people of Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy, and enriched lives:
   - We get the best start in life;
   - We stay active;

- We are safe;
- We live well together;
- We ensure decisions are evidence-based;
- We have the right skills to prosper;
- We have vibrant, well-connected communities

8. To support the working themes in the council's business plan 2022 to 2032, commissioning priorities are to:

   a) **Priority 1** - ensure services are in the right place at the right time.
   b) **Priority 2** - ensure right people receive services in the right place i.e. increasing services delivered in the community and in people's homes.
   c) **Priority 3** - ensure right service, right price

Background

Commissioning arrangements

9. Wiltshire Council currently commissions services from four charities across the county known as District Specialist Centres (DSC) to provide specialist Early Years support for children with SEND. The DSCs are specialist nurseries / pre-schools that provides specialist early years education for children with SEND.

10. Wiltshire Council also commission Wiltshire Portage, a charity to provide a home visiting education service to 75 children a week.

11. Their current contracts end on 31st March 2024, following a two-year extension to their contract which commenced on 1st April 2019. Having exercised the extension clause in the current contract we are legally required to carry out a full recommissioning process

12. The services follow Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and in addition Wiltshire Portage is guided by the National Portage Association (NPA) guidance and materials.

13. All four DSC settings are rated Outstanding by Ofsted.

14. These services are commissioned to assist the Wiltshire Council in meeting the requirements set out within the SEN Code of Practice to meet the statutory duty of ensuring accessible provision is available for children under 5 years with SEND.

15. All children are entitled to an education that enables them to:

   - To achieve the best possible educational and other outcome, and
   - become confident young children with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make the transition into compulsory education

Funding arrangements

16. The DSC and Portage receive funding from the higher needs block with some additional funding from the ICB and these contributions vary for historical reasons. Funding for the services has remained the same since 2014, this is partly due to the challenges with commissioning these services in the past.

17. The DSC funding is supplemented by the 2- and 3-year-old funding entitlement that the providers claim.

18. Both DSC & Portage also supplement their funding by fundraising. The fundraising and charitable donations received each year by each provider varies considerably between each provider approximately between £25k and £150K. Each of the providers is embedded in their community and their fundraising success is built on years of development. The current providers bring significant value for money and the contract price is a fraction of what it would cost to purchase the service received at full cost recovery. Given the current financial climate and especially the cost-of-living crisis and high inflation, it is not possible to rely on the similar levels of fundraising during the next contract.

Typical annual DSC funding

Funding	Wiltshire Council funding Including ICB	DAF	EYPP	EYE Enhanced Rate	Early Years Entitlement	Fundrasing - Aprox	Total income
All DSC	£ 311,229	£ 32,595	£ 3,336	£ 62,620	£ 159,494	£ 271,940	£ 841,214

(Table 1)

Typical annual Portage funding

	Wiltshire Council Funding	ICB Funding	Grants and Fundraising	Total
Wiltshire Portage	£127,476.00	£63,112.00	£51,288.00	£241,876.00

(Table 2)

19. Since the beginning of the current contract the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by 23%; this high inflation has impacted the DSCs and Portage as they have had to manage the increase in costs including the increase in fuel costs and staffing. The DSC and Portage have continued to deliver their service despite not receiving an increase in funding their contract during this time.

20. The DSC supported a total of 327 early years children with SEND between Jan-April 2023 . This includes children receiving a placement service only, children receiving a non-placement service and children receiving both a placement and non-placement service. Table 3 show the number of children supported by DSC.

Total number of children receiving service from a DSC
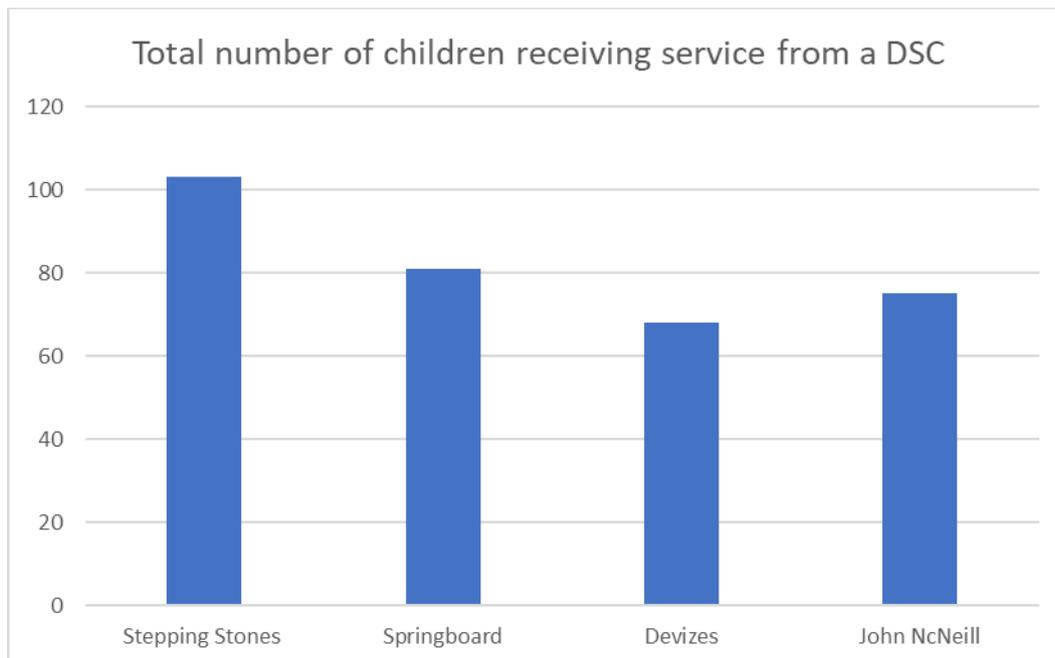
(Table 3)

21. Portage are contracted to support 75 children each week and currently are supporting just over this number.

22. There has been a significant increase in referrals that have led to an unprecedented number of children on a waiting list of 107 (27/06/2023). The waiting list consists of 61 children that are new to the Portage service and 46 children that have received support from Portage and are part of the rotational block. The longest waiting time for the service is 8 months.

23. The number of referrals (on average 3 to 4 a week) continue to rise far exceeding previous years. In response to the large waiting list, Portage conducted a full-scale review of the service. The major changes from the review are:

- A new service criterion and scoring system on how children are placed on the waiting list
- Revised Microsoft referral form
- Triaging of all the children on the waiting list
- Revised paperwork and report formats

Demand

24. Analysing demand for DSC and the Portage service is a challenge due to the historical light touch way these services have been purchased and the quality of data commissioning has received. This is partly because the DSC & Portage manage their own referrals, entry and exit pathways and this information has not been included in the commissioning KPIs. However, we can demonstrate that demand has increased through EHCPs requests for children aged 0-5 (Table 4) and the referrals received. Learning from the previous contract arrangements will inform outcome measures to be stipulated in the new specification.
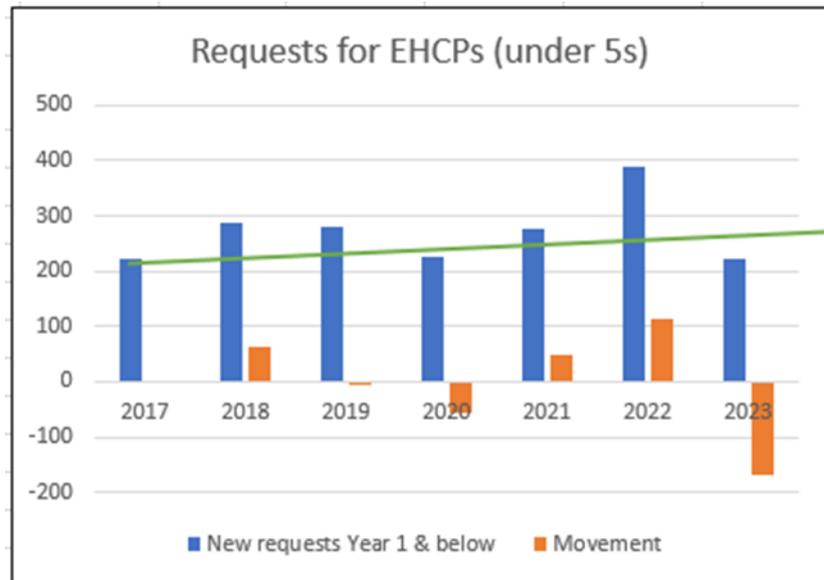
(Table 4)

