

Swindon Borough Council

Cabinet

Wednesday, 7 December 2016

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices

At 6.00 p.m. or at the Conclusion of the Cabinet Open Forum

Conservative Councillors

David Renard (Chair)

Russell Holland

Oliver Donachie

Toby Elliott

Fionuala Foley

Brian Ford

Mary Martin

Keith Williams

Garry Perkins

Committee Officer: Vicki Yull, 01793 463603, vyull@swindon.gov.uk.

Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

Access Arrangements - The venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you have any special requirements to enable you to attend the meeting or would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size, please contact the Committee Officer as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

NOTE:

A Cabinet Open Forum is held at 6:00 p.m. prior to the start of each scheduled Cabinet Meeting. The Open Forum is similar to the 'public question time' that happens at most Council meetings but without the need for questions. It provides the chance to meet with Cabinet Members as well as Board Directors and Directors to discuss matters relevant to the Cabinet and its responsibilities. It provides an opportunity to raise issues and give views. The Forum will normally close at 6.30 pm and the Cabinet will then reconvene for the start of the formal Cabinet meeting. If the Open Forum completes its business earlier than anticipated then the Cabinet Meeting will commence at 6:15pm or at the Forum's conclusion.

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
2. **Declarations of Interest.**
Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.
3. **Minutes.** (Pages 5 - 14)
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2016.
4. **Public Question Time.**
See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.
5. **2016-17 Budget Management and 2017-18 Draft Budget** ICDR (CM:RH)
(Pages 15 - 60)
6. **Outcomes of the Local Government Association Peer Review** HPP&E
(CM:DR) (Pages 61 - 88)
7. **Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services** HL&V
(CM:MM) (Pages 89 - 230)
8. **Affordable Housing Development Programme** HHM&CS (CM:OD) (Pages 231 - 238)
9. **Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centre and Recycling Bring Sites** HS (CM:KW) (Pages 239 - 256)
10. **Commercial Investment Strategy** ICDR (CM:RH) (Pages 257 - 268)
11. **Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17** ICDR (CM:RH) (Pages 269 - 286)
12. **Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2016-17** ICDR (CM:RH) (Pages 287 - 296)
13. **Polling District and Places Review** DLDS (CM:DR) **BH; CD; ET; GP; RC; SA; SM** (Pages 297 - 320)
14. **School Organisational Changes for September 2017** HES (CM:FF) (Pages 321 - 328)
15. **Renewable Investment** CDERS (CM: DR) (Pages 329 - 334)
16. **Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor** HIA
(CM:RH) (Pages 335 - 342)
17. **Insurance for Community Groups** HL&V (CM:MM) (Pages 343 - 348)

Date of Despatch: 29 November 2016

Key:

Officers:

CE	-	Chief Executive
CDCP	-	Corporate Director Communities and Place
ICDR	-	Interim Corporate Director Resources (Section 151 Officer)

CDERS	-	Corporate Director Economy, Regeneration and Skills
DLDS	-	Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)
DCS	-	Director of Children's Services
DASS	-	Director of Adult Social Services
HPP&E	-	Head of People, Performance and Engagement
HL&V	-	Head of Localities and Volunteering
HHM&CS	-	Head of Housing Management & Community Safety
HS	-	Head of StreetSmart
HES	-	Head of Education Services
HIA	-	Head of Internal Audit

Wards:

BH	-	Blunsdon and Highworth
CD	-	Covingham and Dorcan
ET	-	Eastcott
GP	-	Gorsehill and Pinehurst
RC	-	Rodbourn Cheney
SA	-	St Andrew
SM	-	St Margaret and South Marston

Cabinet Members Responsible for the Service Area concerned:

DR	-	David Renard	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet
RH	-	Russell Holland	Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
OD		Oliver Donachie	Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness
TE	-	Toby Elliott	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning
FF	-	Fionuala Foley	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
BF	-	Brian Ford	Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care
MM	-	Mary Martin	Cabinet Member for Communities
GP	-	Garry Perkins	Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills
KW		Keith Williams	Cabinet Member for StreetSmart

Public Question Time - Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above or to the Director of Law and Democratic Services, we will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance" available on the Council's Website.

(<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13338&path=0>) or from the Committee Officer named above.

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CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors David Renard (Chair), Russell Holland, Oliver Donachie, Toby Elliott, Fionuala Foley, Brian Ford, Dale Heenan, Mary Martin, Keith Williams and Garry Perkins

Councillor Bob Wright attended the meeting in respect of Minute Nos. 57, 58 and 61, Councillors Cathy Martyn, Stan Pajak, Maureen Penny and Chris Watts attended the meeting in respect of Minute Nos. 57 and 58, and Councillors John Ballman, Gemma McCracken, Jane Milner-Barry, Des Moffatt, Jim Robbins, Vera Tomlinson, Peter Watts and Steve Weisinger attended the meeting in respect of Minute 58.

52. Declarations of Interest.

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Toby Elliott made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in relation to agenda item 10 (Swindon Town Centre Property Acquisition and Disposal) in his capacity as an employee of the company referred to in the report.

Councillor Dale Heenan made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in relation to agenda item 7 (Community Governance Review) in his capacity as chair of Nythe Parish Council.

Councillor Mary Martin a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in relation to agenda 8 (Free Schools Bid Update) in her capacity as chair of the Great Western Academy.

Councillor Garry Perkins declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 9 (Chapel Farm and other Swindon Solar Schemes) as a property owner in the area that might be affected by the proposals.

53. Stuart McKellar - Corporate Director, Resources

Councillor David Renard, the Leader of the Council, advised the meeting that Stuart McKellar, the Council's Corporate Director, Resources, was leaving the Council to take up a new post with a different Authority. On behalf of the Cabinet, and all members of the Council, Councillor Renard thanked Stuart for his years of service and wished him every success in the future.

54. Minutes.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

55. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act

1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the item listed below, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Item No.	Paragraph No.	Minute No.
10	3	61

56. Public Question Time.

Mr Edward Glennie of Swindon Climate Action Network asked questions about the solar sound barrier proposals. Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways and Transport, responded to the questions at the meeting.

Ms Geraldine Fernandez asked questions about business contributions to cleaning Swindon Town Centre and Old Town. Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, responded to the questions at the meeting.

Mr Colin Doubleday asked questions about the Council Tax yield and Cabinet Members' views about creating parishes. Councillors David Renard, Chair of Cabinet, Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, and Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care, responded to the questions at the meeting.

Ms Alison Bolton, Wichelstowe Residents' Association, asked questions about how the Community Governance Review proposals would reflect Wichelstowe's community interests. Councillor David Renard, Chair of Cabinet, and Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, responded to the questions at the meeting.

Mr Tony Robson, a local resident, asked questions about how the Community Governance Review reflected government guidance. Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities responded to the questions at the meeting.

Mr Roy Worman, Haydon View Community Association, asked questions about the transfer of services to parishes. Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, responded to the questions at the meeting.

Mr Mike Bawden, a local resident, asked a question about the democratic benefits of parishes. Councillor David Renard, Chair of Cabinet, responded to the question at the meeting.

Ms Kareen Boyd asked questions about the outcome of the community governance review and whether parishes might be subsequently absorbed into Wiltshire Council. Councillor David Renard, Chair of Cabinet, responded to the question at the meeting.

57. 2016-17 Budget Management, 2017-18 Draft Budget and Medium Term Resourcing Plan

Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, and the Corporate Director, Resources, submitted a joint report setting out a strategic context and framing for the direction of travel of the organisation to deliver the Vision for Swindon over the next four years, within the expected financial context. The report provided an update on the 2016-17 latest Budget Management position and provided an introduction to the draft budget proposals for 2017-18, which had been considered and developed within this overall context.

Following his introduction of the report, Councillor Holland, with Councillors Oliver Donachie, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care, Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways, and Transport, Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration, and Skills, and Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, responded to questions put by Councillors Cathy Martyn, Stan Pajak, Maureen Penny, Chris Watts and Bob Wright, on the following issues:

- Toilets and parking charges at Barbury Castle.
- Future funding for Public Power Solutions (PPS)
- The cost of changes to the bus station and prosecution of fly-tippers in the town centre.
- The implications of the financial constraints on statutory services

Resolved – (1) That the medium term context of the Council be noted and it be agreed that the contents of this report be used to engage and consult with residents, stakeholders and service users on the organisational strategic response.

(2) That the in-year forecast out-turn position for 2016-17 and responding action plan to manage the projected year-end overspend be noted.

(3) That the 2016-17 budget virements, set out in appendix 3 to the report, be agreed.

(4) That the feedback from the Public Power Solutions (PPS) Board, around progress in mitigating the cost pressure arising on the Waste Solutions Plant, be noted and that it be agreed that repayment of the Company's existing working capital loan facility be deferred, subject to a further review of its financial position in 12 months' time.

(5) That, in relation to the 2017-18 Draft Budget proposals, the key assumptions underpinning the draft budget proposals be endorsed and specifically that:-

- a) While the Council has accepted the Government's offer of a 4 year financial settlement, there remains uncertainty around public finances in general and this will be the case at least until the Autumn Statement is announced in late November and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2017-18 is published in December;
- b) The funding assumptions within the report assume that Council Tax will be increased by 3.99% in 2017-18 representing a 1.99% rise for general services plus a 2% uplift specifically to contribute towards the increasing demand for adult social care services;
- c) There is currently a gap between the assumed funding levels for 2017-18 and the current proposed cost of services as set out in Table Three in the report, and that work will continue to identify further options to close this gap for consideration by Members in December 2016 and February 2017;
- d) The impact on minority groups has been considered for all savings proposals and a full Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken where an impact was perceived; and
- e) The budget assumptions are based on estimated tax base and Collection

Fund balances and these will need to be updated and agreed in the December report.

- (6) That, in relation to the 2017-18 Draft Budget proposals, it be agreed that:-
- a) Consultation commences for Budget proposals affecting front-line services with the outcome of that consultation being reported to Cabinet in December 2016 to inform final decisions;
 - b) Fees and charges should be uplifted by 5%, or a rounded price close to 5%, except where alternative proposals are recommended, as set out in appendix 4 to the report, and that all changes should be implemented from 1st December 2016 or as soon as practicable thereafter;
 - c) All Heads of Service, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and the Interim Corporate Director Resources, be authorised to increase fees and charges by greater than 5% where circumstances permit and subject to legal constraints, and to introduce new fees and charges where the market situation permits;
 - d) The Local Council Tax Support (reduction) scheme in 2016-17 be unchanged from that for 2015-16, apart from the annual increases in allowances, applicable amounts and non-dependant deductions, which will be increased in line with the national scheme;
 - e) Consultation be commenced with landlords, and others who may own empty domestic properties, on ending of the current three month Empty and Unfurnished discount of 50% and on reducing the Structural Alterations Discount to 25 % for a maximum of three months with effect from 1st April 2017;
 - f) Further detail around the opportunities to appropriate assets between the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account be brought to the December Cabinet meeting to support the proposed transfer of housing garages into the General Fund due to the majority now being let privately;
 - g) One-off funding of £3.8m is earmarked to support the implementation and cashflowing of the 2017-18 Budget proposals as set out in Table Six in the report; and
 - h) Those new Budget proposals that do not directly affect front-line services can be implemented by officers at the earliest opportunity, including undertaking consultation with staff where appropriate.
- (7) That the expansion of the ex-Penhill Children Centre building, which has recently opened as the new Family Service Centre, be approved, to enable the North Locality Team to relocate from their existing premises of The Limes to free up this property for disposal in accordance with the Council's development plan and that a proportion of the capital receipt from the disposal of The Limes be ring-fenced to fund works which are essential to enable the relocation.
- The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

58. Community Governance Review (Minute For Confirmation)

Councillors David Renard, the Leader of the Council, Russell Holland, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, and the Chief Executive, Corporate Director Resources, and Director of Law and Democratic Services, submitted a joint report the outcomes of Stage 3 of the Community Governance Review (CGR) and inviting Cabinet to consider the summarised feedback from the Stage 3 consultation, including submissions made

by Blunsdon St Andrew Parish Council and Haydon Wick Parish Council (set out in an update to the Cabinet report), and recommend a final proposal to Council.

Councillor Mary Martin, the Cabinet Member for Communities, introduced the report, initially taking members through the various recommendations and then expanding on the detail of the report by responding to members' questions and observations on (i) specific aspects of the Council's proposed response to the formal consultation undertaken by the Council on proposals to entirely parish the Borough through the creation of four new parish councils, extending the Nythe Parish Council area and the amendment of some other existing parish council boundaries, and (ii) the recommendations proposed to be made to Council, as set out in Appendix 5 to the report, as amended in the supplementary papers published before the meeting and tabled at the meeting, and including submissions made by Blunsdon St Andrew Parish Council and Haydon Wick Parish Council.

Councillor Martin, with Councillors David Renard, the Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet, Toby Elliott, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Brian Ford Cabinet Member Adults' Health and Social Care and Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways, and Transport, responded at the meeting to questions put by Councillors John Ballman, Gemma McCracken, Cathy Martyn, Jane Milner-Barry, Des Moffatt, Stan Pajak, Maureen Penny, Jim Robbins, Vera Tomlinson, Chris Watts, Peter Watts, Steve Weisinger and Bob Wright on the following issues:

- The position on conducting a Referendum to assess Swindon residents' opinion on the parishing of the entire borough area.
- The ratios for the appointment of councillors to each Parish and the principles that supported those calculations.
- The validation and transparency of the Review process and opportunity to make changes to the recommendations to be made to Council.
- The shortfall in funding made available to the Council from Central Government and the motivation for the Review.
- The suggestion that public engagement with the Review has been limited and that the recommendations have been influenced by only a minority of residents.
- The ratio of the electorate to the number of parish councils proposed to be created and the effect on those ratios of residents who are not on the electoral register.
- The extent of consultation with existing parished areas and the role of Shadow Parish Councils.
- The inclusion of polling district SAD in the new St Andrew Parish.
- The viability of the recommended parishes.
- Practicalities associated with the current positioning of the Haydon Wick Parish and Blunsdon St Andrew boundary through the Abbey Meads Village centre.
- The comment received from Highworth Town Council that the Highworth boundary be amended to include "Supermarine".
- The proposed warding arrangements in respect of Nythe, Eldene and Liden and the effect of those arrangements on the position of existing Nythe Councillors.
- The principles supporting the recommendation that areas within the WAA polling district be added to Wroughton parish.

- The correlation between parish boundaries and size and the precepts that might be levied to ensure the future sustainability of services.

The Director of Law and Democratic Services also responded to questions on the timing and scope of new elections and confirmed that Council could amend recommendations put forward by the Cabinet, providing there was an adequate rationale that met the statutory requirements for the community governance review.

