

AGENDA

Meeting: Environment Select Committee

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

Date: Tuesday 19 September 2023

Time: 10.30 am

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

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines 01225 713114/713115.

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Membership:

Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman)	Cllr Dr Nick Murry
Cllr Bob Jones MBE (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Tom Rounds
Cllr Tony Jackson	Cllr Tony Trotman
Cllr Mel Jacob	Cllr Iain Wallis
Cllr Dr Brian Mathew	Cllr Derek Walters
Cllr Charles McGrath	Cllr Stuart Wheeler
Cllr Ian McLennan	

Substitutes:

Cllr Brian Dalton	Cllr Dr Mark McClelland
Cllr Matthew Dean	Cllr Stewart Palmen
Cllr Ross Henning	Cllr Ricky Rogers
Cllr Jon Hubbard	Cllr Bridget Wayman
Cllr Jacqui Lay	

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AGENDA

PART I

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

1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (*Pages 7 - 14*)

To approve and sign the minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 25 July 2023.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

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

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chair.

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

Statements

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

Questions

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

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **Tuesday 12 September 2023** in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response, questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Thursday 14 September 2023**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

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

6 **Highways Term Maintenance Contract - Interim Update** *(Pages 15 - 30)*

This report provides an interim update on the Council's new term contract for highway maintenance and includes an update on the Parish Stewards scheme.

7 **Council's Approach to Tackling Potholes** *(Pages 31 - 44)*

This report provides an update on the Council's approach to tackling potholes.

8 **Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance Contract Update** *(Pages 45 - 58)*

This report provides an update on the Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance contract.

9 **Public Transport Review and Passenger Transport Service Update and Future Developments** *(Pages 59 - 70)*

This report provides an update on progress with public transport projects, noting their positive impacts, highlighting risks and mitigating actions.

10 **Planning Peer Review Report** *(Pages 71 - 94)*

To provide an update on the findings of the May 2023 Local Government Association Planning Service peer review and to set out officers' initial response to the suggested recommendations.

11 **Updates From Task Groups and Representatives on Programme Boards** *(Pages 95 - 100)*

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

12 **Forward Work Programme** *(Pages 101 - 108)*

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

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

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

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

13 **Urgent Items**

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

14 **Date of Next Meeting**

To confirm the date of the next scheduled meeting as **Tuesday 7 November 2023 at 10.30am.**

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Environment Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2023 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman), Cllr Bob Jones MBE (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tom Rounds, Cllr Iain Wallis, Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Cllr Matthew Dean (Substitute), and Cllr Stewart Palmen (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Carole King, Cllr Bill Parks, Cllr Jonathon Seed (Virtual), and Cllr Graham Wright (Virtual)

38 Apologies

Apologies for absence for Members of the Committee were received from:

- Councillor Charles McGrath
- Councillor Derek Walters
- Councillor Tony Trotman
- Councillor Dr Nick Murry, who was substituted by Councillor Matthew Dean
- Councillor Mel Jacob, who was substituted by Councillor Stewart Palmen

Additional apologies for absence were also noted from Councillor Nick Holder, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

39 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes for the previous meeting held on 6 June 2023 were considered. Following which, it was:

Resolved:

The Committee approved and signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 June 2023 as a true and correct record.

40 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

41 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced that two items on the Forward Work Plan scheduled to be considered at the meeting, relating to Active Travel and Public Transport Review & Passenger Transport Service Update, had been deferred to a later date. As such, it was noted that they would remain on the Forward Work Plan until such time.

42 **Public Participation**

The Chairman informed Members that a number of statements had been received the previous evening via email relating to Agenda Item 6: Household Waste Management Strategy Update. It was confirmed that those statements had been passed onto the relevant officers for note, and that they would also be circulated to Committee Members after the meeting.

A further two members of the public were in attendance and also made statements in relation to Agenda Item 6, focussing on alternative methods of domestic waste management, utilising previous disposal sites such as bottle banks, and potentially combining collection services.

43 **Household Waste Management Strategy Update (2023/24)**

Councillor Bill Parks, Portfolio Holder for Waste, alongside Sarah Valdus, Director for Environment, and Martin Litherland, Head of Waste Management, updated the Committee on the Household Waste Management Strategy 2023-24.

It was explained that when looking at the whole life cycle of waste materials, officers were aiming towards a circular economy whereby waste was reduced and reused while ensuring there was due consideration and interlinkage to Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy and Delivery Plan. Members were informed that a national carbon calculator had recently been launched which allowed officers to assess the carbon impact of the services provided. The significant changes in UK waste policy under the Environment Act 2021 were briefly noted but it was highlighted that key details of these changes were yet to be announced. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had released an Environment Improvement Plan (EIP) which introduced national targets. Officers were in the process of assessing the implications of these to waste management as well as other Council services.

Aspects of the National Policy Review were then detailed. Namely, the:

- Plastic Packaging Tax launched in April 2022.
- Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme.
- Deposit Return Scheme launching in October 2025.
- Further consistency in collections; potential for weekly food waste collections from approximately 2025.

- Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs); the incineration of all waste upholstered domestic seating from 1 January 2023 due to the presence of flame-retardant chemicals.

The impacts on Wiltshire's waste services for each of the above was explained, such as potential losses in income and/or further costs and emission implications if additional collections were confirmed as required.

A performance update for 2022/23 was then given with officers providing figures for the number of tonnes of municipal waste managed, Wiltshire's recycling rate, and how much waste was sent for waste treatment or landfill. It was noted that the vast majority of these figures had reduced since the previous year 2021/22, which officers suggested could be attributed to the more stringent measures put in place as a result of the Environment Act 2021 and/or emerging public concerns arising from the climate crisis. Members were then updated on the 2022/23 action plan's activities, including the launch of the reusing paint and 'Recycling – Let's Sort It!' campaigns, successful trial of a pop-up reuse shop in Devizes, and new recycling collections for household batteries.

Highlights from the 2023/24 action plan were given and it was noted that the number of activities for the upcoming year's plan had been reduced to support officers' ability to deliver targets against other competing priorities, such as coordinating the response to the emerging Environment Act 21 requirements and the procurement of new services and contracts post 2026. As approximately 16% of the contents of general waste bins collected at the kerbside contained materials that were recyclable, officers were focussing on concerted public engagement through the continued use of the 'Recycling – Let's Sort It!' campaign to communicate further advice, guidance, and education in relation to reusing, recycling, and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. Furthermore, recruitment for a Waste and Recycling Engagement Officer was underway to supply additional capacity for the Waste Management Team to provide more targeted communications.

During the discussion, points included:

- The impacts of the previous year's industrial action on service provision.
- The type of technology utilised by the incineration plants contracted in Germany and Slough that the Council exported some of Wiltshire's waste to.
- The carbon impacts of incinerating waste in comparison to alternative methods of disposal. To this, officers confirmed that the new national carbon calculator released by central Government would become part of the assessment and procurement process for new and existing contractors/third parties moving forward.
- As the incineration contracts did not expire until 2033, Members queried the level of involvement that they and members of the public could have in the future procurement process. Officers confirmed that there would be

further engagement with the Committee and wider Cabinet closer to the time.

- It was confirmed that officers within the Waste Management Team would measure and monitor performance data for the requirements set out as part of the Environment Act 2021.
- It was noted that the POPs requirements did not extend to other soft furnishings such as mattresses and curtains, but that there was a further consultation exercise by the Environmental Agency happening which was looking at the potential to broaden the scope of materials accepted for incineration.
- Additional funding/reimbursements for supplementary resources needing to be deployed as a result of further requirements under the Environment Act 2021, such as free food and/or garden waste collections. Officers noted that there was the potential to receive funding and appropriate receptacles, however details of such were yet to be published and as such, officers were still in the process of understanding the implications on tonnage variations and current contracts.
- Ensuring that when contractors extend the reach of their enterprises pertaining to reusable materials, their processes are as sustainable as possible.
- It was clarified that the national target of 287kgs of waste per capita per year referred to the total residual waste generated by one person, excluding any materials that can be recycled, reused, or composted.
- It was explained that the Mechanical Biological Treatment Facility in Westbury had reported a reduced input for 2022/23 as a result of restrictions being voluntarily put in place by Hills due to odour concerns raised by the public.
- It was explained that alternative arrangements were procured in relation to disposing of large-scale flame-retardant materials as it was not deemed appropriate to use the waste energy facility contracted in Slough due to atmosphere concerns and the need for suitable abatement controls. Furthermore, officers were awaiting further innovations within the industry to allow for an affordable and sustainable way to separate individual materials present in these larger scale items, such as metal springs within a mattress.
- Officers highlighted that the new guidance was published in mid-November 2022 and some of the requirements were enforceable from the beginning of January 2023, therefore Local Authorities had faced particular challenges with the short time frame given to respond to the revised guidance.
- Officers confirmed that certain landfills in Wiltshire, such as the Lower Compton site in Calne, utilised gas engines that extracted methane to generate energy.
- The potential to consider methane fuelled collection vehicles if the need to provide a separate food waste collection arose. Officers stated that it would definitely be considered, however highlighted that it may not be

achievable in the near future as it may require the infrastructure to support a new fleet and the technology needed to utilise that method of propelling vehicles wholesale may not be available at the time.

- Officers confirmed that they were having ongoing conversations with Hills to discuss future changes and implications of the Environment Act 2021 whereby they would raise the possibility of ducting the heat and CO2 produced by incineration facilities into reusable energy to support nearby greenhouse installations.
- As part of the 'Recycling – Let's Sort It!' campaign, officers noted that there would be communications relating to pre-sorting waste ahead of arriving at Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) to minimise queues and contaminated materials. Further training would also be given to HRC staff to empower them to advise members of the public when using HRCs.
- Officers explained that as the requirements being published were relatively fast-changing, it did not seem appropriate to produce resources for waste receptacles such as stickers or bin hangers listing out what could be sorted into which bin as they would soon become outdated. However, once officers had further clarity on key details and timelines, it would be something they would consider for future service changes.
- It was clarified that all waste facilities required an environmental permit in order to operate, and if found in breach of this, the Environmental Agency would impose consequences. Therefore, the chemicals and contaminants being produced as a result of incineration were filtered and captured before emission through the chimneys and any residue was disposed of at a containment or hazardous waste landfill site. As such, the best available techniques were being applied and Members were reassured that the appropriate control measures were in place to protect the public.
- Public feeling and safety concerns were highlighted, especially in respect to the incinerator due to be built in Westbury.
- Members thanked officers for their report and presentation and commended their hard work when considering the tight time constraints placed upon them by central Government.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Councillor Bob Jones MBE proposed to move the recommendations, which was seconded by Councillor Iain Wallis. After which, it was:

Resolved:

- a) The Committee noted the Household Waste Management Strategy update 2023/24.**
- b) The Committee agreed to receive a further update in 12 months' time.**

Councillor Jonathon Seed, Chairman of the Housing Allocations Policy Task Group, presented an update on the work of the Task Group since its inception.

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

- A scoping meeting held on 19 June 2023 with Nicole Smith, Head of Housing.
- A meeting with local social housing providers held on 12 July 2023 to understand and get feedback on how the current Housing Allocations Policy worked in practice.
- A meeting between the Chairman, relevant Cabinet Member and Head of Housing to understand the aims of the policy.

Furthermore, Members were informed that the Task Group were intending to hold two more meetings to discuss and conclude on different areas of the policy ahead of developing a report and a set of recommendations before being brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

During the discussion, members queried Paragraph 9 of the report and asked for further clarification on what was meant by “inconsistencies with applying the policy”. In response, it was noted that some cases were found to be dealt with quicker and more concisely, however it was acknowledged that further discussions were needed to find out more details. Other points raised included defining what was meant by affordable housing.

Cllr Seed concluded by commending the experience of the Task Group’s Membership and the hard work undertaken up to the date of the meeting.

Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Climate Emergency Task Group, then presented an update on the work of the Task Group since 6 June 2023.

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

- Receiving a briefing on 29 June 2023 from Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management, and Strategic Planning, Georgina Clampitt-Dix, Head of Spatial Planning, and Geoff Winslow, Spatial Planning Manager, concerning the draft Local Plan and the policies that would address the climate emergency.

Members were informed that the Task Group were pleased that the draft Local Plan recognised and was working towards tackling many of the issues previously raised in discussions with officers and Cabinet Members, such as promoting renewable energy and accelerating the construction of low carbon homes. As such, it was highlighted that the Task Group would continue to monitor the delivery of the Council’s Climate Strategy as well as focussing on local transport.

Members requested that the Task Group consider exploring the Council's Waste Disposal Policies in relation to the amount of carbon emissions generated by the disposal of municipal waste, as discussed during the previous Agenda Item. Furthermore, Members highlighted that officers would be undertaking conversations with Hills to further explore the issue and requested that officers from the Climate Team be involved in those discussions at the appropriate time.

After which, it was:

Resolved:

- a) **The Committee noted the update on the Task Group activity provided.**
- b) **The Committee noted the changes to the Housing Allocations Policy Task Group Terms of Reference and the timing of its final report.**
- c) **The Committee noted the Climate Emergency Task Group's draft Forward Work Plan as per Appendix 1.**

45 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received the Forward Work Programme for consideration.

Councillor Stuart Wheeler highlighted the implementation and performance of the Milestone contract to date and suggested that further scrutiny was needed in relation to the effective operation of the Parish Stewards Scheme and other difficulties raised by members of the public such as the accessibility of work and costs. Parvis Khansari, Director of Place, confirmed that a report could be brought to a future meeting of the Committee to provide reassurance and further clarity for Members.

Members also raised Leisure Services and if any Terms of Reference were available for any scrutiny activities in the area, and if the commitment circulated to Members regarding the continued use of Salisbury City Hall as a live music venue underlined any review that was being undertaken. Officers confirmed that these two points would be reviewed and confirmed outside of the meeting.

Furthermore, Members noted that they had been contacted by a member of the public who was a qualified Rights of Way officer and had raised concerns as to the accuracy of Wiltshire Council's definitive maps and the backlogs experienced by these officers in reviewing Rights of Way within Wiltshire. Members then suggested that further reviews into these issues be undertaken.

After which, it was:

Resolved:

The Committee approved the Forward Work Programme with the inclusion of items suggested by Members regarding Rights of Way and the Council's Milestone contract.

46 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

47 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 19 September 2023.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.45 pm)

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

Environment Select Committee

19 September 2023

Highways Term Maintenance Contract – Interim Update

Executive summary

This report provides an interim update on the Council's new term contract for highway maintenance. A robust procurement exercise was undertaken in accordance with the 'Restricted Procedure' in 2022 to identify an appropriate contractor to deliver the Council's highways maintenance services. The most advantageous tender for the Council, taking into account price, quality, carbon, and social value, was submitted by Milestone Infrastructure Ltd (Milestone).

The contract commenced on 1st April 2023 and has been operating for 17 weeks. Mobilisation of the contract involved the successful TUPE transfer of most of the staff and operatives from the previous supplier; however, it was necessary for Milestone to establish a new senior management team for the contract, and this has had to include some temporary staff in the short term, including those from other Milestone contracts. Recruitment in the industry has been a problem in recent years because of skills shortages and this is the case for contractors as well as for the council. To help address this a joint careers fair was held at County Hall on the 16th August 2023 involving the Council and all its highways providers.

The contract started at a particularly challenging time. Road conditions across the UK suffered badly with the particularly dry and hot summer of 2022 followed by a wet autumn, interspersed with two prolonged periods of cold weather with freezing conditions, causing serious damage to parts of the road network. The usual number of pothole reports in the winter and spring months of around 700 to 900 per month increased to around 4,000 per month.

To address this, an early decision was taken to substantially increase resources dealing with potholes by redeploying teams from other works. Consequently, some of the other workstreams took longer than originally planned to become fully operational. This particularly affected the Parish Steward scheme as resources were directed towards filling potholes.

Milestone have been flexible in directing resources according to need; however, in some service areas resource levels have been more resilient than in others. For example, in the area of streetlighting the new service was established promptly whilst drainage investigations have taken longer as it has been more difficult to get resources and sub-contractors in place. This has now significantly improved.

Since the commencement of the contract, council officers and senior Milestone staff have met on a regular basis to monitor and review progress of the services being provided. A full and comprehensive review of the current service provision has been

completed in recent weeks, and a summary is included at **Appendix A**.

Initial indications are that the contract will deliver the anticipated benefits in the longer term, and performance and best value will continue to be monitored and reported to this Committee.

Proposal

That the committee:

- a) Note the contents of the report and the progress being made to establish the new working arrangements with the Milestone term maintenance contract.
- b) Request a report to this Committee on completion of the first year of the contract next year.

Reason for proposal

The operation of the Milestone contract has been monitored and a review of the first 17 weeks has been prepared.

Author: Samantha Howell

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Highways Term Maintenance Contract – Interim Update

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update on the Highways Term Maintenance Contract, including the Parish Steward scheme.