25. Referrals received by Portage has increased considerably during the current contract, Table 5 shows that the increase is over 150%. Factors that have contributed to this include the increase in needs of children with SEND that is reflected in the increase in the number of EHCPs in Wiltshire. Portage have also raised awareness of their service with Health Visitors by being part of the Health Visitor induction process, Health Visitors are one of the main referrers into Portage. Portage have reported that there are very few referrals that do not require support .
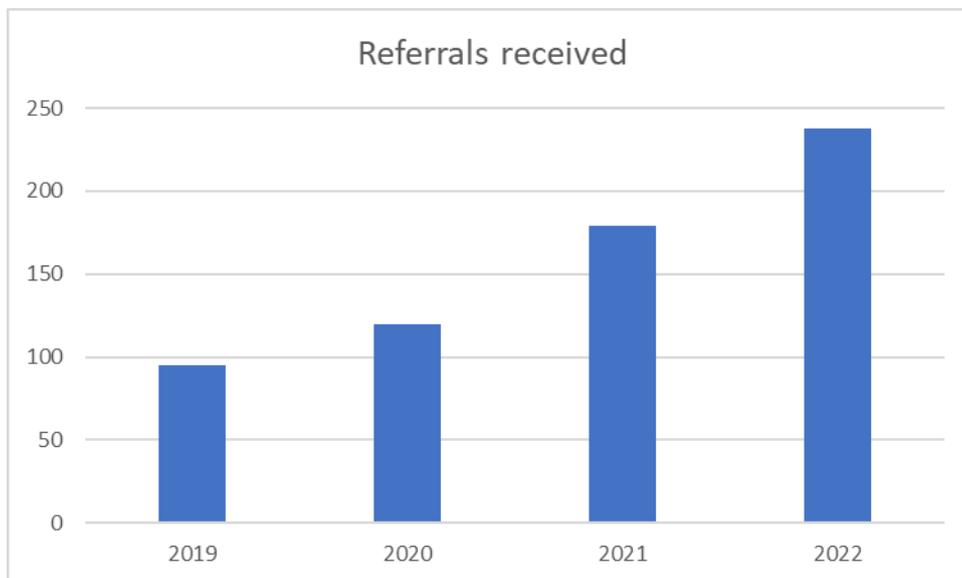
(Table 5)

26. Referrals received by District Specialist Centres have increased during the current contract. Table 6, shows that referrals increased by 36% during the current contract

DSC Referrals
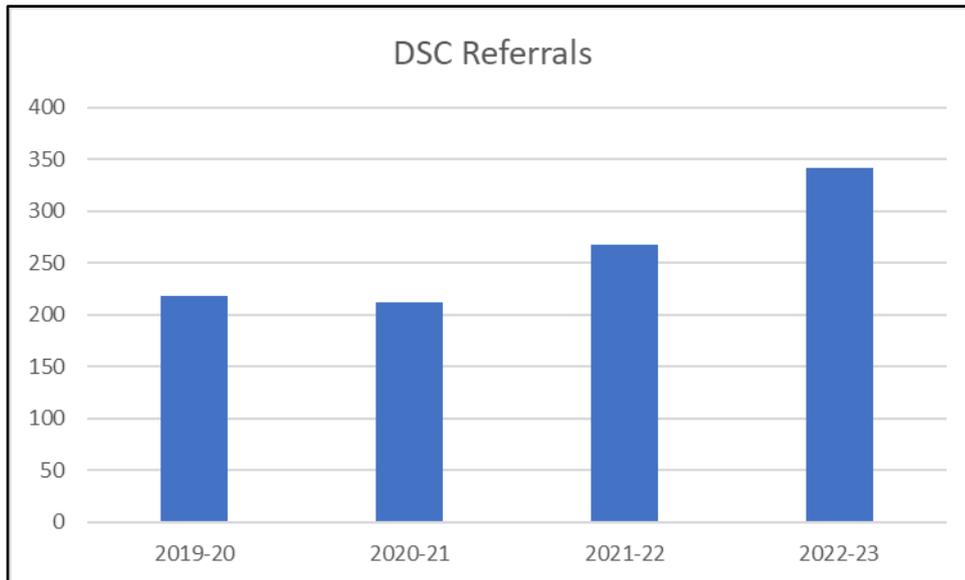
(Table 6)

Main Considerations for the Council

27. DSCs and Portage play an important part in supporting the council's statutory responsibility to provide early years provision free of charge for children with SEND. DSCs additionally provide in reach and outreach to support to Early Years settings to help children with SEND to access a place in a mainstream setting.

28. DSC & Portage have a significant role to play in supporting Therapists and Professional in assessments, observations, introducing strategies and reinforcing treatment. The DSC provide the space for this work to be carried out along with implementing the strategies prescribed by the therapists. Different professionals will be visiting the centres several times a week.

29. The services that the DSCs and Portage provide are different. DSC provide specialist early years support to children with SEND from a nursery setting base with additional in-reach and outreach support to mainstream nurseries. The Portage service offers bespoke child led educational and holistic play programmes to develop the individual learning needs of the child through play in the child's home. It follows a non-centre-based model that bridges the gap between a specialist or mainstream setting and the home environment. Previous commissioning processes have combined the two services together. However, the differences in the services require different specifications, contract management and KPI's. We recommend that the DSC and Portage services are commissioned under separate contracts.

30. DSC and Portage rely on fundraising and grants to fund part of the service, longer stable contracts will help the providers secure additional funding.

31. There has been increasing discussion and feedback that there is an increased demand for support in the Tidworth area. The Early Years Inclusion Advisors have provided information on the number of early years children in the Tidworth, Ludgershall, Upavon, Netheravon, Bulford and Larkhill areas that are known to them that would have benefitted a placement in a District Specialist Centre.
Table 7 shows that there is a demand for DSC support in the Tidworth.

Children known to Early Years Inclusion Advisors

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Academic Co-hort	Number of Children	How many children went on to have EHCP/EHCNA?	How many on SEN Support Plan?
2021/2022 (Started School 2022)	34	24	10
2022/2023 (Starts School 2023)	45	35	12
2023/2024 (Starts School 2024)*	21	14	4

* Numbers will increase through
the year
(Table 7)

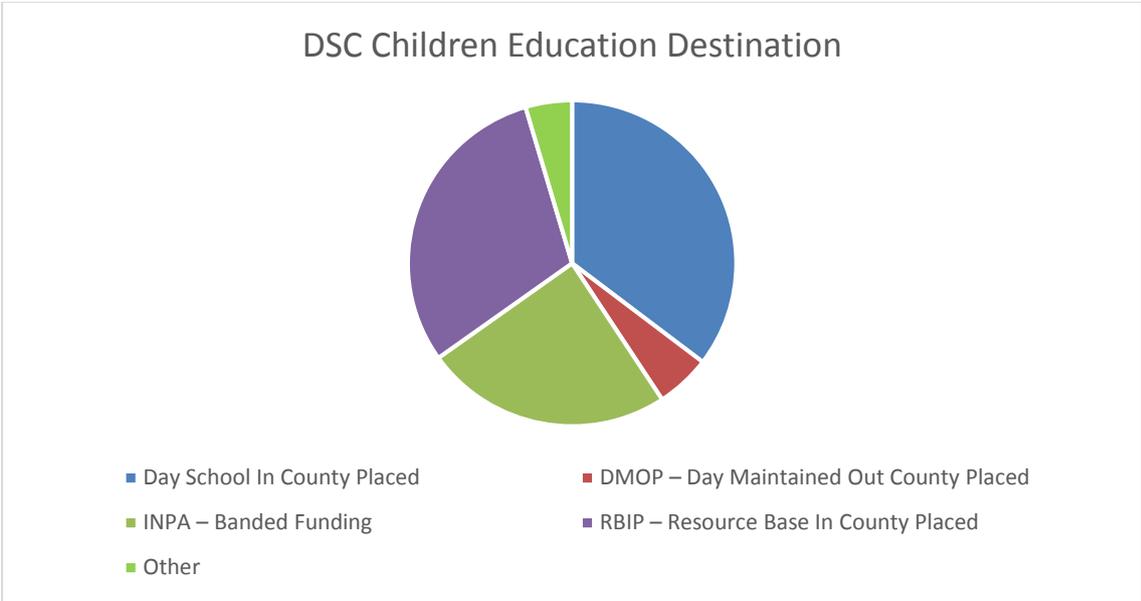Why we need to Invest in Early Support and Intervention

32. There is growing evidence to suggest that change and investment in this area will reap benefits later in the statutory system.
    - Better supported families and children whose needs are met early may avoid the need for a plan completely.
    - Early intervention with families and children whose needs are met early in local mainstream nursery provision are more likely to transition to mainstream school. DSC & Portage support mainstream to meet needs through outreach work.
    - Early signposting to parenting support and other early help and preventative services which can be accessed without an EHCP
    - Better entry and exit routes and enhanced service level agreement expectations and requirements will ensure the services align with the SEN strategy
    - DSC and Portage have a significant role to play in supporting Therapists and Professional in assessments, observations, introducing strategies and reinforcing treatment. The DSC provide the space for this work to be carried out along with implementing the strategies prescribed by the therapists.