Councillor Martin advised that, in response to issues raised by members and by the public during public question time, she would, on request, convene her Community Governance Cabinet Member Advisory Group to consider Parish Ward arrangements. Councillor Martin also invited Councillors from Haydon Wick and St Andrews to come forward before the scheduled Council meeting in November to discuss the proposed changes to the boundary through the Abbey Meads Village centre.

Resolved – (1) That the summarised feedback received from Stage 3 of the Community Governance Review, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report and the additional papers circulated after the initial agenda despatch, be noted.

(2) That the proposed arrangements to agree the transfer of property assets from the Borough Council to parish councils, if new parishes are established, as set out in the body of the report, be noted.

(3) That £3m of one-off resources be set aside to fund parish reserves and transitional funding, on the basis set out in the body of the report, and that the Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, be authorised to agree the exact payment to be made to each parish council within these terms.

(4) That the Corporate Director Resources be authorised to respond to the Government's consultation on 'Council Tax precept referendum criteria for parish councils', to the effect that the Council supports the Government's proposal that should the 'Council Tax increase referendum criteria' be extended to parishes in future, it should not apply where there is a transfer in responsibility for services from a principal authority to a local council.

(5) That Council be recommended that it:

- a) Agrees to the recommendations set out in Appendix 5 to the report, as amended in supplementary papers published before the meeting and tabled at the meeting, including submissions made by Blunsdon St Andrew Parish Council and Haydon Wick Parish Council, and the following additional recommendations, in relation to the parished and currently unparished areas of the Borough, in order to ensure that community governance within the Borough is effective and convenient, and reflective of the identities and interests of communities within the Borough:

Additional Recommendations

- i. St Andrews – to include polling district SAD in the proposed new parish.
- ii. Nythe/Stratton St Margaret – to adjust the border so that the Nythe allotments fall within the current Nythe parish.
- b) Notes that parishing the entire Borough would enable community empowerment at local level consistently throughout the Borough and extend localism to those parts of the Borough that do not currently have a local council and so do not have the full range of options for local service provision;

- c) Agrees that the final proposal map at Appendix Six is approved as the new boundaries of existing and new parishes with effect from the dates to be set out in the Order;
 - d) Adopt and give effect to the recommendations of the Cabinet.
- (6) That, subject to Council approving the recommendation set out in (5) above, Cabinet further recommends that Council:
- a) Authorises the Director of Law and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to:
 - i. Establish Shadow Councils for each of the proposed new parishes with a membership of at least 5 in number made up from the ward members in each area;
 - ii. Determine, in consultation with the Shadow Parishes, the governance arrangements for each new parish;
 - iii. Publish the Council's decision in relation to these recommendations, together with the reasons for making this decision, in accordance with the requirements set out in Section 96 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and to take such steps as he considers sufficient to secure that persons who may be interested in the Community Governance Review are informed of that decision.
 - b) Authorises the Head of StreetSmart to organise the borough council's workforce in such a way as to facilitate any service transfer that may be agreed between the borough council and any new or existing parish or town council.
 - c) Authorises the Director of Law and Democratic Services to:
 - i. prepare, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, a revised scheme and consequential Community Governance Reorganisation Order to include such provisions as he considers appropriate in relation to (inter alia) implementation dates, asset transfers, and warding arrangements;
 - ii. seek the agreement of the Local Government Boundary Commission to any consequential changes to the protected electoral arrangements set out in the Swindon (Electoral Changes) Order 2012; and
 - iii. Make and implement the Reorganisation Order.
- (7) That, in furtherance of the resolution of issues raised during the course of Cabinet's consideration of this matter, the Director of Law and Democratic Services be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Communities, to make such additional amendments as he may consider necessary to Appendix 5, and the proposal map in Appendix 6, in advance of its submission to the Council meeting in November 2016.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

59. Free School Bids - Update

Councillor Fionuala Foley, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, and the Head of Education Services submitted a report providing an update on the applications for new free schools that were submitted by 28th September 2016, in accordance with the Department for Education's "waves" application process.

Councillor Foley advised that the application submitted by Lydiard Park Academy in respect of Abbey Farm Primary School had been withdrawn.

Resolved – (1) That the applications submitted in wave 12, for education provision opening from September 2018 and later, be noted.

(2) That the Head of Education Services be authorised to support the applications from Great Western Academy (Tadpole Farm), The White Horse Federation (SMEH School), Educate Together (Abbey Farm and Badbury Park), Blue Kite Academy (Badbury Park) and The River Learning Trust (NEV campus).

(3) That the principles that a new free school is supported through the allocation of Section 106 receipts when relevant to the location of new housing, type of school required and in compliance with the terms of the legal agreements, be agreed.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

60. Chapel Farm and other Swindon Solar Schemes

Councillor Dale Heenan, the Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport, the Chief Executive and the Head of Economy, Skills and Property, submitted a joint report on the method by which the Council would build on the success of the Common Farm Solar Scheme to progress the Chapel Farm Solar Scheme through ownership of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) and enable community investment incorporating a new ISA structure. It was noted that the proposal would create the UK's first ISA-eligible investment offer through a Council owned company.

The report also provided an update on solar schemes proposed on the Barnfield and Mannington sites, also the proposed solar car ports, and the means by which Public Power Solutions Ltd (PPS) should progress this use of the Council land.

Resolved – (1) That the Director of Law and Democratic Services be authorised to take the necessary steps to secure ownership of the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) currently owned by PPS so as to enable the Council to become sole shareholder of the SPV.

(2) That the Director of Law and Democratic Services be authorised to approve the formation of a Members' Shareholder Panel to ensure democratic accountability for this and subsequent low carbon SPVs, and the appointment of three Directors to the SPVs who shall be SBC officers.

(3) That the Director of Law and Democratic Services, with the Head of Property Assets, be authorised to grant a lease to PPS to progress the solar schemes at Chapel Farm, Mannington and Barnfield sites.

(4) That the Corporate Director, Resources, be authorised to facilitate, on behalf of the Council as sole shareholder of the SPV, all necessary steps to enable Abundance Investment Ltd to undertake and complete the community investment offer as detailed in this report.

(5) That it be noted that, in the event that the community investment offer is unsuccessful, the Council, in its capacity as sole shareholder of the SPV, would need to make a decision as to how the required investment should be raised.

(6) That the Corporate Director, Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, be authorised to invest £3m in the SPV.

(7) That the Corporate Director, Resources, be authorised to allocate annual surplus income from Business Rates, rent and financing costs at Chapel Farm solar farm to support ring fenced funding towards the borrowing costs related to the provision of a noise barrier to the West of the A419 as detailed at paragraphs 3.13 to 3.23.

(8) That it be noted that successful delivery of Chapel Solar Farm will mean the Council has achieved 83.5% of its 2020 target to generate the equivalent low carbon renewable electricity to power every home in Swindon by March 2017, and that the recommendations contained in this report at Barnfield, Mannington and Solar carports add an additional 2%.

(9) That the Interim Director, Economy, Regeneration and Skills, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability, present a report to Cabinet within 12 months on how to achieve the final 29MW to meet the 2020 renewables target, outline what is required to achieve “subsidy free” solar projects, and consider ways to reduce Council electricity costs by at least 20% through measures such as energy performance contracts.

Councillor Garry Perkins made a personal prejudicial interest in relation to this matter, as an owner of property in the area that might be affected by the proposals, and left the room during Cabinet’s consideration of the item.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

61. Swindon Town Centre Property Acquisition and Disposal

Councillor Garry Perkins, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, and the Interim Head of Economy, Regeneration and Skills, submitted a joint report providing an update on further progress made in relation to the redevelopment of the site identified in the report and seeking authorisation to agree the terms of an asset swap and purchase with the company referred to in the report, for the assets owned by the Council, as identified in the plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report, on the basis that the Council acquires from the company the assets in the plan attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

Councillors Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration, and Skills and Toby Elliott, responded to questions put by Councillor Bob Wright about the value of the transfer and the possible effects on the Town Centre Masterplan.

Resolved – That the Director of Law and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director Resources and Head of Property Assets, be authorised to dispose of the Council owned assets, identified in the plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report, to the company identified in the report, as detailed in the main body of the report, and, in return, to purchase the asset, identified on the plan attached as Appendix 2 to the report, for the amount identified in the report, to be funded from Council borrowing, and to acquire the other assets owned by the company, as also identified in Appendix 2, on such detailed terms and conditions as he considers necessary to protect the Councils interests.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

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2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author: Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources
Interim Corporate Director of Resources

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report builds on the decisions taken by Cabinet on 19 October 2016 and updates the position in relation to the 2016/17 forecast outturn and the proposals to produce a balanced budget for 2017/18.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended:

- 2.1 To note the in-year forecast outturn position for 2016/17 and responding action plan to manage the projected year-end overspend;
- 2.2 To authorise officers to engage and consult on a more financially sustainable delivery model for the youth service;
- 2.3 To note the practical issues arising from the implementation of car parking charges at Lydiard House and Park and at Coate Water Country Park and to agree that consultation commences with local residents and stakeholders on the introduction of car parking charges at Stanton Country Park;
- 2.4 To agree to the extension of the Waste Services Contract and Plant Loan with PPS Limited for a further three years to 31/12/2025.
- 2.5 To note:-
- 2.5.1 The significant risks faced by the Council in delivering services within its overall budget for both 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- 2.5.2 That the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2017/18 has yet to be published and therefore the funding assumptions in this report contain levels of uncertainty;
- 2.5.3 That the current gap between the assumed funding levels for 2017/18 and the current proposed cost of services is under £0.5m, and that work is continuing to identify further options to close this gap for consideration by Members once actual funding levels are confirmed and before the final budget is recommended to Council;

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Mick Bowden, Direct Dial 07392 109917, mbowden@swindon.gov.uk

2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 2.5.4 The impact on protected groups has been considered for all savings proposals and a full Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken where an impact was perceived;
- 2.5.5 The tax base for 2017/18 will be 71,551.4 and the estimated business rates retained for 2017/18 will be £31.383m;
- 2.5.6 That this budget assumes a change in accounting policy for the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) to be considered as a separate report on this Cabinet agenda. This budget assumption is dependent on the decision of Cabinet and Full Council;
- 2.5.7 That further detail regarding the transfer of assets between the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as set out in Appendix 7.
- 2.6 That the following be agreed:-
 - 2.6.1 The virements set out in Appendix 3;
 - 2.6.2 That the Empty and Unfurnished Property Council Tax discount of 50% be removed and the Structural Alterations discount be reduced to 25% and applied for a maximum of 3 months from 1st April 2017. Any existing structural alteration discount will be reduced to 25% and will continue for the remaining period of 3 months from its commencement.
 - 2.6.3 That the Council share of the estimated Collection Fund as at 31 March 2017 will be a surplus of £1.962m for council tax and a deficit £20k for business rates.
 - 2.6.4 That those new budget proposals that do not directly affect front-line services can be implemented by officers at the earliest opportunity, including undertaking consultation with staff where appropriate.
 - 2.6.5 That consultation commences for budget proposals affecting front-line services with the outcome of that consultation being reported to Cabinet in February 2017 prior to considering the final budget to be recommended to Council.

3. Detail

Projected Outturn 2016/17

- 3.1 The projected outturn as at 31 October 2016 shows that the Council expects to deliver services broadly within budget for 2016/17. However there are still significant risks to this forecast, particularly within social care where the Council is managing the delivery of savings at a time of increasing demand. This is an issue common to many local authorities nationally and provides an increasingly challenging context for the managing the budget.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Mick Bowden, Direct Dial 07392 109917, mbowden@swindon.gov.uk

2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.2 The budget and projected outturn by Department is set out in Table 1 below and a more detailed analysis is set out in Appendices 1 and 2.
- 3.3 A number of budget changes have been identified since the last report and Members are asked to approve the virements set out in Appendix 3.

Table 1 – Projected Outturn 2016/17

Department	Budget 2016/17 £'000	Full-Year Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance £'000	Movement since last report £'000
Adult Services	72,581	75,819	3,238	1,559
Children Services	26,392	28,236	1,844	(127)
Communities and Place	28,224	31,745	3,521	305
Economy	(855)	(718)	137	(88)
Chief Executive	4,226	4,164	(62)	(56)
Resources	19,946	19,002	(944)	(170)
Corporate	(15,288)	(18,349)	(3,061)	(1,662)
Total General Fund	135,226	139,899	4,673	(239)

- 3.4 The projected outturn has improved by £239k since the last Cabinet report. The most significant changes being:
- 3.4.1 An increase in the projected overspend on Adults of £1.559m, reflecting demand pressures and increased provider charges.
- 3.4.2 The implementation of actions reported in October to release a corporate contingency budget held for pay (£0.8m) and a review of reserves (£0.6m)
- 3.4.3 A number of underspends identified across all departments to reflect the freeze on non-essential expenditure.
- 3.5 In addition to the £4.673m overspend there is a further £1.8m of Adults savings that are now considered at risk in light of the SEQOL transfer, which has severely stretched management capacity, together with a requirement to write off up to £726k of income from the provision of central support services to SEQOL for the financial year 2015/16. This means that the potential call on reserves at year end could be as high as £7.2m, reducing uncommitted revenue reserves to just over £3m. This would not be sufficient to fund the ambitious transformation programme required to achieve financial sustainability. Depletion of the reserves would also significantly impair the Council's financial resilience and erode its ability to safely navigate what will be a highly challenging budgetary environment over the next 3 years.

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2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.6 Accordingly, officers have been exploring measures that could be taken to protect, and potentially enhance reserves. As reported elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda, changes to the Council's minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy are proposed that would deliver £4m of savings in the debt management budget in 2016/17 to offset the current year overspend. Backdating some of these changes would deliver further savings of £1.5m. These figures are indicative and would be finalised as part of the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts process.
- 3.7 Work will continue to bear down on non-essential spend in the remainder of the year to minimise the overspend as far as possible and protect reserves, given the challenging financial outlook over the next few years. This includes a continuing moratorium on non-essential spending and additional controls on use of agency staff and recruitment to vacant posts.