Background

2. The Council is the local highway authority and is responsible for a highway network of over 4,400 kilometres, 6,000km of rights of way, and assets including almost 1,000 highway bridges and approximately 50,000 street lighting columns and illuminated signs and bollards. The management, maintenance and improvement of this infrastructure requires a high level of technical expertise to meet the legal, technical, and financial challenges they present.
3. There is a need for a specialist contractor to deliver the Council's highways maintenance and related services. Prior to the ending of the previous highways contract in March 2023, a robust procurement exercise in accordance with the 'Restricted Procedure' took place in 2022 to identify an appropriate contractor to deliver the Council's highway maintenance services. The most advantageous tender for the Council, taking into account price, quality, carbon, and social value, was submitted by Milestone Infrastructure Ltd (Milestone). Following approval by the Cabinet on 11th October 2022 the contract was awarded to them and started on 1st April 2023.
4. The contract includes for the provision of the following highway maintenance services.
 - Local Highways
 - Safety Repairs
 - Reactive Service
 - Routine Maintenance
 - Cyclic Operations
 - Parish Stewards
 - Minor Works
 - Integrated Transport
 - Improvement Schemes
 - Signing Works
 - Lining Works
 - Handrails and Barriers
 - Structures
 - Maintenance and Repairs
 - Bridge Replacements
 - Culverts
 - Drainage
 - CCTV Investigations
 - Repairs
 - New Drainage Systems
 - Reactive Works – flooding etc.

- Street Lighting
 - Inspections
 - Maintenance
 - Repairs
 - Replacements
 - Lighting Schemes
 - Checking Third Party Christmas Lighting across the Highway
 - Winter Service
 - Provision of Gritter Drivers
 - Call-outs, and Standby
 - Vehicle Management
 - Out of Hours Emergencies Service
 - Out of Hours Standby
 - Responding to Reactive Issues on the Highway
 - Works Programming and Supervision
 - Streetworks Coordination
 - Permits
5. The contract has a duration of 5 years with an option for a 5 year extension based upon satisfactory performance.

Main considerations for the committee

6. The contract required the TUPE transfer of staff and operatives from the previous supplier, and it is often not clear until the very start of the contract who will be transferring. It has been necessary for Milestone to establish a new senior management team for the contract, which has included some temporary secondments in the short term.
7. There is a need for Milestone to recruit further staff as there are still vacant posts in their structure. However, recruitment in the industry has been a problem recently because of skills shortages and this is the case for contractors as well as for the council. To help address this a joint careers fair was held at County Hall on the 16th August 2023 involving the Council and all its highways providers.
8. The transition to the new contract went relatively smoothly; however, there were issues regarding obtaining a suitable depot which the contractor was responsible for arranging. Following the identification of a suitable depot location, the necessary arrangements were progressed and are being finalised. There is a lack of suitable sites in the county, and this has been a problem in the past. In the longer term the Council is seeking to develop its own depots which can be leased to future contractors.
9. The contract started at a particularly challenging time. Road conditions across the UK suffered badly with the particularly dry and hot summer of 2022 followed by a wet autumn, interspersed with two prolonged periods of cold weather and freezing conditions, causing serious damage to parts of the road network. The usual number of pothole reports in the winter and spring months would be around 700 to 900 per month, but at the start of 2023 the number increased to around 4,000 per month.

10. To address this, an early decision was taken to substantially increase resources dealing with potholes by redeploying teams from other works. As a consequence, some of the other workstreams took longer than originally planned to be fully operational. This particularly affected the Parish Steward scheme as resources were directed towards potholes. With the high public interest in potholes the Council held a webinar on Monday 19th June to explain how potholes are dealt with. The webinar slides included infographics on how to report a pothole and the action taken and how potholes are filled.
11. There have been some additional challenges around the Parish Steward service. Whilst measures were in place to make the change of contractor as efficient and effective as possible, at the commencement of the contract the suspension of the Parish Steward Program of visits, due to the unprecedented number of potholes resulted in a dissatisfaction with the service from many parish councils. Further, whilst due diligence was undertaken during on-boarding of personnel with the new contractor, complaints were received about lack of visibility and service provision in some areas. The program of visits recommenced from the beginning of June; however, with changes of personnel, communication with some Parish Councils was poor. In addition to this, Stewards interpretation of risk assessments methods of working contributed to an approach that was not in keeping with the scope of works laid out in the contract specification.
12. The issues were highlighted to Milestone, and an action plan developed to address the problems identified. A review of Milestone's Risk Assessments and Methods of work was carried out leading to a redrafting of these documents, and detailed briefings were then provided to Parish Stewards and necessary clarity given. A dedicated supervisor has been appointed by Milestone with responsibility for Parish Stewards to provide improved guidance and support for them when undertaking their duties, and in turn deliver improved outcomes. These changes have led to an improvement in the delivery of the service, and this is being closely monitored. A summary of Parish Steward tasks, work examples, and vehicles is included at **Appendix B**.
13. It should be noted that the contract is primarily based on the resource levels to be provided by the contractor. In many cases an increase in resources may be desirable but would require higher levels of funding, and the contract needs to remain affordable and sustainable for the Council.
14. Milestone have been flexible in directing resources according to need, although in some service areas this has been more successful than in others. In the area of streetlighting the new service was established quickly; however, in some specific areas of the wider Highways service it has taken longer to get resources and sub-contractors in place.
15. Since the commencement of the contract officers and senior Milestone staff have met on a regular basis to monitor and review progress of the services being provided. A full and comprehensive review of the current service provision has been completed in recent weeks, and a summary is included at **Appendix A**.

16. Value for money across the contract is being monitored through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Service specific and contract wide KPIs based on the Milestone quality submission at the tender stage are being developed this year and will be used as a baseline to assess future performance improvements. In addition, monthly satisfaction scoring of the service areas is being undertaken by the contractor's and council's staff involved in delivering the services.
17. The opportunity is being taken to enable the Parish and Town Councils to also provide feedback regarding the level of service being achieved by the Parish Steward service through a bi-annual questionnaire.
18. The results of the assessment of contractor's performance after its first year will be included in the Annual Review of Service which will be reported to this Committee next year.

Environmental impact of the proposal

19. The impacts of climate change are likely to have significant effects on the highways network with increased incidents of flooding and temperature extremes causing more frequent damage to the roads, footways, and drainage systems. In accordance with the Council's Business Plan objectives, having a suitable highways contractor in place enables robust responses to be made to immediate problems and assists in developing strategies and ensuring evidence-led investment decisions to improve the condition of the network to help build resilience into the highway and transport infrastructure.
20. The maintenance of highways, verges, landscaped areas and watercourses carried out by the council can have an important influence on the local ecology and environment in Wiltshire, and this was taken into account in assessing the contract prior to award.
21. Under the new contract Milestone are required to reduce their carbon footprint in line with Wiltshire's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030. The potential award of a five year contract extension allows the contractor the ability to develop a longer term environmental plan showing how they will reduce their carbon usage past 2030. This will allow them opportunities to integrate future carbon reducing technologies in transport and manufacturing currently not available.
22. A key aspect within the new contract, as in previous contracts, will be to ensure that there is a robust Environmental Plan in place that is periodically reviewed and kept up to date with the latest legislation, and covers all potential environmental hazards associated with highway activities on the surrounding environment.
23. Milestone's quality submission responses included a series of measures that they will put in place to reduce carbon emissions associated with their operations during the life of the contract, and how they will evidence these reductions. These measures include year on year targets for Scope 1 and 2 Carbon intensity reductions, proposals for reducing Scope 3 carbon intensity, and reducing fleet CO₂ emissions. These targets will be used to form key performance indicators linked to the award of the contract extension.

Milestone have already implemented a number of carbon saving measures including:

- a. Switching from diesel to HVO fuel for their plant and vehicles reducing the vehicle fuel carbon impact by 90%
- b. Introducing electric loading shovels instead of diesel in the 3 main depots
- c. Providing only electric or hybrid company cars
- d. Depot waste segregation and recycling

Equality and diversity impact of the proposal

24. The contract activities of maintaining and improving the highway network provide benefits to all people to enable them to be able to use the highway safely, whatever category they may fall into.
25. At tender stage Milestone were required to demonstrate good practice in terms of employment policies and practices, and conform to the Council's standards and values.
26. Milestone included a range of social value proposals which were considered in the tender assessment process. These included equality and diversity training, living wage requirements, local employment, jobs for armed forces veterans, apprenticeships, and work experience opportunities which will be monitored through the life of the contract. Milestone have to date:
 - a. Provided mandatory training on equality and diversity for all staff
 - b. Provided one day workshops on Behavioural Safety for all staff
 - c. Ensured all salaries are above the real living wage
 - d. Provided an Internship through the Change 100 Programme
 - e. Created 25 new jobs in the Wiltshire Area, 14 of which have been filled
 - f. Engaged with the ex-armed forces through the Building Heroes programme to assist ex armed forces employees to find work in the private sector
 - g. Sponsored Wiltshire Council's Wiltshire Business Sports and Gala Dinner
 - h. Supported 5 existing Highway Maintenance Apprentices, have sponsored 1 individual on a Supervisor Apprenticeship Programme and are in the process of recruiting 3 new employees to start a Highway Maintenance Apprenticeship Programme in September.

Risk assessment

27. The most serious risks associated with the transition to the new contract and mobilisation, especially those connected to TUPE and the transfer of staff, have been managed. Regular risk management meetings are taking place between the council and Milestone teams, and risk mitigation is reported to the monthly Contract Management Meetings.
28. The risk register developed for the mobilisation of the contract has evolved to become a risk register for the operational aspects of the contract. The council will continue to monitor the operation of the contract to manage the significant risks associated with construction and highway works.

Financial implications

29. The anticipated expenditure through the contract is likely to vary from year to year depending on budgets and priorities. The annual expenditure through the contract is expected to be in the region of £15 million, but this is likely to vary depending on funding levels, especially for capital works such as road improvement schemes. Spend through the contract during quarter 1 is currently in line with expectation.
30. Milestone are successfully using the Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management System (HIAMS) for electronic ordering and invoicing, which provides robust information on expenditure. Indications are that expenditure has been slightly below anticipated levels because of the resourcing limitations with some service areas at the start of the contract, but these are being addressed.

Legal implications

31. The Council has a duty to maintain the highways network and related infrastructure. The highways maintenance contract will deliver important aspects of the highways service and will help ensure that the Council meets its obligations under the Highways Act and other relevant legislation. The term maintenance contract will help ensure that the services are provided to the standard necessary for the Council to fulfil its statutory duties.
32. The Milestone contract is helping the Council to meet its statutory duties, especially in connection with keeping the highway network safe.

Options considered

33. The operation of the Milestone contract has been monitored during its first weeks of operation, and although there have been some issues the contract has the potential to deliver the significant benefits envisaged from the original procurement.

Conclusions

34. The new term maintenance was awarded to Milestone on 1st April 2023 and has been operating for 17 weeks.
35. Staff and operative recruitment and retention has proved to be an issue with the current skills shortage in the industry, which has had a negative impact on contractor resources and service delivery at the beginning of the contract.
36. The weather prior to the start of the contract had a serious impact on the condition of the road network, which resulted in a massive increase in the number of potholes which Milestone have had to deal with.
37. The need to divert resources to treat the increase in potholes had an adverse effect on the Parish Steward scheme.
38. There has been an improvement in the operation of the contract since its start and the contractors performance will continue to be monitored.

Background papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

Appendices

Appendix A – Service Area Review at Week 17.

Appendix B – Parish Steward Tasks, work examples and vehicles.

Highways Term Contract Service Area Review at Week 17 (9th August 2023).

Operational and Work Activities

- Local Highways
 - Safety Repairs - numbers of new defects raised have been running at record highs for the last 6 months:
 - Weekly Safety Defect Performance Update report now developed and available
 - Potholes – additional resources were allocated onto pothole works for the first 2 months of the contract to address the backlog. The operations are now stable, we have reverted back to the 3 core pot hole gangs who are able to complete the majority of repairs within their due dates.
 - Spray injection patching – Started 3rd July.
 - Hand Patching – 3 man gang is now in place and delivering to programme
 - Machine Patching – this has been challenging due to a number of resource issues, however we now expect to be operational by end of August

- Cyclic Operations
 - Gully emptying programme – the 3 gully cleansers are now all in operation and working on the high priority gullies. The Karbontech system is being used to update the gully positions and record the cleaning, this is downloaded back into the council’s asset management system. We are now reviewing the outputs to date and will be monitoring resources to ensure the programme requirements for the year are met. The gully dipper resource is commencing works this week to identify which gullies need cleaning in the non high risk areas and to allow us to programme more efficiently
 - Sweepers – the 3 no sweepers are working to programme and the data collection system is currently being installed
 - Grass cutting – There were a number of issues with the tractors causing delays to the initial operations. Vehicle repair providers are now in place and a replacement plan for the tractors and the parts has been developed. Meanwhile sub-contractors were procured and used where the direct resource was insufficient to meet programme requirements. Programme is now back on line.
 - Verge cutting - 1st cut and narrow lane cutting are complete, 2nd cut is due to start late summer in line with the programme. The Karbontech data management system will be installed on the tractors by the start of the 2nd cut.

- Parish Stewards
 - Parish Stewards – All 20 positions are filled and the PSs are now working in their parishes in line with the annual programme. There have been a number of issues around changes to ways of working, safety, equipment

and lone working. These have now been addressed, the PSs have been rebriefed and a dedicated Supervisor has been allocated to the PS service. This is expected to: improve communication between the PS's, Wiltshire Council and the customers; ensure blockers to delivery of service are dealt with efficiently and effectively; improve clarity of the role, scope of service etc; monitor and where necessary improve the productivity and service of the individual PSs. It is expected that these changes will take a few months to be completely effective, but will be continually reviewed until all parties are satisfied with the improvement of service.

- The vehicle wrapping provider has been procured and wrapping has commenced.
- Integrated Transport & LHFIG
 - Improvement Schemes – programme agreed and all 3 gangs delivering.
 - Signing Works – Slow start up but both gangs now delivering to programme.
 - Lining Works – Road marking started 15/5/23 and on programme.
- Structures
 - Maintenance and Repairs – Dedicated gang in place and delivering to programme of schemes. Communication, supervisor role and visibility of programme all good
- Drainage
 - CCTV Investigations – slow start due to procurement issues, now resolved and works started in July.
 - Drainage Repairs – 4 man gang working through programme
- Street Lighting
 - All working well, large quantity of works handed over from incumbent but Wiltshire Council working closely to identify and understand what is outstanding and prioritise. CMS base station upgrade 3d to 4d is on programme. Alloy system compatible with HIAMS currently being tested by Wiltshire Council and Milestone and on programme for go live October.
- Winter Service
 - Provision of Gritter Drivers under review for next season – gap analysis complete and training programme agreed and commenced. Engagement with supply chain drivers commenced.
- Out of Hours Emergencies Service
 - Out of Hours Standby running well – clarity of roles, responsibilities and call out process where required to deal with biological/body/blood incidents has improved the service.
- Streetworks Coordination
 - Permits – All working well.
 - Minor issues around details and drawings required have been resolved.

Contract Requirements

- Organisation Structure
 - 15 new (non TUPE) Office Staff, 6 new operatives appointed
 - 11 office staff roles advertised of which 5 are filled by seconded / temporary staff
 - 8 operative roles advertised currently filled via sub-contractors
 - 2 of the management team have left the business and 5 operatives
 - role of supervisors has been reviewed and a number of actions put in place to ensure they are better supported and more able to focus more closely on directly supporting the delivery of the service:
 - 2 new supervisor positions added.
 - 1 new Area Manager position added
 - Admin roles added and filled at each of the 3 depots
 - Review of the overall structure has identified needs to further increase overall structure – change and recruitment plan underway.
 - Training, coaching and development plan for supervisory staff being developed – 1 supervisor started on a Supervisor apprenticeship.
- Subcontractors – procurement was slow due to a number of resource issues in the Milestone process. All key subcontractors now in place and focus on the secondary subcontractors to ensure they are appropriately prioritised and onboarded. Ancillary sub-contractors being set.
- Contractors Plan updated, agreed and in the process of being signed off. Will be updated monthly.
- Contract issues – EWN/CE system set up and working well. Next step is putting on to HIAMS.
- NEC4 Training – to be re-scheduled to commence in August.
- Hiams – Installed and all operatives now using tablets. Long running connectivity issues causing problems with operatives receiving and recording up to date information is being looked at jointly by Wiltshire Council and Milestone.