Reports support the need to invest in Early Support and Intervention

33. The Investing in early intervention, early intervention report (May 2022) EARLY INTERVENTION REPORT A4 FINAL.pdf (mencap.org.uk) states that 'Theory, and to a certain extent research evidence on early intervention, suggests that if you intervene early and support young children with learning disabilities you can change their developmental trajectory and reduce the gap in outcomes between children with learning disabilities and other children'

34. Further detail of the evidence base for early intervention and alignment with the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper (2022) is included in appendix 1.

Impact of DSC's on Wiltshire Children with SEND

35. We have analysed children born between 2011 and 2019 who attended the DSC. All the children have been awarded an EHCP final plan. Table 8 shows the education destinations of these children. Over half (54%) of the children are either attending resource bases or are attending mainstream primaries with banded funding. 35 % of children are attending in county day school (Exeter House, Silverwood and Springfields Academy).

DSC Children Education Destination

- Day School In County Placed
- DMOP – Day Maintained Out County Placed
- INPA – Banded Funding
- RBIP – Resource Base In County Placed
- Other

(Table 8)

36. Comparing the DSC children to all children born between 2011 and 2019 with an ECHP plan.

Education Provisions

(Table 9)

Other Education Provisions

RBOP – Resource Base Out of County Placed
Personal Budget
PAPL – Parents' Placed
MSOP – Mainstream Out County Placed
LMFS – Locally Managed Funds
ISCD – Independent Specialist College Day
EOTAS – Education Other Than At School
EOPA – EO Temporary Funding
ELP – Planned Place
EDUH – Educated At Home
CHWE – Children's Home with Education
BSOP – Boarding School Out County Placed
BMOP – Boarding Maintained Out County Placed

■ DSC ■ All

(Table 10)

37. When looking at the most expensive placements which are specialist boarding schools only 2 children out of 13 have come from the DSC.

DSC Case Studies demonstrating outcomes from early intervention

38. The current service has undertaken case studies demonstrating evidence for need and benefit of the service. See appendix 2

Cost Benefits of providing early support

39. The table (Table 11) below shows the average unit cost of the various types of mainstream and specialist placements from the 2022/23 financial year. It is easy to see how cost savings can be an additional benefit of early intervention and support. The improvement in outcomes that change the education pathway of children and prevents risk of later problems enable children to attend education in their communities and avoid more expensive specialist schools.

HIGH NEEDS BLOCK **Wiltshire School Provision**		**Potential Cost Reduction per annum per pupil**	
Special School Place & Top Up	£21,481	Mainstream not NPA Primary	-£6,225
ELP Place & Top Up	£10,609	Mainstream not NPA Secondary	-£5,206
Resource Base Place & Top Up	£13,210		
Named Pupil Allowance - Primary	£6,225	NPA not Resource Base	-£6,985
Named Pupil Allowance - Secondary	£5,206	NPA not ELP	-£5,403
Independent / External Provision		Resource Base not Special School (P)	-£8,272

Independent Special School Fees	£56,076	ELP not Special School (S)	-£10,872
		Special School not Independent	-£34,595
SCHOOLS BLOCK			
AWPU - Primary (MPPFL)	£4,265		
AWPU - Secondary (MPPFL)	£5,525		

(Table 11)

Consultation, co-production and engagement

40. Co-production and engagement with parent carers, mainstream settings and professionals has taken place during the Spring of 2023 and will continue into the Summer. A comprehensive summary report is included in appendix 3. This engagement with families and professionals is contributing to and informing the design of the new District Specialist Centre and Portage service.

41. Activities carried out in the Spring were in the form of surveys sent to parent carers and mainstream nurseries and working group sessions with professionals on inclusion and outreach and in reach. The response rate to the surveys was good with a total number of 430 responses and the workshops were well attended. During June WPCC also conducted three face to face engagement events in Calne, Marlborough and Salisbury. These events had a total of 12 parents attending and provided rich feedback from parent carers of children with SEND on our District Specialist Centres.

42. The results from the surveys highlighted that DSC and Portage are highly valued by parent carers and mainstream settings. Comments included 'The support from our DSC has 'been truly amazing!' and "Portage are doing a fantastic Job". Families with children in a DSC strongly agree that staff supporting my child understands their needs and that the service is good.

43. Out-reach work is well received as it supports the practitioner and improves confidence.

44. Professionals and therapists are positive about their interactions with DSCs. The expertise and knowledge of the DSC practitioners was often highlighted and is valued. Portage has good engagement with professionals, and they contribute well to reports and assessments. It was highlighted that Portage bridges the gap between mainstream settings and the home environment.

45. The consultation highlighted challenges to the Portage service in relation to large waiting lists for Portage due to increased demand. Other challenges were around the need for clarity on the referral pathways as well as the entry and exit pathways. Professionals highlighted that Portage is a valuable resource but there is potential overlap in roles.

46. The consultation highlighted challenges to the DSC service these included
   - The service is different depending on where you are in the county
   - Tidworth area has children with higher needs and there are difficulties for parents reaching a DSC due to distance
   - There is an increased number of children with high needs accessing mainstream settings
   - Mainstream settings raised the need to provide 1:1 Support for children with SEND

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- Families are looking for longer sessions with DSC
- There is need for clarity on the role of outreach and the offer from DSC
- Waiting lists were highlighted along with clarity of the referral pathways
- There is a need for clarity around an entry and exit pathways

Benchmarking

47. Research into what our statistical neighbours (those local authorities with similar demographics) have in place tells us that the majority have a DSC service and Portage, see Table 12.

48. DSC benchmarking research included conversations with Swindon, BANES and Gloucestershire about their Early Years specialist support models.

    Portage benchmarking research also included a conversation with a statistical neighbour regarding their Portage model.

Local Authority	Specialist Early Years Settings (like DSCs)	Portage
Wiltshire	Yes	Yes
Bath and North East Somerset	Yes	Yes
Cornwall Council	Yes	Yes
Swindon	Yes	Yes
North Somerset	Yes	Yes
Gloucestershire	Yes	Yes
Central Bedfordshire	No	No
Shropshire Council	No Sensory inclusion service (SIS) to support CYP with hearing and/or visual difficulties – local groups	Yes
Cheshire West and Chester	No Sensory Service Family Support Group	No
Northumberland County Council	No Family hubs	Yes
West Berkshire Council	Yes	No
City of York	Yes	Yes

(Table 12)

Proposed Model

49. District Specialist Centres and Portage to be purchased under separate tender processes with separate specifications, contract management and KPI's.
    - DSC - Re-tender the service, award and conduct implementation and TUPE before the 31st August 2024 using a codesigned specification that meets the challenges arising and needs of children 5years + 5years contract length. With the option tender for an additional DSC in the Tidworth are during the lifetime of the next contract.
    - Portage - Re-tender the service, award and conduct implementation and TUPE before the 31st March 2024 using a codesigned specification that meets the challenges arising and needs of children 5 years + 5 years and 5 months contract length**.**

50. Introduce a new coordinator role within the Early Years inclusion team to work in partnership with Portage and the DSC to coordinate referrals, entry and exit pathways, to quality assure home visits and Outreach work. This role will work with supporting the SEND team with school place planning.

51. Portage model
   - Continue with Portage registered home visiting service
   - The service to work with co-ordinator role to review referrals and decide on entry and exit pathways.
   - Increase the number of children with SEND supported by Portage
   - Length of support to be shorter to enable an increase number of children to be supported and reduce waiting lists.

52. District Specialist Centres model
   - Continue with the existing four DSC settings in Wiltshire
   - The service to work with co-ordinator role to review referrals and decide on entry and exit pathways.
   - Work in partnership to offer increased outreach support to mainstream nurseries
   - DSC to work closely together to share best practice

53. Tidworth provision
   - During the life of the contract to propose and introduce a new DSC provision within the Tidworth area to meet the need of the families in the area.

Market Engagement & Indicative Tender Timetable

54. A market engagement event has taken place in June with further workshops on Inclusion, Outreach and In reach. These events have highlighted that the market for these services is very limited, with interest shown from the existing charities that provide the service and one other charity. We plane for further events to be held in September and October.

The intended tender timetables will be:

Portage Stage	Dates
Invitation to Tender (ITT) Issued	21/10/2023
Deadline for Tenderers to submit clarification questions	12 noon 26/11/2023
Tender Return Deadline	12 noon 02/12/2023
Evaluation and Approvals	December 2023
10-day standstill period	January 2023
Contract Award Notification	January 2023
Service commencement date	01/04/2024

(Table 13)

DSC Stage	Dates
Invitation to Tender (ITT) Issued	14/12/2023
Deadline for Tenderers to submit clarification questions	12 noon 25/01/2024
Tender Return Deadline	12 noon 15/02/2024
Evaluation and Approvals	March 2024
10-day standstill period	March 2023

Contract Award Notification	April 2024
Service commencement date	01/09/2024

(Table 14)

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

55. A paper has been presented to Strategic SEND and AP board and the Commissioning Governance Board.

Safeguarding Implications

56. Contracts give clear direction on how and when to raise a safeguarding alert to avoid any confusion about who will do this and/or assumptions that someone else will raise the alert.

