

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Council

Place: The Lansdown Hall - Civic Centre, St Stephens Place, Trowbridge. BA14 8AH

Date: Tuesday 26 February 2013

Time: 10.30 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 15 February 2013 and indicated that the reports detailed below would be to follow. These are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to James Hazlewood (01722 434250), of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01722 434250/1225 718024 or email james.hazlewood@wiltshire.gov.uk

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

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

7 Wiltshire Council Financial Plan 2013/14_(Pages 1 - 2)

Attached is a note on the debate process for the items on the Financial Plan 2013/14, Council Tax Setting, and the Treasury Management Strategy at Item 8.

7f) The minutes of Cabinet 12 February 2013 (Pages 3 - 12)

The minutes of this meeting are enclosed, including the recommendations of the Cabinet in relation to the Financial Plan 2013/14.

8 Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14_(Pages 1 - 2)

See above at item 7 - note enclosed on the debate process for items 7 and 8.

10 **Review of Proportionality and Allocation of Seats on Committees_***(Pages 13 - 14)*

Draft scheme of Committee places – Appendix 2 now circulated.

14 **Councillors' Questions_***(Pages 15 - 34)*

Details of questions received from various Councillors, along with responses from Cabinet Members (responses outstanding to three questions).

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 22 February 2013

COUNCIL – 26 FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET DEBATE PROCESS

1. Introduction by Chairman

- Remind councillors about circulated paperwork
- To clarify process to be followed

2. Leader of the Council

- No time limit on speech
- To move the recommendations of cabinet and/or Leader's motion
- No debate

3. Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

- To present the report of the Committee on the consideration of the Financial Plan
- To highlight particular areas of discussion
- No debate

4. Other Group Leaders

(i) Other Group Leaders

- Group Leaders for Liberal Democrats, Independent, Devizes Guardians and Labour to respond to the recommendations of Cabinet/the Leader's motion
- No time limit

(ii) Amendments

- Group Leaders may as part of their response move an amendment to the Leader's motion – each amendment needs to be seconded and the seconder may reserve their speech until later in the debate
- Debate on each amendment to budget – Group Leaders to be asked to speak first on the amendment followed by any councillor - each councillor to speak once only
- the mover of the original motion (ie the Leader of the Council) has the right of reply
- Vote on amendment – if agreed this amends the original or substantive motion – if not it falls
- Proceed to next amendment and repeat process

5. The Substantive Motion

(This could be the Leader's original motion or the motion as amended in 4 above)

- Debate on the substantive motion
 - Councillors to speak only once
 - Leader of the Council has right of reply
 - Substantive budget put to the vote
 - Budget set
-

COUNCIL TAX

Subject to the Council approving the budget without changes to the net revenue budget of £340.518 million:

- **Leader of the Council** to move the Council Tax resolution (pages 233-234 of the summons)
 - **Group Leaders** for Liberal Democrats, Independent, Devizes Guardians and Labour to respond.
 - Debate on the substantive motion
 - Councillors to speak only once
 - Leader of the Council has right of reply
 - Council Tax Resolution put to the vote (pages 233-234 of the summons)
-

Item 8 – TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY


- **Cabinet Member** to move the recommendations (page 253 of the summons)
- **Group Leaders** to respond
- Debate on the substantive motion
- Councillors to speak only once
- Mover of motion has right of reply
- Motion put to the vote (page 253 of the summons)

CABINET

MINUTES of a MEETING held in THE GUILDHALL, MARKET PLACE, SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE, SP1 1JH on Tuesday, 12 February 2013.

Cllr John Brady	Cabinet Member for Finance Performance and Risk
Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Keith Humphries	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection Services
Cllr John Noeken	Cabinet Member for Resources
Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philipe	Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning
Cllr Jane Scott OBE	Leader of the Council
Cllr Toby Sturgis	Cabinet Member for Waste, Property, Environment and Development Control Services
Cllr John Thomson	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing
Cllr Dick Tonge	Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Cllr Stuart Wheeler	Cabinet Member for Transformation, Culture, Leisure and Libraries

Also in Attendance:	Cllr Richard Britton
	Cllr Tony Deane
	Cllr Nick Fogg
	Cllr Mike Hewitt
	Cllr Jon Hubbard
	Cllr Julian Johnson
	Cllr Jerry Kunkler
	Cllr Jonathon Seed

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

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Alan MacRae and Maggie Rae (Corporate Director).

2 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on **22 January 2013** were presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2013.

3 **Minutes - Capital Assets Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee held on 22 January 2013 were received and noted.

4 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **Leader's announcements**

There were no announcements.

6 **Public participation**

The rules on public participation were noted; however the Leader reported that she would be happy for any members of the public present to participate in the discussion of items on the agenda.

7 **New Local Welfare Provision**

Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing, presented a report which outlined a proposal for the Cabinet to ratify the proposed criteria and delivery model for a new local welfare provision, and to delegate responsibility to officers to make minor amendments to the application of the scheme in light of any review and ongoing consultation.