Carbon and environmental

- Carbon Measurement tools in place – First 3 months work ready for review, meeting to be arranged.
- Environmental – HVO Biofuel now being used in fleet based at Chippenham depot.
- Waste Management plan – final draft now agreed

Social Value

- Social Value

APPENDIX B

Parish Steward Tasks – 2023 - 2028

Vehicle Provision

The Parish Steward shall be each provided with a 4x4 vehicle suitable to undertake the task and duties identified plus winter and weather-related activities. The vehicles shall comply with the contract requirements of the scope in terms of colour, branding and use of tracking devices. In general, the 4x4 vehicles provided shall meet the following minimum specification:

- 4x4 vehicle with single extended cab with aluminium drop side tipping body
- extended cab as a tool and protective clothing store
- fitted with a front mounted winch
- snow plough frame, bracket, and suitable snow plough (10no)
- fitment for small demountable salt spreader and small demountable salt spreader (10no)
- a variable height combination 50mm ball/pin tow hitch

Tasks Undertaken (Single person tasks)

Planned Works

Typical planned local highway work routinely undertaken by Parish Stewards includes (but is not exclusive to):

- hand clearing, and cutting of growth from drainage grips and drain gully covers
- hand clearing of blocked gullies
- rodding of drainage systems
- clearing of small culverts, pipes, and pits
- clearing storm debris
- trimming encroaching hedges and vegetation from around road signs and railings
- cleaning and straightening small road signs
- hand cutting small visibility areas
- reactive emergency repairs including pothole repairs (In accordance with Wiltshire Councils Highways Inspection Manual 2018)
- find, fix & record potholes (cold repairs only)
- responding to road closure requests from the emergency services
- removal of ragwort (hand pulling or strimming of defined areas)
- treatment/removal of weeds
- graffiti and fly posting removal
- clearance of debris and materials from scenes of road traffic collisions including clinical waste.
- siding out of footways and carriageways
- clearance of small fallen trees or minor overhanging branches/limbs

Emergency Works

Examples of types of emergency reactive local highway work which is to be undertaken by the Highway Stewards includes (but is not exclusive to):

- resolving flooding issues – clearing drainage grips and drain gully covers, clearing of small culverts, pipes, and pits etc.
- placing emergency signage and traffic management
- clearing structures and fixings and make safe
- reactive pothole repair
- responding to road closure requests from the emergency services
- small masonry type works such as repairs to slabs and damaged kerbs
- clearance of debris and materials from scenes of road traffic collisions including clinical waste
- clearance of storm damaged trees from the Highway including the use of a chainsaw (NB: where this work is either extensive or dynamic risk assessment requires, then further operational support may be required to complete the task)

Task Undertaken (Multiple person tasks)

Planned Works

The following works cannot be undertaken by a single Parish Steward without support as they are a (minimum) two-person operation. These works can be undertaken on an ad-hoc day, which is typically a Friday, but this is flexible:

- Minor carriageway repairs, including vehicle overruns
- Works requiring traffic management (including Stop/Go or the manual control of temporary traffic signals in accordance with Chapter 8)

Further Work Tasks (Non-Parish Steward Tasks)

The following works will be undertaken by other operational delivery gangs with a specific task order required to detail the scope and nature of the works:

- Small masonry type works such as repairs / replacement of slabs and damaged kerbs. Specific task order required as statutory undertaker information required as excavation works are involved
- Erection of small signs including posts in the footways, carriageways, and verges. Specific task order required as statutory undertaker information required as excavation works are involved. These works will be passed to the sign gangs
- Fence and pedestrian barrier replacement
- Sanding and painting of barriers – this is not a safety critical task so a separate task order to be raised for these works
- Large areas of sweeping and more than 5 gully dig outs/cleans

Parish Steward Liaison and Planning of Works

Parish Stewards will liaise with individual parish reps when they are in their area to ensure all work requests are clear and have been communicated to Wiltshire Council for review and approval prior to the Parish Steward commencing work in their area. Each parish has a planned visit on a monthly basis, with the programme set in advance covering a 3-month period.

We have a dedicated supervisor in place to ensure communication between all parties happens and where needed is improved. The supervisor will also deal with any local issues that require escalation and provide feedback on the resolution of such issues.

Weekly meeting take place between Milestone and Wiltshire CC staff to discuss the Parish Steward delivery along with monthly meetings with the Parish stewards themselves, this ensures we have a consistent message and approach across all working areas.

Milestone are more than happy to meet with local parishes to discuss the above and provide further explanation and understanding where needed surrounding the delivery, planning and

communication with their Parish Steward as well as explaining Milestones approach to the works, in particular the Health and Safety requirements to ensure the Parish Steward undertakes the work in a safe and efficient manner.
Examples of Parish Stewards Works Completed



Parish Steward vehicles



Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

19 September 2023

Council's approach to tackling potholes

Executive summary

The new term maintenance was awarded to Milestone on 1st April 2023 and has been operating for 17 weeks.

The contract started at a particularly challenging time. Road conditions across the UK suffered badly with the particularly dry and hot summer of 2022 followed by a wet autumn, interspersed with two prolonged periods of cold weather with freezing conditions, causing serious damage to parts of the road network. The usual number of pothole reports in the winter and spring months of around 700 to 900 per month, increased to around 4,000 per month.

To address this, an early decision was taken to substantially increase the resources dealing with potholes by redeploying teams from other works. Consequently, some of the other workstreams took longer than originally planned to become fully operational. A decision was also taken to use only cold lay material (Viafix) as this was considered the quickest way of responding whilst limiting impact on the travelling public.

Pothole numbers have now returned to seasonal norms and the resource levels have been adjusted accordingly.

Since the commencement of the contract, council officers and senior Milestone staff have met on a regular basis to monitor and review progress of the services being provided, including pothole repairs.

Further work on identifying the most effective pothole treatments is ongoing and being undertaken jointly between the Council and Milestone.

The identified improvements to MyWilts are essential to maintain engagement with residents and encourage willingness to report defects.

Proposal

That the committee:

- a) Note the contents of the report and the progress and methodologies being pursued to address pothole repairs.
- b) Request a further update to this Committee at a time to be agreed.

Reason for proposal

The operation of the Milestone contract, of which pothole repairs sit within, has been monitored during its first weeks of operation. Although there have been some issues the contract has the potential to deliver the benefits envisaged, and work to identify the most advantageous pothole treatments is ongoing.

Author: Samantha Howell

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Council's approach to tackling potholes

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update on the Council's approach to tackling potholes.

Background

2. Pothole defects are reported via two main channels: Scheduled inspections undertaken by Highways staff and public reports via the "MyWilts" online reporting tool.
3. With regards to the MyWilts system, while it is the council's preferred method for members of the public to report defects, there have been a number of issues with functionality, particularly around the quality of feedback provided to customers on the progression of reports.
4. Work is currently ongoing to address the dissatisfaction there is with the MyWilts platform. With improved integration between MyWilts and the highways asset management software there should be significant improvements for the customer.
5. Reported potholes are subject to officer inspection and categorisation in accordance with the Highways Safety Inspection Manual. Depending on the type of pothole, the officer will allocate a priority from 1 to 5. Not all reported potholes meet the defect criteria, and so not all reported potholes are repaired. Some reported potholes will be repaired at a later date, but not immediately as they are of lower priority. The aim is to fix Priority 1 potholes by the end of the next day, while Priority 2 will be fixed within 14 days, Priority 3 in 28 days, Priority 4 in 60 days, and Priority 5 are referred to a manager for further consideration.
6. With the high public interest in potholes the Council held a webinar on Monday 19th June to explain how potholes are dealt with. This event received positive feedback and the recording has subsequently received 532 views on Youtube. The webinar slides included infographics on how to report a pothole and the action taken and how potholes are filled. A number of slides from the webinar are included at **Appendix A**.

Main considerations for the committee

7. Road conditions across the UK suffered badly with the particularly dry and hot summer of 2022 followed by a wet autumn, interspersed with two prolonged periods of cold weather. The usual winter months pothole reports level would be around 700 to 900 per month. December 2022 saw 924 pothole reports received, while the figure in January 2023 was 4260.
8. The increase in numbers of reports between December and January was a substantive one. To address this an early decision was taken to significantly increase the resources dealing with potholes by redeploying teams from other works. A decision was also taken to use only cold lay material (Viafix). The

rationale behind this being that the scale of the increase meant that this was considered the quickest way of responding whilst limiting impact on the travelling public.

9. Pothole numbers have now returned to seasonal norms and the resource levels have been adjusted accordingly.
10. The preferred pothole repair method is a 'cut and hot fill' and the move to this methodology is underway now that overall pothole numbers have reduced. An infographic showing this method is included at **Appendix B**
11. From early May two spray injection machines have been deployed. These undertake repairs by utilising a bitumen emulsion combined with stone chips. It has a capacity to both fill potholes but also seal and dress areas showing crazing/cracking, so both dealing with the immediate defect but also arresting further deterioration. The nature of this repair method does mean that its use is confined to rural roads.
12. Value for money across the contract is being monitored through Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Contract wide and service specific KPI's based upon the Milestone quality submission are being developed in year 1 and will be used as a baseline for future performance. In addition, monthly satisfaction scoring of the service areas is already being undertaken.
13. Milestone have already developed a PowerBI dashboard for defects, including potholes, that is shared with officers on a weekly basis. This is helping to monitor performance as well as identifying the priority areas for intervention.

Innovation

14. When considering what option(s) to pursue in repairing potholes, experience has demonstrated that no single repair methodology provides a complete solution and that rather a suite of approaches offers the best outcomes.
15. A number of commercially branded pot hole filling operational methodologies are currently being marketed across the UK. Officers have recently attended a site demonstration in Oxford where one road has been subject to a variety of different treatment types to allow comparisons of the type of repair, equipment, material, and labour used, and the time taken. This visit was facilitated by Milestone through their Oxfordshire contract and a commitment has been given to share the findings with the Council.
13. Milestone have developed their own pothole repairing machine known as the Dragon Patcher. This machine releases compressed air which cleans the area before emitting flames to prepare the road surface and elevate the road temperature above 5 degrees, enabling the material to bond effectively with the existing road surface. The Dragon Patcher then seals the pothole with a stone mix and hot bitumen. These machines are currently used across a number of local authority contracts within the Milestone portfolio. Consideration is being given to using this machine in Wiltshire.

14. JCB Pothole Pro – this was initially investigated in 2021 and 2022 by the previous term Contractor, Ringway, on their Worcestershire and Milton Keynes contracts. Initial conclusions were that the size of the machine lent itself more to the larger patching of areas rather than dealing with individual potholes. Further and again due to machine size it was considered likely that road closures would be required to allow operation to take place. A further trial involving Milestone in the County has been arranged and is due shortly.

Environmental impact of the proposal

15. The effects of climate change are likely to have significant effects on the highways network with increased incidents of flooding and temperature extremes causing more frequent damage to the roads, footways, and drainage systems. Having a suitable highways contractor in place and the ability to move resource from other duties to deal with other priorities, such as potholes, enables robust responses to be made to immediate problems.
16. Under the new contract Milestone are required to reduce their carbon footprint in line with Wiltshire's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030. The potential award of a five year contract extension allows the contractor the ability to develop a longer term environmental plan showing how they will reduce their carbon usage past 2030. This will allow them opportunities to integrate future carbon reducing technologies in transport and manufacturing currently not available.

Equality and diversity impact of the proposal

17. The contract activities of maintaining and improving the highway network, including the filling of potholes, provide benefits to all people to enable them to be able to use the highway safely, whatever category they may fall into.

Risk assessment

18. Regular risk management meetings are taking place between the Council and Milestone teams and reported to the monthly Contract Management Meetings.
19. The risk register developed for the mobilisation of the contract has evolved to become a risk register for the operational aspects of the contract including pothole performance. The Council will continue to monitor the operation of the contract to manage the significant risks associated with construction and highway works.

Financial implications

20. The anticipated expenditure through the wider term contract is likely to vary from year to year depending on budgets and priorities. The annual expenditure through the contract is expected to be in the region of £15 million with spend on pothole repairs anticipated to be around £1.6 million.
21. The contract is primarily based on the resource levels to be provided by the contractor. In many cases an increase in resources may be desirable but would require higher levels of funding, and the contract needs to remain affordable and sustainable for the Council.

Legal implications

22. The Council has a duty to maintain the highways network and related infrastructure. The highways contract will deliver important aspects of the highways service and will help ensure that the Council meets its obligations under the Highways Act and other legislation. The contract will help ensure that the services are provided to the standard necessary for the Council to fulfil its statutory duties.

Options considered

23. The operation of the Milestone contract, of which pothole repairs sit within, has been monitored during its first weeks of operation. Although there have been some issues the contract has the potential to deliver the benefits envisaged, and work to identify the most advantageous pothole treatments is ongoing.

Conclusion

24. The new term maintenance was awarded to Milestone on 1st April 2023 and has been operating for 17 weeks.
 25. The weather prior to the start of the contract had a serious impact on the condition of the road network, which resulted in a massive increase in the number of potholes which Milestone have had to deal with.
 26. The need to divert resources to treat the increase in potholes had an adverse effect on other service areas.
 27. Since the commencement of the contract, council officers and senior Milestone staff have met on a regular basis to monitor and review progress of the services being provided, including pothole repairs.
 28. Pothole numbers have now returned to seasonal norms and the resource levels have been adjusted accordingly.
 29. Further work on identifying the most effective pothole treatments is ongoing and being undertaken jointly between the Council and Milestone
 30. The identified improvements to MyWilts are essential to maintain engagement with residents and encourage willingness to report defects.
-

Background papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

Appendices

Appendix A – Pothole Webinar slides
Appendix B – Cut and Fill infographic

Pothole Webinar slides

Spotted a pothole?



1.

When you see a pothole, make a note of its location.



2.

Report the pothole on the MyWilts app, or at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/MyWilts



3.

A highways engineer will then assess the pothole and will grade it based on our Highways Safety Inspection Manual.



4.

So long as it meets our defect criteria, it will then be filled as soon as possible – either temporarily if it's an immediate risk to road safety, or with more permanent fill.



5.

We maintain more than 2,700 miles of highways, and although we regularly inspect them, your reports help us to identify hotspots and fix potholes.

Wiltshire Council

Fixing potholes– Chris Clark

Inspection following pothole report – categorised in line with our Highways Inspection Manual



Wiltshire Highways Safety Inspection Manual

Carriageway (CW)
(including cycleways forming part of the carriageway)

Potholes (POTH)

Road type	Defect description	Priority
2, 3, 4	In carriageway more than 150mm deep and horizontal dimension greater than 300mm x 300mm	P1
5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	In carriageway more than 100mm deep and horizontal dimension greater than 300mm x 300mm	P1
2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	In carriageway at a designated pedestrian crossing point (i.e. Pedestrian, Zebra, Puffin or uncontrolled crossing where clearly identified as such) exceeding 20mm and extending in one direction more than 100mm	P1
2, 3, 4	In carriageway between ditches – 75mm deep and horizontal dimension greater than 300mm x 300mm	P2
5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	In carriageway between ditches – 50mm deep and maximum dimension greater than horizontal dimension greater than 300mm x 300mm	P3
10 and 11	Other defects identified taking into account local condition and usage	P4

Potholes (POTH)

38



Interim repairs

- Undertaken to keep road safe
- Can provide a durable repair
- Enables more extensive repairs to be programmed efficiently



How do we fill potholes?



1.

Our teams cut a square hole around the pothole, around 40mm deep, and remove any loose material.



2.

Then we brush out any debris and water.



3.

Next we add a bonding coat to the hole – this will enable the filling material to hold fast.



4.

We then fill the hole with an approved material and level it to the existing surface to allow for compaction.



5.

It is then flattened using a plate compactor or hand rammer.



6.

Finally, we tidy up before moving on to the next report.



Note: this is the more permanent repair method; we also temporarily reinstate some potholes using 'cold' materials. The temporary filling method is necessary to take fast action to keep the highways safe before a more permanent repair (which is more labour intensive and uses more equipment) can be scheduled.