57. Contracts also ensure that any issues relating to child protection are identified and appropriate referral made to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
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Public Health Implications

58. DSC & Portage will benefit the overall health and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people in terms of service continuity and reducing the risk that their health and care outcomes could be compromised if the service was not in place.

Procurement Implications

59. A compliant procurement process will be followed in line with Public Contract Regulations 2015.

60. The procurement process will be designed and run, in conjunction with the Commercial and Procurement team.

61. Consideration to social value implications will be informed through our socially responsible procurement policy and will be taken into consideration when developing the specification for the service.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

62. An equalities impact of the proposed decision is low against all criteria on the Equalities Risk Criteria Table and, therefore, a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

63. It is anticipated that the energy consumption and associated emissions will not alter from their current levels as a result of this proposal

Workforce Implications

64. This proposal relates to an externally commissioned service and will have no impact on the direct council workforce.

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

65. The report's proposals offer the most effective mitigation to the following known risks:
    - the financial viability of the providers means that they are unlikely to continue without the funding from Wiltshire Council. Given the lack of investment in these services over the last 10 years these services will no longer be able to offer the same level of support to Wiltshire's children with SEND unless additional funding is provided. These are established charities within the community.
    - increased demand on intensive and more costly services
    - less co-ordinated services
    - increased pressure on schools, health visiting and preschools

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

66. There is a risk that there will be a limited market of providers for this type of service. This will be managed with good market engagement and conversations with providers.

67. There is a risk If the current provider is not successful and they continue to offer a service it would be confusing to the community, parent carers and professionals and cause potential duplication of service. This will be managed by ensuring a good handover and mobilisation plan and period.

Financial Implications

68. To ensure that this service continues and improves outcomes for Wiltshire's children with send it is recommended that the funding is increased to meet demand and to meet the levels of historical inflation. The option we recommend is to commission at pre COVID levels + 10% demand with the additional uplift of 100% of CPI uplift of 23%

69. Portage Budget

Commission at pre COVID levels + 10%	£ 271,418.00	
100% of CPI uplift 2020-24	£ 62,426.14	
Total Annual Funding	£ 333,844.14	43% uplift
5 Year Funding	£ 1,669,220.70	
5 + 5 contract length *	£ 3,338,441.40	

(Table 15)

70. DSC Budget

Commission at pre COVID levels + 10%	£ 447,927.00	
100% of CPI uplift 2020-24	£ 103,023.21	
Total Annual Funding	£ 550,950.21	43% uplift
5 Year Funding	£ 2,754,751.05	
5 + 5 contract length *	£ 5,509,502.10	

(Table 16)

*Additional inflationary uplift has not been applied for the extension period.

71. Further commercially sensitive financial information is contained within appendix 4.

Legal Implications

72. Any award of contract should be conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in Part 10 of the Council's Constitution, the SPH Manual and the Public Contract Regulations (2015). Legal Services will need to be engaged throughout this process, with the relevant legal and procurement advice sought.

73. Wiltshire Council's Legal Services must draft robust legal documentation for this matter. Legal Services will need to be consulted to review the final documentation before execution.

Conclusion

74. This paper is requesting investment in District Specialist Centres and Portage to keep pace with demand and inflation as their funding has remained the same since 2014. This investment will help ensure that we meet the needs of early years Wiltshire children with SEND and to meet our duties in the SEND code of practice we need to continue to fund our DSC and Portage services.

75. This investment in early intervention and support of Wiltshire young children will help change 'their developmental trajectory and reduce the gap in outcomes between children with learning disabilities and other children' (The Investing in early intervention, early intervention report (May 2022).

Helean Hughes - Director, Education & Skills

Report Authors: Kai Muxlow – Commissioning Manager, Sue Kirk – Senior Commissioner

28 September 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Reports supporting Investing in early support
Appendix 2 – DSC Case Studies
Appendix 3 – Consultation Summary
Appendix 4 – Funding Stream

Background Papers

None

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Appendix 1 – Reports and Papers supporting the need to invest in Early Support and Intervention

1. The Investing in early intervention, early intervention report (May 2022) EARLY INTERVENTION REPORT A4 FINAL.pdf (mencap.org.uk)
States that 'Theory, and to a certain extent research evidence on early intervention, suggests that if you intervene early and support young children with learning disabilities you can change their developmental trajectory and reduce the gap in outcomes between children with learning disabilities and other children'

2. The report goes on to state that 'At an early age, key developmental skills (e.g., communication, language, social skills, motor skills) would be the focus for early intervention. This is because these are bedrock or pivotal skills that contribute to all later developmental outcomes. If we can improve these early on for children with learning disabilities, other later skills are more likely to follow either naturally or with less intensive later support. In addition, these pivotal early skills, if not developed early on, increase the risk of later problems for children with learning disabilities (including challenging behaviour and mental health difficulties). Thus, early intervention focused on pivotal developmental skills is also likely to contribute to prevention of later problems'

3. The report continues with 'For these reasons, it is important to start intervening at an early age. If early intervention support commences later in a child's life (i.e., compulsory school age or later) significantly more input is needed to see benefit. A benefit may still be apparent, but there may be less impact. Children with learning disabilities will require continued support and services when they are older, but it is important to start intervening in the early years to narrow the gap in outcomes between children with learning disabilities and other children.

The Green Paper

4. A green paper on SEND and Alternative Provision in 2022 highlighted that there is a vicious cycle of late intervention, low confidence and inefficient resource allocation that drives these challenges across the system. This cycle starts in early years and mainstream settings, where early identification of needs and provision of support does not happen consistently, despite the best efforts of the workforce. Children and young people's needs are identified late or incorrectly, with needs escalating and becoming more entrenched. The inconsistency across the system means that parents, carers and providers do not know what to reasonably expect from their local settings, resulting in low confidence in the ability of mainstream settings to effectively meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. Findings from the green paper consultation has led to a National Improvement plan, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan. Right Support, Right Place, Right Time March 2023 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix 2 - DSC Case Studies demonstrating outcomes from early intervention

The DSC focuses on the right setting for the child, however they are able to demonstrate that through their early intervention work and strategies they are able to support children presenting with complex needs into mainstream settings. The following case studies help to demonstrate this.

Case Study One
GS – year of birth 2018
29.09.21 Referral from parent/Health visitor re social communication concerns and severe anxiety, mainstream nursery setting provision had broken down due to G's distress and vomiting.
20.10.21 Assessment sessions identify G anxiety levels impact on all aspects of his development impairing his interaction and learning through a strong need to follow his own agenda and control his environment. G presents as oppositional.
08.11.21 Transition plan to Attend 2 x 2.5hr sessions per week at Stepping Stones commences

Strategies – Clear consistent routines and expectations
Visual strategies to support understanding and reduce anxiety
Non directive play approach
Attention Autism
Blast and TEACCH
High level of adult support to extend tolerance to following adult direction and to prompt and scaffold successful interaction with peers

Nov 21 Discussion with Preschools to support successful transition and placement
Dec 21 Referral for EHC assessment
Feb 22 Transition planning for place at St Michaels Nursery – attends 2 sessions
Outcome
June 22 Transition Planning with Semington School – successful
July 23 – Remains at Semington School

Case Study Two
AM – Year of birth 2017
18.04.19 Health visitor referral significant developmental delay
17.06.19 A attends Stay and Play/Assessment sessions
July 19   Advice for Cygnets where A is due to start
Sept 19   A attends 2 x 2.5hrs per week at Stepping Stones

Strategies – To respond to objects of reference
To establish PECS phase 1
Sept/Oct 19   Outreach for Cygnets re Headbanging and refusal to eat
Jan 20   **Strategies** – To establish PECS Phase 2
              To name objects
              TEACCH

July 20 Discharged from Stepping Stones attending Cygnets only
Outcome

Jan 21 SEND review outcome – Stay on Support plan attend Mainstream school
July 2023- Remains at Westbury Leigh CofE Primary school

Case Study Three
LM – Year of birth 2018
02.07.20 Parents make initial enquiry about Stepping Stones support
22.09.20 Referral from Portage re Family's high level of anxiety for child's complex needs being met outside of the family home. Concerns re separation from parent, sensory and feeding issues and shielding of child from potential infections
07.12.20 Multiagency transition meeting to start Stepping Stones January 21
Jan – March 2021 Non attendance but on going phone contact
April 21   Assessment at Stepping Stones identified high levels of anxiety impacting on his willingness to engage in interaction and learning. Recommending that his skills can be nurtured and supported within small group sessions at Stepping Stones. Future attendance at mainstream nursery recommended.

