

WILTSHIRE

COUNCIL TOWN AND PARISH REPORT



2024/2025

Wiltshire Council



Cllr Richard Clewer
Leader and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development,
Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health and Wellbeing

The council's financial plans for 2024/25, set out a balanced budget that supports the delivery of business plan priorities, namely to:

- Empower people.
- Promote a more resilient society.
- Support our local economy.
- Ensure we have a more sustainable environment.

Despite the ongoing budget pressures arising from increasing demand for services and inflationary costs, the Council has been able to effectively manage these challenges providing us with a firm financial footing.

Key to our sustainable approach to delivering for our community, has been to invest in services, especially where tackles issues in a proactive way.

The council receives nearly 83% of its corporate funding from local taxes, Business Rates and Council Tax, so we take delivering on our promises to our community very seriously.

That is why I am proud, along with the other Cabinet members, to outline in this report how we are using the net £21m increase in expenditure to continue to provide vital services. This is a summary of activities, and if you want to read a full breakdown, I encourage you to read the update budget figures when they are published ahead of the Full Council debate.

One of the great strengths of Wiltshire is its strong sense of community, and it has been a pleasure to visit so many places across the county for regular 'Ask the Leader Events.' Hearing about the aspirations and challenges of the people of Wiltshire is important for us, and we look forward to helping our community continue to thrive in the future.

If you would like more information, please visit [Wiltshire Council's website](#).



Wiltshire Towns Programme

The Wiltshire Towns Programme continues with £1m per annum in 2024/25. It will help create and support vibrant town centres and deliver new strategies for regeneration. Plans are in place to continue the delivery of projects using the funding set aside in the earmarked reserve through to 2025/26. The service will deliver the £5.8m UK Shared Prosperity Fund between 2022- 2025 to support local business and increase the proportion of Wiltshire's wealth that is spent in the local economy. The service will also support the delivery of broadband across Wiltshire, supporting the Government's 'Project GIGABIT' and other broadband capital programme, to maximise broadband connectivity across Wiltshire.

We are allocating £3m for Economy & Regeneration, maintaining previous levels of investment in this area.



Cllr Laura Mayes
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Children's Social Care

We want to give Wiltshire's children the best start in life as it is fundamental in improving their long-term life chances and gives them the best opportunity to live full and healthy lives. Children and families are at the heart of everything we do at Wiltshire Council and is at the core of our Business Plan. We are ambitious for them and are determined to see all Wiltshire families reach their full potential.

We have worked relentlessly to improve our services and now deliver consistently Outstanding services that ensure the needs of families and children are met at the right time by the right people. This is reflected in the Ofsted inspection report from November 2023 that rated us Outstanding across the board.

Whilst many other local authorities have seen pressure on statutory services, the council's preventative family support approach and quality practice has reduced and delayed this. Inevitably demand and cost pressures still exist, including an increase in the number of care-experienced young people requiring our support for longer as well as numbers asylum seeking young people increasing.

We are allocating £71m Children's social care, a net increase of £7m once savings of £1.3m have been taken into account.

This will allow us to continue provide for families that need support, including investing in housing children closer to home, an initiative to reduces expensive out of county placements and reduces the risk of relationship breakdown.

Education & Skills

This area is facing significant legislative change and uncertainty, but we remain committed to improving education standards in Wiltshire. We have created the Wiltshire Learning Alliance to get schools to work together to help every child, and we continue to support our maintained schools with our School Improvement Service.

There has been a significant increase in requests for children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) to have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) so we are investing an extra £1.3m over three years to increase capacity and staff to meet the demand. Some children with a plan are entitled to school transport and so other key areas for investment include £3.408m for SEN transport demand as the number of specialist school places increases in line with need and £0.753m for inflation estimates. In February central government have allocated additional funds to local authorities which means we are able to allocate £3.8m to early help and prevention schemes which will assist our plans for SEN and inclusion over the next two years.