Wiltshire Council

Permanent repairs

- Failed area cut out using a mini planer
- Reinstated using 'hot' material hand laid



Cut and Hot Fill Infographic

 <p>The edge cut depth must be 40mm minimum.</p> <p>The hole is cut out first.</p>	 <p>The hole must be cut with square corners.</p> <p>The sides of the hole must be cut to solid material.</p>	 <p>Make certain to chip the corners of the hole out.</p>	 <p>Remember to check the Polished Stone Value (PSV) being used is equal to or greater than 50.</p>	 <p>Place layers no thicker than 40mm each.</p>	 <p>The specification requires <u>six</u> passes over the whole area of the repair.</p>															
<p>Has the hole edge been cut to at least 40mm?</p>	<p>Is the hole cut to sound material and a regular shape?</p>	<p>Are all cut edges square (not feathered) and chipped out?</p>	<p>Is the filling material of the correct PSV?</p>	<p>Are layers placed in depths no greater than 40mm?</p>	<p>Has each layer been sufficiently compacted?</p>															
 <p>potholes. Has all loose material been removed from the hole before filling?</p>	 <p>Hole must be free of water and waste material before applying the bond coat and filling with material.</p>	 <p>Preference is to apply Leotak (K3-4) to the base and edges with a</p>	 <p>BEFORE</p> <p>AFTER</p>	 <p>Minimise spills and clean up the area before leaving.</p>	 <p>Report any damage that's caused.</p>															
<p>Has water been removed from the hole before adding bond coat and material?</p>	<p>Is bond coat applied to the edges and base?</p>	<p>Have the correct compaction devices been used (hand tamp, compactor plate, small vibratory roller)?</p>	<p>Is the local area free of spilled bond coat?</p>	<p>Are kerbs, ironwork and street furniture free from damage?</p>																
<p>Don't assume that the material you are using is the correct spec.</p> <p>Check the order placed is correct.</p> <p>Check what is loaded on the vehicle, by looking at the</p> <p>For Pothole Patches, only Warm Mix (preferred) or Hot Mix asphalt can be used as a permanent fix on the 3-11 network.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Service Owner:</td> <td>Operations Manager:</td> <td>Task: Pothole Repair</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Effective Date: April 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Review Date: April 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Version: 1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Service Owner Wiltshire:</td> <td>Contract Manager:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Service Owner:	Operations Manager:	Task: Pothole Repair			Effective Date: April 2023			Review Date: April 2024			Version: 1.0	Service Owner Wiltshire:	Contract Manager:		 <p>Spend a few minutes to make the area adjacent to the work area clean and tidy.</p>		
Service Owner:	Operations Manager:	Task: Pothole Repair																		
		Effective Date: April 2023																		
		Review Date: April 2024																		
		Version: 1.0																		
Service Owner Wiltshire:	Contract Manager:																			
<p>Has the correct filling material been used?</p>			<p>Is the completed work area swept clean?</p>																	
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Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

19th September 2023

Subject: Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance Contract Update

Cabinet Member: Caroline Thomas - Highways and Transport, Street Scene and Flooding

Key Decision: No

Executive summary

1. The scope of Wiltshire Council's new Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance contract covers a wide range of services including grounds maintenance, grass cutting, street cleansing, election material deliveries and play area provision.
2. The contract is mainly an outcome requirement. This means the council states the service levels and the contractor delivers this in the most effective way and is incentivised by the contract terms to ensure this occurs.
3. The 2023/ 24 allocated budget is £5.066m, the forecasted spend is £5m.
4. Since the commencement of the contract, savings of £1.078m (£0.4m from efficiency savings and £0.678 from service amendments) have been agreed and are forecasted to be achieved.
5. The Streetscene function has been given additional funding to deliver extra litter related services and £0.37m of these will be delivered via the contract.
6. The Place Performance and Outcome Board Streetscene Key Performance Indicators are recording good performance.
7. The monthly contract operational Key Performance Indicator scores are averaging between 5 and 6 out of 10, which is considered an adequate performance during a mobilisation period.
8. Idverde's Carbon Commitment will be primarily using Hydronated Vegetable Oil (HVO) to meet their contract carbon requirements.
9. Idverde are using 3 Wiltshire Council depots. A 4th was vacated following a water leak and not returned to resulting in a loss of £0.034m in rent.
10. Monthly Service Delivery Team meetings and an annual review have been established, with an escalation process in place for contract failures or challenges.

Proposal

That the committee notes the Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance update.

Reason for proposal

As resolved at the Environment Select Committee meeting on 30 September 2022 the select committee will receive an update report on the Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance contract.

Samantha Howell
Director of Highways and Transport

Report Author: Adrian Hampton (Head of Highway Operations)

Contact details: adrian.hampton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

19th September 2023

Subject: Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance Contract Update

Cabinet Member: Caroline Thomas - Highways and Transport, Street Scene and Flooding

Key Decision: No

Purpose of report

1. As resolved at the Environment Select Committee meeting on 30 September 2022, to provide an update on the Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance contract.

Background

2. The scope of the contract covers a wide range of services including grounds maintenance, grass cutting, street cleansing, election material deliveries and play area provision.
3. The 2022/ 23 Streetscene policy commitments were used as the contract baseline service levels. Examples of policies and contract specification at the time:

Grass Cutting:

Area	Expected mowing season	Expected frequency of cut	Type of mow
General grass areas Urban amenity areas for active play.	Second week March - end of October	Monthly	Cuttings to be as flown
Environmental cut Urban grass areas suitable for biodiversity mowing.	One cut during March, July and September	N/A	Cuttings to be as flown

Area	Expected mowing season	Expected frequency of cut	Type of mow
<p>Wildflower/ conservation areas</p> <p>Urban grass where mowing can encourage native fauna and flora.</p>	<p>A cut will take place the last fortnight of March and commence again in the last two weeks of September.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Cuttings to be collected and composted onsite</p>
<p>Rural grass cutting is undertaken by Local Highways through a number of different contracts.</p>			

Street litter and public litter bins

Area	Expected Standard
<p>Scheduled Litter Picking</p>	<p>All town centres will be at Grade A standard by 8am in accordance with the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse standards.</p>
<p>Reactive Litter Picking</p>	<p>To the Code of practice for litter: GOV.UK: Statutory guidance Litter and refuse: code of practice</p>
<p>Litter Bins</p>	<p>Will be emptied to a frequency to prevent them overflowing and provided where there is a proven need.</p>
<p>Street and road sweeping is undertaken by Local Highways under the Milestone contract.</p>	

4. The contract is mainly an outcome delivered provision, this means the council sets the standards to be achieved and the contractor decides the most effective way to achieve the outcomes.
5. An Option C New Engineering Contract (NEC) 4 is being operated. The decision for an Option C contract followed a Procurement review of other council street scene contracts.
6. An NEC Option C contract pays the contractor defined operational costs (actual costs) rather than individual rates. However, to incentivise efficiencies the contractor at the time of tender provides a cost per activity. The number of activities the council uses is multiplied against the prices to set a Target Price. The Target Price is not the price paid, but the level at which incentivised payments can be made, or a reduction in sums occur. It is commonly known as a 'gain or pain' contract. This gives a considerable incentive for the most efficient delivery as once over the Target Price full costs are not paid by the council. The percentages are:

<i>Share range</i>	<i>Contractor's share percentage</i>
Less than 80%	25%
From 80% to 90%	35%
From 90% to 110%	50%
Greater than 110%	25%

7. The contract runs for five years with a possible extension of up to 5 years subject to performance against key outcomes.

Main considerations for the Committee

8. Wiltshire Council's new Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance contract was due to commence on 1st December 2022. However, this was delayed to 1st February 2023, to allow Idverde time to consider their position as the contract indices (price list increases) were lower than they had assumed at the time of pricing their tender. This meant the Target Price was lower than they had predicted.
9. The matter was resolved amicably, and the council's indices' rates were applied as per the contract clauses.
10. In addition to the original saving of £0.4m for moving to an outcome-based contract, an additional saving of £0.678m was agreed in the 2023/ 24 council budget for the service amendments as detailed in Appendix A. Some have no material impact on service delivery, for example the Service Delegation to Trowbridge Town Council, which Idverde actively supported and was completed on time. Whilst service reductions were also identified, the Option C contract gives us a flexible approach. For example, during June there was a sustained dry spell of weather when the grass did not grow so the council was able to remove one scheduled grass cut, saving over £0.1m on the target price. A further example, is a reduction of cleansing in town centres during low use.

11. The Streetscene team has received additional funding of £0.370m as detailed in Appendix B to address business plan priorities. The extra funding will be used for additional monthly cleaning of Service Delegated multi-story car parks, and litter picking on the highway network. These services started in August 2023.
12. The idverde contract also supports the Highway Operation Enforcement Team. Additional funding has been awarded for the enforcement of fly tipping, with the enforcement outcomes and fly tip numbers monitored by the Place Performance and Outcome Board.
13. The 2023/24 allocated budget was £5.066m, and the forecasted spend is currently £5m.
14. Completed works between the 1st February and the 31st July were high and stand at (Appendix C gives more details)

Details	Volumes
Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse (COPLAR) Reactive Works (per litter pick)	171
Number of empties of public litter bins	145,626
Number of fly tip removals	638
Meter squared of town centre areas cleaned	83,553,240
Meter squared of Amenity Grass cut	11,835.370
Meter squared of Low Amenity Grass cut. (Scoped as an Environmental Cut)	305,458
Meter squared of Wildflower/Conservation Grass cut. (Scoped as an Environmental Cut)	267,315

15. The monthly Key Performance Indicator scores are averaging between 5 and 6 out of 10 (Appendix D) which is considered an adequate performance for the Streetscene Service. This is in line with expectations during the mobilisation period. The main issues have been:
 - a. Access to the telematics information of the vehicles which contains personal details and which the GDPR team took time to resolve;
 - b. The production of an annual budget forecast has been delayed due to discrepancies over allowed defined costs (not all costs can be claimed by idverde);
 - c. Some disruption in the commercial delivery of idverde's town and parish council support.
 - d. Conversion to HVO has yet to be undertaken.
16. The Place Performance and Outcome Board measures are recording high performance:

- a. The annual biodiversity target for increasing environmentally managed land is 289,375m² with the actual area forecasted to be converted is 420,044m²;
 - b. Community Support Events in June were up from 4 in 2022 to nine in 2023;
 - c. Litter reports for June are down from 75 in 2022 to 58 in 2023;
 - d. With circa 90% of litter reports cleared within 7 days.
17. While the council's depot infrastructure is unable to support contractor electric vehicles, Idverde (and all council depot occupying contractors) will primarily use Hydronated Vegetable Oil (HVO), or an alternative bio fuel, to meet their contract carbon requirements. Whilst this is not ideal, it is the next best option to electric to reduce vehicle carbon emissions. However, this will incur additional costs to the Streetscene Service as HVO is approximately 20% more expensive than fossil fuel. Further carbon reductions and revenue savings will only be possible if the electric charging infrastructure is provided.
18. Idverde are using three Wiltshire Council depots. A fourth was vacated following a water leak and not returned to resulting in a loss of £0.034m in rent.
19. Monthly Service Delivery Team meetings have been established, with an escalation process in place for contract failures or challenges. The Director of Highways and Transport is the appointed escalation officer for the council, should this be required.
20. An annual review has been scheduled for each January to consider Idverde's performance and potential contract extensions.

Environmental impact of the proposal

21. The contract has a number of required environment outcomes:
- a. Year on year carbon reductions with carbon neutrality by 2030. The carbon outcomes are being delivered by the electrification of small equipment and moving to alternative fuels such as sustainable Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO).
 - b. A 5% increase in environmentally managed land areas. The move to more sustainable land management is incorporated into the contract with a target to move to increase areas which will support fauna and flora, such as wildflower and Meadow areas.
22. The performance against these targets are part of the Key Performance Indicator assessment for the extension of the contract (as detailed in Appendix D). Failure to meet the Key Performance Indicator targets impacts on any extension award.

Equality and diversity impact of the proposal

23. There are no equality and diversity impacts resulting from the update report.

Risk assessment

24. There are no risk assessment requirements resulting from this update report.

Financial implications

25. The 2023/ 24 allocated Budget was £5.066m, the budgeted forecasted spend is £5m.

26. The contract has a requirement for an annual contract saving of £1.078m (See Appendix A).

Legal implications

27. Wiltshire Council carried out the procurement in accordance with Section B of Part 10 of its Constitution and in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Conclusion

28. The contract has delivered high performance levels on the council's strategic priorities, with quicker litter collection times, a greater number of community support activities and supporting the council's Enforcement Team with the management of fly tipping removals.

29. The contract operational performance through the mobilisation period has been adequate, this is predicted to improve as idverde's back office systems (budget forecasting etc.) and infrastructure (HVO and vehicles) plans are delivered.

30. The commitment £0.4m of savings is forecasted to be achieved this year through the move to an outcome based provision with the contractor delivering the efficiencies.

31. A further saving of £0.678m is forecasted to be achieved through Wiltshire Council service amendments, this will be a mix of alterations, including: a service delegation to Trowbridge Town Council and data led decisions on changes in service levels.

32. The 2023/ 24 allocated budget is £5.066m with a forecasted spend of £5m for idverde showing a small underspend.

33. The Streetscene contract has received additional litter collection funding of £0.370m to address local priorities and there is a high degree of confidence the new contract can deliver this.

34. The impact of the NEC Option C contract with a Target Price will be reviewed over the long term to ensure it delivers the best service within budget.

35. Monthly Service Delivery Team meetings and an annual review have been established, with an escalation process in place for contract failures or challenges.

Background papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

Appendices

Appendix A – 2023/24 Budgeted Savings and Service Implications

Appendix B – Additional Funding

Appendix C - Contract Quantities

Appendix D – Extension Quantities

Budgeted savings and service implications - 2023/24

Street Scene budgeted savings £0.678m
Description
Allotment Maintenance Delegation to Parish and Town Councils
Reduce cemetery grass cutting frequency (to three weekly or monthly as required)
Reductions in pavement sweeping
Conversion of identified urban verge to wildflower
Review Play Areas without S106 funding (Policy for Service Delegation or Asset Transfer already in place)
Increased income from Developer Adoption
Cease external funding for streetscene works
Reduction in litter bin emptying, statutory litter picking service, reduction in layby litter picking etc.
Trowbridge Service Delegation completed

Previous Contract Savings (First Year Of Operation)

Street Scene budgeted savings £0.4m
Description
<p>Contract efficiencies introduced by the contractor to deliver to the budget. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only emptying litter bins when full. • Allocating staff to a task, rather than a time. For example once the town centre is clean, relocate the cleaning to other areas, rather than stay onsite. • Sharing specialised equipment over several contracts, rather than allocating equipment just to Wiltshire Council.

Additional Funding (Per Year)

Description	Measure	Value
Biannual rural road and verge litter picking - Outside of High and Medium Intensity Areas (Unmapped Areas)	2,200 km of verge	£0.370m
Idverde Community Support	52 events (funded by Idverde)	
Biannual Litter pick - National Highways Trunk Roads (Including Slip Roads) - A303/A36	150 km verge	
Clean Multi-Story Car Park Stair Wells (regularly cleaning beyond service delegation which is in accordance with Code of Practice)	1 visit per month dependent on work requirements	

1st February – 31st July Quantities Of Completed Works

Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse (COPLAR) Reactive Works (per litter pick)	171
Kilometres of Wiltshire Council rural roads and verges litter picked	597.78
Kilometres of National Highways trunk roads and verges litter picked (A303 and A36)	212
Number of empties of public litter bins	145,626
Number of fly tip removals	638
Meter squared of town centre areas cleaned	83,553,240
Number of enhanced (scheduled not reactive) cleaning of National Highways laybys (<u>A303/A36</u>)	1,008
Hedges and shrubs - area footprint width x length	Winter Work
Meter squared of Amenity Grass cut	11,835.370
Meter squared of Low Amenity Grass cut (Scoped as an Environmental Cut)	305,458
Meter squared of Wildflower/Conservation Grass cut (Scoped as an Environmental Cut)	267,315
Meter squared of Cemetery Grass cut	1,316,544
Number of community events supported	96

Contract Extension Scoring

1. Extensions to the Initial Contract term (5 Years) may be awarded each year, to take effect at the end of the initial 5 year Contract term. Any extensions to the Contract term will be conditional on the acceptable performance of the Contractor during remaining part of the contract term. In the event of non-performance, or performance below the minimum acceptable standards, entitlement to any previously awarded extensions would be withdrawn.
2. The award of any extension to the Initial Contract term (5 Years) will be at the discretion of the Council. Events may take place that prevent the Contract term being extended due to political, economic or other reasons.
3. If an average score of less than 4.9 out of 10 is achieved, serious consideration would be given to terminating the Contract, or taking other corrective actions. In the event of poor performance in particular areas the selected Contractor may be required to prepare an Action Plan showing how services would be improved to meet the required standard. The selected Contractor's subsequent performance would be monitored and reviewed at the contract management meetings.
4. For average scores of 5.0 to 7.9 the selected Contractor would typically be awarded a nine-month extension to the Initial Contract term (5 Years), but the total extension period will not exceed five years.
5. For average scores of 8.0 and over the selected Contractor would typically be awarded a fourteen-month extension to the Initial Contract term (5 Years), but the total extension period would not exceed five years.
6. The scores will be reported to the relevant Council Committee or Panel in the Annual Review of Service.

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Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

19 September 2023

Public Transport Review and Passenger Transport Service Update and Future Developments

Executive summary

This report provides an update to the Environment Select Committee on progress with public transport projects, noting their positive impacts, highlighting risks and mitigating actions. It also details progress on the public transport network review reflecting passengers changing travel habits and increasing uncertainty in the market, including in relation to costs and driver availability.

Proposal

That the Committee:

- (i) Notes the update on public transport in Wiltshire including the progress being made on the review of the public transport policy.

Reason for proposal

Updated as requested by the Committee.

