

Wiltshire Council
Where everybody matters

Corporate Plan 2010-2014

Welcome to the 2010-2014 Corporate Plan for the new Wiltshire Council

Aiming to be the best

Creating the new Wiltshire Council has been a huge success and I am delighted that in our first year we have achieved so much. We have delivered over £20 million of efficiency savings which has been reinvested into our key front line services including highways, vulnerable children and adults. We introduced one contact number **0300 456 0100** to help our customers to access us and have their queries dealt with at the first point of contact and we launched a new website which more than one million people have visited to use our on line services.

A big success has been the introduction of eighteen area boards, which have been attended by over 5,000 local residents. So far we have allocated £750,000 to support more than 250 community projects including art clubs, allotments, saving village shops, delivering a dental practice and community speed watch schemes. By 2012 we will have allocated over £5 million to support our local communities. Local people are helping to influence decisions affecting their communities and we need to review and rethink our service delivery to meet local needs.

We can no longer accept that an average performance is good enough. Many of our services can be better, especially given our favourable position in Wiltshire compared to many other parts of the country. And, we can no longer accept that people are resigned to not being heard or not being in control of their lives. The era of providing services 'to' the public and creating dependency is over. We must actively involve people in decision making and service design and support them to live more independent lives. This is a big agenda but I know councillors, staff, partner agencies, and the community can work together on this and make Wiltshire the best county to live in, work in and visit.

Our Corporate Plan sets out where we will prioritise our resources – money and people – in the next four years to deliver improvements in these areas. Given the current economic climate and the impact that this is having on our communities, and will have on public sector funding in future years, this is a key priority for us and we must continue to adopt a proactive and positive *can do* approach in everything we do and look at how together we can make Wiltshire even better.

Jane Scott, Leader Wiltshire Council

The journey ahead – working together

The council is the lead public agency in Wiltshire, but despite its size it cannot work alone in addressing the complex, challenging and changing needs and aspirations of all our communities. The challenge we face is to move from being a unitary council to what a 'unitary plus' council.

Unitary plus is an opportunity to work closely with our partners and make partnership working a way of life. Together we can address rising customer expectations and the pressures forecast for public sector funding. It challenges us to be different and to build on what has been achieved so far, transforming our services and building better relationships with local people. It is a future where public agencies share resources and focus on people's lives and not their individual services. This will push us to the boundaries of what is possible. If we're successful, the benefits will be huge in terms of improved service performance and in developing a meaningful relationship with citizens.

We know we need to make radical changes within our organisation in the way we work and relate to other agencies, citizens and the wider community. Our focus will be on making a positive difference to the people living in Wiltshire, helping them to live fulfilling and independent lives with a minimum dependency on public services.

We will need to transform our services improving performance and reducing costs; change the way decisions are made with an emphasis on fostering localism and trust; and fully engage with our partners to pool resources, share intelligence, and deliver seamless services.

We need to raise our ambitions and aim to achieve performance that exceeds expectations.

We will make Wiltshire Council the best local authority in the UK, aiming to do more with less, and focusing its energies and resources on the things that matter most to its communities.

Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive

Our vision and goals

Our role and purpose

Our activities influence lives either directly or indirectly. The council is the main body influencing the quality of life in Wiltshire and we take that responsibility very seriously.

The role of the council is wide ranging and changes to reflect the pressures and opportunities that emerge for local people and their communities. Many services that we provide are required by law, but we have flexibility to adjust our focus based on the needs of people and communities.

The current economic situation and the pressure on public finances make this a challenging time for Wiltshire and the council. Business as usual is not an option for us. We know that we cannot continue as we are and we have to reduce the cost of our activities. We will have to work differently to avoid impacting on our front line services.

Our vision is to create stronger and more resilient communities

A strong sense of community spirit lies at the heart of our vision. We want to encourage and support local communities to get involved and work with us to strengthen their ability to deal with local challenges. We will work closely with town and parish councils, voluntary groups, local people and other public sector organisations to establish community needs and to help meet those needs in the most effective way.

We want to be more than just a unitary council; we want to be *Unitary Plus*, recognising that our real strength will be in working with others to achieve more.

Our communities give us a sense of well-being and belonging. Strong communities can cope with changing and challenging circumstances and they will often find their own solutions to many of the problems they face. These communities require less intervention from public services which is good for people and it reduces the pressure on increasingly scarce public resources.

Our vision is underpinned by 3 key goals:

Deliver high quality, low cost, customer focused services

We must provide the services Wiltshire actually needs, of the quality our residents actually want, and do this in a cost effective way which represents value for money. We must make our residents and visitors, our customers, the starting point when designing and delivering services. Our focus, for everything we do, must be on the customer to ensure that people are satisfied with what we do.

Ensure local, open, honest decision making

To feel a sense of ownership and belonging, people must be able to contribute directly to the decisions that affect their local area. An open and honest approach is essential if we are to build trust in our communities.

Work together to support Wiltshire's communities

The new council must work with its communities, focussing on their needs and helping them to help themselves. We will work closely with voluntary organisations, business and other public bodies. Working together to support communities and citizens, we can achieve so much more.