We are allocating £39m for Education and Skills, a net increase of £10m once savings of £0.7m have been taken into account.

£8m has been added to the Schools Maintenance budget from 2024/25 to 2027/28 to manage the backlog maintenance and mitigate further decline across schools in the county,



Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling

Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, FM, and Operational Assets

Public Health

Public Health underpins much of the Council's prevention agenda; building resilience (e.g: reducing substance use), health protection (from sexual health services to the control of communicable diseases), promoting healthy behaviour lifestyle choices and shaping domestic and work based social, economic, and environmental factors to improve health.

Evidence is key and the Community Area Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2024 (CAJSNA) (at [Wiltshire Intelligence](#)), launched in February presents a picture of Wiltshire's 18 community areas addressing 10 themes: Population, Economy, Housing, Health, Environment, Communities, Cost of Living, Safety, Older People & Children. This helps our Council; local area boards and partner organisations make informed decisions on the allocation and focus of their resources and provides insight to better challenge the health inequalities that exist within our communities.

Utilising the £5.4m Household Support Fund grant from the Department of Work and Pensions, we have helped the vulnerable and those most affected by the cost of living crisis, supporting 16,816 households with children, 2,314 with a disabled person, 1,620 with pensioners and 3,267 others including the 'hard to engage' such as the boating community. We have also provided: food vouchers for children in school holidays, essentials linked to energy and water, housing costs and advice, grants to 33 food banks and our Warm Places.

As part of the Business Plan priority to empower people and help them stay physically and mentally active, the council is enabling communities to have access to quality leisure, sports, and cultural opportunities, including at our libraries and leisure centres.

Libraries

Our Libraries support reading for pleasure to stretch imaginations and assist wellbeing. Free computer provision helps people to get online safely and learn new skills. Since April 2023, there have been over 1 million visits across our 30 public libraries and 3 mobiles, and over 1.5 million items have been borrowed. We continue to develop and innovate, working with partners to deliver our health, education, and support for the vulnerable priorities, offering a welcoming, warm space in our communities.

Leisure

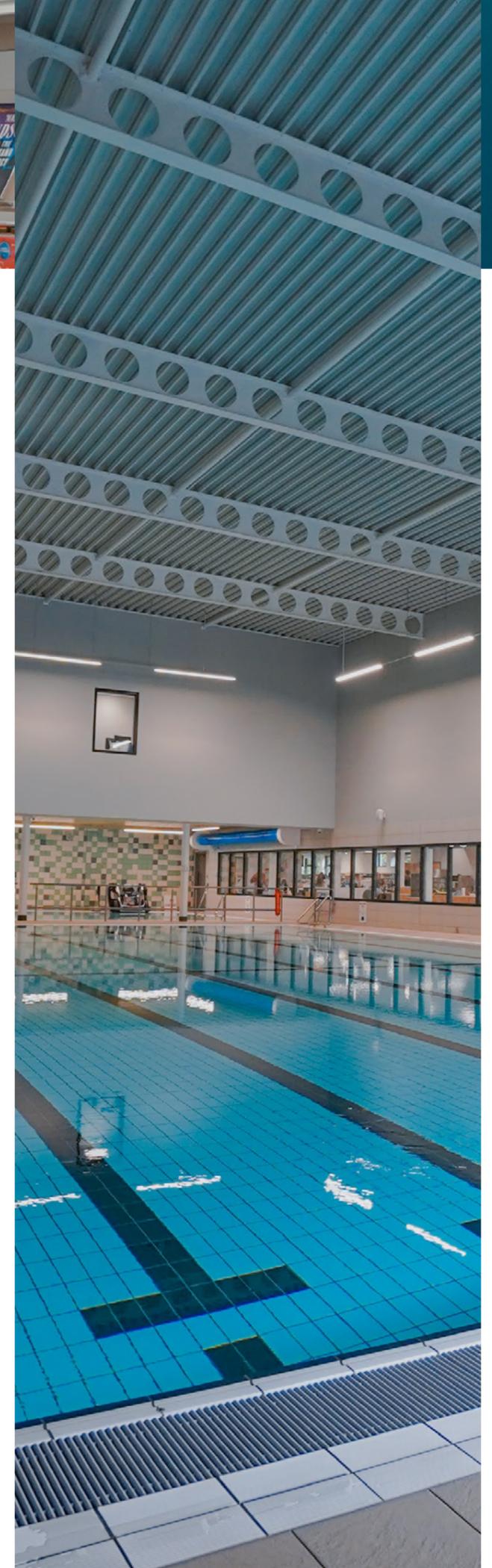
Our Leisure Centres support the health and wellbeing of residents with a wide range of activities at affordable prices. Since October 2021 we have directly operated all 20 facilities, with standardised membership and charging structures and universal access with discounts for those in receipt of certain benefits. Increasing memberships and efficiency measures enable us to maintain all our centres, invest in new and improved facilities and reduce our carbon footprint.