Autumn Statement – 23 November 2016

- 3.8 As part of the Autumn Statement the Government:
- Confirmed that there is no change to the overall government departmental revenue spending plans set out in Spending Review 2015.
 - Reaffirmed its commitment to identify a further £3.5bn of savings from public spending in 2019/20, following an Efficiency Review. Up to £1bn of these savings will be reinvested in priority areas. The Efficiency Review will report on progress in Autumn 2017.
 - Announced that overall government departmental revenue spending will grow in line with inflation in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

2017/18 Budget – Overview

- 3.9 As part of the Central Government's policy objective to reduce the national deficit, in common with all Local Authorities, Swindon Borough Council is facing a significant reduction in its funding from Central Government. Swindon Borough Council has adopted a vision which informs its strategic response to this financial challenge.
- 3.10 The Cabinet report in October set out a residual funding gap of £4.7m for 2017/18. Since then further work has been undertaken to review budget pressures and identify further proposals to close the residual funding gap for 2017/18 to less than £0.5m.
- 3.11 This should be understood in the wider financial context, which is set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Forecast Funding Position – Swindon Borough Council 2017 - 2020

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
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2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Pressures:-</u>				
Reduction in Revenue Support Grant	7,246	4,628	4,682	16,556
Reduction in New Homes Bonus	-38	2,646	181	2,789
Predicted Reduction in Other Specific Grants	1,482	1,526	1,502	4,510
Pay and Prices Inflation	4,700	5,000	5,000	14,700
Social Care Packages	5,300	3,500	3,500	12,300
Pension, NI and Debt Charges	1,500	1,500	1,500	4,500
Other Cost Pressures	4,500	2,000	2,000	8,500
Collection Fund Surplus(-) / Deficit Movement	-500	500	500	500
Total of Funding and Cost Pressures	24,190	21,300	18,865	64,355
Income if Members choose to increase Council Tax by 1.99%	-1,641	-1,697	-1,755	-5,093
Income if Members choose to increase Council Tax by further 2% for Adult Social Care Precept	-1,649	-1,706	-1,764	-5,119
Estimated new Better Care Funding	0	-1,362	-2,876	-4,238
Changes in Funding Decisions	-1,000	-500	-500	-2,000
Gap after assumed increases in income	19,900	16,035	11,970	47,905

- 3.12 In light of the ongoing financial constraints, Cabinet has adopted a strategy, approved by full Council, of proceeding to transform how the council operates in order to ensure long-term, sustainable provision of public services while supporting wealth creation, which in turns provides services for those who are most vulnerable.
- 3.13 Cabinet is continuing to maintain a strategic approach, which will enable the transformation of all council services. This means questioning and reviewing what is provided, who provides it, and the results sought. This requires changes to be made to services which can be difficult or generate debate.
- 3.14 Given the scale of the changes that need to be made, and the amount of work a reduced number of senior council officers will have to undertake, Cabinet has already considered some options at its October 2016 meeting. Further proposals are now being brought forward that will reduce the residual funding gap for 2017/18 to less than £0.5m.
- 3.15 The changes since October are summarised in Table 3 below and detailed in Appendices 4 and 5. Members are asked to approve those budget proposals that do not directly affect front-line services, which can be implemented by officers at the earliest opportunity. This includes undertaking consultation with staff where appropriate, and ensuring that consultation commences for those proposals affecting front-line services with the outcome of that consultation being reported to Cabinet in February 2017 prior to considering the final budget to be recommended to Council.

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2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.16 As with the current financial year, the 2017/18 draft budget proposals contain significant risks – including the delivery of savings, the potential for increased inflation and continuing uncertainty about the extent of demand pressures in adults and children’s social care. The latest set of budget proposals therefore include an additional £2m budget risk contingency to be funded from backdating of the MRP policy changes detailed in a separate report elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda. The establishment of this contingency will provide additional financial resilience, enabling uncertainties and risks to be addressed in a planned and managed way.
- 3.17 It is important to note that although the proposed MRP policy changes will result in reduced debt management costs in the short term they will not result in any increase in the Council’s overall indebtedness and the same amount of funding will be set aside for repayment over the life of the debt under the annuity method for calculating MRP as under the existing straight line policy. However, under the revised policy the amount that has to be set aside will increase by a small amount year on year.
- 3.18 Backdating of the policy change will allow the Council to apply the difference between the amount that would have been set aside using the annuity method and the actual amount of MRP set aside since 2008 as a further revenue budget saving over an 8 year period. This saving will be phased out from the Council’s revenue budget as and when circumstances allow and will be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process but the draft Medium Term Resource Plan assumes that a sum of £2.2m will be used over each of the next 3 years.
- 3.19 The Council does not expect to receive the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement until late in December 2016 and, as a result, Government funding levels have been based on the projections contained within the 2016/17 settlement.

Table 3 – Changes to 2017/18 Draft Budget since the October Budget report

	£'000
Budget Gap Reported to Cabinet in October	4,721
<u>Cost Pressures</u>	
SEN Transport	500
Children’s Placements	(400)
School Improvement	200
Adults Demand Pressures	500
Family Centres continued funding	212
Regulated Services Manager in Adult Social Care	65
<u>Contingencies</u>	
Reduction in pay contingency	(500)
Budget Risk Contingency	2,000

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2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

	Adults – Contract Inflation	300
<u>Savings</u>		
	Youth Service Restructure	(136)
	Income from Investment Property	(500)
	Capital Financing (MRP) Policy Changes	(2,800)
	MRP Policy Change - Backdating	(2,200)
	Digitisation	(500)
	Staff Parking / Mileage Rates	(226)
	Procurement Review	(500)
	STEAM Income	(50)
	Cemetery and Crematorium Income	(30)
	School Crossing Patrols	(20)
	Swift System	(140)
	Car Parking Charges at Stanton CP	(25)
	<u>Total Changes since October</u>	<u>(4,250)</u>
	<u>Current Budget Gap</u>	<u>471</u>

Car Parking Charges at Country Parks

- 3.20 In June 2016 Cabinet agreed to implement car parking charges at Lydiard House and Park and Coate Water Country Park. Appendix 6 provides an update on the implementation of those charges and sets out a proposal to consult on the implementation of charges at Stanton Country Park.

Public Power Solutions (PPS) Update

- 3.21 In the last few weeks, PPS has paid off £2m of the Company's working capital loan facility. This has been paid predominantly from the financial receipts from the Wroughton Solar Project.
- 3.22 The Company has assumed within its business plan that it will make further significant loan repayments and finance investment to increase throughput and efficiency of the plant through company profits. As an example, in October, the Company indicated that it intended to invest in a solution to reprocess large and small materials which are a bi-product of the SRF plant without approaching the Council for a further loan. However, this is only achievable if the company is in a position to generate and retain sufficient profits for future investment.
- 3.23 One of the most significant costs to the Company is the depreciation charge to write down the value of the SRF plant. The plant has an expected life of 25 years, however depreciation is currently set against a loan period of 8 years, in-line with the existing waste services contract. As set out in the Cabinet report in October 2016, the Council is requested to approve the extension of the Waste Services Contract and Plant Loan to 31/12/2025. This will improve PPS' financial position

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2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

by £400k per annum and will also support the Company achieve its annual impairment review and going concern tests.

- 3.24 The extension will also provide the Council with an extended period of certainty regarding its waste disposal arrangements, giving the opportunity for the long-term waste strategy to be developed.
- 3.25 The Council is looking to PPS as its wholly owned company to maximise long-term financial returns and help the Council meet its objectives with regard to:
- Development of Council sites and supporting Swindon's renewable strategy, which is currently generating an additional £647k per annum income from business rates, rent and dividends.
 - Achievement of the vision of a growing, low-carbon economy
 - Creating innovative investment funds and solar bonds
 - Developing an offering to maximise SBC's assets including Private Wire, Car Parks and Storage solutions
 - Freezing the gate fee on the Waste Services Contract for 2 years (£300k).
 - Landfill savings and continuing to develop and implement future innovations.

Consultation on Council Tax Discounts

- 3.26 Consultation on the proposed Empty Council Tax discounts changes has been undertaken with landlords, who may own empty properties, at the Benefits Landlords Forum and details were also published on the Council's website. One comment was received regarding the processes involved in notifying the Council Tax office of changes, although the Council does have online forms available on its website for this purpose. These forms have also recently been changed to make them more relevant to the customer's circumstances. The Council's Housing Department will be impacted and the Head of Housing commented "Understandable why these changes are being put forward. Clearly for the HRA it will give us a greater focus for turning around lettable voids."

Appropriation of Assets between General Fund and Housing Revenue Account

- 3.27 The Council is required to ensure it accounts for assets either within the General Fund or Housing Revenue Account according to their use. Where that use changes over time such that the existing categorisation is no longer appropriate the Council is required to transfer those assets accordingly. More detail on the Council's approach to reviewing these assets is set out in Appendix 7.

Tax Base and Collection Fund Surplus / Deficit

- 3.28 The Council has to notify precepting bodies by 31 January 2017 of the assumed level of tax base for 2016/17. In order to help with their planning processes, this is normally done slightly earlier than the statutory date. The tax base setting

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2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

process starts in mid-October when all Councils have to complete a statutory return to Central Government setting out the number of properties it has by band and any allowances or discounts on those properties.

- 3.29 In recent years, the Council has seen an annual rise in its tax base of around 800 Band D equivalent properties due mainly to growth in the Borough. The change between 2016/17 and 2017/18 is estimated to be above this at 1,075.2 and a further increase has been calculated due to a reduction in the number of households accessing council tax support and other allowances. In overall terms, the tax base has increased by 2,005.6 from 69,545.8 in 2016/17 to 71,551.4 in 2017/18. The increase in tax base between the two financial years leads to an increased level of Council Tax income of £2.4m.
- 3.30 The assumed level of Council Tax surplus to be used to support the 2017/18 Budget is £1.962m compared to £1.462m in 2016/17.
- 3.31 For business rates, latest projections show a deficit on the collection fund of £20k for 2016/17 compared to £0.250m in 2017/18. In overall terms, business rates have increased with an estimated rise in the level retained by the Council in 2017/18 of £1.338m compared to 2016/17. It should be noted that the revaluation of business rates will affect the retained figures from April 2017 but the Government have announced that there will be a corresponding adjustment in the tariff paid by the Council which should mean that the overall impact of the change will be neutral. Confirmation of these arrangements will be received as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement in late December.

Council Tax

- 3.32 In line with expected average increases nationwide, the Draft Budget assumes a Council Tax rise of £3.99% in 2017/18 representing a 1.99% rise for general services plus a 2% uplift specifically to contribute towards the increasing demand for adult social care services. Full Council will be asked to make a final decision on Council Tax levels in February 2017.
- 3.33 Taking into account the extra income from an uplift in Council Tax bills, the estimated funding gap to be closed by February 2017 is under £0.5m. Once the Local Government Finance settlement has been received later this month and the actual funding levels known, further work will be undertaken to close the remaining gap by the time the February Cabinet papers are published.

Consultation

- 3.34 Following publication of the proposals set out in Appendix 7, consultation will now commence and the feedback will be taken into consideration in any final Budget proposals to be presented to Cabinet in February 2017.

Thamesdown Transport

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Mick Bowden, Direct Dial 07392 109917, mbowden@swindon.gov.uk

- 3.35 Officers will brief members on the current position with regard to Thamesdown Transport Ltd.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The report sets out the context for the organisation and its proposed response. The Council could continue to provide services in the current form but this is not recommended as the organisation would soon become financially unsustainable and important services would be unaffordable.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The financial implications of the proposals are set out in the appendices and other reports on the agenda.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.
- 5.3 Over the years, there have been a number of challenges in the courts as to reductions in budgets. The courts have held that the decision to set a local authority budget for a service at a certain level and to make reductions in specific areas is a political decision which cannot be judicially challenged. How those reductions are implemented, however, is key and will be subject to appropriate consultation.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 Where there are such implications these have been reflected in the body of the report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been produced for each of the savings proposals set out in the appendices that could affect protected groups. Where assessments undertaken identify adverse impacts then mitigations are being developed as part of the proposals.

Risk Management

- 5.6 Any risks arising from the proposals contained within this report will be managed through their implementation taking into consideration feedback from the consultation exercise.

2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Interim Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Forecast Outturn by Directorate 2016/17
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Forecast Outturn by Service Type 2016/17
- 8.3 Appendix 3: Virements 2016/17
- 8.4 Appendix 4: Summary of 2017/18 Budget Proposals By Group
- 8.5 Appendix 5: Detailed 2017/18 Budget Proposals By Group
- 8.6 Appendix 6: Car Parking Charging at Country Parks
- 8.7 Appendix 7: Transfer of Assets between the HRA and General Fund

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for December 2016.

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Fund	Tier 1 Pillar	Tier 2 Function	Budget 2016/17 £'000	Full-Year Projected Out-turn £'000	Projected Variance £'000	Movement since last report £'000	Commentary on Reasons for Variance
General Fund	Chief Executive	Internal Audit	376	356	(20)	0	Locum cost now recovered from Childrens and interim government settlement for dual elections.
		Law & Democratic Services	3,850	3,808	(42)	(56)	
	Resources	Finance & Change	4,226 4,108	4,164 3,554	(62) (554)	(56) 22	Additional costs for a temporary Social Worker to work with the Appointees and Deputies Team to ensure deputyships are in place for all required cases which will generate additional income of £50k. This has been partially mitigated by further savings on vacancies.
		Corporate	(15,288)	(18,349)	(3,061)	(1,662)	A review of reserves and provisions identified a number that were no longer required and £674k has been transferred back to revenue. Reduced interest payments and savings on other spend are expected to produce a £75k saving on the Treasury budget. Savings on other corporately held budgets are expected to total £63k and a further £50k has been released that was being held to fund posts which are now not to be filled in 16/17. In addition the £800k held for pay strategy changes will now not be used in this financial year.
		IT	5,300	5,300	0	0	
	Economy	Transformation	1,070	1,012	(58)	(58)	Vacancy savings
		Performance, People & Engagement	2,252	2,107	(145)	(85)	Vacancy savings
		Business Services & Support	7,216	7,029	(187)	(49)	Impact of freeze on non essential spend resulting in a projected underspend on operating budgets
		Routes to Employment	4,658 284	653 230	(4,005) (54)	(1,832) (26)	Staffing savings and one off funding towards a post
		Property & Assets	(2,388)	(2,434)	(46)	(70)	Staff vacancy and contract savings
		Growth & Regeneration	755	712	(43)	(43)	Additional rental income
		Planning & Regulatory	494	774	280	52	The timeline for the evaluation process to identify options for alternative operating models assumed a part year saving in 2016/17. The 6 month Asset of Community Value process was triggered in June. Bidders have until mid December to complete their returns for evaluation. It is therefore unlikely that a part year saving will be achieved. This has been partially offset by
							savings on vacancies and running expenses.