Author: Jason Salter, Head of Service Passenger Transport
Contact details: Jason.salter@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 713334

Public Transport Review & Passenger Transport Service Update and Future Developments

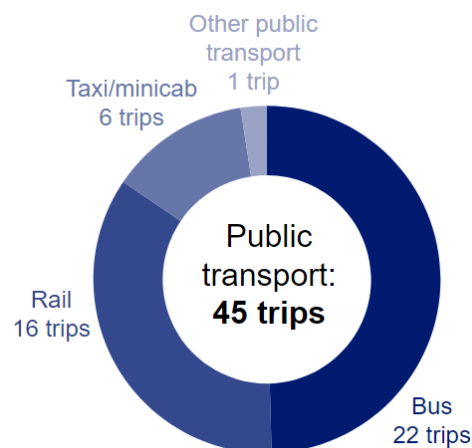
Purpose of report

This report provides an update on public transport and also, the public transport network review which is currently being progressed.

Background

1. The Current State of the Bus Market

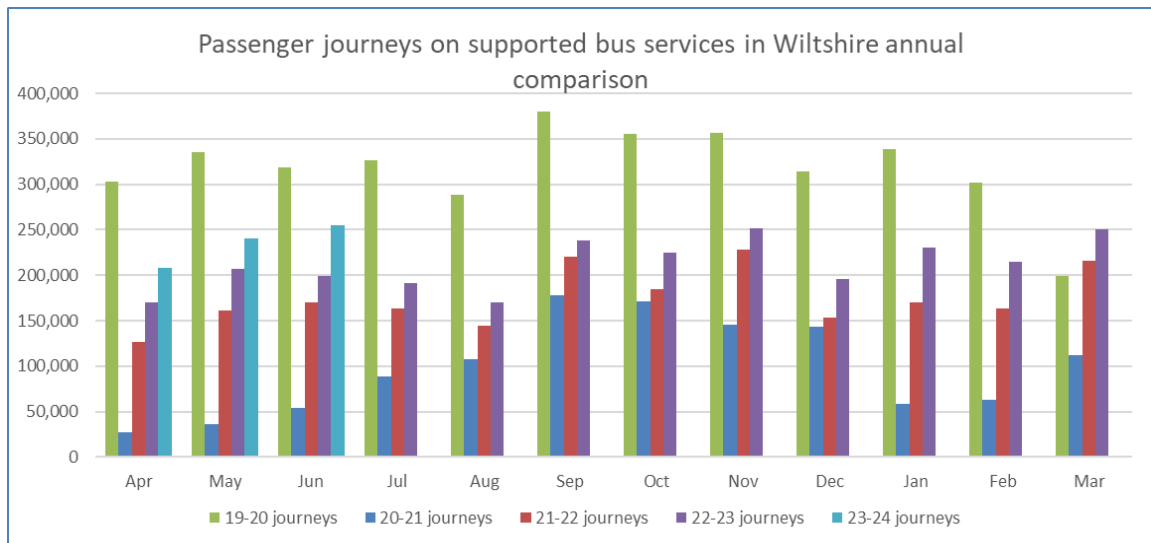
- 1.1 Buses play a significant role in public transport, with far more passenger trips taken by bus than rail, despite the large subsidies which rail receives.



Average number of trips made per person, England, 2020 [Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-statistics-great-britain-2021)

- 1.2 The UK Bus Market is still recovering from the effects of the pandemic, when passenger numbers and services were reduced to minimum levels through the various lockdowns.
- 1.3 Passenger confidence has returned, but people's reasons to travel have altered. The increase in homeworking has reduced the commuting market, and now means that parents are more often available to do the "school run" which may previously have been made by bus.
- 1.4 Similarly, the decline in the high street has reduced the attractiveness of it to shoppers. Whereas pre-Covid someone might travel to town twice a week to include shopping, banking, a library visit, and a visit to a coffee shop / café with fewer shops, banks and cafes open, one visit a week is now more common.

- 1.5 However, weekend leisure travel has seen positive growth and, on some routes, now exceeds pre-Covid levels. This is especially true when there are events and sports fixtures on, but numbers are also strong on other weekends.



- 1.6 Through a series of national and local initiatives the bus is gaining acceptance in a wider segment of the market than before. Whilst existing passengers haven't returned to their previous usage levels, the bus is attracting new passengers.

2. Market Risks

- 2.1 The bus industry continues to struggle for staff in a competitive employment market, although the situation is better than in recent years.
- 2.2 However, recruiting and retaining staff has increased costs as higher wage rates have had to be offered. This, coupled with higher fuel costs, increased prices for spare parts (and very long lead times for some items leading to vehicles being off the road) when set against reduced passenger income has caused our operators significant inflation costs and operating difficulties.
- 2.3 We have seen a number of contracts returned early as operational costs exceed income. These have then been re-procured, but at significantly higher rates, often as high as 45% Unlike many areas though our commercial network remains stable with no de-registrations.

Current Progress

3. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

- 3.1 Our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is still a live document, although the Department for Transport (DfT) have indicated that they don't require an annual update this autumn.
- 3.2 The DfT considered the BSIP to be our "shop window" when considering grant support should further funding come available.

4. Enhanced Partnership (EP)

- 4.1 Our EP, formed under our BSIP is meeting regularly with our bus operators and other stake holders such as Great Western Railway. These are useful meetings which inform us of the bigger picture and allow operators to share views with us and each other.
- 4.2 The EP Board is also meeting regularly and having good discussions leading to important decisions, such as SuperBus (see section below).
- 4.3 It seems that we are one of the few non-BSIP funded local authorities to already have an EP and EP Board, both of which DfT are making a condition of further grant funding.

5. Bus Recovery Grant

- 5.1 The Government extended the Bus Recovery Grant from 20 February 2023 for a further 3 months at a cost of up to £80 million to continue supporting bus services until 30 June 2023.

6. Bus £2 Fare Cap

As part of the wider “Help for Household” policy the Government has extended the £2 fare cap for single fares through to 31 October 2023, with a higher cap of £2.50 cap from then until 30 November 2024. All bus companies which operate in Wiltshire are participating in the scheme. As well as helping passengers, this scheme is also helping bus operators maintain income in the post-Covid market to allow them to keep bus services running.

7. BSIP+ Funding

- 7.1 As well as extending the Bus Fare Cap funding, the Government has instigated a two-year BSIP+ grant to help protect and enhance bus services. Wiltshire has been granted £2.2m for the current and 24/25 financial year.
- 7.2 Despite financial pressures (fuel, wages, spare parts) on our local bus companies, and reduced patronage compared to pre-Covid levels, bus services in Wiltshire are recovering much better than in many areas. The terms of the BSIP+ grant allow it to be used to retain services which would otherwise be lost, or to innovate and expand services. Through the hard work of our operators, we are in a position where we expect to use the funding to build the overall bus market and improve the long-term financial sustainability of the network.
- 7.3 We are currently working with our bus operators to finalise how this money will be spent.
- 7.4 One of the conditions of BSIP+ funding is that the funding will only be made available if the local authority continues to maintain its current spending on public transport for the current and following financial year.

8. Pewsey Vale Rural Mobility Fund Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Project

8.1 The first phase of the project went live on 31 July with a formal launch on 3 August. Ridership so far has been good with over 1,600 downloads of the booking app and just over 1,700 passenger trips carried out in the first month of service (August 23). Two further phases will see the network expand progressively into the Marlborough & Great Bedwyn area on 4 September and 30 October.

9. UKSPF Grant Funding

9.1 Wiltshire Council bid to the UKSPF funding (Levelling up – UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and were allocated £1.084m by DEFRA to improve rural mobility in Wiltshire and support people to access services, employment and education opportunities by improving personal transport options. Most of the funding is capital with a small amount of revenue.

9.2 The business case to spend this grant allocation is being drawn up, with its likely intention being to procure low-floor, accessible minibuses to expand DDRT, including conversion of timetabled fixed route buses where they no longer meet the needs of the market in the most effective way.

10. Promoting Bus Travel

10.1 Working closely with our Communications Team we have developed a marketing plan to raise awareness of bus travel and encouraging local people to use the bus to support not only local bus routes, but also the Wiltshire economy.

10.2 The style of advert initially developed to promote the £2 Fare Cap has been broadened, to more general awareness of the bus. These graphics have been used on social media and the weekly resident's newsletter.

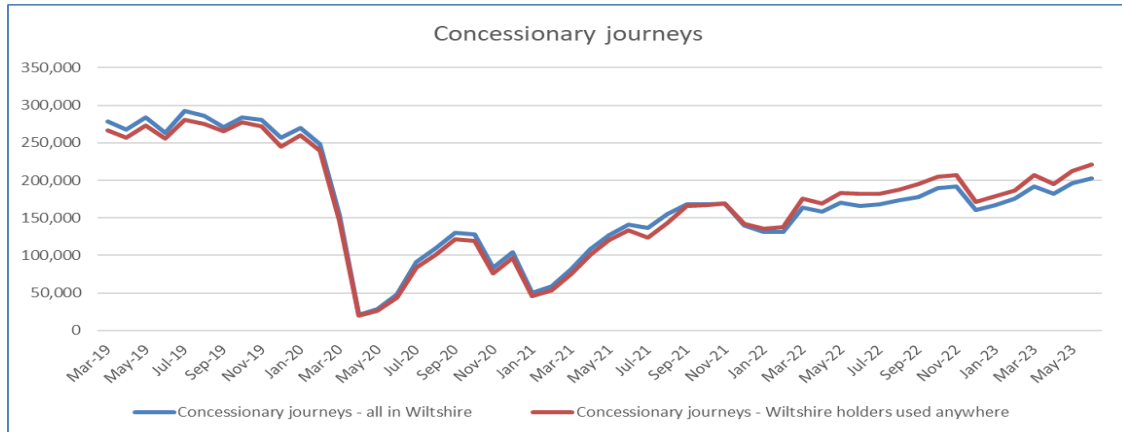


A very similar style of graphic has since been devised by the Government to promote concessionary bus pass use. (see below).

11. English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS)

11.1 The usage of English National Concessionary Travel Scheme passes remains significantly below pre-Covid levels. Between 1st April 2023 and 30th June 2023

we lifted the time restrictions on Concessionary Pass use in an attempt to stimulate the market.



11.2 A report by Transport Focus [Getting free pass holders back on buses](#) reviewed the level of ENCTS usage and considered reasons why pass holders have not returned to using buses. There was no main reason, but numerous causes which, combined, have led to the fall in Wiltshire to around 80% of pre-Covid levels. However, some services have seen usage figures surpass pre covid levels.

11.3 Government has introduced a publicity campaign to encourage pass holders to return to using the bus, and we have worked with our Communications Team to add local branding to the nationally produced resources to promote the use of the ENCTS scheme through our social media channels and the weekly residents' newsletter.



Sample of HM Government / Wiltshire ENCTS promotion

11.4 The income generated by acceptance of ENCTS passes is important to our bus operators, and with the continued reduced levels of usage we will use some of our BSIP+ funding to increase our reimbursement levels to 90% of pre covid levels, or actual, where this is exceeded.

12. Partnership Working With Great Western Railway

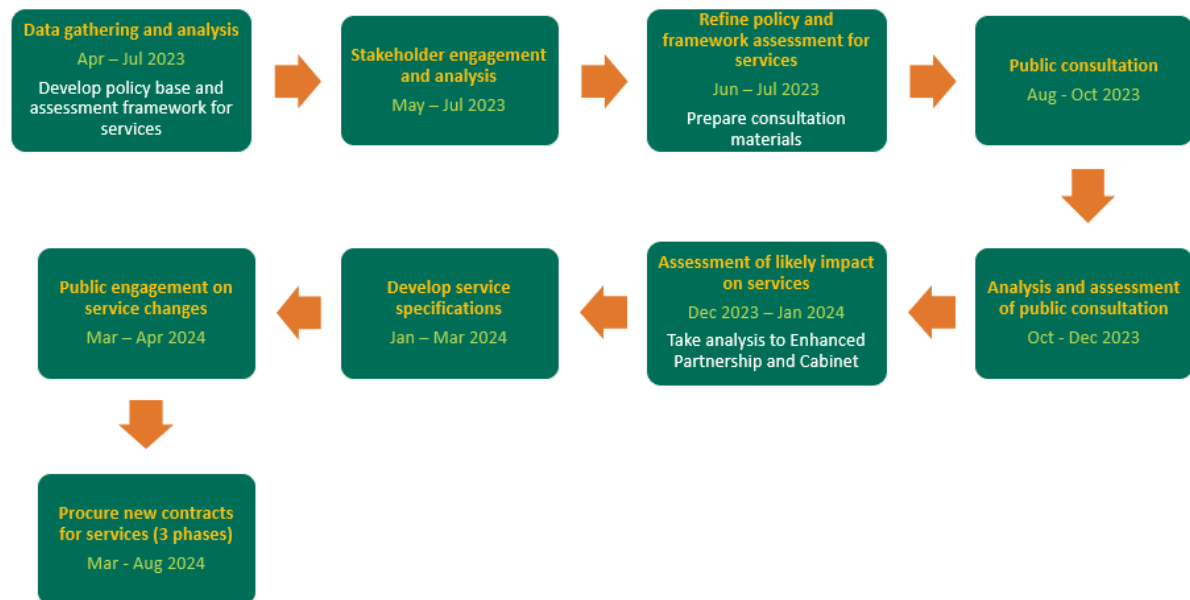
12.1 We have built a strong productive partnership with Great Western Railway (GWR), who have sponsored a number of initiatives.

12.2 We have projects to improve way-finding signage between the station and the bus stops in Bradford-on-Avon, Pewsey, Melksham, Westbury and Warminster, and installed a new bus shelter near Melksham station.

- 12.3 The GWR funded design study for improvements to bus facilities at Bedwyn station last year has been followed up by a successful application to this year's Customer and Community Improvement Fund where we were awarded £44,000 to enable the works. This will complement the new Wiltshire Connect Digital Demand Responsive Transport service serving the Bedwyn area.
- 12.4 Jointly, we have applied Railink branding to the Faresaver bus which operates the Chippenham to Castle Combe service (including a full rear pictorial advertisement) and included Railink branding on our new Wiltshire Connect buses. We are looking for further opportunities to promote bus / rail links.
13. SuperBus Network
- 13.1 As outlined in our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) we are developing a network of higher quality, higher frequency, bus routes incrementally across Wiltshire.
- 13.2 Using Government capacity we have engaged Atkins to advise on what SuperBus could look like and build on experience elsewhere. This capital bid also allows us to carry out detailed design work on the initial SuperBus route.
- 13.3 Atkins considered all the proposed SuperBus Routes listed in the BSIP, and weighted them against a number of criteria, to produce a short-list of routes. The EP Board then selected the first route for development, which is service 55 from Chippenham to Swindon via Calne, Lyneham and Royal Wootton Bassett. Operated by Stagecoach West, this route has seen significant growth over the past 15 years, and all parties feel that there is potential for further development.
- 13.4 Once the infrastructure scheme for the 55 has been developed a capital bid will be submitted in order to implement the recommendations.
14. Local Transport Plan 4
- 14.1 As work begins on Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) we will be ensuring that it reflects the evolving and developing role of the bus, along with the new legislative environment.
- 14.2 The revised Public Transport Policy will form an Appendix to LTP4
15. Rural Zero Emission Bus Taskforce
Wiltshire Council is represented on this taskforce, which is organised by the Confederation of Passenger Transport, as rural bus operation poses specific problems for the transition to zero emission buses. The taskforce includes prominent bus industry figures from a number of progressive companies. Wiltshire is the only local authority represented, but the group very much welcomes the insight we can bring to the taskforce's work.

Public Transport Policy and Bus Network Review

16. We are undertaking a major piece of work to review our Public Transport Policy which in turn will inform a Bus Network Review. We are being assisted in this work by specialist consultants ITP.
- 16.1 The current Policy is part of the current Local Transport Plan and no longer represents fully the travelling habits of the passenger. The bus market has been evolving for decades as people's travel habits have changed. Wiltshire has maintained its bus network, both commercial and supported with some routes now running at the highest frequency they ever have.
- 16.2 The Pandemic sped up many of the changes which were gradually happening in the local travel market, and we need to review our policy to ensure it's validity for now and the future.. The supply side of the bus network has also changed considerably with the decline of the small independent company and the growth of the national groups. Against that however a significant independent supplier has matured in the north of the county having won long term competitive battels on several major inter-urban routes.
- 16.3 There are a number of stages to the process:
- Data gathering – our current supported network, and that of the commercial operators measured in terms of passenger usage, types of places served (employers, colleges, rail stations etc), population statistics (deprivation, car ownership etc) and subsidy cost.
 - Create a model which, based on current policy, produces a result which replicates our current supported level of service.
 - Stake Holder Engagement – we received 163 responses to our engagement questionnaire with local businesses, education establishments and similar stake holders.
 - Refine policy and framework assessment for services to enable us to focus on questions for the public consultation
 - Public consultation – this is currently open and runs until mid-October 2023
- 16.4 We will then proceed to:
- Analysis and assessment of public consultation responses Oct – Dec 2023
 - Assessment of likely impact on services Take analysis to Enhanced Partnership and Cabinet Dec 2023 – Jan 2024
 - Develop service specifications Jan – Mar 2024
 - Public engagement on service changes Jan – Mar 2024
 - Procure new contracts for services (3 phases) Mar – Aug 2024



Environmental impact

17. Wiltshire Council has declared a climate emergency and it will be imperative for the bus service to reflect the objectives of the Council's new climate strategy. Public transport, along with cycling and walking, plays a pivotal role in the reduction of carbon emissions through reduced car use and in turn improved air quality.