We work to increase engagement in sport, physical, arts and cultural activities particularly for those facing barriers. Our Sport and Physical Activity team delivers targeted activities enabling physical activity for older people, those with a disability or long-term health condition, and communities where there are significant health inequalities.

With colleagues from Education and Skills we continue to deliver the Government's Holiday Activity and Food programme in Wiltshire (FUEL), providing children eligible for benefits related Free School Meals with free access to enriching activities and a nutritious meal during the Easter, summer, and Christmas school holidays.

A change in VAT treatment and over achievement in Leisure Operations enables the advance of the saving proposal of £1.172m from 2025/26. With increasing activity and fee increases income is forecast to grow by £0.492m in 2024/25 improving our overall financial sustainability.

We are allocating £6m for Leisure Culture & Communities, once income and savings are taken into account.





Cllr Phil Alford

Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets, Asset Transfer

Housing Services.

The housing service has had a very busy year as the cost-of-living crisis has continued to bite. The team have assessed and placed over 1,500 new applicants into affordable homes this year alone. Furthermore, our Tenancy Sustainment Officers have helped tenants across the whole county to increase their own incomes and to manage their housing debt. This helps to secure these existing tenancies and prevent evictions. Not only has this work generated hundreds of thousands for Wiltshire residents in need but it has also saved the council an estimated £2 million on temporary housing costs. As a result, despite unprecedented pressure, very few placements have been made this year for Bed and Breakfast temporary accommodation.

Rough Sleeping

Our rough sleeper outreach team continue to work with some of our more vulnerable people to provide them support and help to get them into secure accommodation. Historically, Wiltshire has had a low number of rough sleepers, but we have seen that rise this year. During our most recent activation of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) we saw much higher numbers coming forward for support, but everyone was secured accommodation to help them with the cold winter temperatures. We have also agreed further contracts to provide our Sit Up service that works with Rough Sleepers to help them off the street and into secure accommodation with the associated health support.

Affordable housing delivery.

This year has been a difficult year for the delivery of affordable housing across our county. Wiltshire has about 32,000 affordable homes being managed by several Housing Associations and adding new affordable homes to this stock is essential as we continue to address housing need across the county. Delivering these homes is done through planning agreements with developers but as there has been a reduction in new housing being built across the county this has led to a decrease in new affordable homes. We are still on track to see our overall targets delivered in this planning cycle, but in this year and possibly the next two years, the number of new homes will be less.

Wiltshire Council Houses

We own and manage about 5,300 socially rented homes across Wiltshire and despite painful inflationary costs we are still expanding that offer. Our one thousand home build program continues with new developments being worked up and brought forward in a many of our market towns. In addition, many of these homes are being built to a zero-carbon standard reducing energy costs for tenants and carbon dioxide emissions for the environment. Furthermore, our retrofitting program continues to bring up the energy efficiency standard of our stock helping hundred more people cope with energy bills around Wiltshire.



