

## **Annual Parish Report: 2015**

### **Jane Scott OBE: Leader of the Council**

I have great pleasure in presenting the Cabinet reports for this year. For 2015/16, we have faced another reduction in our government grant, which, combined with inflationary and populationary pressures, resulted in us needing to make £30 million of savings. Many of you may have attended our public budget consultations, where we reaffirmed our 3 priorities, to protect the vulnerable: elderly and young people, to support the economy and create jobs, and to empower communities to become strong and resilient.

The administration of the Council has worked very hard to ensure we are a council that protects the majority of our frontline services despite the budgetary pressures. We have chosen not to raise council tax to help families across Wiltshire. A Council Tax rise at this time would be an additional pressure on many households - particularly those on low or fixed incomes. We have therefore prioritised keeping taxes low, and offering choice for those who can afford it.

Following on from the setting of the budget by full council in February, in March we realigned the Cabinet responsibilities by bringing in Philip Whitehead as Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport; which enabled John Thomson, Deputy Leader, to focus on communities, campuses and area boards in addition to his work with broadband and for Jonathan Seed to concentrate on the housing portfolio.

In presenting this report, I wish to thank council staff for working so hard in difficult financial times to deliver our priorities, and the communities of Wiltshire who have matched our reduced funding with community initiatives, volunteer hours, and innovative ideas, helping us to provide the services that the communities value.

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

Having taken on a new area of responsibility, updates on this portfolio are contained within the reports of my colleagues. Work continues on the seven approved campuses in phase 1, and meetings are taking place with other towns and communities who are looking to bring their campuses forward. Area Boards have had funding without reduction confirmed for the next year which will enable them to continue to support communities.

44,000 premises in the County now have access to fibre broadband through the Wiltshire Online programme, and we expect 91 percent of premises in Wiltshire to have access to broadband speeds of 24 mps and above by the end of March next year. We have also secured funding to roll out a second phase, focusing around areas that have yet to benefit.

## **Cllr Keith Humphries: Cabinet Member for Health (including Public Health) and Adult Social Care**

### **Public Health**

Following the transfer of responsibility for public health to local authorities in 2013, Public Health has fully integrated and is now truly at the heart of Wiltshire's public services. The following outlines just part of the work over the last year.

For new-borns and their families, we have trained 80 volunteers to support breastfeeding mothers, launched initiatives to help vulnerable families with new children, and worked with the Lullaby Trust to promote safe sleeping practices to reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Working with older children we have developed our SHINE weight management programme, and expanded the MOTIV8 Substance Misuse scheme to help Children and Young People.

We have worked to raise awareness of schizophrenia and Autism, and have rolled out schemes using the Arts to improve health and wellbeing and strengthen communities. We delivered Mental Health First Aid training courses in locations across the county to increase knowledge and confidence for people supporting someone experiencing emotional or mental ill health or distress. The Big Pledge scheme saw Wiltshire's Community Areas commit to becoming Dementia Friendly and the Before I Forget campaign helped them to become dementia aware.

Through Slimming on Referral we helped 2,509 people to lose weight. In addition, our Active Health scheme was delivered in leisure centres to support 3,000 people referred for cardiac rehabilitation, exercise after stroke, weight management, or falls prevention. We ran a Diabetes roadshow and assessed 791 people. Our Stop Smoking Service worked with 4,500 clients helping over half of them to successfully quit, and we launched a new Community Health Trainers Service, providing 298 clients with health and wellbeing assessments and support to improve their health. Our outreach domestic abuse support service received over 500 victim referrals and we developed a new joint Domestic Abuse Strategy to improve outcomes.

### **Public Protection**

We provided over 3,000 environmental and pollution interventions and dealt with over 1,300 noise complaints, and had a 98% recommendation rate for our pest control service. Over 917 notifications of infectious disease were investigated and action taken to reduce the risk of further infections. We launched a new Alcohol Strategy to promote responsible drinking levels and reduce alcohol related harm, developed a new licensing policy and dealt with over 3,000 licensing applications. We signed up 200 businesses to the Eat Out Eat Well Nutrition Award Scheme. 1,400 food businesses were inspected and we supported over 94% to attain a food hygiene rating of satisfactory or better, and helped local food businesses comply with new food allergen legislation.