What will stronger and more resilient communities look like?

Strong and resilient communities will improve the quality of life for us all and, at the same time, lead to a reduced reliance upon public services.

There are many factors which will contribute to our success. Our vision is of communities:

- that are places where people choose to live and work
- where people take pride in their town or village
- where people from all backgrounds, ages and beliefs feel valued, included, and are treated with respect
- where people volunteer and get together to tackle local concerns
- with many 'social networks' allowing people to be active and involved
- which possess the skills and businesses to generate jobs to meet local employment needs
- which are informed about environmental issues and actively create local solutions
- where children and young people enjoy life and achieve their potential in and out of school
- where people get involved in democratic processes and have a voice in shaping the present and the future of their area
- where people have healthy lifestyles

Our priorities and outcomes for the next four years

Our chosen priorities address the most pressing challenges facing Wiltshire. They respond to our customers and what they have said are important and need more attention.

The financial reality that we face means that we have to work differently. We must look at what we do, ensure we are doing the right things in the right way, avoid duplication, meet people's needs and work in a more business like way to reduce costs.

We have identified the following priorities, as it is acknowledged that resources will not be sufficient to do everything we might want to do in the future.

- **Focus on our customers and improve access to our services**
- **Work in partnership to support vulnerable individuals and families**
- **Local, open, honest decision-making**

- **Increase opportunities to help young people achieve their potential**
- **Support the local economy**
- **Meet housing needs**
- **Improve our roads and road safety**
- **Reduce our environmental impact**
- **Achieve savings, be more efficient and ensure we deliver value for money**

We will review and design our services to reflect these priorities.

Life in Wiltshire today

There are many things that determine what life is like in an area including the economy, the number of houses and their affordability, whether the villages, towns and the countryside are pleasant places to live and visit. National and local surveys tell us what people consider life is like in Wiltshire and how happy they are living here.

The most recent Place Survey (2008) demonstrated that 86.4% of residents are consistently satisfied with Wiltshire as a place to live, comparing favourably with the national figure of 79.7%. Given the challenges we face, we cannot be complacent and must work hard to ensure this remains the case.

In Wiltshire, compared to the national average:

- People are healthier and live longer
- People from different backgrounds get on well together
- More elderly people live here
- Deprivation is generally low
- Crime rates are amongst the very lowest making it one of the safest places to live
- Unemployment rates are consistently low
- The level of qualifications in the working population is relatively high
- The overall effectiveness of secondary schools and sixth forms is good

However, there are challenges:

- Pockets of deprivation exist in some of our market towns and rural areas
- Earnings of people that live and work in Wiltshire are lower than similar areas
- The level of qualifications in the working population varies widely between areas and there are still too many people who lack basic qualifications
- Employment growth in added value employment sectors has been lower than other competitor areas, with a particular loss of manufacturing and public administration jobs
- Many primary schools are only satisfactory and a small number are inadequate
- Primary school exam results for level 4+ at key stage 2 in English and maths is below that for England
- The gap in achievement between the majority of children and those from disadvantaged backgrounds is closing in some areas, but progress is patchy and inconsistent for different groups
- Wiltshire is an expensive place to live, with relatively high house prices
- The quality of private sector housing needs to improve, particularly in bringing empty homes back into use, improving houses in multiple-occupation, and raising the energy efficiency levels of homes

What's Wiltshire like?

Health

Residents in Wiltshire are generally healthier than similar areas elsewhere. For example, over the last decade the number of people dying from heart disease, stroke and cancer have fallen and remain below average. Also, in recent surveys over three quarters of people indicated that their health was generally good or very good. However, health inequalities do exist between areas and different groups. The life expectancy of people living in the most affluent areas of Wiltshire is five years more than the least well off areas. Groups where ill health can be a particular problem include older people, families of military personnel, gypsies and travellers, migrant workers, and families with young children on low incomes.

Most children and young people are healthy but more young children suffer from tooth decay than elsewhere and work is ongoing to address this particular issue. Further joint work is also occurring to tackle issues ranging from child obesity encouraging healthy eating and physical exercise to reducing teenage pregnancy rates.

The growing health needs of older people are recognised with many initiatives being progressed to meet these demands. They include help to prevent falls amongst the elderly and the provision of support to sufferers of dementia and their carers.

Economy

Wiltshire has a strong local economy. However, like most areas the recent economic recession has had an impact on the county and its residents. The downturn has led to people being made redundant, getting into debt and losing their homes, and businesses struggling to obtain credit to invest and remain competitive. The council has been active in helping to address these problems by working with partner organisations through the 'Action for Wiltshire' programme. This provided short term help to reduce the adverse effects of the recession including help and advice lines for small businesses in crisis and residents needing advice on benefits, debt and redundancy; a benefits take-up campaign; and securing £3m from the government's future jobs fund to create 450 additional or temporary jobs for 18-24 year olds.

Whilst this programme continues, the council working with partner organisations is looking at how it can further strengthen the economy in the longer term. The focus will be on supporting existing businesses and enabling sustainable growth in business start-ups and securing new businesses. This will help to address some underlying issues that affect Wiltshire including levels of out-commuting, an over dependence on public sector jobs, and the relatively low income levels of people who live and work here.