Equality and diversity impact

18. The following protected characteristics have been identified in an Equality Evidence Analysis:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Low Incomes
 - Rurality
 - People with no access to private transport
 - Military status
 - Pregnancy and Maternity
 - Race
 - Religion and Belief
 - Sex
 - Shift / Part-time workers
 - Carers
19. The first six characteristics are likely to be impacted greater than the rest and the following is a short summary for each of these six protected characteristics:
- *Age* - Younger and older people are more reliant on bus services and less likely to have access to a car. Also, fewer young people now hold driving licences and we live in an increasingly 'ageing society'. Younger people need affordable bus services to enable them to take up opportunities in education and work, and to increase their independence. Research has shown that many older people place particular value on 'local' and 'daytime' travel and

predominantly travel for shopping, to access key services (notably healthcare) or to visit family and friends. Both groups also benefit from the health benefits of using public transport through encouraging outside activity and mobility.

- *Disability* - People with disabilities are less likely to drive and therefore could become marginalized from the wider community and more reliant on support services without independent travel options, such as supported bus services to provide them access to employment opportunities and essential services or, to visit friends and family. Disabled people are also likely to need more trips to GPs and hospitals for regular medical appointments.
- *Low incomes* - People on low incomes are particularly reliant upon local public transport services and a lack of available and adequate services can be a significant barrier to accessing employment opportunities and essential services. Public transport can also provide health benefits (as people walk more and drive less) which can be particularly beneficial for people from socio-economically deprived areas which typically have lower levels of health.
- *Rurality* - In rural areas, settlements are dispersed, and homes, jobs and services are scattered – access to everyday opportunities and services can therefore be challenging. Rural bus services can help combat social exclusion by enabling non-drivers to access shops, education, training, and essential services. They are also important for the local economy; small businesses in rural areas need good accessibility for their employees and rural buses can encourage visitors and tourists.
- *People with no access to private transport* - are particularly reliant upon local public transport services and a lack of available and adequate bus services can be a significant barrier to accessing employment opportunities and essential services.
- *Military Status* - Military personnel and their families are often located in camps in (semi) rural locations. Therefore, withdrawn or reduced supported bus services will reduce travel options to access essential services or visit friends and family. There is also an increased risk of social isolation.

Risk assessment

20. Not applicable.

Financial implications

21. Inflation against public transport contracts continues to be a factor. Some retender costs on like for like contracts have been around 45% higher. We are able to use BSIP + funding to cover the increase in inflationary costs, but this is of course not sustainable in the long term and reflects the need for a revised public transport policy to ensure funding is provided in the right areas for the right service.

Legal implications

22. Not applicable.

Options considered

23. Not applicable.

Conclusion

24. Members are invited to review this information report and note the findings made.

Background papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

Appendices

None

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

19 September 2023

Planning Peer Review Report

Executive summary

In May 2023, the council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a Peer Review of its Planning service. The LGA in turn commissioned the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to undertake the review. PAS carried out the review as 'critical friends', with the intention of helping to identify areas of improvement to create a more unified and resilient planning service. The final PAS report is attached at Appendix 1.

The Peer Review team made 18 recommendations. These can be grouped in following areas:

1. Service structures
2. Governance arrangements
3. Management, staff and culture
4. Learning and development
5. Process and decision making

To inform the process, the Peer Review team were presented with detailed background information about how the different parts of the service are carried out, what works well and areas where improvements are being considered. They were supplied with data about performance, customer feedback, decision making and governance arrangements. They observed Planning Committee meetings and held face-to-face sessions with senior management, Cabinet members, staff, planning agents, local councillors, Planning Committee members as well as other stakeholders such as consultees and town/parish councils. The conclusions reached were made having gathered data from different sources to challenge the validity of what they were being told.

The full findings from the Planning service peer review are set out within a report that includes 18 recommendations. It is a matter for the council how those recommendations will be taken forward. PAS has offered support and a further visit in six months' time to review progress.

This report seeks to bring to the attention of Environment Select Committee the findings of the Planning service peer review and asks that the initial officer response to the recommendations be noted.

Proposal

The Environment Select Committee is asked 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 for proposal

Given the nature of the issues raised, it is appropriate that the Environment Select Committee be given the opportunity to consider the Planning service peer review report's recommendations and the intended officer response.

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Planning Peer Review Report

Purpose of report

1. To update Environment and Select Committee on the findings of the May 2023 Local Government Association Planning Service peer review and to set out officers' initial response to the suggested recommendations.

Background

2. In May 2023, the council's Planning service invited an external peer review to look at how it conducts its different planning functions. The review was carried out by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) on behalf of the Local Government Association (LGA). This review was not an inspection or audit. PAS were asked to conduct the review by the council as 'critical friends' as part of its journey to create the best possible planning service – one that is more unified, customer focused and resilient.

3. The Peer Review was presented with a detailed position statement alongside many other documents and performance data. The team spent four days on site in Wiltshire which included two full days of meetings, focus groups and committees with various councillors, staff, and stakeholders including town and parish councils, external consultees and planning customers. They focussed on five broad themes covering:

1. Vision and leadership
2. Service Performance & Management
3. Community engagement
4. Partner engagement

5. Achieving outcomes

4. Feedback from the review identified that the organisation was open and honest and ready to embrace change. The final report summarises what the Peer Review team have been told and what they have witnessed, and the resulting recommendations.

Main considerations for the committee

5. As one of the largest and most diverse planning authorities in the country, Wiltshire has the potential to set the benchmark for how planning services are delivered in local government. The volume of work and substantial workforce (compared to others) creates the potential for the planning service to be one that other councils ought to aspire to replicate. While there is lots of excellent work taking place, for various reasons, some parts of the Planning service is under-achieving, with examples of slow-decision making, poor customer service and inefficient practices. Gaining a better understanding of these issues to allow improvements to be made was a key driver for inviting a Peer Review.

6. The Peer Review team identified many positives in the way the council operates and noted that there was openness and self-awareness about the need for improvement to its planning service. The report noted that there is clear senior political and management ambition for change, but this needs to be dealt with as a corporate priority with clear plans and responsibilities for making improvements happen.

7. The report makes 18 recommendations for the council to consider as part of making the planning service more unified and resilient. These recommendations can be seen on page 5 of **Appendix 1**, and they can be grouped into five areas.

- Service structures. Report makes recommendations about how the officer structures are arranged, in particularly within Development Management, moving away from the 'pre-unitary' arrangement of having area teams that correspond with the former district council boundaries. The report recommends improved ways of arranging services (such as the interaction between planning, economic development and urban design) to better align the service to council priorities.
- Governance arrangements. Report makes observations about the inefficiency of Planning Committee structure, which is aligned to pre-unitary district council set up. Concerns raised about number of officer decisions overturned (causing reputational and financial problems for the council), how meetings take too long and how speaking arrangements are in favour of those objecting to planning applications. Recommendations made about reducing the number of committees, changes to the scheme of delegation (call-in arrangements) and procedural changes to how meetings are run.
- Management, staff and culture. Observations made about management capacity, especially within Development Management and how teams work in a 'silo' culture, arranged around area teams linked to former district council areas. Recommendations made that cultural and structural change be

addressed through a corporate transformation project approach. Also recommendations made to strengthen capacity in some areas and review opportunities for staff career progression and succession planning.

- Learning and development. Observations that some parts of the service struggle to retain staff. Also, that users of the service and decision makers are not properly trained in planning issues. Recommendations made that a learning and development programme be developed for elected members and town/parish councils. Recommendations made about better information sharing with local communities, for instance by producing a planning service newsletter, making use of existing meeting arrangements. Recommendation about improved learning from customer feedback.
- Process and decision making. Observations that processes are not consistent and best practice is not being shared properly across the service. Recommendations made to review all processes.

Initial Officer Response

8. The peer review report is comprehensive and picks up on all the issues and challenges that would be expected. Some of the findings are expressed in strong terms, with suggestions made about the impact current practices are having upon service reputation and how existing arrangements are affecting the council's finances. The fact that the service is not geared up to provide the best possible service to support business investment and local community interests needs addressing as soon as possible.

9. The report makes some helpful suggestions about how changes should be dealt with as a corporate transformation programme to ensure that improvements are overseen at senior officer and member level. It also makes suggestions about how some of the larger development projects should be monitored by senior officers and members to make sure that relevant people are briefed and that informed decisions can be taken.

10. There is a strong commitment to making the Planning service one of the best in the country. To achieve this aim, officers are committed to implementing as many of the Peer Review recommendations as possible to deliver lasting improvements.

11. More detailed work now needs to be completed to explore the options further and determine how the council is able to respond to the specific recommendations.

Environmental impact of the proposal

12. This report has no direct implications for energy consumption, carbon emissions or associated environmental risk management. As changes are made to the service, any environmental implications impacts will be considered and mitigated.

Equality and diversity impact of the proposal

13. There are no known equalities impacts arising direction from this report. As changes are made to the service, any equalities impacts will be assessed and mitigated.

Risk assessment

14. No decisions are being taken as a result of this report, other than for Environment Select Committee to note the recommendations being made by the Peer Review panel.

Financial implications

15. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal implications

16. The purpose of this report is to allow Environment Select Committee to consider the recommendations from the Planning peer review. No commitment is being made to any changes to the service or how decisions are made. There are therefore no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Options considered

17. At this stage, Environment Select Committee is being asked to note the findings of the Planning service peer review. No options are being presented as to how the recommendations will be taken forward at this stage.

Conclusion

18. The Planning peer review has provided a comprehensive assessment of how the service is being delivered. The recommendations are robust and based on evidence from a number of sources. Environment Select Committee is asked to note the findings of the peer review report and the initial officer response. Further consideration will be given to how these recommendations will be taken forward.

Background papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Planning Peer Review Feedback

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Planning Peer Review

Wiltshire Council

Final feedback report

July 2023

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1. Executive summary

1. This report summarises the findings of a Planning Service peer review of Wiltshire Council, organised by the Local Government Association (LGA) with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and carried out by its trained peers. Wiltshire Council was formed in 2009. It is the fourth largest unitary council in England serving a population of nearly 510,000 including around 30,000 military personnel and their families.
2. The council is clearly committed to developing its planning service. The appointment of a chief planner was welcomed by many people we met. But we feel that a more visible wider senior officer and senior councillor commitment to transformation will be needed to deliver the changes to the service that the council desires.
3. Putting in place a new Local Plan to plan future housing and economic growth in Wiltshire is a key priority for the council's senior management team and senior councillors. The council is, rightly, pressing ahead with its plans despite national uncertainty around changes to planning legislation. We think that a more systematic, project management approach to future stages of the plan would be beneficial. Historically, opportunities have been missed to involve more councillors in the development of the plan. A risk averse approach to plan development also means that a number of people who contributed to the plan were not aware of its content before it was published to the public. We also found a similar risk averse approach and a disconnect between corporate decision making around issues such as asset acquisition and disposal and a reticence to speak to planners early in the process. This results in a lack of a joined-up approach to the council's development / regeneration aspirations.
4. Immediate priorities for the service are clear but a detailed service improvement plan overseen by senior councillors and officers would be helpful to ensure these priorities are delivered. The plan should also include the actions needed for transforming the development management service and preparing for upcoming legislative changes.
5. Development management is still delivered and organised broadly in line with the four predecessor district councils, although divided into six area teams. Across the teams, we found four very distinct services with inconsistent work practices and procedures and a variety of cultures. Committee numbers, structures, cultures and working practices need reviewing to deliver one, "best in class" Wiltshire wide development management service. We believe that the existing five planning committees (one strategic and four area based) should be replaced with one or two combined committees that deal with the work of the strategic and area committees. (One or two to be determined based on an analysis of the potential volume of applications.)
6. The level of decisions delegated to officers is appropriate. But some committee decisions are being made that are not in line with good decision-making principles and are indefensible at appeal costing local tax payers money. Additional training for councillors could help to reduce this ongoing risk.
7. Senior managers and councillors value planning staff and the relationships between councillors and officers are generally / overall good, particularly at a senior level. However, planning staff don't always feel that because they feel under-resourced. We found some good practice among planning staff but this was not applied consistently across the teams and working in six separate teams limits the ability to capitalise on the levels of resilience that a planning authority of this size should be able to demonstrate. We found some low morale, scepticism and a lack of trust about the likelihood of delivery of change. We found pockets of innovation and keenness to deliver continuous improvement but this was by no means universal.

8. There is a perception that resources are stretched and there are some significant issues with the timeliness of internal consultation responses. The council has allocated significant additional resources for funding planning staff. The council's planning IT system provides good performance management data although it is not clear to what extent team leaders and officers use this data to monitor performance and manage work.
9. The council recognises that customers of the planning service do not always receive a good level of service and that customer service is not consistent. Feedback from town and parish councils was mixed. Early support for neighbourhood plans was welcomed but there were frustrations with current resource constraints in relation to supporting neighbourhood plans and lack of ability to speak to case officers in relation to planning applications. We felt that increased training and engagement for town and parish councils could benefit Wiltshire Council as well as the towns and parishes by ensuring a better shared understanding of the challenges that the respective councils face in relation to planning matters.
10. Feedback from other stakeholders, agents and developers was also mixed but with a real and genuine appetite to work with the council to deliver an improved planning service and to deliver the right outcomes for Wiltshire's communities. Some work is underway to engage with agents and developers and we think that more can be done to continue to build relationships of mutual trust.
11. The council's self-assessment clearly sets out how the planning service priorities align with corporate priorities. We found senior managers are clear about the outcomes that they want from the planning service. But that doesn't necessarily result in the required outcomes happening, for example the council cannot demonstrate that it has enough housing in the pipeline to meet needs for the next five years which is a major issue for the council. It has led to a lot of speculative applications for development, resulting in housing development where the council would not necessarily want it and there are no immediate plans to address the situation, other than progressing the local plan as quickly as possible.
12. Despite not having a five-year land supply, delivery levels are good and the council has met the housing delivery test for the past three years but performance has been slipping year on year in terms of the speed of determining planning applications and planning income is also in decline compared with previous years.
13. Whilst the current focus on housing numbers is totally understandable, the council is not currently monitoring other outcomes from the local plan related to other policies and we heard about examples where outcomes are not being delivered because of delays in the planning function including major housing sites which could help alleviate the five year land supply issue.