A correction was highlighted on paragraph 7.5 on Page 27 of the Agenda papers, stating it should refer to Appendix D rather than Appendix E. Details were then provided on the accessibility of and eligibility for the scheme, as detailed in the report. It was noted that no cash awards would be made under the proposed scheme, with provision being provided by means of a purchase order for an item/service, or a referral to a third party to purchase agreed items or goods.

It was stated that owing to the urgent nature of any applications for the provision, efforts would be made to ensure appeal against refusal would be processed on the same day as that of the appeal, or by 1pm the following day if an appeal was made after 1pm.

The Cabinet welcomed a proposal to amend the scheme to allow people to appeal against refusal by 1pm the day after refusal of provision rather than at the time of refusal, and noted it was proposed officers would be granted delegated responsibility to make other minor amendments to the application of the scheme should other matters, such as signposting applicants to appropriate local services, require further drafting consideration.

It was,

Resolved:

- 1) That the cabinet ratify the proposed criteria and delivery model for a new local welfare provision.
- 2) That the cabinet provide officers with delegated responsibility to make minor amendments to the application of the scheme in light of review and ongoing consultation.

Reason for Proposal

As part of the Welfare Reform Act (2012), the Government is abolishing the current system of Social Fund discretionary payments. From April 2013, the support provided to households through the Social fund by means of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for Living Expenses will cease and Local Authorities will receive financial support to enable them to develop and implement their own 'successor models'

8 **Business Plan Scorecard Update**

Councillor John Brady, Cabinet member for Finance, Performance and Risk, introduced the report which provided a summary of progress against Wiltshire Council's Business Plan for the third quarter of 2012/13.

It was noted that the plan was currently in its second year out of four, and that though external factors such as recent severe weather and the economic downturn might impact on achievement of targets in any one year, the overall four year targets were still expected to be achievable.

At the end of the third quarter, 20 of the remaining 31 indicators were on target, another five were within 5 per cent, and three have no targets set. Only three indicators were not on target, with none being a priority target.

In relation to targets not yet met, it was stated that the last transfer of staff to the Cloud service be completed shortly, and that the Wiltshire Online programme to deliver superfast broadband had been delayed at the time of the report to sign the contract, which had now been achieved, and that further information would follow to the Area Boards when available.

It was also highlighted that the results not on target in relation to Children in Care GCSE results and Care Leavers in suitable education, employment or training, were higher than both the national average and statistical neighbours.

After discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That the progress against the Business Plan be noted.

9 Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan Update 2013/14

Councillor Jane Scott, Leader of the Council, presented a report which provided an assessment of Cabinet's draft proposals to Council to set a budget for 2013/14, and the impact on Council Tax, rents, fees and charges, the capital programme, schools, as well as reserves.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny had met on 7 February 2013 to consider the updated plan, with a report on its conclusions tabled at the meeting and attached to these minutes along with the minutes of the Budget Task Group from 25 January 2013, Group Leaders meeting with Trade Union Representatives, and the Group Leaders Meeting with Non-Domestic Rate-Payers, both held on 6 February 2013.

The Leader detailed the proposals as detailed in the report, highlighting the 1% pay increase for staff and fourth consecutive council tax freeze which had been budgeted. £27.656 million in savings had been identified, alongside £17.804 million increase in investment in frontline services such as safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, and waste services. The largest areas of savings had been achieved through improved procurement procedures, for example saving £1.2 million with regards the Highways Contract.

The Leader also announced that the Council had been awarded an additional £362,000 Rural Grant from central government, and thanked the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for taking into account the county's position.

Taking into account the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 7 February, which had been well attended by non-executive Members, the Leader moved an amendment that £162,000 of the new grant allocation would be distributed between the Area Boards to be focused on children and young people, with the remaining £200,000 to be allocated to the base budget for School Improvement.

Following discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That Cabinet, following consideration of comments and recommendations arising from the Director of Finance and Corporate Directors' statements, Scrutiny and public consultations, makes the following recommendations to Council on 26th February 2012:

- a. To endorse the update of the 2012-15 Financial Plan for 2013/14.
- b. To allocate the new Rural Grant allocated to Wiltshire on 5th February of £0.362 million between the base budgets for Area Boards (£0.162 million) and School Improvement (£0.200 million) as set out at paragraph 6.7.
- c. To recommend to Council, for approval, that the savings and investment proposals summarised at Sections 9 and 7 respectively

of this report and Sections 4 and 5 of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report, provides a net revenue budget for 2013/14 of £340.518 million.

d. To recommend to Council to:

- i. Freeze Wiltshire Council's element of the Band D council tax for 2013/14 £1,222.43, as calculated in accordance with statute, as set out in Section 10 of this report.**
- ii. Set the Council's total net expenditure budget for 2013/14 at £340.518 million.**
- iii. Approve the award of grants to Parish and Town Councils as set out under Sections 10.9 and 10.10 of this report so no such precepting body is impacted by the local Council Tax support scheme introduced for 2013/14;**
- iv. Set a 3.4% increase for dwelling rents in accordance with rent restructuring;**
- v. Set the HRA Budget for 2013/14 (original) as set out at Appendix F of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report;**
- vi. That all other rent or service charges related to the HRA be frozen at 2011/12 levels.**
- vii. The Capital programme proposed at Appendix E of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan, attached to this report at Appendix 1.**
- viii. Set the changes in fees and charges set out in detail at Section 6 of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report.**

Reasons for Proposal

The Cabinet, following Scrutiny and consultation, agrees recommendations to Council to enable it to:

- Set its revenue, capital, housing revenue accounts, fees and charges, levels of reserves and resultant Council Tax for 2013/14 to then issue Council Tax and rent bills.
- Provide the Council with a strong business and financial plan for sustainable delivery for the remaining 2 years of those plans.

10 Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14

Councillor John Brady, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Risk, presented a report which presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2013-14 including:

- a) The Prudential and Treasury Indicators (Prls and Trls) for the next three years;
- b) Other debt management decisions required for 2013-14 that do not feature within the Prls or Trls; and
- c) The Annual Investment Strategy for 2013-14.

Resolved:

To recommend that the Council:

- a) **adopt the Prudential and Treasury Indicators (Appendix A) and approve the change in Prudential Indicator 4, which now compares Gross (previously Net, of investments) Debt with the Capital Financing Requirement in accordance with an amendment issued by CIPFA in November 2012;**
- b) **adopt the Annual Investment Strategy (Appendix B);**
- c) **delegate to the Service Director, Finance the authority to vary the amount of borrowing and other long term liabilities within both the Treasury Indicators for the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary;**
- d) **authorise the Service Director, Finance to agree the restructuring of existing long-term loans where savings are achievable or to enhance the long term portfolio;**
- e) **agree that short term cash surpluses and deficits continue to be managed through temporary loans and deposits; and**
- f) **agree that any long term surplus cash balances not required to cover borrowing are placed in authorised money-market funds, particularly where this is more cost effective than short term deposits and delegate to the Service Director, Finance the authority to select such funds.**

Reasons For Proposals

To enable the Council to agree a Treasury Management Strategy for 2013-14 and set Prudential Indicators that comply with statutory guidance and reflect best practice.

11 Revenue Budget Monitoring

Councillor John Brady, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Risk, presented a report which advised the Cabinet of the revenue budget monitoring position as at the end of Period 9 (end of December 2012) for the financial year 2012/2013 and highlights new cost pressures or changes since the previous budget monitoring report on 18 December 2012.

Councillor Brady noted the revised decreases in cost pressures that totalled £0.761 million after transferring £1.700 million from reserves to support the pressure on safeguarding children as agreed in the period 7 budget monitoring report. This would give a revised potential year end cost pressure of £1.228 million. Councillor Brady stated action to return this to balance was being taken and this should be the position at the conclusion of the financial year.

The Cabinet thanked all those who had worked to provide a balanced budget for the Council.

Resolved:

To note the outcome of the Period 9(December 2012) budget monitoring.

Reason for Proposal

To inform effective decision making and ensure a sound financial control environment.

12 **Wiltshire Community Infrastructure Levy - Update**

Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Philipe, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning, presented a report which updated the Cabinet on the preparation of the Wiltshire Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule and to ensure timely progress is made on preparing a CIL Charging Schedule that will enable the Council to charge CIL on new development to help pay for infrastructure within the county.

It was explained that new government guidance had been issued in December 2012, which required an adjustment of the previously agreed timetable.

It was,

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- (i) Notes the new statutory Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) guidance and implications in terms of the extra evidence and policy requirements, which must be completed before the Council can progress to the next stage of the process - consultation on a Draft Charging Schedule.**
- (ii) Notes the response to the consultation on the Preliminary Draft CIL Charging Schedule consultation.**
- (iii) Approves the revised timetable for the preparation of the CIL Charging Schedule.**

Reason for Proposals

To update Cabinet on progress in preparing Wiltshire's CIL and the implications of new statutory Government guidance on the process and timescale for its preparation; and ensure timely progress is made on preparing a CIL Charging Schedule that will enable the Council to charge CIL on new development to help pay for infrastructure within the county.

13 **Salisbury Central Car Park & Maltings**

Public Participation

Mr Eric Hart gave a statement in opposition to the proposals.

Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Philippe, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning, presented a report which set out the process taken in accordance with European Procurement Regulations, and following approval by Cabinet in December 2010 and February 2012, leading to the appointment of Stanhope plc as the Council's 'Preferred Bidder' for the regeneration of the Central Car Park and Maltings site, and which stated that commercial negotiations have progressed to a stage where the Council is in a position to enter a Development Agreement for the regeneration of the site.

It was recommended that the meeting move into Part II to receive a detailed report on the outcome of the evaluation, to protect commercially sensitive information.