A range of other initiatives will also be progressed including the regeneration of Trowbridge, Chippenham, and Salisbury town centres; maximising the benefits from the military presence in Wiltshire; improving broadband connectivity across the county; and addressing skills gaps in the workforce.

Housing

Wiltshire is a popular place to live and there are 198,700 homes in the county. This is set to increase by about 44,000 homes by 2026 under the government's future planning requirements for Wiltshire. House prices are higher than average and this coupled with below average earnings for people who live and work in the county, places considerable pressure on people wishing to live in their local town or village. The provision of new affordable housing is an important issue and like many areas in the south west, the number of new affordable homes being built in Wiltshire has not kept pace with demand. The recent recession has not helped this situation. The council is committed to providing greater numbers of affordable housing and plans to build more affordable

homes are underway. The council has also recently been given government funding to build additional 'council' houses.

The older population in Wiltshire is set to increase by 43% over the next 16 years. This means the future housing requirements of older people need to be carefully considered and a range of alternatives provided. We must reduce our reliance on residential care homes and increase the opportunities and choices available for people to continue to live independently within their communities.

The council directly manages around 5,400 council homes. Most of these homes are in good condition with only a small number failing to meet the National Decent Homes Standard.

Other issues are also being tackled by the council working with its partner agencies. They include preventing homelessness, improving the energy efficiency of homes, meeting the housing needs of military personnel, providing sites for gypsies and travellers, and bringing back empty homes into use.

Environment

The natural environment in Wiltshire makes a very important contribution to our quality of life. However, globally and locally, our demands and our lifestyles are threatening that environment we value so highly and it is clear that we need to drastically reduce the impact that our lives have on the planet.

Climate change is a major challenge for the world and for Wiltshire and the council must demonstrate its commitment to making an immediate and sustained effort in many areas, particularly in reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions. All large energy-using companies and organisations will be required to participate in carbon trading from 2010 onwards. The council will be assigned a quota of carbon we are allowed to emit and work within that quota or risk having to purchase additional 'credits'. To help us succeed, we have signed up to the 10:10 campaign to cut carbon emissions during 2010/11 and have set ourselves a challenging target of halving our carbon footprint by 2020. We are also responsible for working with other public sector organisations, businesses and communities to reduce CO2 emissions across the county as a whole. As signatories of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change we have demonstrated our commitment to tackling climate change - addressing both its causes and its impacts.

One way in which the council and all residents can work together to reduce the threat of climate change is by improving waste services. Household waste sent to landfill produces significant amounts of methane, which has a powerful global warming effect, and valuable recyclable resources are lost in the ground. Our strategy is to greatly reduce the amount of waste we bury in these sites. One way in which we can do this is by recycling more. The council has also embarked on ambitious plans to reduce landfill by sending non-recycled waste for energy production. By 2015, landfill could be reduced to about 25% of waste collected in Wiltshire, making us one of the lowest landfill authorities in the country.

Along with our focus on reducing Wiltshire's emissions and reducing waste, we also have to manage the effects of increasing temperatures and changing weather conditions. These are the unavoidable consequences of climate change. Recent flooding in Cokermonth showed how extreme weather can damage our lives, livelihoods and the infrastructure of an area. We must be prepared and will develop a plan to minimise the effects of such events and manage the aftermath.

As the countryside of Wiltshire changes through the growth and development of our economy and our communities, and the effects of climate change become more influential, looking after our natural wildlife habitats and the biodiversity they support becomes more difficult. It is vital that we work with landowners, farmers, communities and individuals to protect, monitor and restore

habitats to ensure they will be available for future generations to enjoy nature's contribution to the quality of their lives.

Roads

In large rural areas like Wiltshire, with widely dispersed towns and villages, a safe and effective road network is essential. Our county is joined together by a network of over 2,700 miles of public roads which are used by almost all our residents and feature highly in people's thinking. The most important feature of a road network is, of course, safety and this has always been our primary focus. Although the numbers of accidents resulting in fatalities or serious injuries has been falling consistently over the last decade, we will keep working closely with the Police and Highways Agency to ensure that trend continues.

The maintenance of our roads is something which our residents regularly consider needs improving. The overall trend for the roads in Wiltshire in recent years has been one of improvement, and our carriageway conditions compare favourably with many other counties (especially our B class roads and minor roads which are in better overall condition than other shire counties in the South West). We have recently reviewed our system for repairing dangerous potholes and improved the speed of our response. This has been a real challenge considering the additional damage to our carriageways sustained during the freezing conditions during the winters of 2009 and 2010.

We recognise the need to keep improving the standards of maintenance and cleanliness of the roads, and the need to go as far as we can in meeting the expectations of our residents. We also need to ensure that our communities have a say and can influence aspects of our road maintenance programmes so that people in Wiltshire are helping us identify the priorities on the road network.

Along with the safety and physical condition, the cleanliness of our road network is something we must continue to improve and maintain. The general impression residents and visitors have of the local area can be influenced greatly by seemingly simple things such as how clean and tidy a place looks. Relative to other parts of the country, Wiltshire is largely free of litter, however, we recognise that we must aspire to be one of the cleanest places in the country.