2. Recommendations

14. The following table summarises the key recommendations from the peer review team:

1	<p>Demonstrate clear senior political and officer leadership for achieving planning improvement priorities and ensuring that planning is better engaged in place shaping and the council's development and regeneration aspirations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using the current restructure plans to review links between key services such as planning, urban design and economic development • developing an implementation plan to deliver service priorities (including putting planning front and centre in the council's asset / regeneration / economic development aspirations); merging and transforming the six current development management teams; and plans for addressing potential upcoming changes in legislation; • setting up an implementation board made up of senior councillors and officers to oversee the delivery of the implementation plan; and • creating a developer forum with the cabinet member for economy and growth to support the delivery of strategic sites and articulate the vision for place.
2	<p>Develop a project plan approach to the next stages of the Local Plan, the Minerals and Waste Plan, Gypsy and Traveller Plan and other planning documents to prioritise resources and including improving cross party, senior officer, stakeholder and resident engagement in the plan making process.</p>
3	<p>Review the scheme of delegation and numbers of committees to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combine the functions of the area committees and strategic committee and reduce the total number of committees to one or two (depending on an analysis of the volumes of applications); • review the effectiveness of the call-in procedure to ensure it is not used simply to disagree with an officer recommendation; and • introduce measures to reduce the length of planning committees including (but not limited to) removal of the ability of unlimited speaking time at planning committee for divisional councillors; shorter officer presentations and a potential 'call over' for items where at the start of committee, councillors are asked to call items for presentation, debate and determination. This would enable those not called to be automatically determined in line with the recommendation. • review speaking arrangements to ensure a fairer balance between support and objection – for example by possibly limiting the number of speakers and / or reviewing the amount of time allocated to applicants if there are a lot of objectors.
4	<p>Transform the development management service to become one Wiltshire planning service with a shared culture (in line with Wiltshire Council's "Identity") and consistent processes, practices and decision making. Ensure staff involvement in working up the actions needed to achieve this and include them in the implementation plan referred to in recommendation 1.</p>
5	<p>Consider providing some dedicated transformation resource to kick start the necessary change programme including organisational development.</p>
6	<p>Consider taking a proactive and targeted project management approach to granting permission for key housing sites and facilitating delivery of housing sites granted planning permission to assist with meeting five-year housing land supply prior to adoption of the Local Plan. The use of planning performance agreements (PPAs) would be part of this. PPAs (with associated charge for officer time) are an incredibly useful tool to improve project management of the full process, from pre-</p>

	app through the discharge of conditions, and to facilitate early engagement with key stakeholders including key internal stakeholders
7	Ensure the proposed officer restructure provides sufficient management resource to support and prioritise service transformation.
8	Develop succession plans and career progression for the planning service.
9	Introduce a triage approach to determining planning applications and investigating enforcement complaints. Not all enforcement complaints need to be investigated and it should be possible to implement check lists and shorter reports for low-risk planning applications.
10	Set up an officer working group between Development Management and the Technical Support Team to assist with the effective use of the new IT system by case officers and managers.
11	Ensure that planning decisions are always signed off by a different officer to the one who carried out the assessment.
12	Improve training for councillors and for town and parish councils including regular planning updates, lessons learnt, site visits and webinars.
13	Better use existing mechanisms for communicating with town and parish councils about planning matters – area boards, town centre partnership boards, monthly town and parish council meetings.
14	Consider how to allocate enough space to facilitate teams working together as well as effective cross team working in an office environment regularly.
15	Consider implementing team site visits (including tech support) for lessons learnt etc.
16	Review existing neighbourhood plan resourcing and consider how to prioritise neighbourhood plan resource.
17	Improve focus on customer service by introducing a formal feedback loop from complaints to help shape service improvements and consider setting up a Planning Agents' Forum to provide information and seek views on improving customer service. This could include a regular newsletter to share information.
18	Review current approach to monitoring and consider allocation of resources to enable monitoring of a broader range of local plan objectives and policies.

3. Background and scope of the peer review

15. Peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector. They are tailored to meet the individual council's needs and designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. They help planning services review what they are trying to achieve; how they are going about it; what they are achieving; and what they need to improve.
16. Wiltshire Council was formed in 2009. It is the fourth largest unitary council in England serving a population of nearly 510,000 including around 30,000 military personnel and their families.
17. The over-arching objective for this review was to help the council create a more unified and resilient planning service. As one of the largest and most diverse planning authorities in the Country, Wiltshire has the potential to be at the leading of edge of planning practice nationally and an exemplar for other areas. The review explored whether the structure and resources of the planning service are appropriate for a planning authority of this size, focusing on core roles in terms of development management, local plan making, management and monitoring as well as the planning committees and decision making.
18. The peer challenge involved an assessment of the council's planning function against a framework which explores five main themes. These are:
 - **Vision and leadership:** the council's leadership and corporate engagement of the planning service in this.
 - **Performance management:** effective use of skills and resources to achieve value for money and continuous improvement of the planning service, including in decision making on proposals, and whether the service is adequately resourced.
 - **Community engagement:** how the authority understands its community leadership role, especially in terms of the accessibility, customer focus and transparency of the planning process
 - **Partnership engagement:** how the service works in partnership with other stakeholders to balance priorities and resources, address differing views and deliver shared ambitions.
 - **Achieving outcomes:** the achievements of the planning service within the available resources and the planning services role as a facilitator to change in the area.
19. Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected councillor and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected based on their relevant expertise. The peers were:
 - **Peer councillor:** Linda Haysey (Leader East Hertfordshire Council) linda.haysey@yahoo.co.uk.
 - **Peer councillor:** Daniel Fitzhenry (Southampton City Council) Councillor.D.Fitzhenry@southampton.gov.uk
 - **Lead officer:** Liz Hobden (Brighton & Hove) Liz.Hobden@brighton-hove.gov.uk
 - **Senior Officer:** Anna Lee (Dorset) anna.lee@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
 - **Peer review manager:** Bridget Downton downtonbridget@outlook.com

4. Vision and leadership

20. Wiltshire Council is clearly committed to developing its planning service. We found an openness and a good level of self-awareness about the need for improvement. The appointment of a chief planner was welcomed by many people we met, both within the council and among its stakeholders. We heard that he is making good progress and is visible and accessible within the council and with external stakeholders. But we feel that a more visible senior officer and senior councillor commitment to the transformation needed would be a valuable next step in delivering the changes to the service that the council desires. We heard about the excellent way that the council has dealt with changes needed in other service areas, such as children's services, with a high profile, with corporate support for those issues. We feel that planning would benefit from a similar approach. This would be beneficial for securing the necessary changes to the planning service as well as demonstrating to developers and colleagues that the council is committed to delivering a "best in class" planning service. This is important because planning is key to delivering on the council's corporate aspirations including place shaping; regeneration; economic development; high quality customer service etc.
21. Since the appointment of the Director of Planning, cross-council working has improved. The relationship between planning and other council services is developing. We found a real appetite for change which is a refreshing contrast to a history of a lack of joint working and understanding for each other's perspectives.
22. Putting in place a new Local Plan to plan future housing and economic growth in Wiltshire is a key priority for the council's senior management team and senior councillors. The council's cabinet member for planning chairs a monthly Local Plan Programme Board to discuss progress and to hear about proposed policies, site allocations and evidence that will inform the new plan. The Leader of the Council and officers from the council's extended leadership team attend the Board.
23. The council's spatial planning team, supported by colleagues from other teams in the council, have been working extremely hard to get the Local Plan to its current stage. Historically there have been a number of delays to the plan preparation. Despite national uncertainty around pending changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, the council, sensibly, is keen to press ahead with its Local Plan. We think that a more systematic, project management approach to future stages of the plan would be beneficial. This also needs to be applied to the production of plans that are currently missing or out of date, such as the minerals and waste plan and a plan to deliver the housing needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.
24. Some policies in local plans can be contentious and meet with resistance from the community. Despite the very clear need for housing, many communities are resistant to these being built near them. So, councils often find it difficult to secure support for local plans and get them through the democratic process. Historically, there has been limited engagement of councillors from across the council in developing Wiltshire's Local Plan. This means that many councillors that we met were not clear about the content of the emerging plan and that council-wide buy in for it has not yet been secured. There is, of course, still time to engage councillors as the plan proceeds, which should now be addressed.
25. We also found that a number of managers across the council who had fed into the plan policies were not clear whether their comments had been addressed or not. The council, rightly, has put in place mechanisms to ensure a clear distinction between its role as local planning authority and its role as a landowner with an interest in developing its own land. It is important that there is a very clear separation with checks and balances in place to maintain this. But we found such a risk averse approach that there was a disconnect between corporate decision making around issues such as asset acquisition and disposal and a reticence to speak to planners early in the process. This results in a lack of a joined-up

approach to the council's development / regeneration aspirations. We also found evidence that this approach had been extended to a range of non-contentious policies that had nothing to do with land holdings. This meant that the process didn't feel open to colleagues who had contributed and so we couldn't be clear to what extent the Local Plan will be delivering the council's priorities.

26. The council's self-assessment clearly sets out the following five immediate priorities for the planning service:

- Secure an up-to-date Local Plan
- Regain a five-year housing land supply
- Deliver excellent customer service in line with the council's 'our identity'
- Complete the restructure of the planning service and fill vacant posts
- Improve morale across the service and reduce staff turnover.

27. We found that some planning staff were aware of these priorities but there is not currently a plan that sets out the detailed actions and timeline needed to deliver the priorities. We think that a detailed transformation plan, overseen by a board made up of senior officers and councillors would be helpful to ensure that the necessary transformation is delivered. This plan could also include the actions necessary to integrate the existing development management service which is still organised around the predecessor council arrangements. It would be beneficial if the plan also included the actions that the council needs to take in readiness for the significant national changes that are coming in relation to planning services.

5. Performance management

28. Historically there has not been the resource, the management capacity or the will to deliver the transformation needed to combine the six development management services into one Wiltshire Council development management service that meets the needs of local people and reflects the culture of Wiltshire Council. We found very distinct services in the six teams with inconsistent work practices and procedures and a variety of cultures. We think that some dedicated transformation resource would help to give this work the kick start that it needs. We understand why this work wasn't tackled as part of local government reorganisation back in 2009, but a significant amount of transformation is now needed to deliver one Wiltshire development management service. All of the managers in the development management service currently carry their own significant caseload which limits their capacity to focus on the changes needed to deliver a high quality, consistent Wiltshire wide service. We also found that some managers and councillors are not embracing Wiltshire Council with a significant allegiance to predecessor councils, processes and practices, particularly in relation to development management. This needs to change. It is 14 years since Wiltshire Council replaced the district councils.
29. The council operates four area-based committees (mirroring the predecessor district council boundaries) and one strategic committee. These area-based committees are frequently cancelled and most determine very few planning applications. Most significant planning applications are determined by the strategic committee with the local area planning committees only considering planning applications that have been called in by councillors. It is not clear why the strategic planning committee couldn't consider those applications that are called in by councillors. We understand that these arrangements were put in place as part of local government reorganisation to bring members of the predecessor councils along the unitary journey. The time is right now to review committee arrangements. The council should merge the functions of the area committees and the strategic committee. It would be sensible to carry out an analysis of the likely volumes of planning applications that this would result in to determine how many planning committees are necessary which we would estimate to be either 1 or 2. Obviously, the council will need to consider how local members, community groups and other stakeholders fully engage with the 1 or 2 planning committees but the benefits of reforming the current structure could also enable new methods to be introduced – possibly using technology or varying the locations that committees are held in from time to time.
30. We were concerned with some of the practices that we heard about in relation to planning committees. We heard a lot about the need for “local democracy” in relation to planning committees. Planning decisions are not a way of exercising local democracy. Planning decisions should be made with regard to the national and local policy context and material planning considerations. We have seen decisions made at planning committee that clearly demonstrate that committee members do not always understand their responsibility for taking appropriate policy-based decisions, for example in relation to 5-year land supply. We understand the frustration that some councillors feel in relation to speculative applications but this frustration should not play out in poor decision making that ends up costing the local tax payer money; and taking up a lot of time dealing with appeals that the council has limited chance of winning. At the same time as reducing the number of planning committees, the council should consider ways of reducing the length of committee including eliminating the unlimited time allowance for divisional members to address the planning committees. This is really poor practice. The council's speaking arrangements are also potentially biased towards objectors because of the unlimited number of speakers and lack of additional time given to developers to respond.
31. We also found a lack of understanding among some councillors about the roles of planning committees. We think that this is partly a training issue. The council provides clear guidance

and training for councillors involved in determining planning applications setting out the importance of open and transparent decision making. But this is only done after elections and there is no ongoing training or briefing in relation to planning for Wiltshire councillors. Useful appeal updates are provided to committees which is a good way of learning but we think that the committee members would benefit from a regular training programme to keep abreast of changes in planning and to be clearer about what good and bad decisions look like.

32. The council has high, appropriate levels of delegated decision making which is good. However, we did find that some senior officers sign off planning applications from their own caseload, which is poor practice that can be easily addressed. Using senior officers to sign off applications is a good idea and spreads the load of this part of the planning application processing, but senior officers should not sign off applications in their own case load.
33. Senior managers and councillors value planning staff and recognise them as being dedicated and committed. We found some officers demonstrating initiative to develop new ways of working and some good team rapport and support for one another. We heard about some positive support through buddying and mentoring. We found some cross-team working, such as sharing green belt experience and some good learning initiatives such as “case busters” and “show and tell”. We think that the managers in the service need to capitalise on this. We also found some innovation and a real desire to deliver continuous improvement, for example in the technical support team.
34. However, the good practice that we saw is not being consistently applied across the different teams. And within the existing structures, there is limited sharing of work between teams which means workloads are not balanced and importantly, this impacts negatively on the resilience of the service to deal with the inevitable staff turnover that a planning authority of this size experiences. We also met with some officers who were resistant to change and didn’t really recognise the need for it. Work will be needed to help shift this mind set. We recognise that there are plans to work with organisational development colleagues to develop the teams, cultures and behaviours that will be needed to successfully deliver the change needed.
35. Whilst senior managers and councillors value planning staff, we found that some staff do not feel confident of this. We found some low morale, scepticism and a lack of trust about the likelihood of delivery of change. People feel under enormous pressure and teams told us that they are frustrated because they find it difficult to deliver good outcomes. The level of committee overturns and hostile applications are getting some people down, with one team member telling us that they feel “outgunned and massively overworked”. We found a lack of shared culture across planning and relationships between development management and technical support are not as strong as in some other councils. It doesn’t feel like one team. We also heard that it is hard for new team members to learn the job because of virtual / hybrid working and no specific office space to meet in.
36. The relationships between councillors and officers are good. Senior level relationships are strong and respectful. Some of the committee practices referred to above and some of the inappropriate decision making can cause tension at times, but generally relationships between case officers and committee members are good.
37. In recognition of the importance of planning, the council has allocated significant additional resources for staffing of £668,000 to support the upcoming restructure as well as a budget for appeals. There is a current perception from some staff that the department is under-resourced and not paying competitive salaries. Recruitment and retention are an issue across the service, as they are nationally but there are some examples of good practice including employment of graduates, apprentices and “growing your own”.

38. We heard from internal and external stakeholders that there are significant issues with internal consultation responses on planning applications not being provided in a timely way. This needs addressing. Some additional resource has been secured to increase ecology resources which was one of the areas of concern, but there are others including highways and flooding. We also heard about the large number of neighbourhood plans already adopted or in train / approaching review. The council would benefit from reviewing its approach to prioritising which neighbourhood plans it allocates resource to and reviewing resource levels accordingly.
39. The council's planning IT system provides good performance management data although it is not clear to what extent team leaders and officers use this data to monitor performance and manage work. And we also heard some concerns from staff about how to use IT system and clear differences in approach across the teams. This needs to be addressed so that the whole service can utilise performance management information effectively.

6. Community, stakeholder and partner engagement

40. The council recognises that customers of the planning service do not always receive a good level of service and that customer service is not consistent. There is also currently no structured mechanism for receiving and learning from customer feedback. Work is underway to address this.
41. Wiltshire has 253 parish or town councils with 51 neighbourhood development plans. Some of these councils gave us mixed feedback. They acknowledged that Wiltshire Council had been proactive in promoting and supporting neighbourhood planning. But we heard that resources are now too limited to meet the demand of the many town and parish councils that want to develop or renew their plans. We heard about some good examples of dealing with individual officers that was positive for town and parish councils. But we also heard about the frustrations of not being able to contact case officers in relation to their neighbourhood plans and planning applications.
42. Some of the feedback that we received from town and parish councils demonstrated their frustrations. Whilst there were clearly some legitimate issues that have not been adequately addressed or learnt from, some of the frustrations that we heard stemmed from issues outside the council's control, for example in relation to national planning policy and legislation that requires the council to act, or not, in a particular way. We feel that Wiltshire Council and the town and parish councils would benefit from more training, awareness raising and engagement, particularly for everyone to better understand "the art of the possible" in relation to some planning and enforcement issues. We absolutely recognise that there are a significant number of town and parish councils, but the council has a range of mechanisms already in place that it could build on to facilitate this including a monthly meeting that town and parish councils are invited to and the existing 18 area boards. Using technology to deliver webinars is also a good way of reaching larger audiences and post COVID is something that we are all more used to doing.
43. Some town and parish councils and some other stakeholders found the website difficult to use, particularly searching for and filtering on planning applications.
44. Feedback from other stakeholders was mixed but with a real and genuine appetite to work with the council to deliver an improved planning service and to deliver the right outcomes for Wiltshire's communities. We heard that communication has improved since the appointment of the Director of Planning. Agents, developers and stakeholders welcome this and are keen for the dialogue with the council to continue. Natural England were positive about their relationship with the council, as were stakeholders with an interest in heritage assets. Although those involved with heritage assets did have some concerns about resource levels and the appetite for enforcement in relation to heritage assets.
45. The council has set up a Wiltshire Development Forum to support the planning needs of local businesses and provide guidance and support to key local businesses to navigate through the planning system. The council also has plans to set up regular meetings for agents and this will help to improve communications with key developers. The council has provided some clear communications for agents about things like amendments which are helpful in managing expectations and balancing the need to negotiate good proposals but also in a timely fashion.
46. We heard about some good working relationships, particularly from agents on smaller schemes. But this wasn't universal. We heard that developers have faith in the skills and abilities of some planning officers but some concerns about inconsistencies. Some felt that it was difficult to get hold of case officers. We also heard frustrations about the pre-application service in terms of timeliness and indeed its lack of availability for smaller schemes. One developer had been told to seek pre-application advice only to be told that it wasn't available. Developers and agents told us that Wiltshire is in the "middle of the pack" in terms of their

dealings with planning authorities – Wiltshire is not as good as the best and not as bad as the worst. To improve communication, planning agents were keen to see a regular newsletter to share information and/or a planning agents forum.

