

WILTSHIRE

COUNCIL TOWN AND PARISH REPORT



2025/2026

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 2025/26 set out a balanced budget that ensures funding for vital services and supports the delivery of business plan priorities, namely to:

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

Despite the ongoing budget pressures, we have agreed a balanced budget that does not draw down from reserves, and has not increased tax unnecessarily.

A degree of uncertainty remains as regards to government funding, but budget gaps are not as significant as has been seen in previous years and significant steps are already being taken to address the pressures and identify changes required in service delivery to ensure the council remains financially sound.

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 82% 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 £37m increase in expenditure to continue to provide vital services. This is a summary of activities, and if you would like more information, please visit [Wiltshire Council's Website](#)



The service will receive a further year of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2025/26 at £1.8m. The capital allocation is substantially reduced and a revised Investment Plan for spend will come to Cabinet in February 2025. To date, the funding has been used to support start-up businesses and rural hubs, support businesses to grow, as well as to transition to Net Zero, reduce Fuel Poverty, support people with mental health and to transition to employment, and to invest in the training equipment and facilities necessary to train the next generation of green skills. The service continues to support the delivery of broadband across Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Towns Programme

The Wiltshire Towns four-year funding programme will be coming to an end, with some funding remaining from that investment and has been set aside in a reserve and the Wiltshire Towns Programme will draw down the remaining earmarked reserve for 2025/26 to continue its work.

The fund has supported 61 new businesses to open on the high street, supported events across Wiltshire and supported strategies for regeneration in Chippenham and Westbury. This includes the new Wiltshire Marque scheme which has created a directory to shine a light on Wiltshire's fabulous food and drink producers. The Trowbridge Investment Framework is in development, and there is further work due to commence for additional towns.

We are allocating £2m for Economy & Regeneration.



Cllr Laura Mayes

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Service, Education and Skills

Children's Social Care

Performance continues to be strong following the Ofsted inspection in September 2023 which recognised the impact that significant investment into prevention and new initiatives is having on positive outcomes for children and young people with a resulting overall Outstanding grading.

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 of asylum seeking young people increasing. The funding councils receive from central government does not cover the full cost of unaccompanied young people's care given the higher levels of inflation.

We continue to develop innovative approaches to support, including the PAUSE programme, Dad's Matter Too, and Transitional Safeguarding; and we were really proud to see Canons House, rated Good by Ofsted in November 2023. This facility provides overnight short break care for up to 34 children and young people with profound and multiple difficulties and complex health and care needs, ensuring that these children and young people can remain at home with their families and preventing family breakdown that may otherwise have resulted in entry to the care system.

We are allocating £75m Children's social care, a net increase of £4.4m once savings of £2.4m have been taken into account.

Education & Skills

This area continues to face significant legislative change and changes to the way academisation is viewed. The government's new Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams will sit within a new framework of support and intervention. This provides new opportunities for local authority school improvement teams to be part of the targeted support offer within the RISE model. Selected statutory duties remain for all schools with additional duties for maintained schools. As a result, services continue to require constant review to reflect changes in demand.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill was debated in Parliament on 8 January 2025 and passed its second reading. Stronger powers for local authorities are anticipated to make sure children are getting the right education, along with requirements for a register of children not in school, to avoid children vanishing from education and to strengthen safeguarding.

The SEN & Inclusion transformation programme continues to address the demand for statutory SEN services, and we continue to work with the government on the Safety Valve agreement, and locally to address school transport demand.

It is for this reason that the continued investment in statutory SEN is required in the management, SEN and educational psychology areas with a total £0.416m included for the 2025/26 financial year. The outcome of the recent joint inspection from Ofsted and the CQC was extremely pleasing but we are committed to further improvement and this investment alongside any existing reserves will ensure improvements are resourced.



Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling
Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure and Libraries

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. Much of this work is funded from the government's Public Health Grant.