Fund	Tier 1 Pillar	Tier 2 Function	Budget 2016/17 £'000	Full-Year Projected Out-turn £'000	Projected Variance £'000	Movement since last report £'000	Commentary on Reasons for Variance
	Children Services	Management Skills & Attainment	68	42	(26)	34	One-off recruitment costs. Savings on salaries plus increased income expectation. Savings relating to vacant posts and the impact of the non essential spend freeze.
		Children, Families and Community Health Services	1,948	1,901	(47)	(29)	
	Adult Services		24,376	26,293	1,917	(132)	Cost pressures resulting from national minimum wage impact on providers supporting Elderly exceeded budget estimate by £300k. Increases in demand, particularly around hospital discharge has pushed total pressures on Elderly to over £2m. Cost pressures, challenging savings targets and complexity of care issues within Learning Disability have added £1m to the outturn forecast. The 16-17 savings target is £5.286m of which £4.5m is targetted at care packages The Adults forecast assumes that £0.45m of this target will not be achieved and that £2.1m will be achieved over next 5 months.
		Adults	26,392	28,236	1,844	(127)	
	Communities & Place		60,407	63,662	3,255	1,574	Vacancy savings Savings relating to vacant posts and the impact of the non essential spend freeze. An additional 2,000T Household Waste is currently forecast for this year partially offset by savings in other areas. Adjusted to reflect the shortfall on PSPO income and increased homelessness costs, offset by a reduction in discretionary Community Safety costs. Changes relate to an increase in demand for Home to School Transport for Special Education Needs schools based on the September intake information and updated projections for recharge income.
		Public Health	12,174	12,157	(17)	(16)	
		Libraries & Localities	72,581	75,819	3,238	1,558	
		Streetsmart	3,137	3,346	209	(102)	
		Housing Services	11,342	14,040	2,698	165	
		Infrastructure Assets excluding HRA	333	555	222	(53)	
			13,412	13,804	392	295	
			28,224	31,745	3,521	305	
	General Fund Total		135,226	139,899	4,673	(239)	
Health	Health Commissioning	Adults Commissioning	20,751	21,765	1,014	45	Demand for wheelchairs & equipment aids has been reviewed and forecast revised accordingly. Child placement pressures adjusted accordingly. Swindon CCG have agreed to provide additional funding needed to meet rise in FNC grant.
		Children Commissioning Swindon CCG funding	1,792	1,845	53	(16)	
	Health Service Delivery	Children's Health Delivery Services	(22,543)	(23,377)	(834)	(834)	
Health Total			0	222	222	(802)	

Fund	Tier 1 Pillar	Tier 2 Function	Budget 2016/17 £'000	Full-Year Projected Out-turn £'000	Projected Variance £'000	Movement since last report £'000	Commentary on Reasons for Variance
Dedicated Schools Grant	DSG Commissioning	DSG Skills and Attainment	85,227	81,031	(4,196)	(188)	Decrease in maintained school budget payments due to academy conversion, decrease in Early Years 3&4 year olds as lower than anticipated take up of free places offset by pressure in staff and postage costs.
Dedicated Schools Grant	DSG Commissioning	DSG Skills and Attainment	(85,227)	(81,393)	3,834	233	Reduced funding expectation due to new academy conversion and lower than anticipated Early Years take up of free places for 3&4 year olds.
Dedicated Schools Grant Total			0	(362)	(362)	46	
Housing Revenue Account	Housing Revenue Account	Supervision & Management	(36,734)	(36,802)	(68)	(42)	Increased charges for waste tipping at PPS, IT digitization costs and vacancy factor offset by vacant post savings, reduction in external inspection fee costs and reduced administration costs.
		Special Services	209	(242)	(451)	(13)	A reduction in energy prices against the budgeted increase has resulted in a forecast underspend of £378k. In addition, other savings, primarily due to vacant posts of £73k.
		Repairs	11,037	11,020	(17)	86	Savings from staff vacancies are being offset by increased use of contractors. Combined with the increased tipping charges from PPS has resulted in a reduced underspend.
		HRA Capital Financing	25,488	25,488	0	0	
Housing Revenue Account Total			0	(536)	(536)	31	
Grand Total			135,226	139,223	3,997	(964)	

Revenue Forecast Out-turn 2016-17 By Service

Appendix 2

Service Area Summary 2016/17	Budget 2016/17	Full-Year Projected Out-turn	Projected Variance	Movement since last report
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Culture, Leisure & Libraries	3,895	4,285	390	(162)
Education and Other Children Services	7,308	6,902	(406)	(25)
Environmental & Regulatory	16,656	19,864	3,208	275
Highways & Transport	206	343	137	27
Housing GF	3,117	3,175	58	(14)
Planning & Development	(2,875)	(2,864)	11	(51)
Public Health	12,174	12,157	(17)	(16)
Revenues & Benefits	1,625	1,638	13	13
Social Care - Adults	57,820	61,191	3,371	1,609
Social Care - Children	22,428	24,833	2,405	157
Corporate & Support:			0	0
Central Services	1,862	(2,052)	(3,914)	(1,977)
Contingency Split out	507	0	(507)	0
Debt Management (Debt Charges & Investments)	10,503	10,427	(76)	(76)
Total General Fund	135,226	139,899	4,673	(239)
Total DSG	0	(362)	(362)	46
Total Health	0	222	222	(802)
Total HRA	0	(536)	(536)	31
Grand Total	135,226	139,223	3,997	(965)

	Chief Executive £'000	Resources & Corporate £'000	Economy	Children Services £'000	Adult Services £'000	Communities & Place £'000	Contingency Fund £'000	Total General Fund £'000
Cabinet 19/10/16	6,464	1,863	(1,287)	27,152	72,318	28,209	507	135,226
<u>New Virements :</u>								
Transfer of People, Performance and Engagement budgets between pillars	(2,252)	2,252						0
Allocation of Transition grant to fund pump priming of Childrens Centres		76		(76)				0
Transfer of employee budget between services		(20)	10	(109)	111	8		0
Apportionment of PPS Ltd recharge income to reflect increased NNDR costs at the depot.		(7)				7		0
Premises related budgets transferred to Property			288	(288)				0
Allocation of postal savings across service budgets	14	(12)		(1)	(1)			0
Transfer of funding towards post		(20)	20					0
Split of funding previously held in Childrens to cover new senior posts in Economy and Adults			114	(286)	172			0
Transfer of services back from SEQOL. (all other budget adjustments within Adults)		19			(19)			0
Cabinet 07/12/16	4,226	4,151	(855)	26,392	72,581	28,224	507	135,226
Balances per budget report	4,226	4,151	(855)	26,392	72,581	28,224	507	135,226

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Summary of Proposed Budget By Group 2017-18

Appendix 4

	Chief Executive's £'000	Resources £'000	Economy £'000	Children Services £'000	Adult Services £'000	Communities & Place £'000	Total £'000
2016-17 Budget	4,226	4,658	(855)	26,392	72,581	28,224	135,226
Reversal of One Off funding		(82)				82	
2016-17 Base Budget	4,226	4,576	(855)	26,392	72,581	28,306	135,226
Changes in Funding (outside Formula Grant)		(4,151)		(60)			(4,211)
Inflation	(30)	393	(3)	432	2,365	500	3,657
Other Cost Pressures	261	5,013	80	2,262	4,365	3,360	15,341
Savings not directly impacting front-line services	(221)	(1,196)	(16)	(173)	(450)	(20)	(2,076)
Transformational and Service Changes	(435)	(626)	(30)	(148)	(2,550)	(3,983)	(7,772)
New Income	(30)	(226)	(570)	(20)		(3,740)	(4,586)
Net Changes	(455)	(793)	(539)	2,293	3,730	(3,883)	353
2017-18 Budget	3,771	3,783	(1,394)	28,685	76,311	24,423	135,579
Gap							471

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Funding

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
<u>Cost Pressures (positive numbers)</u>					
Estimated reduction in specific grants (incl Public Health and Education Services Support Grant)	1,887		1,887		
<u>Additional Income (negative numbers)</u>					
Forecast increase in New Homes Bonus Grant from Central Government to reflect expected tax base in October 2016	(38)		(38)		
Total	1,849		1,849		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Communities and Place

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
<u>Cost Pressures (positive numbers)</u>					
Impact of the June Cabinet decision to transfer waste disposal costs from Public Power Solutions (PPS) to the Council	2,600	0	2,600		
Shortfall in Private Sector Leasing Income	100	0	100		
Renewable Energy support post - to work on the client side to fast track Council decision-making and income opportunities around renewable energy.	70	0	70		
Waste Disposal - Increased waste tonnage as a result of household growth	160	0	160		
SEN transport - pressure reflects increased number of children to be transported to schools in 2016/17 as well as recognising additional education provision in 2017/18	0	500	500		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Communities and Place

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Change Programme Savings					
Saving as a result of the June Cabinet decision to withdraw Council funding for local services such as grounds maintenance and street cleaning from 2017-18. Savings in 2016-17 of £500k were achieved by withdrawing such services in currently Parished areas, which have subsequently been taken on by Parish Councils.	(2,600)	0	(2,600)	TBC - subject to Cabinet approval	TBC - subject to Cabinet approval
Subject to Cabinet decision on Libraries Strategy - Community Assets and Libraries Change Programme - 2017-18 savings being targeted over and above the £300k in 2016-17. Consultation is currently underway on the future of the Libraries Service and this number will be finalised in December when the feedback from the consultation process has been considered and the proposal way forward confirmed.	(800)	0	(800)	TBC - subject to Cabinet approval	TBC - subject to Cabinet approval
Commercialisation opportunity for the Council to build and sell small scale housing developments on Council-owned land. Whilst there is confidence in this figure being achievable there is a timing risk for 17-18	(3,000)	0	(3,000)		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Communities and Place

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Other Savings (negative numbers)					
Increase in the current charge for the green waste service from £40 to £50 linked to an improved digital service through the use of in-cab technology and an automated payments method with the saving being net of higher disposal costs.	(150)	0	(150)	0.0	0.0
Target the work of the Enviro-crime team to reduce the levels of littering and fly tipping. Increased income will reduce the net cost of the service.	(45)	0	(45)	0.0	0.0
Efficiencies within the waste & recycling service area by combining clinical, bulky and bin delivery resources	(25)	0	(25)	2.0	0.0
It is proposed that all public toilets outside of formal parks will be closed from April 2017 unless alternative funding sources can be identified. The final saving figure will be confirmed in the February Budget report.	(109)	0	(109)	2.6	0.0
Reshaping the opening hours of the Household Waste recycling centre to allow cost reductions.	(20)	0	(20)	TBC	TBC
Work is being undertaken to reshape the Councils waste strategy which is expected to identify opportunities for future savings. The final Budget to be agreed by February.	0	0	0	0.0	0.0

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Communities and Place

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Full-year impact of efficiency savings plus further cost reductions within the waste and recycling service due to the implementation of rounds based on route optimisation over and above the part year 16/17 saving of £140k.	(160)	0	(160)	9.0	agency staff
Introduce car parking charges at Stanton Park following the trial at Lydiard House and Coate Water Country Park. Tariffs are recommended to be set at the same level as Coate Water. The estimated income figure shown is net of associated costs.	0	(25)	(25)	0.0	0.0
Transfer of garages from the HRA to the General Fund to reflect that over 50% are now private lets - net saving after appropriation of assets that are of benefit to the HRA from the General Fund in exchange for the reduction in garage income.	(500)	0	(500)	0.0	0.0
Reduction in facility management costs (cleaning, security etc.) through identified saving on current contracts	(20)	0	(20)	0.0	0.0

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Communities and Place

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Undertake a review of the current highways winter maintenance arrangements by benchmarking against those provided by other Local Authorities. A specific reserve is set aside in the event of severe winter weather and salt levels will be maintained at appropriate levels.	(20)	0	(20)	0.0	0.0
Efficiencies within highways service area through the introduction of hand-held technology and a comparison of current service standards on the highway. Part year saving £40k - full year saving £80k. Health & safety standards will be maintained at appropriate levels.	(40)	0	(40)	3.0	0.0
Extension of the current programme of bus lane enforcement measures at identified sites to support bus priority measures and to contribute towards service costs.	(20)	0	(20)	0.0	0.0
Financial impact of the renegotiation of the Dial A Ride contract for the 2 years ending 31st August 2018 over and above the £100k saving achieved in 2016/17	(69)	0	(69)	0.0	0.0
Updated bus strategy approved by the Cabinet in September, 2016 with details of services to be provided in the future. Savings to the general fund over and above the £100k in 2016/17. This figure will be updated in the final Budget to be agreed in February 2017.	(120)	0	(120)	0.0	0.0

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals
Service Area - Communities and Place

Appendix 5

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
School Crossing Patrols - work is progressing on identifying new funding streams or reducing the number of patrolled crossings. Further information will be included in the final Budget to be agreed in February 2017	0	(20)	(20)	TBC - subject to Cabinet approval	TBC - subject to Cabinet approval
Total	(4,768)	455	(4,313)	16.6	0.0

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Adults

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Cost Pressures (positive numbers)					
Demand pressures - older people services. Increasing numbers of clients and increasingly complex social care needs	2,500	500	3,000		
Demand pressures - learning disability services increasing client numbers transitioning from Childrens services	1,300	0	1,300		
Regulated Services Manager post to manage the Care Quality Commission registered services previously provided by SEQOL	0	65	65		
		0	0		
Other Savings (negative numbers)					
Reintegration / retendering of services insourced from SEQOL	(250)	0	(250)		
Supporting People - financial impact of work already completed to review and reprocure contracts requirements and support provider to access other income sources.	(200)	0	(200)		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Adults

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Reduction in Public Health services in line with the estimated reduction in specific grant plus containing inflationary pressures	(371)	0	(371)		
On-going review of care packages mainly across Learning Disabilities to ensure effective use of universal services and packages of care that support the needs of clients	(2,179)	0	(2,179)		
Release of budget for revenue costs linked to implementation of a replacement for Swift. The implementation has been delayed and the revenue implications will need to be considered as part of the implementation.	0	(140)	(140)		
Total	800	425	1,225	0.0	0.0

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Children

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
<u>Cost Pressures (positive numbers)</u>					
Increased demand for Children's placements including those for disabled children.	1,500	(400)	1,100		
Additional social workers to ensure suitable caseload levels to enable the delivery of an effective quality service as case work increases	650	0	650		
Special Education reforms additional case load from production of Education Health & Care Plans	100	0	100		
School Improvement funding to support schools that are rated as Requires Improvement by OFSTED, (currently 5 secondary schools in Swindon fall into the category)	0	200	200		
Family Centres - Contracts for 2 years have delivered successful outcomes through Family centres at Highworth and Abbey Meads (Butterflies). It is therefore recommended to continue these contracts with the intention of working with the providers to source external income sources over a period of time. £150k will be provided for Butterflies and £25k for Highworth.	0	212	212		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Children