Strategies – Seperation support plan
　　　　　High level of adult support to reassure and reduce anxiety
　　　　　Visual strategies to support understanding and reduce anxiety
　　　　　Sensory Programme
　　　　　May 21 Attends 1 session per week until July

Sept 21 Attends 2 x 2.5 hr sessions per week – attendance concerns
Nov 21 Transition planning towards sessions in mainstream from Jan 22
Jan 22 Professionals meeting re Management plan for moving forward
Jan 22 Snapdragons Corsham completing Inreach and transition planning
May 22 Professionals meeting to review progress
May 22 Laani starts sessions at Snapdragons
June 22 Parents plan to delay school start
Outcome
September 22 Laani starts at Castlemead Resource base
September 23 – remains at Castlemead

Appendix 3 - District Specialist Centres and Portage Consultation Summary

April 2023 – June 2023

Methodology

Surveys

- Parent Carer Survey
- Mainstream Setting Survey
- Professionals Survey
- Follow up targeted questions

Working group / workshops

- Internal Inclusion and outreach session
- External Inclusion and outreach session

Next Steps

- Face to face discussion groups with parent carers organised by WPCC
- Online session with parent carers
- Online session with mainstream nurseries

Summary

Surveys

1. Parent Carer Survey

Majority of families would prefer to receive specialist support in a specialist setting.

Families with children supported by Portage strongly agree that staff supporting my child understands their needs and that the service is good.

Families with children in a DSC strongly agree that staff supporting my child understands their needs and that the service is good.

Families with children in mainstream nurseries have a large number agreeing that staff supporting my child understand their needs, however there are also families that have responded neutrally and disagreeing and strongly disagreeing.

Families are looking for support for parent carers , shorter waiting times and longer sessions from DSC.

2. Mainstream Setting Survey

The primary needs of the children in mainstream settings are Speech and Language and communication needs, followed by social and communication difficulties.

Secondary needs are also Speech and Language and communication needs, followed by social and communication difficulties, along with Social and Emotional and Mental Health

When asked about what factors were important for your setting to be able to offer more spaces or better quality provision. Additional funding and targeted advice were the most important. DSC and support from Portage were considered the least useful.

There are 63 mainstream settings that have duel placed children with DSC. 95 children in total. Most children receive 2.5 – 5hours a week support in a DSC. Most children do not receive out reach support. If they do the majority of children receive an hour a week. The ways DSC support the child in the setting is through TAC meetings and in reach work. Fewer children were receiving outreach support.

There are 33 settings that have children also receiving support from Portage. 47 children in total. Most children receiving 1 hour a week. Portage provides support by contributing to reports and feedback to settings.

Increased numbers of children with SEND are impacting on hours and provision, through reduced staff numbers especially qualified staff, staffing levels and recruitment challenges.

Mainstream nurseries have feedback that they need 1-1 to meet the needs of children with SEND, and impacting on other children.

Funding issues was raised in particular ISF, referencing it does not cover 1:1 support.

Mainstream settings would like support with recruitment, training and funding and shorter waiting lists for SALT.

3. Childminders Survey

The Primary and Secondary needs reported are Speech, language and communication needs followed by Social communication difficulties along with Social emotional and mental health needs

The majority of support the childminders receive is through the Individual education plan and the SEND support plan

Only 2 children receive support from a District specialist centre and 4 from Portage

4. Professionals Survey

DSC & Portage have a significant role to play in supporting Therapists and Professional in assessments, observations, introducing strategies and reinforcing treatment.

The DSC provide the space for this work to be carried out along with implementing the strategies prescribed by the therapists.

Professionals are accessing children by using the DSC, different professionals will be visiting the centres several times a week.

SALT Feedback

- DSC staff are familiar with the way the SALT Service works and will implement targets with minimal guidance from SALT. DSC can offer support and training to parents and mainstream setting staff on eg Pictures are Powerful, and other strategies. They keep SALT informed of key meetings for specific children so that SALT can offer any additional up to date information. DSC can be flexible in accommodating SALT at sometimes short notice ie to fit in visits when EHCP info is needed.
- Portage work with SALT by Combining SLT targets into their own targets/supporting parents to unpick and model these targets/only service that supports parents with specialist knowledge/detailed developmental profile using Early Support doc/Reciprocal brainstorming and collaborative working around complex children's needs/feeding back on parental capabilities and opportunities e.g., when SLT targets may be proving too difficult to implement in home such as take up of PECs.
- Waiting lists and capacity has been highlighted as a challenge by the SALT team. Also, there is a lack of equity of service levels across the county. Some families find it tricky to get to a DSC (transport/their own work etc) so may take up a place for a term and rarely attend which wastes a coveted place. Meeting deadlines eg for EHCP if a child is absent on allocated day – very few children attend more than once a week

Occupational Therapy Feedback

- OT's carry out regular visits to DSC, the frequency of visits depends on the amount and the needs of the children accessing the DC. For example, there is a cohort of very complex children in Stepping stones therefore Physio and OT will visit 1/month. However, Devizes Opp group has currently very few complex children and therefore has fewer visits (4-8 weeks just physio at present)
- DSC staff support OT's and parents in carrying out treatment programmes with children. DSC help parents understand their child's condition and assists parents understanding about therapy's role in their child's journey.
- Portage: The aim in the future is to work more closely with Portage around the more complex children in their care, as I do think there may be some training need around how therapies are commissioned and therefore how the therapies are provided
- The feedback from OT's is only positive about DSCs and their staff. The feedback from my own perspective as well as that of my team is full of praise.
- OT's highlighted that Portage is a valuable resource but there is work to be done with regards to the overlap in roles.

Educational Psychologist Feedback

- EPs and APs interact with DSC frequently. And visit at least once a week for 1-3 hours.
- EP's highlight that most DSC have are very welcoming and have good links with parents and the mainstream settings the children jointly attend. They are proactive in ascertaining children's individual needs. DSC make referrals to other professionals and hold referral clinics with paediatricians. The have good quality and informative referral paperwork and knowledgeable staff.
- EP's would like to see DSC working together and sharing best practice and more flexibility in practice. They would like to see DSC continuing with their good practice examples, and the philosophy of settings. Child led practice/ flexibility/free flow and staff responsiveness to children's emotional needs. EPS would like to see DSC develop individual techniques and practice/ interventions/ knowledge/training opportunities from EPS.

Health Visitor

- DSC and Portage support Health Visitors with DLA and all the admin/benefit side of having a child with additional needs. They support with ongoing Paediatric assessment. Intensive early support for families and ongoing specialised support.
- Health Visitors highlight that DSC and Portage are an excellent resource, the provide lots of support for the whole family. Families feedback is positive.
- Challenges include long waiting lists, Portage's waiting list is currently closed. The support of deferred school entry then is resulting in increased waiting. Capacity in offering additional sessions to child

5. Working Groups

Outreach

It is important to observe the child in their mainstream environment and helps with strategies for that environment. It supports interaction between DSC and mainstream nursery and reenforces partnership working.

There was an acknowledgement that there needs to be more outreach. It supports the practitioner and improves their confidence.

Face to face outreach is important for those families that cannot drive and cannot get to a DSC, and the support can be provided through their mainstream nursery

Outreach is approached differently in different areas, nurseries are receiving different types of outreach. We currently do not monitor the quality of our outreach advice and do not know how effective it is.

Funding was raised and if we are funding outreach enough? Do we consider all the costs involved, for example costs for travel and releasing a member of DSC staff. We do need to acknowledge the cost of travel.

It was raised that additional expertise is needed for outreach work, and it is difficult to recruit highly experience staff on low pay.

Mainstream settings need more frequent outreach / currently there is a long time between visits so how do we know the strategies we have been taught are being delivered right/working.

There needs to be a confirmed entry and exit criteria, for example Dingley's promise. There needs to be CPD for outreach to ensure credibility.

In reach

It is beneficial to observe the children in the specialist setting / useful to see the PECs communication and mirror it. Its increases confidence for mainstream practitioners. Provides time away from the mainstream nursery to focus on the child, and learn the strategies needed

Mainstream settings are often unable to release staff for in-reach sessions, and recruitment is a real issue. Outreach can burden mainstream practitioners with unrealistic expectations on how to work with a child. As a mainstream nursery is very different to DSC setting.

6. Internal Working group

Out-reach and In-reach DSC

Strengths

Expertise of the DSC are recognised and appreciate they provide Support for the individual child with hand on knowledge, they are implementing the strategies and not advising on what to do. They support transition into schools and help with HCNA requests.

They provide expertise in meetings; this can be beneficial particularly when transitioning child in to mainstream.

DSC provide inhouse support for professionals such as salt, results in children receiving quick support.

Challenges

There is recognition that there are regional differences. One DSC does not offer outreach, there are difference in assessment sessions, referral admission criteria. Pathways are not clear. There is inconsistency of the number of weeks a child should be in service.

It is felt internally that DSC do not follow the rules and move through processes more quickly for example around ISF, although there needs to be more clarification on this. They don't follow council policy around training for example, Dingley's promise and Five to thrive. There is reluctance to use the new support plan.