Cllr Nick Botterill

Cabinet Member for Finance, Strategic Planning and Development Management

Transformation and Business Change

The maintenance of good financial sustainability and balanced budgets depends on transforming the way we do things as a council in order to meet constant rising demand. We have to ensure that the right skills and capacity are in place to support the delivery and management of change programmes across a wide range of the services performed by the Council. We have allocated one-off funding via the Transformation Reserve to enable this to happen, which is in turn anticipated to be replenished partly through the very savings delivered from the transformation projects. Other transformation projects may be funded by the flexible use of capital receipts. There will need to be major programmes of transformation work into the foreseeable future in order to address demand pressures as well as redesign/update services in areas such as Waste and the Depot Strategy.

Planning

We will be launching a transformation programme to make the Planning service more responsive and address service improvements. This programme should help with recruitment and retention of planning staff which in turn will help to reduce caseloads further and allow for more coverage of appeals. The service needs to complete the Local Plan Review and the Gypsies & Travellers Plan as quickly as possible and to make significant progress to put in place new Plans for Minerals & Waste. These Plans collectively will help deliver the needs of Wiltshire's growing communities from an economic, environmental, and social perspective. Additionally, we are allocating an additional £0.25m from the Business Plan Priority reserve to be spent on Planning Enforcement, increasing the capacity of the team who address complex and contentious cases. This will ensure the Council increases its presence and activity in this area.

We are allocating just under £3m for Planning Services.



Cllr Jane Davies

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion

There are a number of service areas within the Adult Social Care directorate designed to assist and maintain independence for individuals who experience physical, cognitive, and sensory difficulties, and to support their unpaid carers. As the highest percentage spend of our council budget, we are very careful in how we manage our spending but have experienced significant demographic and cost pressures. For 2024/25 the Cabinet is proposing taking the 2% levy, permitted by government, specifically for Adult Social Care. The levy will raise £6.7m and will help to fund, in part, the £16m of inflation and demand growth that has been built into the Adult Social Care budget. Overall, the increases will provide sufficient funding to enable the delivery of vital services.

As part of the Transforming Adult Social Care programme, Wiltshire Council is proactive in engaging with the residents of the county to ensure our services meet need. Continued investment is being made in preventative, enablement and reablement services that support people to stay in their own homes and take full part in their communities. The Shared Lives Wiltshire Scheme, which offers a fostering style model of care and support, continues to grow. The use of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) is a key priority for Adult Social Care which has the potential to revolutionise the way services may be delivered to individuals.

Moving from children's to adult services is one of the most critical times for anyone's life, this is even more important for young adults who have Special Education Needs and Disabilities. Adult Social Care works closely with Children's social care and education services to ensure that this move is a positive experience. The 18-25 Moving On Service was established in the summer of 2023 and is working closely with young adults, their families and carers.