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Other Savings (negative numbers)					
Work is progressing to try to convert 2 residential placements to in-house fostering which will generate a saving. The saving achieved will be updated in the final Budget to be agreed in February 2017	0	0	0		
Work is progressing to try to stop the need to use at least 10 independent fostering agency (IFA) placements and to use an additional 10 in-house fostering arrangements which will generate a saving. The saving achieved will be updated in the final Budget to be agreed in February 2017	0	0	0		
Reduction in front door assessments by 200 per annum through effective Multi Agency working (MASH) enabling the reduction of 1 social work post	(44)	0	(44)		1.0
Full-year impact of 2015-16 reduction of 2 agency staff from the Assessment and Child protection team due to effective multi agency working (MASH)	(75)	0	(75)		
Music service to be self-funded through grant funding, trading with schools and parental contributions.	(25)	0	(25)		
Training offer to early years providers to be reviewed and income expectation increased	(10)	0	(10)		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Children

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Advisory service to schools to be provided from within school improvement team	(19)	0	(19)		
School improvement post funded by Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	(20)	0	(20)		
Increased income expectation for Governor Services team	(10)	0	(10)		
Early years post funded by Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	(15)	0	(15)		
Education Welfare - increasing the penalty charge income budget to reflect current levels of income being achieved.	(10)	0	(10)		
Youth Service Provision - a report will be going to the February Cabinet for a decision to be made on the level of service provision. Final figure will be updated in the February report based on the decision taken.	0	(136)	(136)		
Total	1,985	(124)	1,861	0.0	1.0

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Economy

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
<u>Cost Pressures (positive numbers)</u>					
Loss of income on Carfax Street Medical Centre offset by increase in MECA rent	80	0	80		
<u>Other Savings (negative numbers)</u>					
A review of operations at the Steam Museum to increase commercial opportunities across the site and reduce costs. Targeted additional income of £100k as current income falling £50k short of budgeted level	(50)	0	(50)	0.0	0.0
Consolidation of catering provision across the Borough to generate additional commercial opportunities	(30)	0	(30)	0.0	0.0
Commercialisation of some Building Control services to generate new income within the team	(20)	0	(20)	0.0	0.0
Reduction in the adult learning grant contribution from the Economy &	(16)	0	(16)		
Income from Commercial Investment Strategy	0	(500)	(500)		
Total	(36)	(500)	(536)	0.0	0.0

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Corporate & Enabling

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Cost Pressures (positive numbers)					
Pay Inflation (at 1% for most), impact of the minimum wage and incremental pay increases	1,670	(500)	1,170		
Contract Inflation (at average of 1.5% but some specific areas are different)	2,720	300	3,020		
Income inflation (at average of 5%)	(533)	0	(533)		
Pensions - increase in contribution to fund deficit and impact of employer's contribution increase from 18.4% to 19.4% plus pension costs associated with reshaping services	775	0	775		
Debt Charges - cost of interest and debt repayment on investment through additions to the capital programme and reprofiling of debt from short to long-term	1,000	0	1,000		
Apprenticeship Levy - work is being undertaken to identify existing apprenticeship posts that could be funded via the apprenticeship levy that would partly mitigate this cost and therefore this cost pressure may be reduced before the Final Budget is agreed in February 2017	250	0	250		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Corporate & Enabling

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Increased costs of the cremator maintenance contract at Kingsdown Crematorium	80	0	80		
Increased costs of legal support to Adult and Children Services.	28	0	28		
Reduction in court costs income following the introduction of pre-summons interventions that reduce the number of individuals being taken to court over non-payment of council tax through more proactive collection methods but result in lower levels of court fees for the Council. This cost pressure is offset by an increase in the overall collection rate that will be reflected in the final Council Tax calculations to be agreed in February 2017.	153	0	153		
Increase in Microsoft Enterprise licence costs. This figure will be refined when the detail of the new charging model is available.	80	0	80		
Contingency to mitigate increased costs pressures arising before February 2017, a worse than forecast settlement from Central Government and risks in the 2017-18 budget.	500	2,000	2,500		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Corporate & Enabling

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Increase in levy paid to Central Government in relation to Business Rates growth	0	338	338		
<u>Savings (negative numbers)</u>					
Use insurance reserve to partly meet the cost of insurance excess liabilities and remove the base budget. This will result in the level of reserves held to meet future liabilities being reduced over 3 years so that rather than holding funding to cover 2 years of maximum liabilities, funding for one year will be held instead	(500)	0	(500)		
Reorganisation of work across Committee Services resulting in a reduction of 2 posts	(80)	0	(80)		2.0
Print contract procurement savings of £125k less £39k investment in resource required to manage the multi-functional device (MFD) estate. The new print contract provides opportunities for further savings linked to behaviour change and digitalisation as this work develops.	(86)	0	(86)		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Corporate & Enabling

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Redesign of ICT infrastructure to accommodate applications currently in the Capita Private Cloud (CPC). This work has been funded from the ICT reshaping reserve in order to deliver revenue savings from implementation. This saving may increase by the time the final Budget is approved in February 2017.	(32)	0	(32)		
Implementation of a Customer Portal to provide 24/7 self serve access for some Council services resulting in reduced staffing costs in Customer Services and a reduction in IT licencing costs. The cost of the technology, development work and dual running of systems is £254k and this project pays back in just under 2 years. The work has been funded from the ICT reshaping reserve in order to deliver revenue savings from implementation date.	(126)	0	(126)	2.5	
Reduction in Debt Charges costs through an MRP review to extend the period of capital loan repayments, use of capital receipts to repay debt.	(500)	(5,000)	(5,500)		
Mobile phones contract re-procurement - part-year saving	(35)	0	(35)		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Corporate & Enabling

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Redesign of services across the People, Performance and Engagement function.	(175)	0	(175)	4.0	2.0
Internal Audit savings from staffing and non-salary budgets.	(25)	0	(25)	1.0	
Finance Team staff saving following a reorganisation of roles within the team.	(80)	0	(80)		1.0
Revenues and Benefits Capita contract savings linked to a reduction in council tax inspectors, reduced benefits claims and call volumes	(116)	0	(116)		
Procurement savings from a review of terms and contract management arrangements for a number of HR related contracts	(48)	0	(48)		
Customer & Business Services - Review and redesign of specialist support roles across Customer and Business Services.	(70)	0	(70)	2.0	

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals

Appendix 5

Service Area - Corporate & Enabling

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Customer Services - more cost effective recruitment and reductions in hours across the team. Also includes a contribution of £15k to a post to support maintenance of web content to support the success of promoting the use of on-line services.	(30)	0	(30)		
Remove Council Tax Empty & Unfurnished discount of 50%	(420)	0	(420)		
Reduce Council Tax Structural Alterations discount to 25% discount for a maximum of 3 months	(15)	0	(15)		
Review of staff car mileage to replace some mileage with more cost-effective pool cars, increase car sharing opportunities and review mileage rates and introduce staff car parking charges for Town Centre parking.	0	(226)	(226)		
Strategic Procurement Review delivering savings through contracts and contract management.	0	(500)	(500)		
Digitisation - review of back office processes to make them more efficient making use of technology and reducing paper.	0	(500)	(500)		

2017-18 Budget - Detailed Proposals
Service Area - Corporate & Enabling

Appendix 5

	Changes Approved By Cabinet in October 2016	Change Proposed in December 2016	Total Changes Proposed for 2017-18	Post Deletions 2017-18 (FTEs)	
Proposal	£'000	£'000	£'000	Filled	Vacant
Introduction of new and extended services within Cems & Crems including Trees of Remembrance and organist service.	0	(30)	(30)		
Total	4,385	(4,118)	267	9.5	5.0

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Swindon's Country Parks – Car Parking Charging

1. Detail

- 1.1 Car parking charges at Lydiard House and Park and at Coate Water Country Park were implemented on 1st July 2016. During the implementation, a dedicated telephone line and email address was publicised to enable users and stakeholders to feedback about any issues experienced during the implementation of the charging. This was accompanied by information in local press, as well as discussions with onsite stakeholders and users, and briefing for local members. A small number of reports have been received of incidents of displaced parking on adjacent roads or residential areas. An issue has been noted around Coate Water where congestion caused by parked cars overspilling a layby is causing issues for pedestrians and motorists. The council will investigate the most appropriate way to resolve this issue and will also continue to monitor ground conditions in the car parks for improvements and maintenance.
- 1.2 Full year income across both sites was projected at £400,000. The income levels for the first 4 months (July-October 2016) is broadly line with the modelling for part year income during 2016-17 in the order of £250k - £300k.
- 1.3 During the implementation period, requests for suspension of parking charges have been received – particularly for long-standing annual charity events held in the parks. The organisers felt members of the public would be less likely to attend and contribute towards the charitable fundraising if car parking charges are in place. Since the implementation of the charging, different approaches have been tested to support user groups, volunteers and charitable events to operate at both Lydiard and Coate. From April 2017, volunteers and organisers for charitable events or fundraising events that benefit the Town and organisers of user groups on site will be supported to park without charge in the most appropriate way, whilst enabling the income from parking charges to reduce the subsidy of the sites.
- 1.4 Long term, further benefits can be achieved at Lydiard by providing a surfaced overflow car parking area. However, location, orientation and size of overflow parking depends on future operations of the site, and is not proposed to progress this work at this point.

2. Phase 2 – Country Park Car Parking Charging Implementation;

- 2.1 Following the implementation of charging at Lydiard and Coate, the car park usage at other Country Parks has been assessed and proposals are set out for each park below.
- 2.2 Stanton County Park - It is proposed to gather views of users and residents on expanding car parking charges to Stanton Country Park at the tariff consistent with Coate, as set out below. This would expect to achieve in the region of £25,000 - £35,000 of income in a full year, with potential implementation in spring 2017. The proposed charging model is £1 for up to 2 hours, £2 for over 2 hours and a season ticket at £30 per annum.

Swindon's Country Parks – Car Parking Charging

- 2.3 Barbury Castle – it is not proposed to implement charging at Barbury Castle due to a number of factors including; displacement parking would likely be an issue on the access road and remoteness of car park, and this also brings an increased risk of vandalism and high costs of enforcement of charging due to remoteness of site. The business case for this will be reviewed in the future.
- 2.4 Moulden Hill – it is not proposed to implement charging at Moulden Hill as limited data is available on car parking levels so monitoring will be put in place and the business case for this assessed at a later date.
- 2.5 Shaw Forest – it is not proposed to implement charging at Shaw Forest Country Park as the small size of the car park would not make it viable to operate this.

Transfers between the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund

Background

- 1.1 At 31 March 2016 the Council owned 10,298 dwellings, 3,113 garages and 21 shops and a number of parcels of land that are accounted for in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 1.2 International Financial Reporting Standards require that these properties are categorised according to the purposes for which the Council holds them. As part of the Council's continuous review of its assets, properties have been identified where the Council's reason for holding them has changed since the original acquisition, which requires that the properties be moved from one class of asset to another.
- 1.3 Where the purpose for holding a property is not related to the provision of housing under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 (Part II), the property should not be held within the HRA. If such a property is currently held within the HRA, usually as a result of being originally acquired or constructed under Housing powers, it should be transferred ("appropriated") to the General Fund.

Detail

- 1.4 The HRA garage stock is currently let to both HRA tenants and private individuals of which 67% are let to private individuals and are not primarily held for the provision of housing under the 1985 Act.
- 1.5 The shops were originally provided as part of neighbourhood development but no longer contribute to the achievement of a housing objective as they are now let on a purely commercial basis rather than for the provision of housing.
- 1.6 The HRA holds a number of miscellaneous assets that were originally provided as part of the neighbourhood development, these include sub-stations and telephone masts. It is proposed that where these assets are not attached to residential premises then they will be transferred to the General Fund.
- 1.7 The HRA also holds various parcels of "amenity land" that were part of the original green space requirements when the estates were established. These incur annual maintenance costs that are solely borne by the HRA tenants. On most estates approximately 50% of the properties are in private ownership following Right-to-buy sales, and these owner occupiers make no contribution towards the upkeep of these green spaces. It is therefore proposed that these are transferred to the General Fund, with the corresponding £50,000 liability for upkeep.
- 1.8 There are a number of properties that are proposed to transfer from the General Fund to the HRA. These include the land and building at Townsend House which is currently being converted into 15 HRA properties, and the Hawthorns site which is being used to develop 24 HRA properties. The HRA would ordinarily have had to have paid market value to the General Fund for these sites, and it is therefore considered sensible to include these in the wider valuation exercise.

These sites should generate an annual income of around £180k per annum to the HRA when operational.

- 1.9 The General Fund holds a number of residential properties as part of its estates portfolio, a number of these properties have both a commercial and residential elements. However there are 28 street properties that are proposed to be transferred to the HRA.
- 1.10 Any shops where there are separately let flats above the shops are to be excluded from transfer to the General Fund, as separation of the maintenance responsibilities is impractical. In addition any miscellaneous properties that are intrinsically linked to a residential property will be excluded from transfer to the General Fund, e.g. Telephone masts attached to multi storey flats.
- 1.11 All assets will be kept under regular review and should any subsequent changes be required these will be reported to Cabinet.

Financial Impact

- 1.12 The financial consequences of appropriations between the HRA and General Fund are that the costs and any income relating to the properties will subsequently be accounted for in the relevant fund. All risks associated with the properties would also transfer, for instance uninsured losses and health and safety works.
- 1.13 Any transfer of properties between the HRA and General Fund needs to be accounted for at market value, and a payment made between the funds if the transfer is unequal. As the value of the properties to be transferred from the HRA is higher than that to be transferred into the HRA, then a payment will need to be made to the HRA to compensate for this.
- 1.14 Asset transfers between the funds are dealt with by means of adjusting the debt levels attributable to each, as represented through the Capital Financing Requirement or “CFR”. Work is currently ongoing to establish the capital value of each of the assets, for each £1m of asset transferred there will be a consequential impact on annual debt interest of £33.2k per annum (a saving to the HRA, and a cost to the General Fund).
- 1.15 The HRA currently has a limit to the amount of borrowing it can take out. Reducing HRA debt will therefore effectively increase the amount of debt “headroom” available for future development opportunities.

Legal Implications

General appropriation power

- 1.16 Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) provides that the Council may appropriate for any purpose for which the Council is authorised to acquire land, any land which belongs to the Council and is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation.

Power to appropriate HRA land

- 1.17 Section 19(2) of the Housing Act 1985 (the 1985 Act) provides that the Council shall not appropriate land held for the purposes for Part II of the 1985 Act without the consent of the Secretary of State if any part of the land consists of a house or part of a house for any other purpose.

