

Annual Town and Parish Councils Report

Baroness Jane Scott of Bybrook, OBE: Leader of Wiltshire Council

I have pleasure in presenting the Cabinet Reports for 2016-17. As ever, the delivery of local government services is a continuing challenge due to the reduction in our grant funding from the government and an increasing demand on our services. We have had a number of external reviews on our services which have all reported that our services are good and above; including the Military Civilian Integration Partnership Board. We are becoming recognised nationally as the leading county working with our military communities. We also had an Ofsted inspection and were praised for how well our children's services had advanced and improved. Clearly, one thing that Wiltshire does well is having the determination and ability to achieve positive results in the face of challenging circumstances; by doing things differently and working closely with our communities we have achieved great things and I'm sure that this will become clear as you read through the reports from my Cabinet.

Laura Mayes: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Wiltshire Council Children's Services Department continues to perform well.

Safeguarding

Ofsted held a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), which assessed the Council's ability to work with Police and Health to protect children from domestic abuse. Ofsted were very impressed with the strength of the partnership, and considered the work to protect all Wiltshire's children from domestic abuse to be very good.

Our Children in Care numbers remain steady at about 420. The Safeguarding department is working towards a new model of Child Protection called Children Services Integration. The aim of the new system is to meet children's needs early and to ensure a seamless process through the system.

Education

We are very proud that 92% of Wiltshire's children attend Good or Outstanding schools. 66% of children achieved A*-C in English and Maths GCSEs and apprenticeships have increased by nearly 20%. The re-designed Youth Service has reached over 15,000 children – more than more than ever before.

Fleur de Rhé-Philippe: Cabinet member for Economic Development, Skills and Strategic Transport

Building on work over the last four years, we have:

- Achieved and maintained unemployment rates significantly below both regional and national figures;
- Supported businesses, both large and small, to expand within the county: recent examples include Dyson and Bath ASU;
- Encouraged businesses to establish in Wiltshire, including a potential significant investment from Boeing - bringing 1,500 high quality jobs to the area. We have also started construction of the Porton Science Park;
- Worked with the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership to obtain government funding to modernise Wiltshire College campuses at Salisbury and Lacock;
- Met and exceeded targets for new apprenticeships within Wiltshire;

- Continued the regeneration of our town centres, notably achieving government funding to support development of the Maltings and Central Car Park in Salisbury;
- Worked with Highways England and other partners to progress a solution to the serious traffic congestion on the A303 at Stonehenge - with a reasonable chance of success!

Jonathon Seed: Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure, Libraries and Flooding

Housing

Housing services continue to improve in a time of great policy change in the national housing environment. The Housing and Planning Bill has completed its passage through Parliament, but its radical aims to leave housing only for those in social need and radical change to house building, extending the right to buy to all social housing tenants and encouragement for Councils, individuals and developers to build housing have been watered down. There are effects of policy being experienced through the 1% reduction in social housing rents and this is having a significant effect on our Housing Revenue Account and our ability to use this account to expand our housing stock and improve the stock that we have. The £40 million investment from the Housing Revenue Account in building homes on Council land continues apace with several sites already completed. We have also made significant advances in our dealings with homelessness in the County and we have a straightforward policy - that even one homeless person or rough sleeper is one too many. The effects of improving our workings with partners and the homeless have been seen in a steady reduction in our homeless numbers. We are also working hard with partners to remove the support and street drinking culture that can encourage continued rough sleeping; this has been particularly successful in Salisbury. These are exciting and innovative times in housing and our staff are rising magnificently to the challenge.

Leisure

Leisure continues to work under the Director of Public Health and we are working hard to reduce the financial burden of leisure on the Council. We have a first-rate staff, and newly promoted centre managers are now taking on budget aspects of their centres. The opening of the latest new health and wellbeing campuses in Tisbury have not been without difficulties, but we are working with locals to overcome these. We are also embracing new management proposals to enhance the business development of our campuses. In addition to increasing overall levels of physical activity in Wiltshire and focussing on the health of our residents through targeted programmes such as Active Health, we are also working hard to deliver sport as an enabler of both excellence and social change in the County. This includes our support to Wiltshire's future Olympians, as well as the Street Games and Get Wiltshire Walking programmes; both of which offer opportunities for volunteers. Work on the Cabinet decision to bring the management of the centres run by People for Places in house continues, but with a parallel work stream to advance a future and innovative structure for our leisure services being undertaken. It is important to note that we started our journey as a unitary authority in 2009 with 23 leisure centres, including 11 swimming pools. It is a real achievement to continue to offer these facilities to our residents eight years on and thus contribute to improvements in our County's health and wellbeing. We do this in a time of financial change and must constantly review the future of our service and centres and this includes an ongoing review of the cost of building maintenance of the centres.