14 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

15 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Further notice was given in accordance with paragraph 5 (4) and 5 (5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of the intention to take the following item in private.

Resolved:

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Number 16 (minute 16 below) because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

No representations had been received on the question of taking the item in private.

16 **Salisbury Central Car Park & Maltings**

Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Philipe, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning presented a confidential report on entering in a Development Agreement with its preferred bidder for the regeneration of the Central Car Park and Maltings site, Salisbury, for consideration.

The issues and impacts in relation to the agreed commercial terms were considered. Including consideration of the impact on parking revenues as development is delivered and the level of future National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) generation arising from the scheme. The overall financial implications were summarised in net present value terms and detailed in the report.

Resolved:

- I. **That the Council enters into the Development Agreement with a Stanhope special purpose company with Stanhope plc as guarantor for the delivery of the Salisbury Central Car park & Maltings mixed use retail led development on the principal terms and conditions set out in appendix 2 of the report with such minor changes as may be approved by the Service Director (Economy and Regeneration).**
- II. **That the land now in the ownership of the Council within the area shown edged in red on the phasing plan displayed at the meeting (except for any public open space) be appropriated for planning purposes under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 immediately before the commencement of development it then no longer being required for the purpose for which it is currently held.**

Reason for Proposal

- i) The signing of the Development Agreement will commit Stanhope to investing further resources to deliver the development thereby enhancing the viability and vitality of the city as envisaged by the Core Strategy and Salisbury Vision.
- ii) The Appropriation for Planning purposes will require landowners with legal rights over the site to be compensated for interference with those rights whilst ensuring that such rights, if any, do not preclude the project from proceeding.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.10 pm)

These decisions were published on the 18 th February 2013 and will come into force on 25 th February 2013

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718024 or e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 10

**COUNCIL AGENDA 26/02/13
ITEM 10
APPENDIX 2**

Committee	Total Number of Places for Elected Members	Conservative Group Allocation (61 seats)	Liberal Democrat Group Allocation (22 seats)	Labour Group Allocation (2 seats)	Independent Group Allocation (10 seats)	Devizes Guardians Group Allocation (3 seats)
Strategic Planning	13	9	3	-	1	-
Area Planning Committees						
North	11	8	3	-	-	-
South	11	6	3	1	1	-
East	9	6	-	-	2	1
West	11	6	3	-	2	-
Licensing	12	8	3	-	1	-
Overview and Scrutiny Management	13	7	3	1	1	1
Children's Services Select	13	9	2	-	2	-
Environment Select	13	7	3	1	1	1
Health and Adult Social Care Select	13	8	3	-	1	1
Standards	13	7	3	1	1	1
Police and Crime Panel	7	5	2		-	
Audit	13	8	3	-	1	1
Appeals	8	6	2	-	-	-
Staffing Policy	9	6	2	-	1	-
Officer Appointment	5	3	1	-	1	-
Pension Fund	5	4	1	-	-	-
TOTALS:	179	111(-2)*	40	4	18(+2)*	6

NB PLEASE SEE FOOTNOTE OVERLEAF

*The allocation of seats as it currently stands indicates that the Conservative Group needs to lose 2 seats – making their total allocation of seats 111 - and the Independent Group needs to acquire 2 seats making their total of seats 18.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (1) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Nicholas Fogg, Marlborough West Division

To

Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection Services

Question 1

How many visits/tests on food have been carried out in the past year by Council officials and with what results?

What cuts, if any, have been made to the funding of the Trading Standards department? Has the number of staff employed been reduced together with the number of tests made on food?

Has the Food Standards Agency asked Wiltshire to carry out any tests on the current food scare (some 24 authorities round the country asked to do so)?

Response

Due to the speed at which this matter is progressing and the likelihood of further updates from the FSA before Council, a verbal response shall be provided at the meeting.

26 February 2013

Item 14 (2) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Bill Douglas, Chippenham Hardens and England Division

To

Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing

Question 2

In April the new so called 'Bedroom Tax' will be introduced. This will impact families across Wiltshire of working age, meaning from about 38 years, with potential additional bills which could be as high as £80 per month. Those without the means to pay will be forced to seek alternative and smaller accommodation. I believe that there are roughly 18,000 people on Wiltshire's housing waiting list currently. Can the Cabinet Member explain to us how he intends to resolve this housing situation?

Response

The new Housing Benefit rules will help free up larger social housing stock and reflect the existing arrangements in the private sector. Although we support the aims of these changes, we appreciate that the transition into these new rules may cause difficulties for both tenants and housing providers. We can provide reassurance that we are working very hard with our partners to support housing tenants and our housing providers through this transition.

In August 2012 extensive analysis of households across Wiltshire who will be affected by the 'bedroom tax' was undertaken, which enabled us to work effectively with our partners to ensure targeted communication could take place in October 2012. Below is a breakdown of the total households affected by this change and how it impacts them financially. This data can be broken down to address level which has significantly helped with targeting our resources and that of our housing providers to ensure that every households affected has been well informed.