Communities

There are many things that influence people's quality of life and it has become clear in recent years that one of the most important is a sense of belonging, being part of a 'community'. People living in places which have a strong sense of community, a healthy community spirit, tend to enjoy a better quality of life and general well-being.

It is also clear that strong social networks with a range of voluntary groups and clubs taking an active role reduces the reliance upon public services. Communities are better placed to look after themselves without needing expensive intervention from public service organisations.

The strong military presence in Wiltshire is a major influence on life in the county and on the council and its partners. There are approximately 15,000 military personnel based in Wiltshire with a further 16,000 dependants. Overall, this amounts to over 6% of the population and has a direct impact on our local communities and on the infrastructure, services and economic activity in the county. We want that impact to continue to be valuable and positive.

There are changes to the existing personnel numbers and locations in Wiltshire including the development of the Super Garrison on Salisbury Plain and the closures of the UK Land Forces HQ in Wilton and RAF Lyneham. We will continue to work jointly with the military community through the Military Civilian Integration (MCI) Programme and other partners to ensure that such initiatives are managed successfully and result in positive outcomes for the county as a whole.

Communities having their say

Recognising that people have become disengaged from their communities and local democracy, in Wiltshire we have encouraged local residents to get involved with community issues through Area Partnerships and Area Boards. This has resulted in real benefits including an increase in the number of residents becoming engaged in voluntary activity and the provision of funding for local community projects. Wiltshire can be proud of the fact that 30% of its residents are regular volunteers against a national average of 23%.

Without doubt, this good work means that there are high levels of satisfaction with Wiltshire as a place to live. However, 70% of residents feel that they are unable to influence local decisions and there remains a general lack of trust and confidence in national and local government. We must rebuild people's confidence in public services by encouraging them to have a greater involvement in the decisions that affect them, influencing services in their local area. By being open and honest we can start to rebuild trust in democracy.

Ensuring that people have a voice in the decisions which affect their lives was at the heart of our move to a unitary council. The cornerstone has been the creation of 18 Community Area Boards across the county, which focus on issues affecting their respective local areas. Collectively, the council will have provided nearly £5.5m by 2012 for Area Boards to invest in projects and activities which improve life in the county. This work has been recognised nationally by the Audit Commission which awarded a 'green flag' to the council and its partners, for the innovative work in involving people in decisions that affect their local communities.

People and families

Wiltshire's population is set to increase by over 40,000 people by 2026. The total population increase of 9.2% will be almost entirely accounted for by our retired population.

As the proportion of older people in the community increases, so does the number of people requiring help and support, either at home or through residential care. In response to this challenge, the council is reviewing and transforming its adult social care services to promote independent living, well-being and choice. This will help people to stay independent in their communities and continue to use mainstream services and give them choice and control over any additional support services they may need. Implicit within this approach is support for those who act as carers for friends or family members, which whilst being valuable to those who benefit from it, also lessens the pressure on public services.

Other groups also benefit from an emphasis on independent living. For example, many adults with learning disabilities require residential care which takes them away from their families and communities. Where possible, we need to support people in these difficult circumstances whose preference may be to live at home.

Independent living can be achieved successfully if all public service providers work closely together. The council therefore needs to maximise its opportunities to work with its key partners such as the NHS, the Voluntary and Community sectors, and the business community, so that support is coordinated, streamlined and focused on meeting the needs of individuals.

Young people

Educational attainment amongst children and young people shows a mixed picture in Wiltshire. In 2009, overall secondary school GCSE results were good and above the England average, with a positive and improving trend over the last five years. However, performance for primary schools in combined English and Maths Level 4+, Key Stage 2 was below the England average with little change evident over the last five years.

Particular groups of children and young people find it more challenging to get the best out of life and achieve the same educational results as others. Children in care, with special educational

needs, in receipt of free school meals, with a disability often need more support to do well. "Narrowing the gap" between the outcomes for these children and other children is a key need.

In the community, the provision of activities for young people is seen as important an area in need of improvement.

The council – fit for the future

The unitary council must be fit for purpose and able to meet the challenges that face our communities.

The recent global financial crisis and high levels of national debt will result in pressures on public service budgets for the foreseeable future. Our grant from central government is one of the lowest in the country and as a result of the recession, our income from fees and charges has also dropped. We intend to keep council tax as low as possible and so we will need to use our resources as efficiently as possible if we are to deliver our priorities and continue to improve quality of life in Wiltshire.

Managing our resources

The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) anticipates resource requirements over the next four years. It forecasts changes and variation in the council's income and expenditure and helps us to plan for the future. It will be updated to take account of changing assumptions, risks and other uncertainties. These can range from new central government policies imposing additional responsibilities on the council to a prolonged recession leading to reduced income and added pressures on services. It is closely linked to the Corporate Plan and reflects how we will resource our priorities over the next four years.