Libraries

The library service continues to provide publicly available books and is the only source of large print books for those with limited sight. We are successfully changing the way our libraries are used and

this includes investment plans to turn several town libraries into community hubs. Almost all our libraries host events and activities that have proven to be extremely popular with local communities; these range from toddler groups, rhyme time, the summer reading challenge and older resident IT tablet groups. In Calne the introduction of an electronic opening system has proved to be a great success and has significantly expanded library usage. The library service continues to bear its part of the budget efficiencies that need to be found across the council, with a 25% reduction in its staff budget. The service is changing and adapting to local need and Wiltshire is proud that it still boasts 31 libraries; the number inherited when Wiltshire Council was formed in 2009. Four of these are new since 2009. The growing number of volunteers - now more than 850 - working with our valued staff has enabled the service to not only continue, but to thrive.

Flooding

Flooding is clearly weather dependent and rainfall over the past four years has been kinder to Wiltshire than in 2013. That means that we have been able to concentrate our drainage budget on schemes to prevent future flooding, as well as reorganising the way in which we deliver our flood alleviation programme. The drainage team has been restructured to reflect demands on its services. The additional Operational Flood Working Group in the City of Salisbury has proved to be a great success. We are now working even closer with our partners, and particularly the Environment Agency who regard Wiltshire Council as an exemplar local authority in flood working; both in its working with external partners and our ability to demonstrate joined up working on flooding with clear leadership

Toby Sturgis: Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Property and Waste

Planning Policy

The Cabinet has recommended Council should adopt the Chippenham Sites Allocation Policy following the Inspector's Report, which found the plan to be sound after modifications were made prior to the resumption of the examination.

The adoption of the above plan allowed the Housing Land Supply Calculation to be revised upwards. The revised figure means the Council now has sufficient sites to demonstrate five years of housing supply against their housing requirements, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This allows the Council to defend speculative developments that fail to meet the policies in our Local Plan.

The adoption of Neighbourhood Plans also provides evidence for plan led development and will provide defence against speculative development.

The adoption of affordable housing on small sites was thrown into confusion following a Written Ministerial Statement; raising the threshold for affordable housing in conflict with our own policy. This was subject to legal challenge by West Berks District Council and Reading Borough Council, resulting in Planning Inspectors making different decisions according to their interpretations of the judgement. This has now been clarified by the Planning Inspectorate, confirming decisions should be made in accordance with our Core Policy 43 in our Local Plan, where there is fresh evidence of need and we have five years of housing supply.

Development Control

There has been a large increase in the number of applications received and the percentage of applications determined within the agreed target has risen from 79% in the first quarter of 14/15 to 97% in the same quarter 16/17. The number of decisions overturned at appeal has fallen by 10%.

Waste

The amount of waste per household after recycling continues to fall and the forecast for this year is 560kgs compared with 595kgs 4 years ago. The percentage going to landfill continues to fall this year 20.58% compared with 26.7% 4 years ago. The amount of garden waste fly-tipping is 5% of all fly-tipping and this has fallen from 12.5% last year to 10.7% this year.

Having reviewed the HRC usage following the introduction of van and trailer permits last year the HRCs at Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury will now open an extra day and all sites will open an extra hour in the morning during the summer.

John Thomson: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Campuses, Area Boards and Broadband

Broadband

The Wiltshire online programme was designed to provide a fibre broadband service to those premises that commercial providers considered to be financially non-viable. Without Wiltshire Council's investment, approximately 40% of Wiltshire would not have access to superfast broadband. The approach is designed to deliver fibre broadband to the greatest number of premises for the budget available. To date over 83,000 homes and businesses have access to fibre broadband due to Wiltshire Council's 'Wiltshire Online' investment.