Relationships with mainstream settings vary and communication between them is sometimes poor.

It is felt that DSC can influence parents to make decisions around deferring school entry and choice on settings. DSC often make decisions on the child's pathway very early and without formal assessment.

Portage

What works well?

The service is received well by families, there is good engagement with professionals including Wiltshire Council and they will go to Tac meetings. There are good examples of multi-agency working.

There are assumed good outcomes for children, but this does need to be evidenced. Portage fills the gap between mainstream and home.

Inexpensive service, it is good value for money Wiltshire Council provides funding for 75 places –Portage are supporting 101 children.

What are the challenges?

Portage is weak at collating and evidencing their date, Portage provides little information on session plans. They are paper based, and pen based which means time is spent on admin and report notes, data should be recorded digitally.

It is difficult to understand the Pathways through the service, e.g. how waiting lists work? Criteria for referrals isn't clear and it seems inconsistent. Criteria of the Assessment process e.g. barriers for portage include – attending tumble tots etc

It is felt that Portage practitioners are supporting outside of the home sessions – are they attending more than they should? Eg schools etc Interventions and strategies at home, should not be parenting support.

Low paid staff, what are the qualifications and experience level? We should specify the qualifications needed – level 2 -3.

Consultation Reports

Surveys

7. Parent Carer survey

Communication channels used to distribute the survey

- WPCC newsletter
- WC SEND newsletter
- WC Schools Newsletter
- Right Choice
- WC social media
- Local Offer
- Community Area Boards / Our Community Matters Newsletter
- Early Years Newsletter

There were 91 respondents and 36 parent carers have expressed an interest in attending a workshop discussion.

Results and Themes

- Children attend mainstream setting and DSC equally, none of the children attend a childminder.
- 86 % of the children receive specialist support with the majority receiving support through a dual placement with DSC and Mainstream, only two children attend a mainstream nursery.
- 50% of Children are not attending a mainstream nursery because they are unable to meet the needs of their child, and 44% due to family choice.
- Majority of families would prefer to receive specialist support in a specialist setting.
- 66% of children in a mainstream nursery receive support from a DSC
- 46% of children in a mainstream nursery receive support from Portage
- 74% of Children receive between 4-10 hours of specialist support
- 92% of children could attend the hours requested
- The most important factor when looking for childcare is 'Being able to meet and support the needs of my child'
- Families with children in a DSC strongly agree that staff supporting my child understands their needs and that the service is good.
- Families with children supported by Portage strongly agree that staff supporting my child understands their needs and that the service is good.
- Families with children in mainstream nurseries have a large number agreeing that staff supporting my child understand their needs,

however there are also families that have responded neutrally and disagreeing and strongly disagreeing.

- Majority of Families use DSC to get support if they have a query regarding the needs of their child.
- When asked about the support available to families they found that improved communication from other professionals, guidance on the types of early years support is very important.

Key Themes

Other factors considered when looking for childcare / an early years setting for your child.

- Families need good communication between staff and parents
- SEN experienced and knowledgeable staff
- Good indoor floor space and outside space
- Access to therapies in the setting
- Personal feeling of the staff and setting (patience, care, security, family environment)

If your child has accessed a District Specialist Setting, what further support would you like your child to receive?

- Support for parent carers
- Shorter waiting times
- Longer sessions

If your child has accessed Wiltshire Portage, what further support would you like your child to receive?

- Shorter waiting times to get support

If your child has attended a mainstream setting, what further support would you like your child to receive?

- To be better equipped to deal with sensory issues
- Improved transition to mainstream at the right time
- Training

Where is the first place you would go to for support and advice if you had a query regarding the needs of your child with SEND?

- SALT
- Autistic led online forums
- Health visitor

When thinking about the support available to parent carers of children with SEND, what other factors do you consider to be the most important?

- Clear communication
- Including parent carers in decisions about their child
- Information about schools / transitions
- Guidance on EHCPs

Other comments about how we can improve the care and support for the child:

- Long waiting lists for specialist support (DSC & portage)
- More funding for the DSCs so that more sessions / hours can be offered for a child
- Increase funding for Portage
- Challenging to find out what support is available for SEND children and their parent carers
- Improved communication with SEND lead workers
- Parent carers being present with child when accessing SALT / timely reports
- Improved knowledge and understanding in mainstream settings
- A central portal where parent carers can request support

8. Mainstream Nursery Survey

557 settings received the survey and 356 completed the survey with 62% completion rate. 167 Mainstream nursery settings responded. 56 early years providers expressed an interest in attending a further workshop to discuss support SEND children

154 Mainstream settings have children an 13 reporting they did not have any. In total these settings have 1118 children with SEND. This is an average of 7 per setting and one setting reporting they have 32 children with SEND. 567 children are open to the inclusion team.

83 settings report that the number of SEND children are impacting on the provision the they are able to offer.

The primary needs of the children in mainstream settings are Speech and Language and communication needs, followed by social and communication difficulties.

Secondary needs are also Speech and Language and communication needs, followed by social and communication difficulties, along with Social and Emotional and Mental Health.

When asked what support is in place most children have Individual education plans and Send support plan. 89 children re supported by outreach from DSC and 74 through Portage.

182 Mainstream nurseries receive Inclusion Support funding and 52 DAF funding.

When asked about what factors were important for your setting to be able to offer more spaces or better quality provision. Additional funding and targeted advice were the most important. DSC and support from Portage were considered the least useful.

Mainstream settings used the Early Years page on right choice for resources. DSC training was the least used.

There 63 mainstream settings that have duel placed children with DSC. 95 children in total. The majority of children receive 2.5 – 5hours a week. Most children do not receive out reach support. If they do the majority of children receive an hour a week. The ways DSC support the child in the setting is through TAC meetings and in reach work. Fewer children were receiving outreach support.

There are 33 settings that have children also receiving support from Portage. 47 children in total. The majority of children receiving 1 hour a week. Portage provides support by contributing to reports and feedback to settings.

Themes

Please explain how the numbers of children with SEND are impacting on hours/provision

- Reduced staff numbers and especially qualified staff
- Staffing levels
- Recruitment Challenges
- Mainstream nurseries have feedback that they need 1-1 to meet the needs of children with SEND, and thus this impacts on other children
- Increased levels of high needs
- There is a lack of space and resource to support children with SEND
- Funding issues in particular ISF, again they reference it does not cover 1:1 support

Other examples of support the children with SEND in your setting have in place

- Majority of support comes from Health, SALT, Health Visitors. Childrens Centres were also highlighted. DSC and Portage were mentioned in the context of being on a waiting list.
- The use of BLAST – Boosting Language Auditory Skills and Talking system was used along with Makaton.
- SEND Support Plan and individual action plan was quoted as used.
- Resources to support the child with their needs e.g. ear defenders, toys / games

Other suggestions on what you might like support with

- Support with recruitment, training and funding was highlighted
- Shorter waiting lists for SALT
- Outreach was mentioned, specifically for under 2s (one mention)

Where do you go for resources and toolkits to support children with SEND?
- Some settings are accessing private SALT
- If part of a MAT – they use their resources
- Springfield has been used
- One comment of waiting for DSC support

Other comments received
- Funding
- Increased communication between professionals/collaborative work needed.
- Settings finding delays in assessments and referrals.
- Settings want more specialist placements.
- Some settings feel supported, and some feel they lack this.
- Further training and support from professionals/workshops etc.
- Positive feedback on support EYIA provide.
- Seeing increased numbers of children with SEN In
- Inconsistency on the admissions criteria for Portage
- 1:1 care is referenced
- Increased numbers of children with SEND
- Rural locations mean difficult to access DSC

9. Childminders Survey

557 settings Childminders and Mainstream received the survey

356 completed

62% completion rate

179 Childminders

9 Childminders expressed an interest in attending a further workshop to discuss support SEND children

18 out of the 179 child minders care for children with SEND. There are a total of 24 children with send form this survey with the maximum 4 children in one setting. 12 children are open to the Early Years inclusion team.

3 Childminders report that the numbers are impacting on hours/provision offered. One Childminder said 'Child requires 1-1 care, another child with behaviour concerns but no identified SEND also requires a lower ratio'.

The Primary and Secondary needs reported are Speech, language and communication needs followed by Social communication difficulties along with Social emotional and mental health needs.

The majority of support the childminders receive is through the Individual education plan and the SEND support plan.

Only 2 children receive support from a District specialist centre and 4 from Portage.

Specific training and targeted advice are seen as the most important factors to increase more spaces and better quality of provision.

Childminders use the Early Years page on right choice and the WC local offer page for resources and toolkits. DSC training was rated as an important factor.

There are currently no children dual placed with a DSC. There is 1 child dual placed with Portage.