In 2025/26 there are also the following grants to support the services provided by Public Health. The smokefree grant for £0.553m is allocated towards enhancing Wiltshire's smoking cessation offer. This funding supports the government's commitment to create a smokefree generation, alongside the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant of £1.078m, which will be spent in accordance with Central government stipulations, is an increase to the £0.865m received in 2024/25. The Drug and Alcohol Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant of £1.215m (which remains indicative until Treasury approval) and will be spent in accordance with the grants terms and conditions. This is a consolidation of the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant, the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant and the Inpatient Detoxification grant received in 2024/25.

Libraries

£0.170m additional funding has been built into the libraries budget to support staffing cover and to enable book purchasing to ensure stock remains up to date and relevant to the needs of library service customers. The 2025-2030 Library Strategy has been approved and will ensure that the service remains innovative, with efficient use of the allocated budget.

Leisure

Our Leisure Centres support the health and wellbeing of residents with a wide range of activities at affordable prices. With investment in new equipment and the resulting increasing memberships, income is forecast to continue to grow.

We were particularly proud to announce detailed plans for the new Trowbridge Leisure Centre which will demonstrate our commitment to remove the physical and financial barriers, and to improve access for all, benefiting the health and wellbeing of the community.

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.

We are allocating £4m for Leisure, Culture & Communities



Cllr Nick Botterill
Cabinet Member for Finance, Strategic Planning and Development Management

Transformation and Business Change

Wiltshire Council's finances are currently stable. However to maintain this position there is a constant need to update and transform everything we do and thereby improve our inherent productivity.

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.

The big challenge and potential opportunity which is now emerging is that of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This is, however, not an area that we should just jump straight into without any thought. Considerable work will need to be done over the coming year to ascertain the tangible benefits from the adoption of AI and the sectors where its use will be most relevant.

Planning

The service has made continued progress with the Local Plan which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent inspection at the end of 2024.

The service continues to respond to a changing and very challenging legislative environment, including the new government's substantial increase in the targets for new housing. The £0.250m allocated in 2024/25 towards additional Planning Enforcement will be allocated again in 2025/26. This will allow the team to address complex and contentious cases and ensure that the Council increases its presence and activity in this area.

Recruitment campaigns have meant that far fewer planning posts now remain vacant than in the past but the employment market still remains challenging in a number of competencies.

We are allocating £2.93m for Planning Services (+4.7% on last year).



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 people 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 we continue to experience significant demographic and cost pressures. For 2025/26 the Cabinet proposed taking the 2% levy, permitted by government, specifically for Adult Social Care. The levy will raise £7m and will help to fund, in part, the £20m 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.

The Council continues to take an innovative and preventative approach to service delivery, and we were thrilled to get a Good rating from the recent CQC inspection of Adult Services with the report acknowledging that our staff go 'above and beyond' to support people in our community. We recognise that there is still more work to do, and will continue to support our Transformation Programme including better use of technology.

Additionally, capital investment has enabled the purchase of a number of properties that are being used for supported living. This allows individuals with care and support needs to have a home of their own while receiving person centred support rather than living in more traditional care home settings.

Ensuring that young adults are supported to move from children's to adult's services is vital to them being able to live the lives they chose. The transitions service works with people aged 18-25 to ensure that this happens. It will work closely to bridge the gap between children's and adult's services and will work in partnership with SEND, children's social care, adult's social care as well as voluntary and community sector services

We are allocating a net budget of £194m for Adult Services, which includes over £8m of efficiency savings.



Cllr Phil Alford
Cabinet Member for Housing

The £10m Housing Acquisition fund that was set aside by the Cabinet in July 2023 will leverage up to £40m for investment to deliver homes for a range of services. This will support savings in areas such as Adults and Children's Social Care as well as providing much needed homes. An example of the use of this fund is the investment of £10.560m to provide housing for 68 care experienced and asylum seeking young people as well as £1.6m providing four solo children's homes in Wiltshire to support our young people.