Contract 1 - update on progress:

Wiltshire Council has received the final claim from BT. The Wiltshire Online delivery team will now work with Broadband Delivery UK, Department of Culture Media and Sport (BDUK) on a robust contract closure and assurance process over the next 4 months.

Contract 2 – update on progress:

Contract 2 is progressing but at a slower pace than expected. As the build is entering more rural areas, the challenge of getting power to the new infrastructure is greater than ever before.

The GWB board acknowledge this is a challenging build, but feel that BT are failing to mitigate these not unexpected issues into their build plans. As a result, they have been falling behind on quarterly targets.

The GWB Board have written to the Managing Director of BT detailing our concerns and have also invited BT to meet with the board; for an additional board meeting regarding their lessons learnt report and future build profile, in order to help demonstrate how they will plan for the challenges of contract 2 build.

Gain share

There is a gain share clause in the contract that brings additional funds back into the contract investment pot, which allows us to extend our build footprint further.

Gain share is calculated on the rate of take-up of the service available via the infrastructure we deploy. To date take-up rates on Contract 1 have exceeded expectations and are currently over 30%.

This level of success has resulted in a gain share proposal from BT to the value of £2.8 million; which results in additional build serving 3500 new premises.

The Wiltshire Online delivery team are currently reviewing the proposal to ensure it adheres to State Aid principles, represents good value for money, serves premises not yet getting a good service and the rate of delivery is appropriate.

The Wiltshire Online team work are working with BDUK and hope to be able finish the review and make the announcement about the new deployment as soon as possible.

Ultrafast

Wiltshire secured £2 million from BDUK's South West Ultrafast fund. £1 million match funding has been secured from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP).

The Wiltshire Online delivery team are working very closely with Procurement, Legal, BDUK, and central government's National Competence Centre with regards the completion of a State Aid compliant and robust procurement exercise.

I hope to be able announce the successful bids in May 2017.

BDUK's main priority remains getting to the most premises as possible to achieve their UK wide ambitions of 95% superfast broadband coverage by the end of 2017.

Area Boards

We have continued to make significant progress working with local communities and area boards to devolve decision making and a range of local services. Last year the council agreed that the responsibility for the provision of youth activities would be decided and grant funded by area boards. 226 local projects have received funding support from the area boards over the last 10 months.

Based on responses from grant recipients, we estimate that over 15,000 young people have benefitted from this provision - compared to the 4,800 young people supported through the former local youth centres.

Despite budget pressures in 2016/17, the council has retained its commitment to provide the area boards with the resources they need to strengthen communities across Wiltshire. Over £1 million was devolved to the area boards last year for local projects. The funding has supported 286 local community schemes and projects over the last 10 months and this levered £3 million of investment and match funding. Currently, for every £1 awarded by the area boards through its community grants scheme, £4.60 is invested benefitting local communities.

Area Board funding for 2017/18

Area Board capital	£800,000
Youth revenue	£350,000
Health and wellbeing funding	£121,600
Older peoples' champions expenses	£18,000
CATG capital	£250,000

Plus – pavement/street scene capital	£150,000
Total	£1,689,600

Health and Wellbeing Centres (formerly campuses)

The council has completed three health and wellbeing centres (campuses) in Corsham, Salisbury and Tisbury.

In Corsham the centre has attracted a large number of new users; particularly of the fitness suite which has seen an increase of 48% and the library by 20%. The centre will also be home to the local health clinic in the next few weeks.

Five Rivers Health and Wellbeing Centre in Salisbury opened last year and hosts the newly merged Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service, as well as Citizens Advice Wiltshire and the learning and disabilities service. The new centre has more than 2,500 visitors every day and has seen the fitness suite usage increase by 24%.

The Nadder Centre in Tisbury opened this summer providing leisure facilities, library, business start-up units, a pre-school, children's centre and community space. The new fitness suite has seen membership increase by 157% and the library usage has increased by 2,300%.

A new 3G all weather pitch and new toucan road crossing at Beversbrook in Calne officially opened in October last year. The new pitch, which will be managed by the town council had seen a huge uptake in usage at the site.