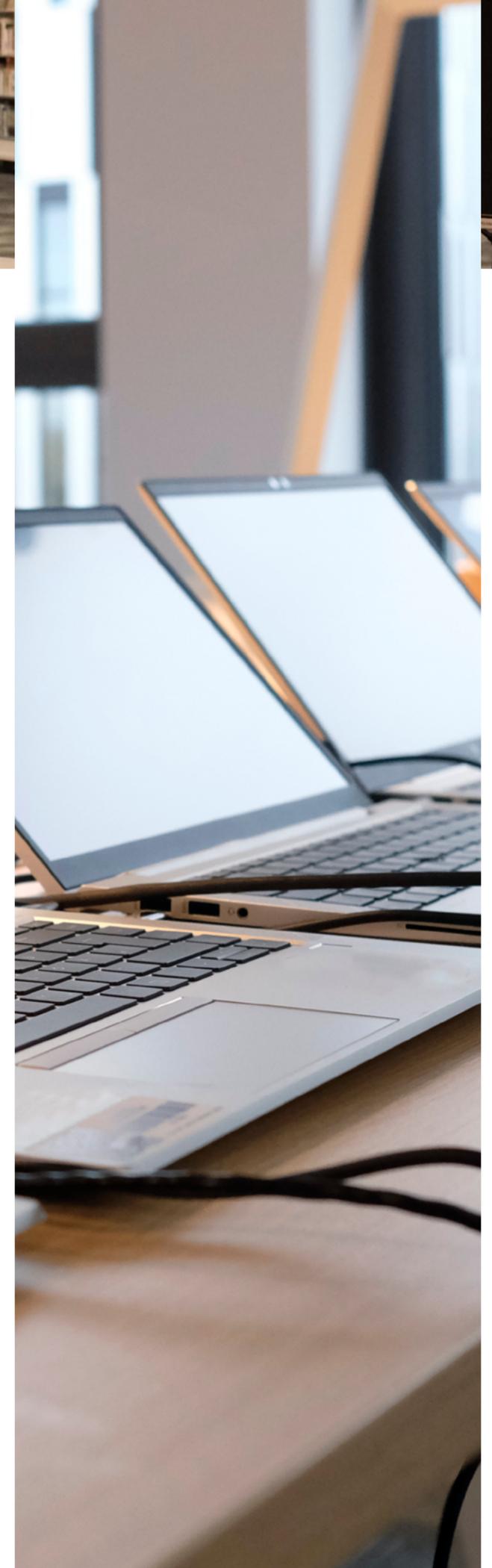
We are allocating a net budget of £179m for Adult Services, which includes over £9m of efficiency savings.



Cllr Ashley O'Neill

Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Licensing, Staffing, Communities and Area Boards

Following the successful completion of our most recent programme, we have allocated £35m over six years to ensure the security of our IT infrastructure, while delivering projects and transformation. Around £16m of the investment over the 5 years will be on core ICT infrastructure, security improvements and a rolling programme of replacement equipment for the whole council e.g. laptops, smartphones, and hybrid technology. Circa £15m of the investment will be the capitalisation of ICT staff directly involved in the delivery of schemes and projects, with the remaining spend, over £4m, being spent on upgrades or replacement of line of business applications e.g. revenues and benefits.





Cllr Nick Holder
Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Air Quality

Formal consultation on the council's Air Quality Action Plan has been completed with the final report due to Cabinet in March 2024. The plan demonstrates the council's commitment to improve air quality in Wiltshire. An additional £100K has also been allocated for 2024, to deliver a series of air quality monitors across Wiltshire, providing additional information on pollution levels particularly fine particulates. The project is in the scoping stage, but we will work with Town and Parish Councils on the locations for these sensors.

Climate

The annual update on our response to the climate emergency can be found at: [Climate emergency - latest progress - Wiltshire Council](#). The council is on track to be carbon neutral by 2030.

In 2024 two key projects will be to update of the Council Adaptation Plan, and to start work on a Local Area Energy Plan

Natural, Built and Historic Environment

There are numerous projects that are ongoing to enhance our natural environment.

- Completed purchase of 4ha of land at Yarnbrook for woodland (delivery of Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy).
- Awarded £50K from Coronation Living Heritage Fund for Community Orchards. More details to follow!
- £9.8m pump priming grant award for phosphorus mitigation in the Hampshire Avon catchment area to enable development.
- Identified almost 70 Ha of land for tree planting and 6,200m for hedgerow planting

- Local Nature Recovery Strategy is in development, currently engaging stakeholders and collecting data with community engagement events due in the next few months. Formal public consultation expected Feb – May 2025, with a target date to be signed off at Full Council in Autumn 2025.
- Requirements for biodiversity net gain min 10% - (Subject to Examination of the Local Plan this may rise to 20%) will take effect as follows:
 - Major developments, mandatory from mid Feb 2024
 - Small sites from April 2024
 - Nationally significant infrastructure projects from late Nov 2025
- Consulted on the first Wiltshire Council Design Guide (subject to council approval Feb 24 it will become a supplementary planning document).
- Wiltshire Council's Archaeology Service organises a project to clear vegetation from three of Wiltshire's scheduled ancient monuments.