Reductions to HB per week	Of which...		Total
	Under-occupying by 1 bedroom	Under-occupying by 2+ bedrooms	
£30+	1	16	17

£25-£30	1	236	237
£20-£25	6	170	176
£15-£20	441	6	447
£10-£15	1978	9	1987
£5-£10	28	0	28
<£5	1	0	1
Total	2456	437	2893

Money management, debt advice and housing advice are crucial to households seeking to manage their increased liabilities for rent. The letters that had been sent out signposted households to seek this advice from our website and trained housing staff, Wiltshire's Citizens Advice, Shelter and the government's Directgov website.

A training programme has been developed and training sessions have taken place with operational staff both at Wiltshire Council and across many of our partners on the changes contained within the Welfare Reform Act to ensure they are best placed to provide robust and beneficial advice to these households.

As with all the housing providers across Wiltshire, the housing management team for the council's housing stock wrote to all their tenants affected by the bedroom tax offering them a visit to discuss their options and they are now in the process of attempting to contact those that have yet to respond. The results of these visits were as follows;-

- 9% of tenants have said that they are considering moving.
- 37% of tenants have decided to pay the difference
- 16% of tenants are not affected (pensionable age, back in work and off benefits, babies born etc)
- 1% tenants are thinking about taking in a lodger
- 37% tenants still to see.

The other housing providers across Wiltshire who have also conducted home visits are getting a very similar feedback, in that the majority of households are deciding to pay the difference rather than considering a move.

To help facilitate moves more easily for those households who may need to consider down sizing into smaller more suitable accommodation, we conducted a full 3 month consultation exercise to allow us to amend our current allocation policy to give the highest priority we were able to under the new allocation guidance for households who would be in financial hardship and under occupying by 2 or more bedrooms.

Based on the information we have we have identified 447 who would meet this criteria, with 297 households who are not currently registered on the housing register and 144 households who are on the housing register and who we are currently writing to offer advice and carry out financial assessments.

As well as using the choice based lettings system to bid for a transfer we have advertised and have noticed a significant increase in tenants who are doing a mutual exchange. Mutual exchanges are home swaps between social sector tenants and have provided many households affected by the new rules with the opportunity to move to smaller properties without having to bid through choice based lettings.

Ensuring sufficient affordable homes for those in need will aid those affected by the new rules in the longer term. One of our key priorities as a council is to ensure that there is an appropriate supply of good quality housing of all types and of all tenures, delivered to address the needs of people in Wiltshire. Our target is to deliver 600 new affordable homes a year. As well as working with our housing providers and private developers to increase the levels of affordable homes in Wiltshire, the Council has also built and let new council homes in the area, and is delivering the only affordable housing PFI scheme in the South West. This project will provide over 242 new affordable homes to rent.

Question 3

With no homes available people seeking to downsize but who cannot afford to pay will be trapped and forced to pay the tax, or become homeless if they collapse into debt. Can the Cabinet Member tell us what steps Wiltshire Council has taken for when the assistance money allocated by the Government runs out? What provisions are in place to assist genuinely poor elderly people, and families, already struggling to pay bills and rent while feeding themselves and their children?

Response

The new rules relating to housing benefit 'bedroom tax' will only affect those of working age who have a spare room and are claiming benefit. Anyone over the qualifying age for state pension credit will not be affected by these changes.

The Government has allocated us discretionary housing funds amounting to £474,000 for 2013/14. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) provide customers with further financial assistance when a local authority considers that help with housing costs is needed. DHP is only determined a year at a time and could be subject to major change next year with the arrival of universal credit which will incorporate housing costs. We are not able to assess at this stage what the impact on Wiltshire will be due to the limited information provided to date. The roll out is not scheduled to begin in Wiltshire until March 2014 and it maybe that some households are better off. DHP awards can either be a short term award to give a customer time to sort out their financial circumstances or they can be awarded until the customer's circumstances change.

A report is due to go to cabinet to seek approval in terms of prioritising the spend of this grant to ensure the most vulnerable are able to keep their homes and not fall into debt, especially if the properties have been significantly adapted to allow a member of the household to live independently.

In addition to what is described above, there is an identified need to increase 'financial capability' across the county to enable individuals to manage their finances independently and responsibly. In particular the introduction of Universal Credit could present a challenge to people who are not used to managing their benefits. Universal Credit will help claimants and their families to become more independent and will simplify the benefits system by bringing together a range of working-age benefits into a single streamlined payment. The new Universal Credit system aims to:

- improve work incentives
- smooth the transitions into and out of work, supporting a dynamic labour market
- simplify the system, making it easier for people to understand, and easier and cheaper for staff to administer
- reduce in-work poverty
- cut back on fraud and error.

It will be launched in 2013 and will replace:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- Housing Benefit.

Universal Credit is known as the new single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income. The council and other partners are working together through the financial inclusion partnership for the county, Wiltshire Money, to address this need.