Calne Leisure Centre transferred back to the council from the Calne Leisure Centre Trust last year. Discussions are taking place to look at occupancy and options for centre.

In Cricklade, discussions are taking place with the town council to look at options for the future sustainability of the leisure centre.

The new state of the art football and rugby facilities (Oakfields) opened at Woolmore Farm in Melksham. This £7.4 million investment provides a new stadium and 18 pitches.

Work is also underway to provide a new skate park, cricket pavilion and to improve the Market Place; which will be the entrance to the new health and wellbeing centre on the Melksham House site. These new facilities and works will be complete this summer (2017).

A contract has been awarded to deliver the new health and wellbeing centre in Pewsey, which will provide leisure and community facilities by the summer 2018.

Front of House and client management arrangements

The current front of house arrangements in all three campuses are provided by leisure staff. The focus is predominantly leisure for leisure customers. The front desk is at times shared to provide front of house CAW in Five Rivers and the police in Springfield, Corsham.

Whilst this arrangement is adequate for a leisure service, it falls short for an all-round client management role reflecting the diverse occupancy in the three centres, which will increase as more space is utilised to generate income and the offer to local communities.

New front of house arrangements will be implemented to ensure all service providers, partners, businesses and community groups using the health and wellbeing centres have a full services and key point of contact.

The client manager will ensure that the centres are fully utilised and sustainable in the future.

Community Hubs

New Community Hubs will offer improved facilities and a range of services, as well as space for the benefit of the local community to use for events, gatherings and meetings.

The first hubs to open were Calne (September 2016) and Malmesbury (March 2017).

The library building in Calne was refurbished to make better use of space and create a focal point and vibrant place. The hub became home to the Calne Community Hub; a group of local volunteers that provide information and support to those who are most vulnerable in the community. The refurbishment included flexible, movable shelving to enable larger meetings and events to be held in the library area. A state of the art automated card access system was also installed to allow access to the new hub and its facilities outside of library opening hours. A new bookable meeting room, for up to 16 people, and a smaller breakout room for 1 to 1 meetings, was also provided.

In October 2016, Citizens Advice Wiltshire also relocated into the hub, providing its services and advice on Monday and Friday mornings. Visitor figures increased by 11.2% over 7 months (compared with the previous year). This is set against a national trend of a decline in library visitor numbers.

The relocation of the Community Hub, combined with the implementation of the card access system, has resulted in library customers, community groups and visitors to the hub being able to access the building and all its services and facilities on Wednesdays - a day when the library was previously closed – and, outside the opening hours of the library including from 8am on weekdays and 9am on Saturdays and available for evenings as bookable space. This has resulted in a 37.5% increase in the opening hours.

Thirty nine diverse community groups and organisations now use the building including, Dementia Action Alliance, Open Minds mental health group, Spectrum (Autism) Support Group, Calne Job Club, Wiltshire Addiction Support Group and Calne Men's Shed. The hub is also the locality for the council's community engagement manager, health trainers and the Registrar, and hosts many meetings; such as the Health & Wellbeing Steering Group, Local Youth Network and Older People Carers Voices.

Having access and flexible shelving in the library area has enabled the space to be used for larger meetings and events. The community area board meetings are now held in the building, the Our Community Matters event and a theatre performance of Romeo and Juliet also took place in this space.

The former youth centre in Malmesbury has been refurbished to create new, bright, accessible meeting space for the community. The centre is run by Friends of the Riverside; a locally based trust and group of volunteers who are making sure the centre is fully utilised and viable.

Work is underway to create further hubs in the library buildings in Devizes; which will incorporate the customer services currently provided in Snuff Street. In Royal Wootton Bassett the library will be refurbished in partnership with Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council; to incorporate meeting space for the community and the town council.

A feasibility study looking at options for refurbishment and improvements at Westbury Library, to provide a community hub is currently underway. Based on the study, it is planned to create a hub model for the local community.

Working with the MoD, options for improvements at Tidworth Library are also being considered.