We worked to deter commercial vehicles from breaching weight restrictions through prosecutions and the introduction of new Lorry Watch schemes locally. We responded, in just 6 months, to 4,000 criminal and consumer complaints and set up new 'No Cold Calling' Zones, with Community Area Boards given the ability to implement their own zones and social care workers trained to identify rogue traders. We worked with local people and managed public safety at major events including the Tour of Britain and the Summer Solstice and 1,298 outdoor education events were approved enabling 40,780 participants to engage safely across the county.

## **Adult Care**

The number of customers for whom the Council pays for a service has grown from 6,917 in 2012/13, to 7,568 in 2013/14 whilst those where we have had contact with has also grown from 13,247 in 2012/13, to 15,521 in 2013/14. A great deal work has been undertaken with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Acute Trusts and other providers and our joint Better Care Plan with the CCG was one of five selected nationally to be fast tracked to enable integrated health and social care in Wiltshire

Two new care homes have opened in partnership with the Council and the Orders of St John Care Trust in Warminster and Devizes. These care homes offer nursing and residential care for older people including those with dementia. Work on an information and advice portal is well underway and by April there will be an up to date service directory and self-referral form available on the Council's website. This will detail a wide range of services available to support people with their health and social care needs. Further work will take place subsequently to extend this to libraries and various NHS settings.

The Care Act that comes into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup> will significantly change the work of our adult services. There will be a new model of support for carers that will see them being treated on an equal legal footing to those that they care for. In January 2015 we introduced a Care and Support Accreditation Scheme - this is a list of specialist providers that Wiltshire Council has checked to make sure that they can provide good quality services in Wiltshire for people with disabilities that offer value for money. All Providers in the scheme have gone through a full accreditation process evidencing their skills, knowledge and experience.

In the last few months, in response to the Winterbourne View Concordat, we introduced a new robust care management approach for people with the most complex needs that will ensure a consistent approach and a focus on keeping people in or returning people to their local community – training has been provided to all the staff undertaking this.

## **Laura Mayes: Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

The new Community Youth Service was established in October 2014 and is beginning to show real results. The Community Youth Officers have been busy meeting all the young people, forming the Local Youth Network and agreeing the young people's priorities for each area. We have been very pleased by the response from many voluntary organisations and local people who want to be involved. The flexibility of the new service is leading to many innovative ideas that are making a real difference to young people's lives.

### **Improving School Standards**

We are pleased to say that more children than ever are being educated in schools that have been rated Outstanding or Good by Ofsted. Overall our score is 85.1% of Outstanding and Good schools. This is broken down into 88.2% for Secondary Schools, 82.2% for Primary Schools and 100% for Special Schools.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Many of you will be aware of the terrible cases of child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, Oxford and Rochdale. We are taking the issue very seriously in Wiltshire and have a clear strategy to tackle perpetrators of this terrible crime. A play called "Chelsea's Choice" will be performed in our secondary schools to make our young people aware of the dangers of being exploited, and give them strategies to avoid it.

## **Fleur de Rhe-Philippe: Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Skills and Strategic Transport**

The council has worked with the SWLEP to secure £38.67 million Local Growth Funding for Wiltshire, and to deliver the ESIF Strategy 2014-20 which will guide investment of over £70 million. Projects for which funding has been confirmed include:

- City Deal – ‘Growth Through Knowledge’ skills brokerage to secure higher education qualifications for Army leavers - £1.4 million government investment backed by £1 million total local authority contribution
- Porton Science Park, which will create 2,000 jobs in the long term: £4 million, backed by £2.6 million council funding and a further £2 million via the ESIF
- We facilitated Dyson’s plans for expansion, which will create 3,000 jobs in the long term, and as part of the Growth Deal secured £1.4 million which will be supported by local contributions of £0.6 million
- We are bringing forward Digital and Innovation Incubation Space in Corsham – with £2.5 million funding backed by £1.5 million council resources

The Wiltshire Business Hub has supported over 1,000 businesses, of which around 300 at start-up stage. We have supported 1,200 individuals with training and skills development, and the council endorsed the new Education, Employment and Skills Strategy in November.

Through this activity other initiatives attracting employers and investment into the county including the Wiltshire 100 and Enterprise Network, and providing a comprehensive and efficient planning service, the Directorate has supported the delivery of over 6,000 jobs in the pipeline since April 2014.