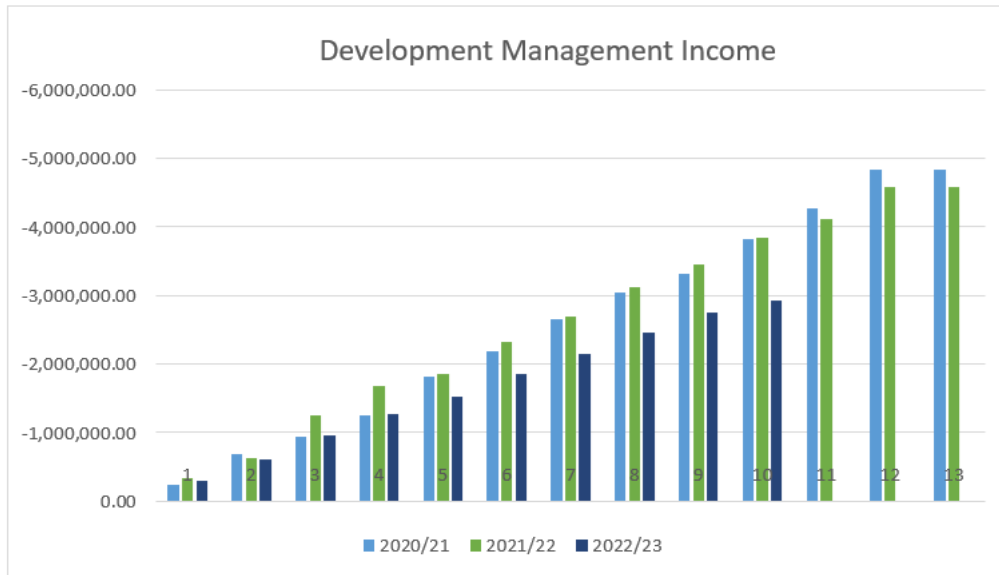
47. Developers perceive a lack of a joined-up project management approach on strategic applications and would value a dedicated team and better relationships with those dealing with their applications – case officers and consultees. And some developers expressed concern about the confidence of some officers in resolving competing issues and the challenges of coming to a balanced planning view in the face of those competing issues. This is a key role of the case officer but we heard that sometimes conflicting consultation responses were simply shared with the developer without any conclusion about the implications of those conflicting views. We feel that a more joined up “team” approach to some of the more significant and strategic sites would benefit both developers and the various officers who need to input into determining large, complex schemes.
48. As well as improving the one team approach for dealing with significant and strategic sites, we also think that the council might want to consider setting up a forum to include senior politicians and officers to engage with strategic developers – not in relation to specific planning applications, but rather to discuss broader development opportunities and barriers in Wiltshire from the perspective of both the council and developers. This could also help inform some of the actions that the council might want to consider as part of its service transformation work.

7. Achieving outcomes

49. The council's self-assessment clearly sets out how the planning service priorities align with corporate priorities. And senior managers are clear about the outcomes that they want from the planning service:
- Place shaping and design
 - Improve quality of development
 - Attract investment
 - Support rural economy
 - Enable planning service to deliver net zero
 - Increase affordable housing in rural areas
50. The council cannot demonstrate that it has enough housing in the pipeline to meet needs for the next five years. The lack of a five-year housing supply, in part caused by some stalled sites that would deliver significant numbers of homes, is a major issue for the council. It is resulting in a number of speculative applications for development resulting in housing development where the council would not necessarily want it and not in line with the concept of plan led development. This situation frustrates Wiltshire Council councillors as well as town and parish councils and local communities. Without a five-year land supply, councils have a lot less ability to refuse planning applications. The council is putting a lot of effort into getting an adopted local plan in place to tackle this but doesn't have a plan for how to try and regain a five-year land supply in the meantime. By understanding how many houses it needs to grant planning permission for and focussing efforts on some key applications to deliver this, it could reduce some of the pressure ahead of the local plan adoption. The plan will gain some more weight at the beginning of 2024 if the current proposed timescale for submission for independent inquiry is met. But more could be done ahead of that, and the council cannot be certain of the timescale for achieving a sound adopted plan, at which time it will be best protected from speculative development applications.
51. Despite not having a five-year land supply, delivery levels are good and the council has met the housing delivery test for the past three years, but performance has been slipping year on year in terms of the speed of determining planning applications and the council is also heavily reliant on extension of time agreements. This is a particular risk as the government may be introducing a wider range of performance measures. For major applications, quarter one of this year has shown a small improvement and for non-major applications, there has been a further small deterioration in the first quarter of this year:

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1 2023/24
% major applications determined within 13 weeks or a time agreed with applicant	94%	94%	67%	66%	71%
% non major applications determined within 8 weeks or a time agreed with applicant	94%	92%	77%	75%	71%
% appeals resulting in decisions being overturned where committee decision has gone against officer recommendation	20%	75%	43%	56%	

52. Planning income is also in decline compared with previous years:



53. Whilst the current focus on housing numbers is totally understandable, the council is not currently monitoring other outcomes in relation to other policies from the local plan and local plan delivery is about more than just housing numbers. The council is also not currently learning from outcomes on the ground and would benefit from using site visits as a training tool for teams and councillors to look at the impacts of good and bad decisions.
54. We heard about examples where outcomes are not being delivered because of delays in the planning function. For example, investment for a warehouse was lost because of delays with pre-application advice and delays on highways consultation responses have had a major impact on a significant development site near the railway station.

8. Implementation, next steps and further support

55. We recognise that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider and reflect on these findings.
56. To support openness and transparency, we recommend that the council share this report with officers and that they publish it for information for wider stakeholders. There is also an expectation that the council will develop an action plan to be published alongside the report.
57. Both the peer team, PAS and the LGA are keen to build on the relationships and the peer challenge process includes a six-month check-in meeting to take place in January 2024 This will be a facilitated session which creates space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps and any further support required.
58. A range of support from the LGA and PAS is available on their websites. This includes:
 - local plan project management
 - helping with options for planning committee changes
 - pre-app and PPAs
 - training and development for members, town and parish councils and officers
 - more detailed work around enforcement
 - advice and support around approach to developer contributions (S106 and CIL)
59. For more information about planning advice and support, please contact garreth.bruff@local.gov.uk
60. The LGA has a range of practical support available. The range of tools and support available have been shaped by what councils have told LGA that they need and would be most helpful to them. This includes support of a corporate nature such as political leadership programmes, peer challenge, LG Inform (our benchmarking service) and more tailored bespoke programmes.
61. Emily McGuinness, Senior Adviser is the LGA's focal point for discussion about your improvement needs and ongoing support and can be contacted at emily.mcguinness@local.gov.uk

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Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

19 September 2023

Housing Allocation Policy Task Group

Background

1. In January 2023, the council commenced a review of its allocation policy. The policy confirms the way in which social housing across Wiltshire are let, to ensure that people have homes that meet their needs, giving priority to those in greatest need and making best use of limited social housing stock. Following a formal three-month consultation in the autumn the council will implement the new policy during 2024, following full council approval.
2. The select committee agreed to set up a Housing Allocations Policy task group following the report presented to the committee at its meeting on 14 March 2023.

Membership

Cllr Ian McLennan
Cllr Iain Wallis
Cllr Bob Jones
Cllr Jerry Kunkler
Cllr Jonathon Seed (Chairman)
Cllr Mike Sankey

Terms of reference

- a) To review how well the current Housing Allocations policy is working.
- b) To support the development of a Housing Allocations policy which aims to house those in greatest need, create realistic expectations about being housed for those on the register and makes the best use of the councils limited housing stock.
- c) To consider the following areas and to make recommendations on whether:
 - To retain local connection as a priority for re housing and the impact of this policy.
 - To retain, increase or develop the four bands.
 - To increase the financial affordability threshold.
 - To introduce a time limit for those awarded the highest band.
 - Sharing facilities is a housing need.

- Individuals who are homeless have choice or should the council be placing bids for them when in temporary accommodation to facilitate a rapid move.
- d) To make recommendations to the Environment Select Committee by 7 November 2023.

The task group's last update to the Select Committee was on [25 July 2023](#)

Recent activity

Meeting – local connection and banding (31 August 2023)

3. At the beginning of the meeting the task group heard from John Walker, Service Manager - Housing Solutions who raised an issue on behalf of Cllr Jane Davies (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion) regarding people with learning disabilities on the housing register who want to share tenancies.
4. The main part of the meeting looked at the current local connect and banding criteria.
5. The task group agreed that the council should retain a local connection policy. However, it considered how the residency and employment criteria could be re-thought and whether the number of criteria exclusions could be reconsidered.
6. The task group also considered the banding criteria and whether the number of bands could be reduced.
7. The task group have put a number of questions to housing officers to clarify the impact of any potential changes in order to inform further deliberations.

Meeting dates and work programme

8. On **28 September**, the task group will consider the following areas and make recommendations on:
 - the financial affordability threshold.
 - time limits for those awarded the highest band.
 - sharing facilities.
 - homeless people having bids placed for them when in temporary accommodation.
9. On **18 October**, the task will review and agree its draft final report.

Climate Emergency Task Group

Background

10. The Climate Emergency Task Group (CETG) is a standing task group reporting to the Environment Select Committee. The task group's initial terms of

reference were endorsed by the Select Committee on 3 September 2019 and were revised on 9 November 2021.

11. The task group has produced two reports with recommendations:
 - Energy and Transport & Air quality (29 September 2020)
 - Planning (13 January 2021)
12. At its meeting on 6 June 2023 the Select Committee approved the continuation of the task group 2023/24.
13. The task group's last update to the Select Committee was on [25 July 2023](#)

Membership

14. The membership of the task group is as follows:

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

Terms of Reference:

15. The task group's revised terms of reference were endorsed by the Environment Select Committee on the 9 November 2021. These are:
 - a) To help shape and influence the development of Wiltshire Council's programme (in all relevant areas) for meeting its objective of making Wiltshire Council carbon neutral and seeking to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 (excluding the geographical area administered by Swindon Borough Council).
 - b) To scrutinise the delivery of this objective through the Climate Strategy (2022-2027) and its delivery plans, as well as key plans, policies, and programmes, such as the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Including the way in which the Council is measuring progress and how it is performing and reporting against baselines.
 - c) To provide recommendations on other aspects of decarbonising the county including partnership working and community-led approaches as well as acting as a national role model.

Recent Activity

The task group has not meet since the last meeting of the select committee.

Forward work plan

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

Proposals

That the select committee:

1. **Notes the update on the Task Group activity provided above.**

Cllr Jonathon Seed, Chairman Housing Allocations Policy Task Group
Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman Climate Emergency Task Group

Report author: Simon Bennet, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Tel: 01225 718709,
email: simon.bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Climate Emergency Task Group – Forward Work Plan

Oct 2023	Update on council's response to climate emergency To receive the update report going to Cabinet (Oct 2023)
Spring 2024 (tbc)	Climate Change Adaptation Plan To review the council's draft plan.
tbc	Local Transport Plan To understand the future strategy in particular active travel, electric vehicles charging.
tbc	Update British Army Sustainability To update task group following briefing on 6 May 2022.
tbc	Natural England Funded Pilot Meeting to consider the pilot projects looking at rolling out local nature recovery planning, bio-diversity net gain and the environmental toolkit.
tbc	Biogas To explore the potential for biogas as a replacement for natural gas and use in vehicles.

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Environment Select Committee Forward Work Programme

Last updated 8 September 2023

Environment Select Committee – Current / Active Task Groups		
Task Group	Start date	Final report expected
Climate Emergency Task Group	September 2019	Standing
Housing Allocations Policy Task Group	June 2023	November 2023

Meeting Date	Item	Details / purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Report Author / Lead Officer
7 Nov 2023 (tbc)	Update on the Towns Programme App Development	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 4 January 2023, the select committee will receive an update report.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Richard Clewer	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)
7 Nov 2023 (tbc)	Update on Broadband Provision in Wiltshire	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 4 January 2023, the select committee will receive an update report.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Ashley O'Neill	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)
7 Nov 2023 (tbc)	Housing Development Partnership	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 8 November 2022, the select committee will receive an update report in 12 months' time.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Phil Alford	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration) Richard Walters (Head of Service – Major Projects) Claire Moore (Housing Enabling Lead)

Meeting Date	Item	Details / purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Report Author / Lead Officer
7 Nov 2023 (tbc)	Private sector renewal strategy	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 8 November 2022, the select committee will receive an update report when appropriate.	Emma Legg (Director – Adult Social Care)	Cllr Phil Alford	Nicole Smith (Head of Housing)
7 Nov 2023	Report from the Housing Allocations Policy Task Group	To receive the final report and recommendations of the task group.			Cllr Jonathon Seed Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)
7 Nov 2023	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Cllr Graham Wright Cllr Jonathon Seed Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)

Meeting Date	Item	Details / purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Report Author / Lead Officer
11 Jan 2024 (tbc)	LHFIG Review	To receive an update report on the implementation of the Local Highway & Footway Improvement Groups (LHFIG)	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Caroline Thomas	Dave Thomas (Head of Highways Asset Management & Commissioning)
11 Jan 2024 (tbc)	Rights of Way	To receive a report, as requested by ESC 25 July 2023, regarding rights of way. To include issues of maintenance and access, updates to the definitive maps and engagement with volunteer groups.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Caroline Thomas	Chris Clark (Head of Local Highways)
11 Jan 2024	Executive response to the recommendations of the Housing Allocations Policy Task Group.	To receive the Executive response to the recommendations of the task group.	Emma Legg (Director – Adult Social Care)	Cllr Phil Alford	Nicole Smith (Head of Housing)
11 Jan 2023	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Cllr Graham Wright Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)
6 March 2024	Homeless Strategy 2019-2024	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 8 November 2022, the select committee will receive an update report in 12 months' time.	Emma Legg (Director – Adult Social Care)	Cllr Phil Alford	Nicole Smith (Head of Housing)

Meeting Date	Item	Details / purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Report Author / Lead Officer
6 March 2024	Highways Annual Review of Service 2022	As resolved at ESC 12 January 2022, to receive a further annual report in 2023.	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Caroline Thomas	Dave Thomas (Head of Highways Assets & Commissioning)
6 March 2024 (tbc)	Libraries Development	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 14 March 2023 on the leisure and libraries portfolio to provide an update on the development of the council's library service.	David Redfern (Assistant Director Leisure Culture and Communities)	Cllr Ian Blair Pilling	
6 March 2024 (tbc)	Leisure Services	As resolved at the ESC-meeting on 14 March 2023 the committee will receive a further update that includes trend data, the outcome of the public holiday pilot (incl. the terms of reference for the pilot) and further information on the transformation review.	David Redfern (Assistant Director Leisure Culture and Communities)	Cllr Ian Blair Pilling	
6 March 2024	Task group update	To receive update from task groups regarding activity and its forward work plan			Cllr Graham Wright Simon Bennett (Senior Scrutiny Officer)

Meeting Date	Item	Details / purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Report Author / Lead Officer
6 March 2024 (tbc)	Economic Strategy	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 23 November 2022 on the economic development portfolio.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Richard Clewer	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)
tbc	National Park action plan	Partnership arrangement with the National Park and joint action plan.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Nick Botterill	Georgina Clampitt-Dix (Head of Spatial Planning)
tbc	Wiltshire Marque	As discussed at meeting with the Cabinet Member the select committee to receive a report about the 'Wiltshire Marque' for produce.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Richard Clewer	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)
tbc	Wiltshire destination management	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 13 October 2022 on the heritage, arts and tourism portfolio to provide a report on destination management	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Richard Clewer	
tbc	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 23 November 2022 on the economic development portfolio.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Richard Clewer	Victoria Moloney (Head of Economy & Regeneration)

Meeting Date	Item	Details / purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Report Author / Lead Officer
tbc	Parking Strategy	As discussed at the ESC-Executive meeting on 6 December 2022 on the highways and transport portfolio.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	Cllr Caroline Thomas	
tbc	Wiltshire Council's Housing Board Annual Report 2022/23	As resolved at the ESC meeting on 4 January 2023, the select committee will receive the annual report.	Simon Hendeby (Director Assets & Commercial Development)	Cllr Phil Alford	
tbc	Public Transport Review & Passenger Transport service update and future developments	As resolved at the select committee meeting on 14 June 2022, the committee will receive a further update. (Deferred from July 2023)	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Caroline Thomas	Jason Salter (Head of Service Passenger Transport)
tbc	Active Travel	As resolved at the select committee meeting on 14 June 2022, the committee will receive a further update. (Deferred from July 2023)	Samantha Howell (Director of Highways and Transport)	Cllr Caroline Thomas	Spencer Drinkwater (Principal Transport & Development Manager)

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