For example, Wiltshire Money is working with front line staff in children's centres to raise awareness of financial exclusion issues and ensure that staff understand where to refer families which are struggling. Another key area of work for Wiltshire Money is the promotion of services which support good money-management and provide alternatives to unaffordable credit. This includes working with the credit unions through Wiltshire Community Bank and England's Illegal Money Lending Team.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (3) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Brian Dalton, Salisbury Harnham Division

To

Councillor Dick Tonge, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Question 4

Can I ask how much of the £18.7m for “maintaining and improving roads” was spent in the Salisbury area in this financial year? It seems that only the Harnham gyratory was resurfaced within the Salisbury area in September as planned, and nothing else.

Response

The budget figure of £18.7m includes expenditure on Integrated Transport Schemes, Bridges and drainage works. The capital budget for road maintenance in 2012/13 was £14.1m. The expenditure on major maintenance in the Salisbury area was approximately £500,000 this year. As well as the resurfacing of Harnham Gyratory, there were carriageway repairs at Crane Street, safety fence work at Churchill Way South, footway works at Manor Road, and other bridge and sign maintenance work across the area. This total excludes the day to day carriageway defect repair work carried out, including repairing potholes, and the repairs to the drainage systems.

The investment in improving the condition of the road network is spread across the whole county, and is based on need. The structural condition of the roads and their skid resistance are important. The severe winter weather and flooding has badly affected parts of the network, and this year this was particularly noticeable on some of the minor rural roads where the construction is not as substantial as on many of the purpose built urban roads.

Question 5

I note that the council plans to spend an additional £3m in the next financial year. Are there any road works planned for the Salisbury area this time around? Roads in South Wiltshire are in a dire state. The list of roads below are from my question to council last year. None of these have received any attention and are in a state of disrepair. There are numerous other roads that could be added to this list that councillors will be aware of:

- A30 London Rd

- A338 London Rd to the Winterbournes and beyond

In the City:

- Catherine St
- Silver St
- Minster St
- Castle St
- Blue Boar Row
- Winchester St
- Endless St
- Brown St
- St Ann St
- Folkestone Rd
- Essex Square
- Norfolk Rd
- Harnham Rd

Response

The priorities for road resurfacing next financial year are currently being reviewed and finalised. Road safety is the priority, and technical surveys regarding road condition and skid resistance are used to inform the site selection. The high speed roads with poor accident records are of particular concern. It is too early to know which roads it will be possible to treat next year.

It would be unrealistic to expect a long list of roads to be resurfaced in a single area. There is an extensive 2700 mile road network in Wiltshire which has suffered from under investment in the past, and from severe winters in recent years and flood damage this year. The maintenance backlog is being reduced through the ongoing investment, but the priority has to be to keep the highway network in a safe condition, and this requires work to be prioritised according to need. The use of technical surveys of road condition and skid resistance is important to inform this process.

Whilst it is unlikely that it will be possible to resurface a long list of roads in Salisbury next year, it is intended to carry out a series of repairs across the network based on those sites most in need of attention, which could include those listed. This carriageway repair programme has proved successful in addressing problem sites in recent years and will be developed further with the increased budget for 2013/14 and the new Highways and Streetscene contract starting in June.

Question 6

How much has the council paid out in compensation claims since the 2009 financial year in Wiltshire Council as a whole and separately, South Wiltshire for:

- a) Vehicle damage claims and
- b) Personal injury claims.

Are there any cases ongoing for the above?

Response

The Public Liability claims received which have been caused by defects on the Highway or Car Parks and include payments for compensation and associated costs from 1st April 2009 to 18th February 2013 are:

- a) Wiltshire Council total paid £112,434.73 for vehicle damage claims. Of this £53,159.40 is from the Southern Highway Area. Breaking this down by year;

	Annual figures	Southern Area
09/10	£55,320.70	£26,928.51
10/11	£41,534.05	£20,227.55
11/12	£6,481.80	£1,802.42
12/13	£9,098.18	£4,200.92

- b) Wiltshire Council total paid £275,526.35 for personal injury claims. Of this £102,135.30 is from Southern Highway Area.

	Annual figures	Southern Area
09/10	£55,320.70	£26,928.51
10/11	£147,301.23	£70,050.00
11/12	£12,010.00	£11,350.00
12/13	£44.98	£44.98

There are cases ongoing. However, the cost of claims is not high taking into account the extensive highway network, and they represent a very small proportion of the Council's expenditure on highways.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (4) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham South Division

To

**Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult
Care, Communities and Housing**

Question 7

At the recent cabinet meeting held in Salisbury the Cabinet Member gave me an assurance that he would be asking officers to revisit the decision not to issue emergency cash loans as part of the council's new crisis support scheme.

I was disappointed to note that no mention of this was to be found in the draft minutes of the meeting.

Is the cabinet member able to assure me that this was an error of omission and that this work is indeed being undertaken and could he outline for me when we can expect to see the revised plan?