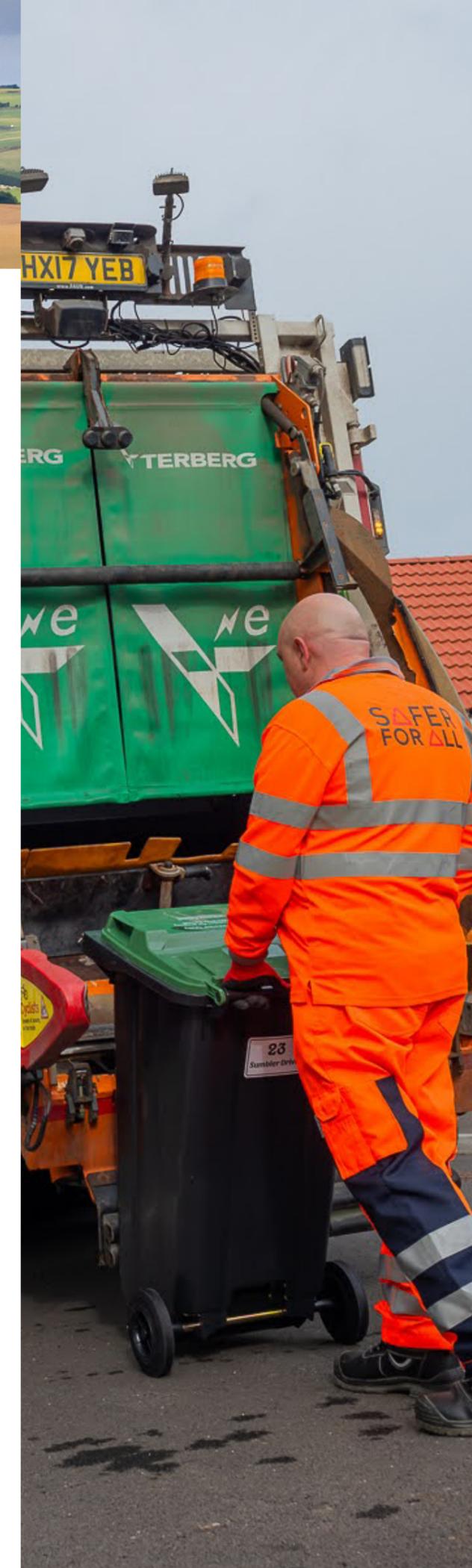
Waste Services

Recycling: Let's Sort It! campaign launched in 2023, aimed at increasing recycling and reducing waste to landfill. The campaign's success was demonstrated in the reduction of contamination from 18.4% (Dec 2022) to 8.6% (Nov 2023) and won the LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) award for Best Communications Campaign 2023.

The campaign will be used to support key messages in 2024 including:

- kerbside recycling of household battery and small rechargeable electrical items,
- increase sorting of mixed waste brought to the council's household recycling centres
- reducing food waste and promoting food waste digesters,
- promoting the paint reuse scheme at household recycling centres
- chargeable garden waste subscription renewals
- Relaunch of the household recycling centre van and trailer permitting scheme

We are allocating £50m for Environment, a net increase of £1m, once savings, income and inflationary pressures have been taken into account.





Cllr Caroline Thomas

Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding

Extreme heat, flooding and severe winter weather has caused significant damage to some of Wiltshire's roads in 2023, with the number of pothole reports increasing dramatically. However, the overall condition of Wiltshire's classified road network is similar to, or better than, the average road conditions in other south-west authorities, and is better than the national average.

As we continue to respond to the unprecedented number of extreme weather events, we are investing an additional £10m for highway maintenance, which together with increased Department for Transport (DfT) funding, will enable an extensive programme of road surfacing and treatment in 2024/25. We are also investing an additional £1m to support preventative drainage programmes and have confirmed an additional £1.5m revenue funding from 25/26 onwards to help with gully cleaning and potholes. So far in 2023/24, we have filled 11453 potholes across the county.