The service supported Hill Brush’s plans to relocate its factory, retaining the company in the county and bringing a further 40 jobs to the area in the future, and facilitating the delivery of 138 new homes at the old site, as well as Dyson and others in bringing forward development.

In partnership with neighbouring authorities, we have been successful in achieving Government funding for improvements to the A303, particularly around Stonehenge.

### **Recent Examples of Supporting Business and Enterprise in Wiltshire**

- We supported the development of Chippenham based Dymag’s bid for AMSCI funding of £3.3 million grant and a loan of £3.8 million as part of a £11.2 million project combining composite technology and process engineering to create up to 263 jobs and safeguard 14.
- We supported Our Enterprise in their planning and in securing £3 million Libor funding application to provide Army veteran accommodation and enterprise space at the former UKLF headquarters in Wilton.
- We also gave support to Anthony Best Dynamics, manufacturer and supplier of advanced testing systems and measurement products to the global automotive industry, in their bid for Regional Growth Funding, and they have now secured up £2.3 million from Round 6. The grant will facilitate the Group’s expansion to meet increasing global demand.

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

We have agreed the funding to develop seven approved campuses: Corsham, Melksham, Tisbury, Pewsey, Salisbury, and Calne. We also added Malmesbury to the first tranche. The campus project remains central to the goals of Cabinet with other communities aspiring to have their own Campuses or Hubs included in the future programme.

In communities we have reorganised and reviewed the running of Area Boards, and they continue to thrive and continue to be funded with capital revenue. There has been no reduction in funding to Area Boards in spite of difficult financial circumstances for the Council.

Libraries continue to be valued by our communities with increases in usage and particular successes with our newer libraries. We have continued our ground breaking success of opening our libraries for longer and with less staff and more volunteers as well as opening Springfield for lengthy periods without staff.

Leisure continues to be a county success story and the leisure team have been reorganised and further integrated into Health over the past year. The contract extension with People for Places has now been implemented to the financial advantage of the Council. Leisure services continue to narrow the gap between cost and revenue with the eventual aim of leisure provision becoming cost neutral to the Council.

Finally flooding has had a thankfully quieter year than the previous year. Many dwellings did suffer desperately sad flash flooding in September of last year and we fought hard, without success, to get central government to include these incidents in grant provisions. We have continued to invest heavily in our flood alleviation projects and Wiltshire continues to be highly regarded for its flood alleviation work.

**Toby Sturgis: Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning (Strategic and Development Management) Property, Waste and Strategic Housing**

**Strategic Planning and Development Management**

In January the council formally adopted its Core Strategy, providing the blueprint for major planning applications coming forward in the county over the next 12 years. We are also enabling 30 Neighbourhood Plans to come forward with more expressions of interest in the pipeline.

The number of planning applications has increased year on year, with the number of Major, Minor and Other classified applications increasing as follows:

- 2012-13 = 5183
- 2013-14 = 5875
- 2014-15 = 6090

There has been a 221% increase in large majors since 2012. The service determines 77.8% of major applications on time, surpassing the national guideline target of 60%.

**Environment**

Wiltshire Council has set a challenging target to reduce its carbon footprint by 11,823 tonnes of CO2 by 2016/2017 as set out in the latest Carbon Management Plan 2014-17. Energy and transport costs for the council totalled £13.6 million in 2013-14 and the latest energy consumption figures from its corporate estate are generally showing a downward trend.

**Waste**

The council recycled over 51% of household rubbish at the end of 2014 and continues to reduce the amount of waste going into landfill. Tenders for the delivery of the waste services will be considered in May. From the 15th June a charge of £40 will be made for the collection of green waste bins.

**Property**

The rationalisation of the councils operating properties continues following the refurbishment of the three hubs at Salisbury, Trowbridge and Chippenham with over half of the original properties either sold or under offer and a number awaiting planning permission for changes of use, making substantial savings.

**Dick Tonge: Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance, risk, systems thinking, procurement and welfare reform**

2014/15 was dominated by the need to make savings due to the combination of a lower government grant, increased demand for services in adult care and looked after children and inflation. An added pressure occurred due to increased volumes of waste compared with the previous year attributed to increased consumer spending. Up to the end of 2014/15 we have made cumulative savings of £123 million whilst at the same time investing in the economy, creating jobs and apprenticeships.