Garages and Shops specifically

- 1.18 For those pieces of HRA land which consist entirely of garages, Section 19(2) of the 1985 Act has no relevance as the land to be appropriated to the General Fund does not consist of a house or part of a house as the definition of "house" in Section 56 of the 1985 Act does not include freestanding garages or shops. To appropriate the garages and shops from the HRA to the General Fund, the Council will rely on the power in Section 122 of the 1972 Act. However, in order to avail itself of the appropriation power in Section 122 of the 1972 Act, the Council needs to be able to confirm that the land is no longer required for the purpose for which it was held immediately before the appropriation.
- 1.19 The view is that the garages, shops and open space are no longer held for housing purposes. For example, the majority of the garages are not let to secure tenants of the Council and are, therefore, no longer being held for the purposes of meeting housing needs (as ancillary to the houses) under Part II of the 1985 Act. In these circumstances, the Council would in any event need to consider whether to appropriate the garages from the HRA to the General Fund.
- 1.20 In summary, in order for the Council to rely upon the power under Section 122 of the 1972 Act to appropriate the garages to the General Fund, the Council needs to be satisfied that the garages, shops and open space are no longer required for the purposes for which they were held immediately prior to the appropriation. It is considered that, given the circumstances that now pertain on our estates e.g. the mix of tenures that has arisen through right to buy and other changes in tenure and the actual status of the majority of garage tenants, this would be a reasonable position to take.

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Outcomes of the Local Government Association Peer Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author:	Leader of the Council and Head of Performance, People and Engagement
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report outlines the scope and main findings of the peer review, and gives details of the Council's response to the review findings.
- 1.2 The review provided valuable external insight and challenge and identified a number of key recommendations to enable the corporate functions of the Council to continue to develop and improve.
- 1.3 High quality corporate functions are an essential component of successful delivery of the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report and
- 2.2 Authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to deliver the actions outlined in the plan.

3. Detail

Scope and Purpose of the Review

- 3.1 The review provided a peer challenge by senior officers and elected members from other local authorities. It was not an inspection, but provided a constructive external view about how well the Council has put structures and processes in place to deliver its Vision, Priorities and Pledges. The review took place from 13th -16th September 2016
- 3.2 The review team focussed on questions covering five key themes:
 - 3.2.1 Understanding of the local place and priority setting. -Does the Council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
 - 3.2.2 Leadership of place- Does the Council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Sam Mowbray 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

Outcomes of the Local Government Association Peer Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.2.3 Organisational leadership and governance- Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
- 3.2.4 Financial planning and viability- Does the Council have a financial plan in place to ensure long-term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented?
- 3.2.5 Capacity to deliver- Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the Council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

Findings of the Review

3.3 The review team noted the Council had strengths in a number of areas. There included:

- Clear ambitions from the Council Leader and energy and drive for the Council action
- Leadership which provides a focus for Council action through a vision for Swindon and a good understanding of key challenges and opportunities
- Ambitions with purpose including the economy, housing plans, master plans for the town centre, educational attainment
- Savings of £120m over the past eight years and a medium term financial plan with a clear direction
- Work which is moving from transactional to transformational
- A Vision which is underpinned by a strategic framework and commitment including a Council Plan
- Strong and sustaining partnerships and good partnership working through changes. Examples quoted included work with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Schools Forum and the Local Enterprise Partnership
- Staff who are proud to work for the Council and some shining lights.

3.4 The review team also made a number of key recommendations. These were:

- 3.4.1 Underpin your compelling vision with a coherent narrative and plan which will take you from 2016 to the outcomes you seek for 2030,
- 3.4.2 Develop critical success factors for making choices about what initiatives to prioritise, to sit along your very clear principles,

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Outcomes of the Local Government Association Peer Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.4.3 Have a clear understanding of the Council's purpose and then design its structure to ensure it can deliver the vision,
- 3.4.4 Place a greater emphasis on the execution of your plans and review whether you have the existing capacity and right vehicles to help you deliver them,
- 3.4.5 Review the breadth of responsibility at CMT level by reducing direct reports to the chief executive to create strategic space,
- 3.4.6 Ensure all corporate/enabling services are restructured to support front – line service delivery and review merging finance, HR, legal, IT, PPE and customer services into one strong enabling function to help deliver the change most effectively,
- 3.4.7 In respect of your Parish plans consider how you will most effectively ensure a smooth transition to devolving responsibilities in this new model,
- 3.4.8 Harness afresh your business and community partners to revive your One Swindon ambitions,
- 3.4.9 Look to engage more purposefully with your communities and seek their views and opinions in a structured manner,
- 3.4.10 Step up your ambition about digitalisation,
- 3.4.11 Utilise your great people to be even more effective and fill your skill gaps,
- 3.4.12 Call to arms, celebrate wins, create momentum, engage people to play their part and inform the public possibly via a community magazine, and
- 3.4.13 Keep learning and be networked - look outwards and steal with pride-- encourage others to steal from you-there is much to steal.

Response to the Review

- 3.5 Officers from across the Council have contributed to drawing up an action plan to address the recommendations of the peer review team.
- 3.6 This plan is set in the context of the existing Council Plan and will complement and enhance that work and the delivery of the Vision, Priorities and Pledges.
- 3.7 There is an offer of further support from the Local Government Association. This includes additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and the potential for a light touch follow up review in 12- 24 months' time.

Outcomes of the Local Government Association Peer Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could decline to implement the recommendations of the independent peer review team, but this would be inconsistent with securing value for money for residents as well as delivering continuous improvement. Therefore the report sets out how Cabinet is committed to taking action to address the review's recommendations.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The actions outlined in the plan will be delivered within the existing budget. There are no additional financial implications. The Head of Finance has been involved in the production of the action plan.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 There were not considered to be any legal or human rights implications arising from this report. The Board Director for Legal and Democratic Services has been involved in the production of the action plan.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 As the review looked at corporate function, the majority of the recommendations and actions relate to these areas of work and do not require diversity impact assessments. Prior to implementation of any actions where assessments are deemed to be necessary, these will be carried out.

Risk Management

- 5.5 The actions of the plan will make a significant contribution to areas of corporate risk including organisational sustainability, achievement of the vision and capacity and capability.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Interim Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Sam Mowbray 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

Outcomes of the Local Government Association Peer Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix One – The Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report.

8.2 Appendix Two – The Peer Review Action Plan.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

9.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for September 2016.

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Corporate Peer Challenge Swindon Borough Council

13-16 September 2016

Feedback Report

1. Executive Summary

Swindon Borough Council (SBC) is a well led and purposeful organisation. It has developed a clear and compelling vision for the borough which describes that by 2030 Swindon will have one of the UK's most successful economies based upon well managed business and housing growth.

Driving and nurturing that vision there is evidence of a strong council and community leadership. As such many of the required ingredients to help deliver that vision are either in place or being assembled. The Leader of the Council is passionate about Swindon and is intent on driving the council forward to achieve its ambitions. With the appointment of the new chief executive that political vision is matched with a renewed focus on equipping the council with the necessary leadership capability, capacity and culture to help deliver what is required. We found many positive ingredients that will help the chief executive with this including a staff group that are clearly proud to work for the council and within which there are many 'shining lights' in terms of people who can and will step up when required.

The council's ambitions have purpose and we had the benefit of seeing at first hand through our journeys around the borough, either the existing footprints or plans for how the council with its partners intends to grow an already buoyant economy and build housing in keeping with these plans and with a focus on the need of both its current and future residents. At the same time there is an exciting master plan for regenerating Swindon's town centre to reflect both its rich heritage as well as its future retail, cultural and leisure needs.

As well as the progressive leadership of both council and place there are a number of key ingredients to indicate that SBC has the capability to deliver upon its vision. Through a period of austerity it has demonstrated effective financial stewardship and has made savings in excess of £120m over the past 8 years. Importantly we saw the outline of a future financial plan with an emphasis on sustainability of the council based upon the growth ambitions in that vision. As a consequence the council is now at an early but important juncture in moving from making savings through service and transactional efficiencies to fundamentally rethinking the purpose of the council and how it can and needs to transform itself and the way it must do things into the future.

That financial discipline referred to is matched by a broader effective planning framework. The Swindon 2030 vision is also underpinned by a coherent council plan setting out four clear priorities for the period 2016-20. Furthermore there are a range of key plans, such as the Town Centre Masterplan that relate clearly and as such the suite of council policies and procedures is coherent. Additionally, the council attends to its performance and we saw in place a simple but largely effective performance dashboard through which council leaders and managers can drive improvements

The council is very aware that it has a role in the leadership of place but does so through effective partnership with the commercial, public and voluntary sector. We saw or heard about many of these partnerships and how though for example, its relationships with its health partners its was targeting more effective commissioning of services, or through the Schools Forum seeking to improve school performance or indeed as part of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) actively promoting the infrastructure projects to deliver a modern Swindon.

Despite the range of strengths identified there are a core set of issues for the council to both consider and address if the aspirations of 'Swindon 2030' are to be met. During

our four days we met with a range of stakeholders who felt the image of the borough needed to improve. One resident perhaps summed this up best with their description, which was, 'Swindon as a place is not so bad!' It was clear to them and us that many of the core building blocks are there but the critical job is now for the council and its partners to develop a clear and compelling narrative about how the 2030 vision will be delivered. In our view this vision and narrative will require a plan mapping out the journey and milestones from the current day to 15 years hence so that priorities and progress can be properly set and marked.

The council recognises the need to invest in its own internal capacity and capability to ensure the vision is delivered. A key step will be the appointment to its new Director for Economy, Regeneration and Skills. This alongside restructuring its refreshed Corporate Management Team (CMT) will be instrumental in helping it achieve its aims. We feel this was mission critical for the council; there is a market upturn and significant regeneration plans for the town itself and housing development in train across the borough. It is crucial these do not stall due to lack of capacity or wherewithal and we strongly encourage the council to as one stakeholder said 'get things over the line' i.e. show through delivering projects that they are credible.

Against this backcloth of growth there are of course demographic and service pressures, especially in health and social care where increased demand for care support for older people, supported lodgings for young people and increased costs of accommodation for homeless families are just some of these core and growing demands. These demands and others besides are inevitably drawing resources from the council and creating financial pressures both within year and beyond and indeed begging fundamental questions about how the council can and should operate into the future as it seeks to address its budget gap of £49m over the next three years.

Given the scale of challenges and opportunities in play we felt that SBC should look to engage its residents more systematically through this period of change, assessing all of the time their satisfaction with progress and the outcomes being sought. The council's members are also crucial players in this change agenda, it will be important to support them in their community leadership roles and help them introduce effectively new ways of working, including the potential significant changes that new parishing arrangements may bring across the borough which is currently subject to consultation.

Finally, it is crucial that the council's staff are effectively engaged and led and supported through the next few years. We saw an internal previous change process lose momentum through the departure of a few key individuals and it will be crucial that the chief executive's renewed focus on staff engagement and development is mainstreamed and supported through to conclusion and renewal as this will be very important in determining whether the council's ambitions are met or not.

2. Key recommendations

- Underpin your compelling vision with a coherent narrative and plan which will take you from 2016 to the outcomes you seek for 2030
- Develop critical success factors for making choices about what initiatives to prioritise, to sit along your very clear principles
- Have a clear understanding of the council's purpose and then design its structure to ensure it can deliver the vision
- Place a greater emphasis on the execution of your plans and review whether you have the existing capacity and right vehicles to help you deliver them
- Review the breadth of responsibility at CMT level by reducing direct reports to the chief executive to create strategic space
- Ensure all corporate/enabling services are restructured to support front – line service delivery and review merging finance, HR, legal, IT, PPE and customer services into one strong enabling function to help deliver the change most effectively
- In respect of your Parish plans consider how you will most effectively ensure a smooth transition to devolving responsibilities in this new model
- Harness afresh your business and community partners to revive your One Swindon ambitions
- Look to engage more purposefully with your communities and seek their views and opinions in a structured manner
- Step up your ambition about digitalisation
- Utilise your great people to be even more effective and fill your skill gaps
- Call to arms, celebrate wins, create momentum, engage people to play their part and inform the public possibly via a community magazine
- Keep learning and be networked - look outwards and steal with pride--encourage others to steal from you-there is much to steal

Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and were agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at Swindon Borough Council were:

- Tony Williams, Chief Executive, Bournemouth BC
- Cllr Sean Anstee, Leader, Trafford MBC
- Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration, LB Merton
- Lesa Annear, Strategic Director Transformation and Corporate Services, Plymouth City Council
- Stuart McKinnon-Evans, Director of Finance, City of Bradford MDC
- Paul Clarke, Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components at all Corporate Peer Challenges. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
4. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
5. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

The peer challenge process

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement-focussed and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent four days onsite at Swindon Borough Council, during which they:

- Spoke to more than 140 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 50 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 240 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 6 weeks in Swindon.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit (13-16 September 2016). In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

3. Feedback

3.1 Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?

The council has a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities that the physical location of the borough creates as well as the needs of its current and future populations. It now stands at 216,000 and by 2030 is projected to grow to 265,000. As such the council's place vision 'A vision for Swindon', describes how by 2030 the borough will be renowned for being one of the UK's most successful economies with well managed housing growth areas and provides the core focus for the council's ambitions and plans well into the 21st century.

This vision is contextually grounded with 4 core priorities and a council plan. This sets out clear aims: infrastructure and housing, education and skills, clean and safe streets and culture and supporting the most vulnerable. These priorities are made real by the 30 pledges which describe how these priorities will be realised, for example by working with all of the 1270 families in Swindon who are in most need of support or by building up to 3,500 homes in Wichelstowe and the development of new communities in East Swindon. The council has further grounded its vision, priorities and plans in outlining how they will be delivered through a focus on growth, localism and resilience, using these as the core tenets to describe the 'how' in terms of the way it will do things.

It is clear that overall the sense of understanding referred to above is real as we saw at first-hand how the plans the council and its partners has for some of its challenging areas, for example the need to improve educational attainment in the borough to create the skilled working population for the future, or how with its health partners it was planning for demand pressures in health and social care and finally with a range of significant 'blue chip' companies across Swindon its was having a post Brexit dialogue and increasing understanding of real world pressures. All of the above and more is importantly underpinned by a strong evidence and strategy base including the Local Plan and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

As well as understanding the borough, its people and resources, the council is active in responding to their needs. We made visits across Swindon and it is clear that the council has purposefully shaped parts of the wider borough in line with its aspirations, including a strong (albeit out of town centre) retail offer, green space and housing and is now turning its attention to the town centre regeneration and as part of this we saw some very positive outcomes in terms of developments, for example Regents Circus. We agree with the Council that the town centre should be a priority for its regeneration work.

We felt there were a range of approaches and actions the council could consider that would help it deliver its ambitions more effectively. For example, the vision would benefit strongly from what we described as a narrative, charting the course from 2016 to 2030 by outlining priorities and timelines so that all stakeholders and especially residents understand what is happening, when and why. As part of this we would encourage the council and its partners to be bolder in action. The 2030 vision is bold in terms of ambition but currently stakeholders we spoke with did not

describe Swindon in terms of that ambition or make the connection between the current and the future, indeed the impression we gained was somewhat passive and reflective of what one resident told us 'Swindon, it is not so bad'. We felt strongly that a focus on telling well Swindon's story and ambition is crucial if the vision is to be achieved and the council and its partners should concentrate on this and through that championing Swindon's identity, aspirations locally, regionally and nationally too.