The move to one council has already delivered £8.5m of efficiency savings in its first year and a further £5.8m is anticipated in 2010-11. Having become a single organisation, harmonising and transforming our services and the way we do things is our next challenge. We will produce a business plan that will set out the business the council is in and how it will operate in a more business like way. The plan will align to the MTFP and the Corporate Plan. It will be a visionary strategic plan for all our services that will drive our ambition to be the best local authority in the country. It will focus on further efficiencies, more effective ways of working in partnership, systems improvements and service performance improvements as well as our influence and standing within Wiltshire, the south west region and nationally.

We will measure our success based on our efficiency, performance, how we work with others and our customer and stakeholder satisfaction. The level of local people influencing the direction of our services and spend will also be a clear measure that we changed the way we do things.

We anticipate that we will deliver savings greater than originally estimated in our move to one council. The MTFP indicates that we will deliver savings and efficiencies of £50m by 2014 which will be reinvested to support our priorities.

We have also identified areas where we need to invest in order to save in the future. The focus will be on taking preventative measures which reduce longer term costs, for example, investing relatively small sums to enable elderly people to remain living independently at home rather than needing expensive long-term residential care. Additional investment will also be earmarked to invest in our priorities and will be identified in the MTFP, which demonstrates our commitment towards ensuring that our resources remain aligned to Wiltshire's needs.

The new council will be an efficient, effective and high performing organisation that is fit for purpose and in a position to deliver the priorities and the outcomes described in this plan. We will actively promote strong financial and risk management and maintain a balanced budget, with

sufficient reserves to ensure the financial stability of the council. We intend to achieve all this whilst delivering year on year reductions in the rise of council tax.

One council - one culture

The move to one council brought together five separate organisations with their own individual strengths and weaknesses, their own ways of working and of delivering their services, and their own values and behaviours. To successfully achieve our vision and goals, we are now developing a single culture for the new organisation.

We want to be an organisation that understands its customers and focuses on people's lives, not individual services. All staff and councillors will adopt a 'can-do' attitude in the way the council works and have a commitment to help the customer and community, to help solve a problem even if it is not part of their specific job.

We must approach our work with the enthusiasm and commitment necessary to inspire confidence in our customers that we have their best interests at heart. In short, when we say "everybody matters" we must mean it.

Achieving a cultural shift takes time, focus, energy and the drive of all leaders and managers to make it happen. We consider it important that we demonstrate our values by translating them into behaviours and actions.

The values and behaviours are:

- **Focusing on the customer** – put customers at the heart of what we do, listen to and involve them, be honest about what we can do, be an ambassador for the council.
- **Being inclusive and supporting others** – build trust, be available, be open and listen, allow others to express their views.
- **Creating clarity** – clear direction, focus on what's important and on actions that make a difference, communicate.
- **Leading through change** – provide a positive vision for the future, support and involve people, trust others to deliver.
- **Being decisive** – take ownership for decisions, take the initiative, create 'can-do' attitude.
- **Treating others with respect** – individuals matter and deserve respect, act consistently, be open fair and honest
- **Challenging the norm** – seek ways of doing things differently, encourage innovation, be receptive to new ideas.

Our priorities

Focus on our customers and improve access to services

Why is it a priority?

Our customers come first and foremost in our thinking and actions.

The demands and expectations of customers continue to rise with the requirement for better services, more choice and options, and easier access. We need to work harder to keep pace with these trends and rising expectations. Less than half of our residents are currently satisfied with our service delivery (47.5%). Although this is better than the national average of 43%, it remains a low figure and one which clearly needs improving.

Customer focus and access to council services formed one of the key elements in creating a new unitary council and we must deliver on those promises made. We still have much to do in transforming services that meet or exceed expectations, maximising choice in communication, capitalising on technology to make it work and adopting a *can do* approach at all times.

Key outcomes we will achieve

- Redesign the top 20 services, putting the customer at the centre of everything we do to deliver improved services. Measure customer satisfaction with these services and use this data to continuously improve them.
- Enable customers to access the council's top 20 services such as Housing Benefit, Planning, Adult Social Care etc. through scheduled appointments in their own home or business premises.
- Develop the website to be fully transactional for the top 20 services most requested by our customers.
- Through the website enable a customer post code input model to deliver all service information about that post code for the top 20 services.
- Deliver the Work Place transformation programme to include four refurbished hub buildings with state of the art customer access facilities by 2013.
- Ensure that customer telephone call connection rates of 95%+ are achieved every month in all facilities. Enable direct dial "golden numbers" for our top 20 services so that customers can contact service experts directly.
- Investigate the customer requirement for extended opening hours for services. Identify which services and implement revised times.

Work in partnership to support vulnerable individuals and families

Why is it a priority?

Growth in older people

The number of older people in Wiltshire is set to increase over the coming 16 years by 43%. As people age they often need more help and support to live the lives they want and their chances of developing dementia are significantly increased. We estimate that there are over 7,000 people currently living with dementia in Wiltshire, although approximately 2,000 have formal diagnoses.

Wiltshire Council currently helps approximately 5,000 carers per year by providing information and advice, as well as services such as respite care or by funding other organisations to help carers on the council's behalf. Nevertheless, we know that the council and NHS can work more closely to support carers.

Social care has to change across the country and this will involve the fairer distribution of council funding to people who need social care services; telling people who are entitled to support the value of their funding; and letting them choose how to use their funding to meet their needs. All people who need help and advice will receive it, whether they are responsible for funding their own care or not.