Our council house build programme will see millions invested in building and acquiring new energy efficient council homes. In our ambitious 1000 house build programme, 174 homes have been delivered so far and another 532 are in the pipeline. We are also making a substantial investment to improve existing council owned homes to ensure they achieve a minimum energy performance rating of B.

We are also on target to complete the installation of retrofit measures to 86 private homes by the end of March 2025. This programme of works has been funded via the Home Upgrade Grant (HUGS2) from government and will provide energy efficiency measures for low income, off-grid homes and help with mitigating fuel poverty.





Cllr Nick Holder

Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Flooding

We are determined to improve the quality of the road network across the whole of the county but this is a not a quick fix. We added an extra £10M to the budget in 24/25 and have committed to the same amount in the budget for 25/26. We continue to work with the local Area Boards to ensure their priorities are included in the future maintenance programme.

The Fleet Strategy has led to vehicle modernisation and travel savings of £0.114m in the 2025/26 budget along with £0.080m for various maintenance and operational reviews to seek efficiencies. Energy efficiencies continue to be seen in street lighting and a reduction in the energy budget of £0.250m has been built into the 2025/26 budget to reflect this. Additional funding of £1m for Highways preventative flood maintenance including surface repairs and drainage works was added to the revenue budget in 2024/25 and this now forms part of the base budget allowing this enhanced service level to continue.

Income

The Highways & Transport budget is supported by income generated by services. The key areas for Highways & Transport are Car Parking and Street Works with growth of £0.475m included in the Street Works income budget for 2025/26 and an updated Parking Plan for 2026-2030. These income streams are reliant on demand from the Public and Utility companies so can be volatile as demand is affected by changes in the economy and in the community.

We are allocating £43m for Highways & Transport, maintaining the budget, once savings, income and inflationary pressures have been taken into account.

Cllr Tamara Reay

Cabinet Member for Transport and Assets

Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)

The LTP4, sets out how we can continue to build an efficient and effective transport network in Wiltshire for the plan period up to 2038. It addresses all aspects of transport in the county, including road safety, highway management and improvements, public transport (buses and rail), walking, cycling, freight, car parking and the transition to electric vehicles.

It is tailored to three different place types: principal settlements, which covers Salisbury, Trowbridge and Chippenham; market towns; and rural areas. A strong transport network is essential for economic growth in Wiltshire, and the LTP4 outlines our strategy for preserving and enhancing existing infrastructure, with a focus on fostering sustainable economic growth, improving public health and safety, reducing carbon footprints, and strengthening the resilience of our transport systems.

In a large rural county like Wiltshire, many people depend on their cars for their everyday lives, and so the plan looks to support motorists and not penalise them.

Bus Service Improvement

The Council was awarded Bus Service Improvement Plan plus (BSIP plus) grant of £2.1m per year for both 2023/24 and 2024/25, further increased BSIP funding of £5.891m has been confirmed for 2025/26 and includes capital as well as revenue funds. This funding is to improve, enhance and support bus services, improve infrastructure supporting services and assist contractors facing commercial failure to ensure services are maintained. It is also helping to manage inflation and retender pressures within the service.

Walking, Cycling & Wheeling

We were delighted to receive this funding, which will allow us to enhance active travel infrastructure across Wiltshire.

The £1,042,507 funding from the Government and Active Travel England (ATE), together with developer contributions will be used to develop new and improved footpaths, cycle lanes, and junctions.

The improvements will also encourage safer travel to schools, with thousands of children expected to benefit from better cycling and walking routes across the country.

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI)

Our Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) project will contribute to meeting our climate targets. It aims to improve Wiltshire's EV charging network by focusing on areas with the greatest need for residential charging. The goal is to expand access to EV charging while staying updated on new technologies and trends to ensure sustainable progress.

Funded by £3.89 million from central government, following our successful grant application, the LEVI project is part of a countywide initiative to install more EV charge points.