Response

A written or verbal response will be presented at the meeting.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (5) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To

Councillor Dick Tonge, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Question 8

What provision, if any, has been made for additional grit bins in the proposed 2013/2014 council budget?

Response

There is no provision for new bins but consideration is given to cases where relocating existing bins might be more advantageous to the community. The council has approximately 1600 salt bins which it fills and maintains on the road network throughout the county. Each location is recorded and identified on town and parish maps. The resource to fill these bins particularly during extreme weather when they become emptied in a short time is great. The council operates a 1 tonne salt bag scheme. In this scheme Wiltshire Council delivers the salt to the town/parish councils. This enables them to treat areas of their community which they consider to be important through the winter. It has proved very successful. Since we trialled the scheme two years ago 46 councils have joined the scheme. Chippenham Town Council already participates.

In some cases own and parish councils have provided new bins themselves and undertaken to fill them from the 1 tonne bags of salt provided to them at the start of the winter season. I will ensure an officer of the winter team contacts Chippenham Town Council to further develop their weather response plan in preparation for the next winter season.

All requests for existing salt bins to be repaired or refilled can be reported to Wiltshire Council through CLARENCE 0800 232323. Requests are then noted, prioritised and every attempt to refill them will be made as soon as possible.

The salt must only be used on the highway and not on private driveways or property.

Question 9

If there are to be any additional grit bins, what can residents do to make the case for their streets or areas?

Response

Any request for an *existing bin* to be relocated must be supported by the town or parish council. These requests together with any *new bins* provided by the town or parish councils will then be reviewed by the Area Highway Engineer who will consider the following:

- A request will not be accepted unless the new location to site the bin has been agreed between the local and adjacent residents.
- Bins will not be placed on main roads that are routinely salted on Primary or Secondary routes. These routes are published on the council's web site:
www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets/roadshighwayspavements/gritting.htm
- Bins will only be considered in areas that are populated and have either a steep incline or a known seepage from spring water.
- The location is not within 200 metres of another salt bin location.
- Bins will only be placed where there is a sufficiently wide verge or footpath to allow safe passage of pedestrians and allow safe access for salt replenishment.
- Bins will not be placed on roads that are not adopted.
- Bins shall not obstruct sight lines.
- Bins will only be provided if there is sufficient traffic and/or pedestrian use to justify provision.
- If salt bins are misused for the treatment of private driveways, or regularly vandalised, Wiltshire Council reserve the right to remove them.
- Area Highway Engineers will notify the Weather & Drainage Team of any moves so updated maps can be issued for town and parish councils and weather plans amended.
- Once a suitable site has been agreed, the Area Highway Engineer will arrange the works through the Community Steward.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (6) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To

Councillor Dick Tonge, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Question 10

When do you expect the string of large potholes in Cocklebury Road, near the Chippenham train station, to be filled in?

Response

The majority of potholes on site were filled earlier this week. There are a few more by the site entrance to the new station car park; we have raised a new works instruction for these to be filled in during the next week.

Question 11

Given the tendency for potholes to open up the time on this busy stretch of road, what plans are therefore it to be resurfaced?

Response

The priorities for road resurfacing next financial year are currently being reviewed and finalised. Road safety is the priority, and technical surveys regarding road condition and skid resistance are used to inform the site selection. The high speed roads with poor accident records are of particular concern. It is too early to know which roads it will be possible to treat next year.

There is an extensive 2700 mile road network in Wiltshire which has suffered from under investment in the past, and from severe winters in recent years and flood damage this year. The maintenance backlog is being reduced through the ongoing investment, but the priority has to be to keep the highway network in a safe condition, and this requires work to be prioritised according to need. The use of technical surveys of road condition and skid resistance is important to inform this process.

This carriageway repair programme has proved successful in addressing problem sites in recent years and will be developed further with the increased budget for 2013/14 and the new Highways and Streetscene contract starting

in June. Cocklebury Road will be considered for treatment next year to ensure it remains in safe condition.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (7) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To

**Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult
Care, Communities and Housing**

Question 12

In the light of growing national concern about the combined effects of benefit changes on the poorest section of our society, do you now regret passing up the opportunity to protect residents in Council Tax Bands A and B from the removal of their Council Tax relief?

Do you see an opportunity to review this decision, and if so when?

Response

A written or verbal response will be presented at the meeting.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (8) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To

Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing

Question 13

Which stakeholders did the Council consult on its way to abandoning all emergency cash awards in its Local Welfare Provision replacement of the previous Social Fund Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants?

Given that there were over 2000 Crisis Loan awards of an average of £51 and 580 Community Care Grants averaging just under £600 made in just six months in 2011, and that the DWP award rates for these two schemes were 84% and 76% respectively does he accept that the Social Fund met a genuine need for the people of Wiltshire?

And if so, what is his response to those people who will genuinely need small cash advances in the future? Are they simply to be referred to pay day loan providers, charging extortionate rates of interest, and guaranteeing continuation of the poverty cycle?