Additional comments

'The whole system is so confusing. I want to be able to speak to a person who can tell me where I need to go to get support '

'I understand there is a high need for portage so spaces are limited but it's such a fantastic service and unfortunately the child that attends here has lost portage due to the number of hours they attend. I know the parents valued the service a lot '

10. Professionals Survey

SALT Feedback

SALT therapists visit DSC regularly to assess, observe, discuss and advise staff/ parents re. children. They Liaise closely with the staff there especially the SLCN TA and Manager to manage children.

DSC staff are familiar with the way the SALT Service works and will implement targets with minimal guidance from SALT. DSC can offer support and training to parents and mainstream setting staff on eg Pictures are Powerful, and other strategies. They keep SALT informed of key meetings for specific children so that SALT can offer any additional up to date information. DSC can be flexible in accommodating SALT at sometimes short notice ie to fit in visits when EHCP info is needed.

Portage work with SALT by Combining SLT targets into their own targets/supporting parents to unpick and model these targets/only service that **supports parents** with specialist knowledge/detailed developmental profile using Early Support doc/Reciprocal brainstorming and collaborative working around complex children's needs/feeding back on parental capabilities and opportunities e.g., when SLT targets may be proving too difficult to implement in home such as take up of PECs.

SALT reply on specialist knowledge and skills of the DSC and Portage to implement therapy targets which doesn't happen in mainstream settings. DSC will also work with parents for training and ongoing support.

DSC practitioners are skilled in several key practices eg PECS, Attention Autism, TEACCH, total communication, communication friendly environments, which makes a huge difference to this cohort of children, plus they support parents and mainstream settings with incorporating targets into home/Preschool environments.

SALT practitioners can be visiting a DSC setting 2-3 times a week. Visits can last an hour.

Waiting lists and capacity has been highlighted as a challenge by the SALT team. Also, there is a lack of equity of service levels across the county. Some families find it tricky to get to a DSC (transport/their own work etc) so may take up a place for a term and rarely attend which wastes a coveted place. Meeting deadlines eg for EHCP if a child is absent on allocated day – very few children attend more than once a week

Mainstream nurseries are unable to establish the level of support DSC are able to do. DSC are able to offer higher child to adult ratio, smaller group sizes, consistent approach to CFE strategies.

ALT are seeing more more complex children in mainstream with limited specialist skills in workforce. Complexities : Nonverbal /severe ASD/severe SLCN/ SEMH and behaviour/attention/poor self help/sensory/complex home environments.

SALT would like to see better communication from DSC and increased outreach into mainstream nurseries.

More sessions available so that children can attend more often/more children can attend. More SLT time allocated so that early intervention can be pushed even more.

SALT would like to see more specialist training to be run by DSCs for mainstream EYs staff. Possibility of satellite centres which can be accessed more locally for families and increased opportunity for outreach

Transport difficulties prevent families from further away accessing the support. IT would be great if something around this could be developed.

Increase time for outreach/in reach for mainstream settings, potentially supporting transition to school with outreach depending on school selected and level of need ie severe SLCN and PECs user in mainstream

SALT & Tidworth

High levels of EYs children with complex needs exacerbated by : being army families, increased levels of parental poor mental health, family isolation/EAL, domestic violence, lack of transport.

These families do not understand education or health systems and cannot access the DSCs (DDOC/John McNeill) as no transport available for this age.

By not being in specialist environments they are not accessing specialist support, the broader parental incidental information sharing and support, the early applications for EHCPs that tend to happen in DSCs, raised awareness for parents of specialist provision that might be available to their children at school age etc.

This means that children in Tidworth/Ludgershall have inequitable access to the provision that they need.

Occupational Therapy Feedback
OT's carry out regular visits to DSC, the frequency of visits depends on the amount and the needs of the children accessing the DC. For example, there is a cohort of very complex children in Stepping stones therefore Physio and OT will visit 1/month. However, Devizes Opp group has currently very few complex children and therefore has fewer visits (4-8 weeks just physio at present)

DSC staff support OT's and parents in carrying out treatment programmes with children. DSC help parents understand their child's condition and assists parents understanding about therapy's role in their child's journey.

Portage: The aim in the future is to work more closely with Portage around the more complex children in their care, as I do think there may be some training need around

how therapies are commissioned and therefore how the therapies are provided.

The feedback from OT's is only positive about DSCs and their staff. The feedback from my own perspective as well as that of my team is full of praise.

OT's highlighted that Portage is a valuable resource but there is work to be done with regards to the overlap in roles.

OT's work with mainstream nurseries and highlighted that Knowledge of conditions and treatment approaches is much higher in DSC. DSC can provide very good outreach to mainstream settings.

There is nothing the OT's would like to change with DSC. With Portage they would like a closer working-relationship, basic level of training required for Portage as my understanding is that no qualification necessary and they can work with some very complex children

Educational Psychologist Feedback

EPs and APs interact with DSC frequently. And visit at least once a week for 1-3 hours.

EP's highlight that most DSC have are very welcoming and have good links with parents and the mainstream settings the children jointly attend. They are proactive in ascertaining children's individual needs. DSC make referrals to other professionals and hold referral clinics with paediatricians. The have good quality and informative referral paperwork and knowledgeable staff.

DSC visit mainstream settings and mainstream settings can visit and contact for advice. They provide child led activities and are responsive to the children's emotional needs. DSC can manage transitions effectively.

EP's report that Some of the approaches used are not necessarily ones EP's would advise, this can be hard to challenge . They would like to see more flexibility and to be less rigid in what they offer, this does not reflect all settings.

EP's visit mainstream settings, staff generally less experienced. Children with complex needs usually have a 1:1 member of staff attached to them. It is often seen that the perspective/expectations of staff is different within a mainstream setting compared to a DSC. In a DSC staff often have higher expectations of the children and can provide more educationally challenging activities and be more confident in pushing children. It was felt that mainstream staff don't want to do the wrong thing and may not challenging children enough.

Ep's see more complex cases including C&I, Social communication and Speech and Language needs.

EP's would like to see DSC working together and sharing best practice and more flexibility in practice. They would like to see DSC continuing with their good practice examples, and the philosophy of settings. Child led practice/ flexibility/free flow and staff responsiveness to children's emotional needs. EPS would like to see DSC develop individual techniques and practice/ interventions/ knowledge/training opportunities from EPS.

Health Visitor Feedback

Health visitors interact with DSC and Portage through email and phone and through the Early Support Assessment. They currently do not receive acknowledgement of referral from Portage.

DSC and Portage support Health Visitors with DLA and all the admin/benefit side of having a child with additional needs. They support with ongoing Paediatric assessment. Intensive early support for families and ongoing specialised support.

Health Visitors highlight that DSC and Portage are an excellent resource, the provide lots of support for the whole family. Families feedback is positive.

Challenges include long waiting lists, Portage's waiting list is currently closed. The support of deferred school entry then is resulting in increased waiting. Capacity in offering additional sessions to child.

Health Visitors are seeing an increase in children with Social /emotional and communication skills: Interpersonal skills; General developmental delay. Challenging behaviour.

Health visitors would like to see acknowledgment of referrals form DSC and Portage, reduced waiting lists and increased availability.

Health visitors highlighted they value the specialist service offered. Health Visitors would like to develop the communication between Heath visiting and DSC & Portage.

11. Working Groups

External Inclusion, In reach and Outreach workshops
4th May and 9th May

Inclusion Discussion

One setting has changed the way their provision is run - their core service meets the needs of children with SEND and children that are 'overachieving' will receive further support.

High level of need in Tidworth – DSC supporting setting with outreach.

Settings seeing increase in children with additional needs
Variable across the county
Positive experience
Based on how many hours they are told their child can attend / lack of choice re days/times etc.
Some withdrawing hours after offering them
Degree of discrimination for children with disabilities
Sometimes inclusion can turn into an element of exclusion because they are unable to keep up with their peers (what they enjoy/how they engage/social element/developmentally not at the same level)

Creating a way the parents feel included and have a sense of belonging / confidence in the staff (particularly in the early years stages - this helps them move on from specialist settings - creating a positive experience).

Out – Reach
Out reach is important to observe the child in their mainstream environment and helps with strategies for that environment. Supports interaction between DSC and mainstream nursery and reenforces partnership working.

Acknowledgement that there needs to be more outreach. It supports the practitioner and improves confidence.

The most positive experience of outreach is when settings have asked for outreach and when they are more prepared for the visit there is better engagement.

Tidworth outreach model works really well – almost due to the fact that there isn't a DSC there, the nurseries have had to work together.

It is thought that outreach can include other forms of support, teams and phone calls.

Face to face outreach is important for those families that can not drive and can not get to a DSC, and the support can be provided through their mainstream nursery.

Out reach isn't provided regularly when a child is well established.

Barriers to Outreach

Outreach is approached differently in different areas, nurseries are receiving different types of outreach. We currently do not monitor the quality of our outreach advice and do not know how effective it is.

Are we funding outreach enough? Do we consider all the cost involved for example costs for travel and releasing a member of staff. We do need to acknowledge the cost of travel, time an resources.