Dick Tonge: Cabinet Member for Finance

It's a bit boring to say this yet again, but once again the year has been dominated by the need to make savings. This is due to the combination of a declining government grant, as well as an increased demand for services for vulnerable adults and children. This led to a requirement for savings of £25 million in 2016-17. This has been achieved, owing in no small part to heroic efforts by council officers. In parallel, investments have been made in the economy to create jobs and apprenticeships and to increase the skills that make Wiltshire an attractive place for employers to invest in.

As widely reported in the press, care for vulnerable residents has been a severe financial pressure in past years and will continue in the future; as medical treatment improves and leads to longevity. This is good for us all as individuals, but this does create greater demand on social services with an associated increase in costs. This not only affects the Council, but also the NHS, as evidenced in the increases in their budgets year on year. It should be noted that the NHS get more cash when they are in trouble, whereas the Council has to balance its books each and every year. Vulnerable residents include: children in care, severely disabled children and adults, residents with mental health problems, adults with learning difficulties and elderly residents living at home or in care. Investment has been made in all of these areas to improve efficiency, as well as to improve the quality of life of those affected, but the demand pressures will continue. Additionally, the investment made in Health and Wellbeing Centres is based on the fact that if residents lead healthier lives they will need less care.

2017-18 will be no different with the need to save another £25 million. Some of the savings will be controversial and will result in adverse publicity, but this is rarely accompanied by suggestions of where alternative savings might be achieved. Most residents realise that these huge savings are needed and the reasons why; but pressure groups never want the savings to be made in their area of interest.

Savings have been, and will be made, by reconfiguring services to drive out costs - without changing the service that is being provided; in other words doing things differently. There has been some inevitable resistance to change by some users, but looking ahead the pace will accelerate and will have to be applied to many more services. Part of the plan is to provide more digitally; this is part of the rationale for the Council's huge investment in broadband.

We just can't stand still.

The Council has agreed to increase Council Tax by 1.99% in 2017-18, as it is becoming more and more difficult to squeeze savings out of the budget. In addition, the Government has recognised the pressure of social care and is now allowing Councils with this responsibility to have a Social Care Levy of 3%, which will be ring-fenced for that purpose alone; it can't be squirreled away for other purposes. This additional income will offset some, but not all, of the demand pressures - one of which is the introduction of the National Living Wage.

On a positive note, the collection of Council Tax is as expected. The fact that collection is in good shape reflects the strong financial and economic success of Wiltshire. We worked with government

and successfully negotiated a four year settlement that gives the Council some financial stability and will allow us to plan ahead; knowing what grants we will receive rather than living from year to year.

In summary, we have to change the way we deliver services, given the financial reality in which we live, and strive to look at everything we do to reduce the costs. We have to ensure that every penny you give the Council is spent wisely. The harsh fact is that we have to balance our books each and every year; we are not permitted to borrow to cover our costs. How we wish governments and the NHS had the same restriction, it might then lead to less pressure on us!!

Stuart Wheeler: Cabinet Member for Hubs, Heritage and Arts, Governance and Support Services:

We are very pleased that the biannual staff survey showed high levels of commitment and enthusiasm across all areas. Concerns were expressed regarding ongoing staff development and training; which have been addressed by reducing suggested economies in training programmes.

A large programme of parish and town boundary reviews was carried out by a small but focussed and dedicated team, involving a major consultation effort across the county; which culminated in a major presentation to Full Council - who are the final decision making body.

Despite the difficult economic circumstances, support continued to be given to the major arts bodies in the county; including support together with the Arts Council, which would hopefully lead to a streamlined and coordinated arts offer in Salisbury.

Financial support was given allowing the county museums to acquire a resource for storing archaeological items off site, which will let them better use their existing buildings.

Philip Whitehead: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

We have maintained our higher level of investment in Wiltshire's roads; spending £21 million per year on major maintenance and resurfacing 250 km of the county's roads. This is double the amount of grant received from government. This has resulted in a drop of over £25 million in our level of backlog and is starting to be evidenced by the amount of good surface on Wiltshire roads. We still have some way to go to reduce the historic backlog, but there has been a significant improvement since we increased spending 3 years ago.

Last year we terminated the Term Maintenance contract and started managing our contractors for road maintenance, grass cutting and streetscene operations directly. This has proved to be a great success and we have continued to benefit from the extremely favourable rates. Ringway were appointed as the new Term Maintenance Contractor and October last year saw the return of the Parish Stewards to all areas in Wiltshire. This direct service which is controlled by Town and Parish Councils has once again proved to be very popular.