Disabled young people and living with disability

Between the ages of 14 and 25, young people usually have to make important decisions about their education, leaving home, and getting a job. These decisions and changes can be both exciting and challenging. For disabled young people it can be a confusing and complicated time, as they often receive support from a number of different agencies, including health, social care services and education. Planning should start well in advance of leaving school, so that the young person's needs and choices are fully explored.

Wiltshire currently spends around half of its learning disabilities budget on keeping 350 learning-disabled people in care homes. We want to help more people to live in the community where that is their wish. However, it is recognised that there will always be a need for care homes to meet the needs of some people.

Key outcomes we will achieve

Support for older people

- By 2014 we will help increase the opportunities for people to live independently in extra care settings.
- We will work together with the NHS to help older people avoid needing care too soon, and by 2012
 - reduce the amount of avoidable admissions to hospital on the grounds of falls by 10%
 - offer everyone discharged from hospital, who needs it, free support and help to regain their independence and necessary skills to live at home for at least 6 weeks
 - offer everyone discharged from hospital, who can benefit from it, free assistive technology for the first 6 weeks
 - offer specialist support and intermediate care services for people with dementia
 - offer joint early diagnosis and support clinics for people with dementia and their carers

Support for people who care for others

- By 2013 the council will support at least 2,500 more carers. In addition, we estimate that Wiltshire's carer support agencies will take 1000 *new* referrals per year between now and 2013.

Self-directed support

- By 2013 everyone in Wiltshire whom the council funds to live independently in the community will have a personal budget.

Support for learning-disabled adults

- By 2014 all learning-disabled who need adult social care services when they reach adulthood will have a transition plan in place from their 16th birthday.
- By 2013 70% of learning-disabled people of working age will live in the community. This will reduce the proportion of the learning disabilities budget spent keeping people in care homes to 40% (It was 70% in 2007).
- We will help find paid employment for 25 learning-disabled people per year between 2011 and 2013.

Local, open, honest decision making

Why is it a priority?

The council must have a positive relationship with local communities so it can be responsive to their needs and aspirations. It should provide opportunities for them to be involved in discussing and shaping decisions that affect their lives.

Over recent years, there has been a loss of trust and confidence in government generally. This can result in people being sceptical about the council and becoming disengaged from the democratic process, either not voting at local elections or not getting involved in any decision making affecting their local communities. In 2008, less than a third of residents felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area. Although this is higher than the national average it needs to be substantially improved.

Local area governance formed one of the key elements of the bid for a unitary council. It was recognised that we needed to strengthen community engagement in local decision making by creating Area Boards. These are now in place and the challenge is to generate greater citizen interest and engagement, and for public services to be organised so that they can respond effectively to community priorities and issues.

Key outcomes we will achieve

- By 2014, 50% of people within communities will feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area, including a greater number of such responses from people who are currently under-represented in the process. At present 30% of residents feel they can influence decisions.
- By 2012, the council will have invested £5.5 million in community led projects and initiatives, determined and prioritised by area boards.
- By 2014, the council will have increased year-on-year funding to the Area Boards who in turn will have increased their influence.

Increase opportunities to help young people achieve their potential

Why is it a priority?

The way in which children and young people grow up affects their whole outlook, wellbeing and future life chances. The council has an important role to play in helping all young people to attain their goals and needs to focus its energy in a number of areas where more needs to be done.

The quality of education young people receive is very important and it is recognised there is a need to narrow the educational attainment gap, between children of different backgrounds and between different schools. Children with special educational needs, in care, and in receipt of free school meals, from black and other minority ethnic groups often under-perform in examinations compared to other children. There are also wide variations between schools with some performing extremely well whilst others perform poorly.

Leisure facilities and activities for young people are seen as vital in making somewhere a good place to live. Activities are often cited as needing improvement in local surveys. This provision can help to dispel negative perceptions about young people, especially in respect of anti-social behaviour.

Protecting children from abuse or neglect and supporting parents, carers and families to keep children safe is very important. In some cases of neglect, harm or for other reasons children are either accommodated by the council in agreement with parent / carers or in some instances placed in council care through a court process. The outcomes and life chances for these children can be significantly worse than other children.

Disabled children and young people and their parents/carers want better information provided, improved communications between professionals, to have a real say in the services they receive, more opportunities to make friends out of school and join in activities and to have more short break provision and choice.

Key outcomes we will achieve

In schools

- We will close the attainment gap for pupils in schools through 1:1 tuition, increasing attendance, improving the quality of school facilities and extending the school 'good' and 'outstanding' ratings from Ofsted inspections. By 2011:
 - The achievement gap of those receiving free school meals and the rest of their peer group will be reduced to 24%
 - The gap for pupils who have special educational needs and their peer group be reduced to 51% at age 11 and 43% at age 16.
 - A third of those children in care taking GCSEs will get 5+ A*-C including English and maths
- By 2011 at least 80% of children will achieve Level 4 or above in both English and maths at Key Stage 2, up from 71% in 2009.