Additional expertise is needed for outreach work, and it is difficult to recruit highly experience staff on low pay.

Mainstream settings need more frequent outreach / currently there is a long time between visits so how do we know the strategies we have been taught are being delivered right/working.

There is some confusion around what an inclusion officer does and DSC outreach.

There needs to be a confirmed entry and exit criteria, for example Dingley's promise. There needs to be CPD for outreach to ensure credibility.

We need to align with the objectives of the LA & SEND strategy

DSC need to understand their boundaries on what fits within the contract and outside of the contract. They need to know what we are asking them to do.

In - reach

Beneficial to observe the children in the specialist setting / useful to see the PECs communication and mirror it. Increases confidence for mainstream practitioners.

Provides time away from the mainstream nursery to focus on the child, and learn the strategies needed.

Barriers

Unable to release staff for in-reach sessions, recruitment is a real issue.

It burdens the mainstream practitioners with unrealistic expectations on how to work with a child. As a mainstream nursery is very different to DSC setting

We need to be clear on the purpose of in reach.

12. Internal Working group

Strengths

Expertise of the DSC are recognised and apricated they provide Support for individual child with hand on knowledge, they are implementing the strategies and not advising on what to do. They support transition into schools and help with HCNA requests.

They provide expertise in meetings, having their expertise in meeting can be beneficial particularly when transitioning child in to mainstream.

DSC provide inhouse support from professionals such as salt, results in children receiving quick support.

Challenges

There is recognition that there are regional differences. One DSC does not offer outreach, there are difference in assessment sessions, referral admission criteria. Pathways are not clear. There is inconsistency of the number of weeks a child should be in service.

Each DSC building is different which means each service can support different numbers of children attending.

It is felt internally that DSC do not follow the rules and move through processes more quickly for example around ISF, although there needs to be more clarification on this. They don't follow council policy around training for example, Dingley's promise and Five to thrive. There is reluctance to use the new support plan.

Relationships with mainstream settings vary and communication between them is sometimes poor.

It is felt that DSC can influence parents to make decisions around deferring school entry and choice on settings. DSC often make decisions on the child's pathway very early and without formal assessment.

Suggested Service Plan

For the majority of SEND Children

- Defined number of sessions and length and review points
- Clear and agreed in-reach and outreach for the child
- A needs led plan for the child over the period of time – so can go into mainstream
- Entry and Exit pathway
- Expectation on a fully support plan

For the most complex children

Criteria of what is a complex child –

- Life limiting, not safe to be in a mainstream – pathway and agreed through local authority.
- Health & LA – next steps
- Entry and Exit pathways and review points – agree an enhanced package
- Discuss next steps access to services

Portage

What works well

The service is received well by families, there is good engagement with professionals including Wiltshire Council and they will go to Tac meetings. There are good examples of multi agency working.

There are assumed good outcomes for children but this does need to be evidenced. Portage fills the gap between mainstream and home.

Inexpensive service – good value for money Wiltshire Council provides funding for 75 places – Portage are supporting 101 children.

What are the challenges

- Portage weak at collating and evidencing their date,
- It is difficult to understand the Pathways through the service, e.g. how waiting lists work?
- Portage provide little information on session plans
- Portage are paper based and pen based which means time is spent on admin and report notes– data should be recorded digitally.
- Criteria for referrals isn't clear and it seems inconsistent
- Referrals to link in with panel HELM
- Criteria of the Assessment process e.g. barriers for portage include – attending tumble tots etc
- Length of time for support, could working parents accessing the service
- What does the offer from birth look like are we duplicating with health?
- Need to understand where Portage partitioners are supporting outside of home sessions – are they attending more than they should? Eg schools etc
- Who are we supporting through portage is it the Child or Family?
- Interventions and strategies at home, should not be parenting support
- Low paid staff, what are the qualifications and experience level?
- We should specify the qualifications needed – level 2 -3 – to discuss
- Safeguarding – compliance – this needs to be reviewed

WPCC Parent Carer Face to Face discussions

Session 1, Salisbury (6 parents - 1 husband and wife)

- Wonderful support from Portage. Parent will remain on the waiting list for further support
- SALT received via John McNeill but found them to be 'clueless'
- There is good parental support groups on Facebook
- DSC and Portage are invaluable resources
- Portage has been a lifeline for the majority of parents
- Health visitor referred to portage and this was when support started for child and family
- Portage support has impacted families positively – especially for those where extended family live abroad
- Miliary families do not feel supported
- 50/50 split feeling for parents wanting their child to go to mainstream vs specialist school.
- Need more support with transitions. Parent wants their child to attend the right school where they can be happy and get the right support. Feel professionals need to help parents make an informed choice.
- Happy with their child attending the mainstream nursery but feels they lack the skills and experience to support the child's development
- Parent started the EHCP independently – no support from professionals at all. Frustrating experience.
- Parent feels practices used in John McNeill are not right for her child (attention bucket too prescriptive) – has done lots of research through social media on other practices. Felt John McNeill was not supportive of parents view of using different practices
- Parent on waiting list for Portage and still not been seen.
- Parent went privately to get a diagnosis for ASD
- All felt they would benefit from early signposting from professionals
- No one was aware of the Local Offer or what it is

Session 2 – Calne (5 parents)

- DSC have helped with referrals – parents feel this helps make the process quicker
- Parents are referring to DSC to help with getting a diagnosis for their child
- One parent was told their child would be taken off the Wiltshire Autism Assessment List due to private diagnosis. Parent carer says this is illegal and had to fight hard to get them to review the private diagnosis.
- Portage have been a godsend, helped family through referral processes / attended all meetings
- Nursery (Tiny Bubbles, Calne) did not pick up on the needs of the child and now he is significantly behind other children in reception class and struggling.

School (Cherill Primary School) working hard to get EHCP and funding. Health visitor did not pick up on needs and did not support the parent carer. Parents first child so was not aware of any needs/concerns – there is reliance on professionals having the skills/experience and understanding of SEND and supporting parents with next steps

- Nothing happens after a child has been diagnosed through the Wiltshire Autism Assessment Service (WASS). Lack of support for parent carers after diagnosis.
- DSC and Portage give parents a management plan setting out what they can and can't apply for and support available. Without this, parent carers would be lost.
- Those parents who don't send their child to nursery until 3 years old when they get 15 hours free funding are reliant on health visitors/Drs to pick up on potential needs prior to starting nursery – without this there is little to no support for first time parents.
- Health visitors saying young children 18 months etc. too young to pick up on needs and should wait until the child is 2 before being assessed. Parent did not feel listened to when raising concerns to the health visitor.
- More sessions at a DSC and Portage are needed for all children with SEND.
- Portage have a long waiting list.
- One parent experienced a lack of information given to them from a DSC on EHCPs and transitions. This made the transition period unclear, stressful and difficult. All DSC should have a parent information evening focussed around transitions and the EHCP process. Stepping stones organise one.
- Experience of dual placements have been very good for DSC and mainstream but more outreach to nurseries needed and highly valued.
- Often parents feeling like mainstream nurseries working hard to keep the child and other children safe, not working with them developmentally. What benefit is the child getting attending a nursery? It was recognised that it does provide respite to the parent carer.
- Terminology of EHCPs unclear – often referred to as complex needs. What does this mean for transitioning into a resource base / mainstream school or specialist school?
- Parents feel the DSC should be more involved in placement decisions e.g. telling parent carers what school setting would be potentially suitable. Parents unsure what is best for their child and want more support from professions to make informed decisions.
- Nurseries need more SEND training. They do not have the skills and experience to support children with SEND.
- No one was aware of the Local Offer

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Appendix 4 - DSC and Portage funding stream

The current providers bring significant value for money and the contract price is a fraction of what it would cost to purchase the service received at full cost recovery. Given the current financial climate and especially the cost-of-living crisis and high inflation, it is not possible to rely on the similar levels of fundraising during the next contract.

Typical DSC funding

Funding	Springboard	Stepping Stones	John McNeill	Devizes
Contract Payments Including ICB	£75,442.00	£75,422.00	£84,769.00	£75,596.00
DAF	£8,610.00	£12,300.00	£8,610.00	£3,075.00
EYPP	£712.85	£1,278.63	£1,005.15	£339.20
EYE Enhanced Rate	£20,062.62	£16,011.31	£18,734.02	£7,812.45
EYE 2 Yos	£9,628.36	£11,713.50	£8,209.04	£3,003.04
ETE 3&4 Yos	£39,240.55	£36,820.00	£35,993.13	£14,886.25
Fundrasing - Aprox	£155,906.62	£38,866.56	£50,909.66	£26,257.06
Total income	£309,603.00	£192,412.00	£208,230.00	£130,969.00

(Table 1)

Typical Portage funding

	Wiltshire Council Funding	ICB Funding	Grants and Fundraising	Total
Wiltshire Portage	£127,476.00	£63,112.00	£51,288.00	£241,876.00

(Table 2)

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