In conjunction with realigning supply chain, the department has been restructured to provide a better service to the customer. Following the Peer Review of February 2016, a comprehensive action plan aimed at improving performance and value for money has been implemented. The service has been rated at the maximum level of performance by the Department of Transport and has been rewarded by receiving £1.4 million incentive funding.

The 'MyWiltshire App' has been further developed to assist residents with reporting their issues. We continue to look at innovative ideas using cutting edge technologies such as the Pothole Spotter project, car parking Apps, and MyWiltshire portlets.

Our strategic investment in the A350 continues with a further £7.1 million to be invested this summer on both the M4 roundabout at junction 17 and further duelling of the A350 around Chippenham. Improving this key north-south route reduces rat-running through many of our Wiltshire villages and better links the south coast ports to the M4.

We completed our comprehensive review of subsidised bus services and are now implementing the strategy that should ensure that 97% of journeys in Wiltshire are protected. Unlike the vast majority of other authorities, we have maintained our subsidy support for 50% of all bus services in Wiltshire; maintaining a sustainable service for the foreseeable future. We still have considerable pressure on bus services in Wiltshire, with commercial companies continuing to withdraw services and the adage, “use them or lose them” still applies.

Jerry Wickham: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection

Budget

- From 2012/13 to 2016/17 the adult social care budget has grown £13 million to £130 million at a time when the overall Council budget has reduced and many other authorities have reduced their care budgets;
- The Council increased the social care levy from 2% to 3% for 2017/18 following guidance from central government;
- Under plans announced in the Budget in spring 2017, the Council will receive additional funds over three years totalling nearly £13m.

Care Act 2014

The Council has to work to the statutory requirements in this wide ranging and powerful act. This includes assessing and meeting eligible needs.

We have a policy where we help vulnerable people to live their lives comfortably and supporting independence and where possible in their own homes

Adult Social Care

This covers the provision of care for our older population; which the Council is required to look after under the Care Act. In addition, the Council also covers Mental Health and Learning and Disability provisions. In excess of 13,200 people received support of some kind from Wiltshire Council’s Adult Care Services in the first three quarters of 2016/17.

Help to Live at Home (HTLAH)

The Council has a well-regarded scheme in which people are encouraged to live in their own homes and support is provided if required. The aim is to prevent our older population developing a condition which becomes a crisis, resulting in their admission to an acute hospital. Wiltshire Council was featured on the Radio 4 PM programme and was held to have an innovative approach to dealing with care in the community and in people’s homes.

To support this, the UK Homecare Association has produced data for all local authorities across Great Britain and Wiltshire pays the third highest. The association identified that a care provider company needs a minimum of £16.70 paid, whereas many councils are below this and Wiltshire pays £19.10.

The council does not operate the often reported 15-minute visit regime and instead works on an outcome based approach and care workers are paid to travel between clients.

Even in recognition of this, the county has high employment levels and consequently providers still encounter difficulties in recruiting staff, especially in the south of the county.

This nevertheless demonstrates our commitment to the vulnerable in the county.

Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)

This plan was initially identified as being very much an NHS plan. The STP includes the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Wiltshire, Swindon and BANES, Wiltshire Council, BANES Council and Swindon Council, AWP and the acute hospitals RUH Bath, GWH Swindon and SFT Salisbury. The plan has only recently been published and looks to address the health needs across this area moving forward, to ensure the services meet the needs of communities and addresses a potential funding gap by 2020.

Delayed Transfer of Care (DTOC) {Bed blocking}

The Council has a responsibility to provide social care to elderly or vulnerable persons in hospital who are fit to be discharged. The recent media interest has focussed on councils being unable to find appropriate care packages and causing blockages in hospitals. Wiltshire Council's performance has in the past needed improvement but has improved over the last three months. Very recent DTOC levels post-Christmas 2016/17 have shown a deterioration in delays due to health issues and therefore, the responsibility of the NHS rather than the council. Despite this, there is constant work and cooperation between health and social care colleagues to maintain the flow in the acute hospitals.