Given the renewed focus on the future of the borough and the impact this will have on the physical location and its population we feel it's important that the council revisits how it achieves this and consider gauging residents views in a more systematic way and addressing some of the potential gaps we came across. For example: do your residents understand the town centre plans, have all stakeholders a clear sense of your plans for parishes, how are plans for a university or further education plans for the borough being developed and considered? We suggested to the council thinking again about a structured resident's survey (the last was 2012) and directly informing its residents via newsletters, which it suspended some time ago.

3.2 Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?

We saw a clear ambition for Swindon and the Council too. This was manifest through the Swindon 2030 vision and most importantly is being led by the council leader who has an inspiring view of Swindon's future but is very aware and quite rightly proud of Swindon's heritage and history. That strength of leadership is enhanced with the very able support, energy and drive from the new the new chief executive. This is crucial since the ambitions within that vision are quite rightly challenging and will require not only the council but importantly its public and private sector partners across the borough to jointly take leadership. In such an environment the confidence and trust of partners is crucial and those we spoke with were complimentary about the political and managerial leadership of the council, as one said, 'the Leader and the Chief Executive put their money where their mouth is and will go that extra mile for Swindon'. In truth though we would have welcomed meeting with more of your commercial partners to be able to fully endorse this view.

We found many examples of leadership through effective partnership. The council and its health partners have a strong focus on improving the health outcomes for the borough's residents and we heard about a very effective Health and Well-Being board and a very proactive and engaged Community Safety Partnership. Its role within the Local Enterprise Partnership is effective and recognised and its focus on business growth and the retention of the many '*Blue Chip*' companies being 'centre stage' will be fundamental to the success or otherwise of the vision.

The council is also looking to explore opportunities and engagement beyond Swindon and Wiltshire to establish itself as a regional and national area for growth and real ambition. Its recent engagement seeking to be included in the Norwich/Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford growth corridor is a good example of this.

We saw the council and most importantly its leadership always trying to be on the front foot to keep momentum and drive and demonstrate results. The council's housing delivery targets and plans are on schedule, its work on solar farms is a national story of success, knowing its challenges with skills and education we saw it working purposefully with its Academy Schools Forum. Furthermore we saw strong joint planning with Wiltshire Council on spatial planning and this is a good start for further exploration of shared services.

The council has a clear focus on the needs of its current as well as future residents. The town centre master plan is being developed to take account of the town's heritage, the council is developing a housing company and plans to drive its house building programme and also lead the charge in terms of being a more commercial council. Yet its plans are also longer term focused and are intent on building resilience for its future communities and more effectively managing demand wisely. The council's emphasis upon providing dementia friendly housing is evidence of this.

The narrative and plan required for 2030 will also help the council know, understand and make provision for the necessary capacity to ensure things are delivered. One such vehicle for this will be its delivery company 'Forward Swindon', where it is increasing its capacity. However it remains underpowered given the full scale of what will be required to get the many projects at the heart of the council's vision 'over the line'. This is more than just increasing the numbers of staff. It is also about having clear and crisp lines of accountability and responsibility between the council and its delivery partners. We felt this was one example of several where ensuring capacity will help the council execute its plans.

The business and housing market is on the upturn and again in terms of increasing the capacity of the council and deliver ahead of the curve we would encourage the council with the appointment of its forthcoming Director post to look at the range of options available to what we described as 'grabbing a bigger share of the financial uplift through the development of its existing assets and possible further acquisition at this very opportune time and this may involve a whole range of options such as a Joint Venture Vehicle, for example.

If the Council is to realise its ambitions for Swindon 2030 it will need to deliver sustainable growth in jobs and housing. For the local population to access the high value jobs planned for the borough a significant improvement in skills levels will be needed. Schools and the FE sector will be key to this and the Council will help shape this through its next iteration of the skills strategy and how it plays its community leadership role in influencing the FE Sector Area Review and the nature of the skills offer for Swindon. The Council will want to work closely with business and the colleges to ensure that the skills offer matches the ambition and plans for the town centre and seeks to develop the skills necessary to attract and retain high value added jobs as well as the lower skilled jobs necessary to sustain a thriving place.

We see the council's plans for regeneration as very positive. In terms of physical changes to the place and especially the infrastructure and fabric underpinning the town centre plans we were less clear what the plans were in terms of approach to both the quality of environment and public realm. Swindon places great store in its

history and has taken steps to maintain the fabric of the town centre that reflects this. In developing the town centre the Council will want to ensure that it has a real focus on quality and retention of this heritage so that Swindon is marked out as a unique and worthwhile place to visit, live and work in. Quality public realm will help ensure the town centre distinguishes itself from other 'clone town' centres and puts its place more securely on the map.

The quality issue referred to above will be very important in relation to the image of the borough, how it is marketed and what its 'brand' is. We know this is an issue that the council and its partners are aware of but we were not clear about how those partners were collectively leading this and what capacity in terms of resources they were allocating to tackle the issues of image that they all want to change. The borough has many attributes: its strong heritage, its open spaces, its iconic roundabouts, its physical positioning relative to the M4/M5 corridor, its 'blue chip' existing and growing company profile and the plans in place to build significant numbers of houses. All of these attributes and others combined with a first rate town centre regeneration we believe, if promoted and marketed well should put Swindon on the map.

3.3 Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?

We met with many of the politicians and the managers at the council and in our view individual member / officer relationships are strong. At the senior level we saw a culture of respect between cabinet members and the directors within Corporate Management Team (CMT). This provides a solid bedrock for positive relationships and will help enable a focus on improvement to take the Borough and the council to the next level.

We strongly advocate for collective ownership by both senior managers and Cabinet to be seen more often to create and reinforce the one council message. Whilst the right things are being done to help start this we found that managers and councillors alike still had a tendency to slip back into comfort zone of individual directorates and portfolios and become at times distracted with detail. This will be important to address for two key reasons, firstly it will mean everyone is very clear about the key strategic priorities for the council as a whole. Secondly, in terms of delivery on the ground it should also mean that officers especially are crystal clear about the expectations of them and their accountability for delivery against those priorities. Equally, if this is not made clearer, it could create a lack of confidence from partners which would inevitably delay progress.

The council is aware of the challenges referred to above and is intent on addressing them proactively. One such way would be for Cabinet and CMT to have both external challenge and support to help them make a real success of achieving the right balance between operational / strategic discussions and drive the council forward at pace. As part of the next step to maturing these relationships we also recommend that there should be regular strategic discussions between CMT and

Cabinet. This will allow them to collectively focus on what one stakeholder called 'the really big issues' and help ensure that capacity is added to deliver the actions required to turn those strategic plans into action.

There is an encouraging breadth of cross party consensus on some key issues and we found pragmatism around decision-making, most especially in relation to the Town Centre Master plan and the recent taking back into the council ownership of some of the social care staff that had previously been outsourced. Indeed we heard about shadow cabinet members signing off key delegated decisions jointly which is a sign of very mature political management. We found that the Leader's style and approach encouraged that pragmatism across political groups. Various stakeholders described his statesman- like approach and his desire to seek consensus where he can.

The council benefits from positive engagement across its strategic partnerships, for example within People Services there were trusting and productive relationships with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Acute Hospital Trust and indeed with the Health and Well-Being Board. As the council's focus on growth, housing and regeneration develops it will be key for the new Director post and the political portfolio holders overseeing these elements to show that same engagement and leadership into the future.

We found a good, honest and straightforward employee relationship climate in the council with very positive engagement with the Trade Unions who clearly value the style and engagement of the Leader and Chief Executive.

There was a range of good examples of well informed decision making with members, notably through the GLL leisure arrangement which saw a difficult and potentially tricky situation in respect of outsourcing leisure result in the creation of new reinvigorated service rewards. This was based on sound consultation, clear officer and member leadership and positive engagement with the new partner providing the service.

The council is open to exploring a range of delivery models. At times these arrangements for a range of reasons have not been as successful as was originally planned. From our very brief time with the council we felt that sometimes the client side management arrangements it has put in place need to be more robust, to make sure that there is effective oversight to ensure outcomes are delivered, recognising that the Council's active management of services provided does not end once a contract has been signed. The council would be wise to review its arrangements in respect of this and learn from past experience, although it is recognised that some models are implemented at a time when conditions are appropriate for that time.

The focus on delivery aspects in respect of economic growth and regeneration across the borough are crucial to enabling the council achieve its vision for Swindon. As such there has been a renewed emphasis on 'Forward Swindon' the council funded but independently run company. Its staff group capacity is growing albeit from a small base with specialisms in economic growth and inward investment, property development, senior business management, marketing and communications, and project management. It will be very important if they are to

deliver at the pace required that there exists a clear political and strategic framework from which it can be empowered to deliver and also be held account of proportionately.

The council needs to ensure it effectively engages its staff through change. SBC has in the past ran significant change programmes, notably 'Stronger Together' which have garnered interest and support but perhaps not fully been seen through. With a renewed focus on economy, going local and building resilience being mainstreamed into the council's way of working it is important that this doesn't just replicate another change management initiative but rather creates and sustains a closer corporate grip and focus to support the council's transformation and ensures future success against targets.

The council is modernising and managing commissioning and provision of services in a range of ways. It is undertaking a significant exercise in consulting about the future parishing of the whole borough area and devolving more powers to its parishes and communities and finally it has a new vision and corporate plan to help focus its future arrangements and structure. We felt now was an ideal opportunity to review the form and function of the council-essentially what it is there for and how it will operate as a consequence. As part of this it is crucial that SBC has an effective corporate resources function. As such we felt a key aspect of that review should be the shape and structure of its corporate resource and given the range of change that has occurred of late or is scheduled soon we believe this should be a first order priority as this will really enable the council to achieve its ambitions and so must be done soon and must be done well.

3.4 Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?

SBC has a sound track record of financial management. In recent years it has time and again sensibly and pragmatically achieved its targeted savings. Like many other good local authorities it has done so through prudent financial stewardship and at the same time has sought to make efficiencies whilst seeking to minimise disruption to service provision. In doing it has created a relatively healthy balance sheet in both cash and land for the council, with a strong tax base as the Borough continues to build houses and welcomes and accommodates national and international companies.

We found that SBC's financial control regime is effective and the council's external audit opinion is positive. We saw effective financial reporting and have confidence in its rigor.

Whilst such efficiencies have taken the council to where it is now, it is clear with the scale of required savings ahead, specifically £49m required over the course of the next three years that new, different and more radical changes will be required. In response to these demands the council has developed a clear and coherent future financial plan that takes account of the various spending and demographic pressures underpinned by the council's sound analysis of its current and future

needs. At present SBC's financial plan, which is based on this set of assumptions, results in relatively small deficit forecasts in future years compared to others.

The council has shown a real intent and willingness to innovate and experiment in relation to seeking creative funding solutions including joint ventures, out sourcing, shared services etc. Some of these have been extremely successful, for example the leisure out-sourcing and others less so but where that has been the case, notably in relation to the recent return to the council of some previously outsourced social care staff, it has been decisive in making the change required. As such we see this willingness to explore, learn and improve as a significant strength.

The current financial team have served the council very well and have led the charge in relation to driving efficiencies. They have a very strong skill set as well as a real understanding of the council and its financial challenges. We were particularly struck by the change management skills the finance team had been encouraged to adopt. With the council's new vision and priorities and the changes afoot within the finance team it is very important that those skills and organisational knowledge are refreshed. Some of our interviewees felt there were opportunities to drive more internal efficiency, as well as keep the very effective grip on total cash spending. In addition, we perceive an opportunity for the council to utilize an even more rounded set of skills and perspective in driving costs out, by calling for example on the contribution technologists, organisation developers and process engineers – all of which we encountered during our visit.

There will need to be a change in emphasis going forward if SBC is to truly leverage the very best from its relative financial strength and that change is essentially about the business strategy, i.e. vision and council plan, leading the financial strategy. There was a sense that up until now this had been the other way around and whilst that has meant the council has achieved financial stability to date, the change in senior leadership provides a timely opportunity for the Council's financial performance to become everyone's accountability, and not the preserve of the finance team. In this, we feel the council can deal with the sense, which was echoed in several fora, that the council has been "too finance led". As part of that change in emphasis it will be very important that individually and collectively leaders across SBC demonstrate they own the whole council financial targets and demonstrate the same.

There is a current in-year projected overspend largely created by a combination of demand pressures in adult social care and children's services and changes within the gate fee costs of Public Power Solutions (PPS), which will require a credible re-plan so that you achieve the year end with a balanced budget.

From the information provided to us we were not clear whether your capital programme sufficiently provides for the council's role in regeneration and development into the future and we believe it would be wise to review this. In the same vein we questioned the council's appetite for borrowing to support/co-fund future investment to help place shape the borough at pace and help with its own longer term financial sustainability and again it would be useful for the council to reflect on this.

3.5 Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

We saw a renewed appetite for change and a focus on building the capacity and capability within SBC and its partners. The council itself has refreshed its change agenda and is building this now upon three core tenets: *Growing Swindon's economy and identifying new forms of funding*, 'Going Local' i.e. working in partnership with community groups, residents and parish councils to take services closer to local people and finally 'Building Resilience' aimed at working with those communities and enabling different responses to the challenge of increasing demand for services. We saw this as positive as it gives all staff a strong reference point for what one stakeholder described as 'the way we will go about our work'.

The relatively new chief executive has a personal determination to develop and nurture the staff group. That passion from him about having 'no glass ceilings' and seeking out and developing people to enable them to make their best contribution was very refreshing. The evidence from the staff survey and Trade Unions in respect of this was positive. Furthermore we read about the 'Swindon Manager Programme' and met with representatives of the 'Employee Influence Forum' and also met through the course of the peer challenge with a range of well-informed innovators in management roles who are committed to making the place a success. Inevitably there is still much the council can and will do to build its capacity but we saw at first hand that rhetoric of change was becoming a reality and through this a broad range of stakeholders were being positively engaged.

That engagement extended beyond the council and we were impressed with the way you built capacity through your effective landscape of partnership working. Your relationships with the CCG were particularly impressive and we were encouraged with your joint commissioning arrangements, use of the Better Care Fund and working relationships at Health and Wellbeing Board. This excellent working relationship was evident in your STP work and discussions over an Accountable Care Organisation. Furthermore we received a glowing reference from representatives from the not-for-profit sector we met with who were very complimentary about the way the council worked with them in respect of co-production, communication, and collaboration in respect of commissioning of services to adults.