Response

A written or verbal response will be presented at the meeting.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (9)- Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To

Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing

Question 14

What opportunities to report poor care or abuse are open to Wiltshire residents whose relatives have been privately financed in care homes in the in the County, without the involvement of the NHS or this Authority?

Response

The Council has a responsibility to ensure the quality of all services including those provided to individuals funding their own care. To this end all care homes are reviewed and visited by commissioning staff and all homes are subject to inspection by the Care Quality Commission. CQC's telephone number is 01225 712553.

There are a number of opportunities that include:

Report to Care Quality Commission details of which have to be displayed in public areas of the care home;

Report to the Council's care quality helpline – the number is 01225 712553

Contacting Age UK or South West Advocacy Network to support an individual in raising a complaint or concern;

Report to the Council's safeguarding team where poor care or potential abuse of residents are a concern. The role of the safeguarding team is widely publicised.

The Local Adults Safeguarding Board have an overall responsibility to assure that all residents of Wiltshire safeguarded. To this end it produces information which is available in written form and on the [Council website](#) .

The Quality Assurance Sub Group of the Safeguarding Adults Board monitors all safeguarding alerts, their source and the response. This information is presented to the Safeguarding Adults Board on a quarterly basis. They have

recently undertaken an audit of homes and identified where no alerts have been made. Information on safeguarding is being sent to all those homes identified.

The Council have a specialist Safeguarding Adults Team who provide a service to the whole of Wiltshire. All alerts from whatever source go this team. They perform a triage function, using a multi-agency threshold guidance. This ensure there is consistency of approach throughout the county and they are able to identify patterns of abuse at an early stage. The telephone number for the Safeguarding team is 0300 456 0111

Report to the police on 01380 734212 where abuse or poor care is suspected

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (10)- Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To

Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing

Question 15

Specifically how, and how often, does this Authority monitor the quality of nursing care delivered in care homes which the Council uses for placements, and which offer nursing services?

Response

The Council has block and framework agreements with nursing home providers and have a number of means by which we monitor quality. These include:

Regular feedback and liaison with the Care Quality Commission to exchange information informally and formally about care homes. Representatives from CQC undertake a formal inspection process of providers measuring their performance against defined legislative standards expressed in legislation. CQC inspectors visit care homes on an announced and unannounced basis and this information is shared with the Council's commissioning team

Individual reviews of people placed in care homes and funded by the Council. These reviews are undertaken by the Council's operational staff and take place in care homes. Whilst completing reviews staff are expected to take into account the service that is provided on a more general basis. This information is reported to commissioning staff.

Formal contract reviews: These take place annually as a minimum at which providers are expected to report back on a number of quality issues.

Regular information and liaison with the Council's safeguarding team to ensure commissioners are aware of safeguarding alerts and actions arising as a result of any safeguarding alerts. Where a number of concerns are raised, investigated and found to be proven, the Council can take a number of actions including implement a decision to make no further placements, to restrict the number of new placements or to provide additional assistance to the provider

to enable them to improve services. Our principle aim is to ensure customers are safe and every effort is made to ensure existing residents do not have to re-locate.

Unannounced and announced visits to care homes by commissioning staff: Every care home is visited annually as a minimum in addition to formal contract management meetings. Homes will be visited more frequently where there are concerns or where a potential risk is identified such as those where the existing manager has left and no replacement appointed; those where CQC have identified some compliance actions are required; those homes where the number of residents who have fallen or those homes where members of the public or the Council's staff have raised concerns. The emphasis of these visits is on the performance of the whole home rather than services delivered to individuals so whether residents are self funders or supported by the Council is not taken into account.

South West Audit Partnership: A recent audit of two large nursing home providers in Wiltshire was very complimentary about the quality of service being provided. .

Where concerns about quality are founded, the Council and Wiltshire CCG will work with the provider to develop an improvement action plan which will be monitored closely to ensure improvements are made.

In terms of the Council's role in proactively promoting quality in nursing homes the Council funds "My Home Life" which is a national programme supported by Age UK which provides training and support to care home managers. To date 45 care home managers have completed or are currently undergoing the My Home Life programme.

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 February 2013

Item 14 (11) - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To

Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection Services

Question 16

With reference to the recent Briefing Note on the ongoing horsemeat scandal, why has this Authority chosen to use a public analyst which is not capable of carrying out DNA analysis? Was that decision informed by a need to reduce costs?

How many Public Protection Service officers qualified to carry out food safety checks does the Council currently employ? And what were the equivalent numbers for 2010 and 2011?

Why is the Council "liaising with any food manufacturers operating in Wiltshire who process comminuted beef products" rather than seeking clear assurances or carrying out checks?

For how many meat processing businesses in the County does this Council have enforcement responsibility?

What checks are being carried out on the beef being served in Wiltshire schools, both within the Academy system and in those schools for which the Council still has direct responsibility?

Response

Due to the speed at which this matter is progressing and the likelihood of further updates from the FSA before Council, a verbal response shall be provided at the meeting.