Those with disabilities

- We will improve the health, wellbeing and opportunities for children and young people with disabilities, with over 65% of parents of disabled children being satisfied with the level of service y received to support them and their children.

- We will improve access to services and provide more support and choice for families and ask them to shape, and influence future services ensuring a better planned transition into adult life.

Safeguarding children

- Keeping children safe from harm and neglect is everybody's concern. We will improve the safeguarding of children and the lives of children in the care of the council through appropriate referral and assessment, ensuring that every child who is looked after or has a child protection plan has an allocated social worker. We will minimise the chances of preventable child deaths, and ensure that bullying is reduced to below the national average.

Activities for young people

- We will support young people to find positive things to do in their spare time and increase their participation in activities from 73% in 2009 to 82% in 2011.
- We will maximise the opportunities for all to access a range of varied and interesting organised events and activities, using for example the additional activities provided through extended schools and volunteering initiatives. This should lead to reductions in anti-social behaviour.

Support the local economy

Why is it a priority?

A strong local economy is essential to providing local jobs, creating wealth and investment, and in helping to enhance people's general health and wellbeing. A prolonged recession can have many negative consequences in terms of levels of unemployment, debt, homelessness and health and can lead to an increasing dependency on state benefits and public services.

Wiltshire has a comparatively strong economy with one of the highest gross domestic household income levels in the southwest, and therefore has not been as adversely affected by the recent recession.

However, there are some areas of economic vulnerability which must be addressed. One way of assessing the economic well-being of an area is Gross Value Added (GVA) which measures the financial output or productivity of each worker. Wiltshire is below the average GVA for England and therefore issues such as the level of out-commuting, the amount of high-value employment, lower business growth and confidence levels, skill gaps in the workforce, and town centre decline must be addressed.

The council has a lead role to play in addressing these and other issues, implementing a range of initiatives which will enable new sustainable growth and investment, diversify our business base creating high skilled job opportunities, and in regenerating our town centres.

Key outcomes we will achieve

- We will support business start-ups, expansion and secure inward investment creating 6,000 new jobs and safeguarding 8,000 jobs in Wiltshire's economy by 2014.
- We will secure growth in higher skill/value employment sectors narrowing the gap in output per worker between Wiltshire and the England average (Wiltshire GVA £44,350 England average GVA £48,300). Target sectors will be:
 - Advanced manufacturing
 - Bio-medical
 - ICT
 - Environmental Technologies
 - Food & Drink
 - Tourism
 - Creative Industries
 - Financial/business Services
- We will retain and support the growth of Wiltshire's top employers through engagement and improving our understanding of their needs, working jointly to support their future skills development and investment.

Meet housing needs

Why is it a priority?

Everyone needs somewhere to live and having a good home is vital to people's health and wellbeing. But there is not enough affordable or high quality housing to meet current and future needs.

The cost of housing in Wiltshire is around 10% higher than average, and at the same time the earnings of people working in the county is below average. This makes affordability a big issue for many people. The recent recession has further worsened the situation with less new housing being built and more people experiencing unemployment and debt problems, which could lead to an increase in home repossessions and homelessness. There are about 10,100 people on the council's waiting list for an affordable home, and this is steadily increasing.

With people living longer, the need for housing support for the elderly will increase significantly over the coming years. However, it is not feasible or desirable to simply provide more and more residential care homes. Instead the challenge is provide alternatives and help people to stay independent and live in their own homes within communities, with the development of extra care housing, supported living accommodation, disabled facilities grants, and the use of telecare products through Careconnect.

The council has a major leading role to play in improving the provision of housing in Wiltshire. This includes planning where new housing development will occur through the Local Development Framework, directly managing 5,400 council homes, preventing homelessness, and securing and allocating affordable rented housing. It is also working with other partners such as housing associations and the Ministry of Defence to develop plans to provide housing for those identified as having a housing need.

The standard of council housing is good, but the way the service is managed is currently not providing good value for money. It is taking too long to re-let homes and many repairs are not completed on time. To address these concerns the council will be implementing an improvement plan.

Key outcomes we will achieve

- More vulnerable clients will be living independently at home for longer, with the number of Careconnect customers increasing from 3,500 in 2010 to 5,500 by 2014.
- Maximise the delivery of new affordable homes built in Wiltshire to help meet local needs and maximise the use of existing properties in the county. It will achieve 2,400 new affordable homes and return 2,160 empty homes to use between 2010-11 and 2013-14.
- To be one of the best 25% of councils in the Country for housing management services.

Improve our roads and road safety

Why is it a priority?

An effective road network is vital for Wiltshire, particularly in respect of local economic prosperity, giving access to services, and in linking rural and urban areas to the principal road network.

The condition of Wiltshire's carriageways has been improving in recent years and the standards compare favourably with other shire counties in the south west. However, there is long standing dissatisfaction with the standard of road maintenance and in local surveys, road repairs is the service identified as most in need of improvement and future investment. We recognise that the expectations of residents and our communities are not being met. This position is also reflected in the early experience of Area Boards where analysis of issue logs shows that over half of all the issues raised by residents are concerns about roads and other related matters (120 out of 237 issues raised in the first 6 months of their operation).