2015/16 will be no different with the need to save another £30m. Some of the savings have been controversial and have resulted in adverse publicity, but this is rarely accompanied by suggestions of where alternative savings might be made. Most residents realise that these huge savings have to be made and the reasons why; but pressure groups never want the savings to be made in their area of interest.

We did not increase Council Tax in 2015/16, which is the fourth year in a row that there has been no increase. Given the financial pressure the Council some have suggested a tax increase might be appropriate. The reason we have chosen not to do so, is that we are acutely aware of the financial pressure many families have been under, and by having no increase over this period the average household has saved around £382, giving some relief to those on lower incomes.

Some of the savings have been and will be made by reconfiguring services to drive out cost without changing the service that is being provided, in other words doing things differently. There has been some inevitable resistance to change by users, but looking ahead the pace of change will accelerate and will have to be applied to many more services. We just can't stand still.

There will be no respite. With an election looming the rumours of the level of grant we might get from government in 2016/17 ebbs and flows. We do know that the demands for services of an ageing population and increased numbers of looked after children will grow, inflation will also have its impact. The best estimate is that we will have to save another £30m.

On a positive note the collection of Council Tax is as expected, as is the collection of Non Domestic Rates, of which we retain a percentage with the remainder being transferred to government. The fact that collection is in good shape reflects the financial state of Wiltshire.

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 brass farthing we spend is spent wisely.

**Stuart Wheeler: Cabinet member for Internal Transformation, Culture and Arts.**

The Electoral team have made an effective start on coordinating and organising the complex exercise of reviewing town and parish boundaries across the County. Preliminary meetings have now been held with all areas requesting changes and the consultation papers will be circulated immediately following the General Election. We have introduced the new Individual Electoral registration regime on behalf of the Central Government Cabinet Office. Many questions and comments answered quickly and effectively with the whole operation not being helped by the failure of the Cabinet Office to draft its contribution to the process accurately.

Our HR department conducted a biennial survey of staff attitudes getting a very high response rate of 60%. This showed that staff morale had improved since the previous survey. HR are also preparing an innovative and effective exercise to widen and improve Wiltshire Council's ability to identify and attract recruits in the areas of social work and those responsible for children's welfare where recruitment nationally is challenging.

There has been a great effort across all areas to continue to build on and improve our working with partners, especially Wiltshire Police, with IT support in particular proving innovative and flexible.

Across the Council, progress has been made on paperless working. In particular, Democratic Services introduced paperless working across all council committees with good humour in the face of, in particular, some technically challenged councillors, saving not only serious amounts of money, but also serious numbers of trees.

Swindon and Chippenham History centre continued to supply an excellent service, promoting, in particular First World War research in schools and attracting substantial grants for various projects. The Centenary of the start of the First World War was commemorated across the county, with numerous events, and children across the county researched individual soldiers for our Wall of Remembrance.

Although grant funding had to be reduced due to falling support from Central Government support we continued to significant arts organisations and museums across the county.

## **Philip Whitehead: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

The impact of the additional investment that was agreed for Highways Asset Management at the end of 2013 has shown for the first time this year with a considerable amount of additional roads being repaired. This is despite the destructive flooding for the first 3 months of the year which resulted in considerable amount of damage in the county's roads and a number of project delays.

Grass cutting once again raised its ugly head with poor performance by BBLP at the start of the 2014/15 season which resulted in many complaints and negative publicity. BBLP employed additional resource and eventually caught up with the work, but of course by then the damage was done. As we are entering a new grass cutting season of 15/16, BBLP have sub-contracted the grass cutting, providing additional resource and the quality of the service is much higher.

We started a pilot street lighting project where a number of lights in Trowbridge were turned off in the late evening and overnight. The project has gone well with officers making a number of adjustments to the scheme to reassure and support specific communities. Equipment is being installed to enable the scheme to be introduced in the other towns.

Litter has increased, with a 20% increase in reports nationally, which has been reflected in Wiltshire. We have been working with communities to support community clear-up initiatives, including the National Community Clear Up day on 21<sup>st</sup> March, where many communities set up their own operations. We will be supporting community actions throughout the summer.