Major Projects

Other major projects include Fisherton Gateway, Salisbury Station, Salisbury River Park and Trowbridge Town Centre projects. These have demonstrated how we have been able to leverage funding and support from central government funds to deliver on the aspirations of local communities.



Cllr Dominic Muns
Cabinet Member for Waste and Environment

Waste Services

The significant pressure in Environment services primarily arises from the Waste Services contracts for collection and waste treatment. The contracts are focused on reducing the amount of household waste sent to landfill and increasing recycling to keep Wiltshire looking beautiful and taking responsibility for the environment.

The Environment Act 2021 will require the Waste Service to deliver substantial service changes over the next three years, including the separate weekly collection of food waste from August 2027.

Two main changes from the legislation will impact future waste service costs: Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR) and the national Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). Producers must pay into a national scheme for packaging waste, with Wiltshire's pEPR payment set at £7.6 million for 2025/26.

The DRS, expected from October 2027, will require deposits on drink containers, potentially reducing Wiltshire's recyclable material income by £0.900m. Additionally, new "Simpler Recycling" provisions will require councils to collect the same materials for recycling at least fortnightly, plus separate weekly food waste collections, impacting Wiltshire's existing contracts and future procurement.

The council has secured £4.990m capital funding for the food waste scheme setup, but additional revenue funding details are still awaited.

Waste Services are forecast to generate £9.295m of income from Bulky Waste collection charges, sale of material collected for recycling in 2024/25 and Chargeable Garden Waste subscriptions. As recycling material income is particularly influenced by the changing global economic climate and near-term legislative changes, it is difficult to predict.

Air Quality

A total of £0.113m has been added to the capital programme for two air quality equipment schemes £0.035m for the purchase of two new real time sensor-based air quality monitors for Marlborough and Devizes to support the councils statutory responsibilities and provide data to inform the development and planning process, secure s106 contributions and support decision making around health impacts.

Additionally, £0.078m has been allocated for the purchase of a new air quality monitoring station street box including nitrogen dioxide and fine particulates analyser in Calne.

We are allocating £50m for Environment, maintaining this budget, once savings, income and inflationary pressures have been taken into account.



Cllr Ashley O'Neill
Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital and Staffing

Staffing

The Government Budget from last Autumn set out increases to employer's National Insurance contributions from this April. Government have said that local authorities will be compensated for this pressure for directly employed staff only. They have allocated £515m nationally to cover this cost but the fund will not fully compensate councils, with an estimated £0.750m pressure added to Wiltshire Council's budget to ensure provision is made for costs not compensated and funded by Government.

Broadband and Digital

Wiltshire Council is actively supporting the Building Digital UK 'Project GIGABIT' and other broadband capital programmes aimed at maximising fibre broadband connectivity throughout Wiltshire. We are working with two contracted providers, Wessex Internet in the south of the county and Openreach in the north, to offer local insights to network builders as well as to provide guidance and support to Wiltshire residents regarding the build plans. We are continually advocating for increased full fibre coverage across Wiltshire and will persist in these efforts as part of the contract delivery plans.

In the coming months, we will host a Broadband webinar featuring Wessex Internet and Openreach, where they will share more information about their plans and how residents can explore their options.

Digital Services

We are continuing to invest in our digital services for those who prefer to engage with the council through such platforms while ensuring the preservation of traditional methods, including face-to-face interactions and telephone communications.

Recently, we have launched an updated version of the MyWilts app, which incorporates several technical improvements over the previous iteration and provides a solid foundation for further development. This advancement will allow us to integrate additional services into the MyWilts platform that are currently unavailable within the app, thereby reducing the reliance on paper forms that require downloading, completion, scanning, and submission via email or post.

Wiltshire Council

The logo graphic consists of two white, curved lines that sweep upwards from the center and then downwards towards the ends, creating a stylized underline or swoosh effect.

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www.wiltshire.gov.uk