The way that we organise and deliver the maintenance of local roads and public open spaces is being changed so that we are able to better meet the needs and the expectations of the community.

While the overall number of road accidents in Wiltshire is low, the proportion of those accidents which result in people being killed or seriously injured remains a concern. The numbers have been declining over the last decade but we need to ensure that this trend continues.

Key outcomes we will achieve

- By 2012 we will reduce the average time to repair a pothole to no more than 10 days, with the most serious potholes being fixed within 24 hours. In 2008 the average time to repair a pothole was over 30 days.
- We will continue to improve on the high standards of cleanliness of our roads by achieving a performance target 7% higher than the National Benchmarks for litter and detritus. This means that by 2014, 96% of our roads will be free or predominantly free of litter and 86% of our roads will be free or predominantly free of detritus against the National Benchmarks of 89% and 79% respectively.
- By 2012 we will have built on our current engagement and communication with Area Boards such that they are able to influence planned maintenance priorities within the work programme for their Areas, whilst ensuring that safety considerations are not compromised.
- The number of road accident fatalities and serious injuries will be targeted for at least a 15% reduction by 2014, compared with the 3 year average up to 2008.

Reduce our environmental impact

Why is it a priority?

Awareness of, and concern about, environmental issues has been on the increase for many years. We now understand that aspects of human activity are causing irrevocable damage to the planet, the cost of which is now being felt not just in physical terms but also financial. The council has both ethical and legislative motives for reducing the impact of its activities on the environment, and has a responsibility to encourage and help all businesses, communities and individuals to do their bit.

A recent survey demonstrated that the majority of Wiltshire people are concerned about climate change and they want the council to take the lead on tackling it. This challenge has significant implications for council services and activities, planning future requirements and in addressing the consequences of changing weather patterns.

It is likely Wiltshire will experience more regular severe weather events in the future, including storms, flooding, snow, and heat waves. Measures will need to be put in place to manage and minimise the disruption these events will cause and ensure a quick recovery is made.

Successfully managing the county's waste remains a key challenge for the council. The cost of burying our non-recyclable waste in landfill sites is enormous, both in environmental and financial terms. Neither the environment nor the taxpayer can continue bearing the burden of this cost and therefore a key aim for the council is to dramatically reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Under increasing pressure from the changing climate and from the growth and development of our economy and communities, protecting and enhancing our wildlife habitats and the biodiversity they support will be essential if we are to ensure that they survive for future generations to enjoy.

Key outcomes we will achieve

- By 2014 we will have a range of pilot energy efficiency and renewable energy projects with at least one in each of Wiltshire's community areas – from micro-generation to home energy efficiency projects. These will be developed with communities with the aim of sharing and replicating best practice across the county and beyond.
- We will reduce our carbon emissions by 20% of our 2008/09 baseline by 2013/14. This is a key milestone for our overall target of a 50% reduction by 2020, improving on the National target for that date of 34%.
- By September 2010, we will produce a Local Climate Impacts Profile and undertake a comprehensive risk assessment to understand the consequences of unavoidable climate change across all community areas in Wiltshire. By April 2011, we will produce an Action Plan detailing work we will do to reduce the impacts of, and improve our response to, events such as extreme weather and flooding.
- Last year, 56% of our waste was sent to landfill. By 2014, we will have reduced that figure to 25% making Wiltshire one of the lowest landfill authorities in the country.
- We will aim to deliver over 50% of local sites with recognised value for biodiversity (e.g. County Wildlife Sites, Protected Road Verges and Regionally Important Geological Sites) in positive management by 31/03/2011, compared to the baseline of less than 40% in 31/03/2008, and will aim to maintain it at this level.

Achieve savings, be more efficient and ensure we deliver value for money

Why is it a priority?

Managing our resources effectively is essential if we are to cope with the future national public spending cuts.

Achieving savings through joining and transforming services was a key part of becoming a unitary council. The scale of savings required now is much higher, and the organisation must find new and innovative ways of working more efficiently if it is to deliver its priorities. Financial pressures come from a variety of sources, and include anticipated cuts in government grants (down 20% over five years), the recession and reduced income, carbon trading, landfill taxes, pay harmonisation, pensions, and escalating fuel and energy costs.

In addition to managing its resources well, the council also needs to earn the confidence and trust of its communities in order to support the development of its work and provide leadership to its communities. This can be achieved by demonstrating to residents that their council is a successful and high performing organisation and one which consistently achieves standards of service delivery well above the national average. Changing perceptions will be key to improving the relationship between the council and people, and in engaging them in future decision making on how and where their taxes are spent.

Key outcomes we will achieve

- We will drive out waste and increase efficiency across the organisation, whilst maintaining front line services. To achieve this we will:
 - Deliver savings of £50m over the period 2010-11 to 2013-14.
 - Deliver year-on-year reductions in the rise of council tax.
 - Release £50m from our asset portfolio to enable investment in front line service areas.
 - 75% of our services will be in the top two performance quartiles nationally by 2013-14.
 - Deliver 3% in cost reduction from procurement & commissioning each year (£9m p.a.)
 - Deliver 3% in cost reduction from service redesign (including lean) each year (£9m p.a.)