We have completed procurement for new parking pay and display machines, which will accept cash and card payments, across Wiltshire with delivery planned later this year.

During the cold weather significant flooding experienced this year, we have distributed the following to town and parish councils through our Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme (PEAS): 598 25kg salt bags, 130 gel sac boxes, 55 flood warden tabards, 50 snow warden tabards, 79 flood signs and 50 other signs.

Traffic signing

Many signing improvement schemes have been introduced across the county this year, with an additional £500,000 allocated in 2023/24 for sign replacement. This has funded comprehensive signing reviews on the A354, A362, A365 spa roundabout and A338 Bodenham bypass.

Major highways projects

We are supporting the Environment Agency with the Salisbury River Park project, as well as delivering walking, cycling and public realm improvements at Fisherton Street.

We have received £6.9m from DfT for safety improvements to the A3102 between M4 J16 and Melksham to introduce measures such as improving signage and road markings.

Work has started on the final phase of the A350 dualling at Chippenham, and we have committed funding to repair the road at Lyneham Banks.

Local Highway and Footway Improvement Groups (LHFIGs)

LHFIGs were introduced in April 2022 and their wider remit has led to a significant increase in the number of requests, with over 420 being received during the year. Updates on live projects and delivery programmes are presented at Area Board level through our series of Highways Matters events.

Passenger transport

We have been awarded £4.2m over two years from the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to enhance and support bus services across Wiltshire. We have also received a £1.2m Rural Mobility Fund grant for on-demand buses, which has been invested into the hugely successful Wiltshire Connect services in the Pewsey Vale and Marlborough areas. We are now looking to expand Wiltshire Connect in other areas of the county with a £1.1m UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant.

Active travel

We have made progress in developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) in Salisbury, Trowbridge, Devizes, Melksham and Calne and public realm improvements are currently taking place in Trowbridge Town Centre. Active Travel England funding of £183,110 has been received through its Capability and Ambition Fund, with a further £91,000 received in November, and £978,000 received through Active Travel Fund 4. These funds will be spent on cycling and walking infrastructure throughout the county.

Road safety

We have invested in road safety, by delivering Bikeability training to more than 1,200 children so far this year, with another 60 schools signed up so far to receive the cycling training. A further 12 schools are signed up to Scootability training, with 53 children trained so far, while 3,166 children have completed Walk Safe training so far this year, with 60 schools signed up to receive the training later this year.

Local electric vehicle charging

We have secured £4.5m to develop and deliver a strategy for EV (Electric Vehicle) charging infrastructure across Wiltshire.

Following the adoption of the Wiltshire Council Fleet Strategy 2023-2030, we have started electrifying our own vehicle fleet; 48 petrol/diesel cars and vans have been replaced with electric vehicles this year, and we have also replaced our 35 public electric vehicle charging units.

StreetScene

There has been significant extra funding for additional resources to tackle and reduce fly-tipping/littering with an increase in formal enforcement. The litter awareness campaign, Don't Mess with Wiltshire, launched this year, and the ongoing We're Targeting Fly-tippers (WTF) campaign has been nominated for Best Campaign at the Keep Britain Tidy Awards.

The £150,000 per year for three years that has been invested to tackle fly-tipping has led to an increase in successful prosecutions, a 30% reduction in the number of fly-tips, and national media coverage, including on Defenders UK and ITV Tonight.

We have also allocated £510,000 from the Business Plan Priority reserve for the next two years to fund litter enforcement activity, to go with £25,000 Chewing Gum Removal Grant we have received from Keep Britain Tidy.

We are allocating £43m for Highways & Transport, a net increase of just under £3m, once savings, income and inflationary pressures have been taken into account.

Wiltshire Council

The logo for Wiltshire Council, featuring a white, stylized wave or swoosh underneath the text.

This document was published by Wiltshire Council
For further information please visit the following website:
www.wiltshire.gov.uk