We saw good performance management frameworks in place which showed a clear golden thread from the council's vision, to the council plan and on to individual performance appraisals, albeit that we feel you need a renewed emphasis on compliance with the latter.

Through this period of austerity members are having to take the most difficult decisions in the most testing circumstances that will impact upon their communities. The changes afoot in respect of parishing are an obvious example of this. As such now is a very important time for the senior officers of the council to work very closely with members over the longer term to support them in making these tough decisions, creating the narrative we have already referred to and focussing on delivery at pace.

As such we advise that now, given the range of changes that have happened or are in train you ensure that dedicated time and resource is allocated to the joint development and working of the Cabinet and the new CMT. Likewise, with range of changes in train or afoot, CMT will alongside your corporate resource function need to be reviewed. The chief executive in the view of the team has too many direct reports and both he and CMT need space now to become the strategic officer leadership body for SBC.

Some components of transformation were we believe not as developed as they might be, for example Organisational/ People development and workforce plans. We would advise you reflect upon how you support and equip your workforce of the future and build in capability for change: develop grow, buy –in (process architects and marketeers) and then mainstream it into a coherent workforce plan. Aligned to this we heard very little about how you are promoting and resourcing approaches to your demand management pressures and your progress in terms of your digital strategy. That is not to say you are not making progress, rather its absence from much of our discussions with people gave us the impression it was not front and centre.

The council's performance in terms of sickness is showing an increase and this is becoming an issue to review as we were unclear how this was being tackled. Likewise your compliance with appraisal is somewhat off its target, yet this is at the core of your engagement with and development of staff and again it would be wise to review this.

We have complemented SBC for its strong partnership focus. We found that there is so much goodwill and therefore potentially untapped capacity across your partnership arrangements. Given this we it would be useful to explore opportunities for further collaboration and sharing to build capacity and resilience with your partners.

Whilst the council has been creative in looking at new and different ways to commission and provide services we felt it needed to refocus on how well it manages those arrangements in terms of performance and outcomes. Given that some of these have been less successful than others it is worthy of reflection so lessons are learnt and capacity is used to drive performance not used negatively to deal with failure. We do advise you to continue to explore and be pragmatic about your range of delivery options but look at how you build your capacity and skills to champion your delivery priorities and commercial aspirations.

At our feedback we said we gained a view that 'commercialisation' was spoken about as the gift of a few people within the council. Our advice was that it needed to be more built into the organisations 'psyche' so that concepts and approaches such as being business-like, understanding charges and profits etc. were more mainstreamed. Perhaps this is a reflection of an organisation that has been too finance led and relied on a core team to do that for the council when in truth it is the responsibility of everyone. Likewise there are key people around the organisation in terms of the project change team staff group who are there to offer support and guidance but it is the services themselves that must own and embrace change in their own areas if the new focus on being more business led is to succeed.

Finally, we came across a whole range of expertise internally that wasn't necessarily explicitly being used for the benefit of the whole council and our advice was to embrace that culture of knowledge exchange and learning more. As part of that our advice was to encourage that learning and inquisitiveness beyond Swindon and shamelessly encourage your members, officers and staff as one manager told us 'to get out more' and learn and exchange knowledge on a national platform. In doing so you will also be putting Swindon and Swindon Borough Council on a national platform and there is much others can learn from you.

4. Next steps

Immediate next steps

We appreciate that you will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions with your senior managerial and political leadership in order to determine how the Council wishes to take things forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this. Andy Bates, Principal Adviser is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). His contact details are: andy.bates@local.gov.uk
Tel 07919562849.

In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with you and colleagues through the peer challenge. We will endeavour to provide additional information and signposting about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform your ongoing consideration.

Follow up visit

The LGA peer challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the original peer team. The timing of the visit is determined by the Council. Our expectation is that it will occur within the next 12-24 months.

Appendix Two - Peer Review Action Plan

Area identified	How we will respond	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Officer	Completion Date
<p>1. Underpin your compelling vision with a coherent narrative and plan which will take you from 2016 to the outcomes you seek for 2030-</p> <p>Develop critical success factors for making choices about what initiatives to prioritise, to sit along your very clear principles</p>	Work with external partners to develop a narrative and high-level plan for the organisation to enable a phased implementation of the Council's vision to 2030.	Leader / Chief Executive	March 2017
	Work with senior officers and portfolio holders to agree phasing of the implementation of the pledges to 2030	Leader/Head of PPE	March 2017
	Design and deliver further communication and engagement activity for staff, residents and stakeholders around the vision to celebrate achievements, share challenges and ensure consistent messaging across all channels and service areas. This will include a vision event for staff in November.	Leader /Head of PPE	Comms plan in place April 2017
2. Have a clear understanding of the council's purpose and then design its structure to ensure it can deliver the vision	Work with an external partner to develop a narrative and organisational blueprint for the organisation to 2020 which will also include supporting strategies for delivery: customer, people, digital and commercialisation.	Leader /Interim Corporate Resources Director	Blueprint in place Jan 2017. Strategies in place Mar 2017.
3. Place a greater emphasis on the execution of your plans and review whether you have the existing capacity and right vehicles to help you deliver them	Use best practice research and local lessons to better understand what works in delivery, with a particular emphasis on areas where there are performance challenges.	Deputy Leader/ Head of PPE	In place & ongoing work
	Hold regular performance discussions with senior officers and members to reinforce wider perspectives linked to delivery as planned with Chief Executive, Leader and Deputy Leader.	Deputy Leader /Head of PPE	Start Nov 2016

	Ensure key pieces of work , business plans , policies , strategies and commissioning / procurement is linked to delivery of the priorities by reinforcing this in all council guidance and toolkits and including details of how work links to the priorities in the relevant documentation including cabinet and Gateway papers, Joint Venture and partnership agreements , strategies , policies and plans.	Leader/Head of PPE / Director of Law & Democratic Services	April 2017
	Review current arrangements with arm's length subsidiaries with a view to seeing how the Council's vision priorities and pledges can best be delivered.	Leader/Director of Law and Democratic Services	April 2017
	Carry out research to understand the range of commercial opportunities in terms of acquisitions and joint ventures and utilise learning from others to identify the best opportunities for Swindon. Devise and implement a commercialisation framework. Improve performance management of contracts, joint ventures and partnership agreements to focus on delivery of the Council priorities.	Deputy Leader /Corporate Director of Economy, Regeneration & Skills/ Head of Finance	March 2018
	Ensure that clear resourcing plans are drawn up for work on town centre regeneration and all change programmes including requirements from enabling functions. Use these plans to identify capacity gaps and recruit/ redefine priorities.	Deputy Leader/Corporate Director of Economy, Regeneration & Skills/Head of Transformation	April 2017
	Ensure that we are clear about the costs of pledges (where we expect to have to deliver them or pay for them ourselves) and the capital programme and use this information to plan the phasing of the pledges.	Deputy Leader/Head of Corporate Finance	Feb 2017

	Agree a common direction, governance and methodology for change work, driven from within service areas, supported by the change team. The work will be focussed on Council priorities and realisation of non- financial and financial benefits, delivering savings and ensuring that change is grounded in evidence of what works and engagement.	Deputy Leader/Head of Transformation	April 2017
4. Review the breadth of responsibility at CMT level by reducing direct reports to chief executive to create strategic space	Currently in hand with new senior management organisational structure.	Leader/Chief Executive	Dec 2016
5. Ensure all corporate/enabling services are restructured to support front – line service delivery and review merging finance, HR, legal, IT, PPE and customer services into one strong enabling function to help deliver the change most effectively	Implement the restructure of enabling functions, which was approved by the Special Committee in October, to drive and support the delivery of the Council's Vision and the change needed to achieve it	Leader/Chief Executive	Mar 2017
6. In respect of your parish plans consider how you will most effectively ensure a smooth transition to devolving responsibilities in this new model	Make use of the experience gained from the parish pilots over the past 18 months where we have already transferred some StreetSmart services. Engage with key stakeholders including ward, parish and town councillors, residents, staff and unions to plan a smooth transition and organise the workforce where necessary to transfer delivery through parishes. This will include a transition team to provide guidance on parish clerking, finance, procurement, and operational support to enable a smooth handover through 2017/18 of the Community Governance arrangements that were approved by Council in November 2016.	Cabinet Member for Communities /Head of StreetSmart/ Director of Law and Democratic Services	From November 2016
7. Harness afresh your business and community partners to revive your One Swindon ambitions	Work with One Swindon Board Members to refresh and restate the role and remit of One Swindon to provide focus and purpose in a changed context. This will include addressing links with the place marketing work, community engagement work and the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board.	Leader/Head of PPE	Jan 2017

8. Look to engage more purposefully with your communities and seek their views and opinions in a structured manner	Conduct research into the ways in which residents get information about the council. Use the information to develop plans for increased engagement with our residents.	Cabinet Member for Communities /Head of PPE / Head of Localities & Volunteering	Dec 2016
	Work with residents, officers, members to refresh our consultation policy over the next year. This will include the production of a toolkit and guidance to support officers to self-serve and an expansion of policy to cover engagement. Work with senior officers and members to ensure that engagement and consultation opportunities are factored in to decision making practice and process	Deputy Leader /Head of PPE / Director of Law and Democratic Services	Dec 2016
9. Step up your ambition about digitisation	Develop and implement a digital strategy to support the Council Vision and Council Plan. The Digital strategy will work in synergy with the Customer strategy closely to provide an increasing number of end to end digital services to Swindon citizens and businesses. The digital strategy will set out new ways of working for the Council; for central services and back office processes and enable them to raise efficiency and productivity. We will support the Digital Strategy with new process architects to help redesign council services which are currently paper reliant and over-processed. The Head of Customer & Business Services will lead work to identify key processes to improve and the Chief Information Officer will work with officers from across the Council on our digital strategy once the organisational blueprint work outlines the future model for the Council.	Cabinet Member for SreetSmart /Chief Information Officer/ Head of Customer and Business Services	July 2017

10. Utilise your great people to be even more effective and fill your skill gaps	Define the leadership behaviours, qualities and capabilities that are required to deliver the Vision. These will include collaborative, distributed leadership to help promote innovation, collaboration/systems-thinking and to increase organisational capability and capacity. Use this insight to develop and deliver a programme of leadership development for officers and members.	Deputy Leader /Head of PPE	To be delivered throughout 17/18
	Develop commercialisation as a culture change programme not just an isolated programme and ensure that the required learning and development is offered to embed this approach across Council.	Deputy Leader / Head of Transformation/Head of PPE	March 2018
	Develop and implement a people strategy to include the skills development needed to deliver the Council Vision.	Deputy Leader/Head of PPE	March 2017
	Improve absence management and rate of appraisals. This will include research into what works in improving compliance.	Deputy Leader/Head of PPE	March 2017
11. Call to arms, celebrate wins, create momentum, engage people to play their part and inform the public possibly via a community magazine Our response to this recommendation is also addressed by the responses to recommendations on and eight	Build on our work with communities to create a true and sustainable partnership, in order to harness the energy of the community and voluntary sector in service of the vision for Swindon.	Cabinet Member for Communities / Head of Localities	Dec 2016
	Use our place marketing work to further understand the priorities of the business sector so that we can work with the sector both to improve the reputation and image of Swindon and to create a sustainable business driven approach to place marketing in the future	Leader/Head of PPE	Jan 2017 launch
	Use research information to develop information infrastructure for resident engagement based on their preferences. Find a way (possibly reintroduce Place Survey) as way of understanding impact.	Leader/Head of PPE	March 2017

12. Keep learning and be networked - look outwards and steal with pride--encourage others to steal from you-there is much to steal	Build on the best practice research to inform evidence based decision making – specific areas mentioned are education and skills, HE , early years, environment and public realm	Deputy Leader/Head of PPE	March 2017
	Use our place marketing work and Fast Growth Cities to extend our sphere of influence	Leader/Chief Executive	January 2017 launch of Place Marketing Board Fast Growth Cities – work in progress
	As part of our People Strategy , ensure that we have a strong and targeted programme of learning and development to deliver the Vision , grow our staff and provide a strong and sustainable succession of talent for the Council	Deputy Leader/Head of PPE	April 2020

Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author:	Cabinet Member for Communities Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report proposes a strategy for securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services. It follows previous reports in which Cabinet requested the development of a strategy for the Library Service that would continue to deliver a comprehensive library service. These reports initiated public engagement and in July 2016, formal public consultation on a proposed Libraries strategy and delivery model.
- 1.2 Approval of the recommendations would initiate implementation of the Libraries strategy and delivery model described in this report. This would include working with ward councillors, parishes, partners, community groups and other stakeholders who might provide access to library services.
- 1.3 The proposals contribute towards the Council's Vision for Swindon, and particularly: Priority Two: offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places; Priority Three: ensure clean and safe streets and improve public spaces and local culture; and Priority Four: Help people to help themselves while always protecting the most vulnerable children and adults.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the findings of the consultation and the Council's response set out in the body of the report and at Appendices 1 and 2.
- 2.2 To note that it is the intent of this strategy for Library services to:
 - 2.2.1 sustain access to library services through the core provision of five public libraries,
 - 2.2.2 maintain professional skills to develop library and information services through use of technology, outreach and learning and
 - 2.2.3 support ward councillors, parishes, partners, and local communities to develop community-led Library services.

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 2.3 In response to the consultation, to approve the addition of Parks Library to the Council's core Library provision, in order to increase the reach of the service to an area of high service need;
- 2.4 In response to the consultation, to approve the allocation of transitional funding to help secure community-led library services in Wroughton, Covingham and Upper Stratton;
- 2.5 To approve the strategy and delivery model described in the report and attached at Appendix 3 "Libraries Strategy and Delivery Model" and authorise the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering to implement the strategy in accordance with the approach and timetable set out in paragraph 3.34 to 3.35.
- 2.6 To authorise the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to continue to engage ward councillors, parishes, partners, and stakeholders to develop further community-led Library services, and approve the basis on which the transitional funding of £500k is allocated to support the development of these local arrangements as set out in Appendix 4;
- 2.7 To authorise the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering in consultation with the Interim Corporate Director, Resources and the Cabinet Member for Communities to investigate the feasibility of establishing alternative models for the delivery of Library services – including trust and mutual models - and make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet in February 2017; and
- 2.8 To authorise the Head of Localities, Community Involvement, and Volunteering, in consultation with the Head of Libraries, to commence restructuring of the Libraries workforce, subject to consultation.

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 At its meeting of 10th February 2016, Cabinet considered a report that set out the demographic and financial context for the future of Swindon's Cultural Assets, Libraries and Community Services (Cabinet Minute 58, 2015/16 refers). That report described the context affecting the future of Swindon's Libraries, including a detailed needs assessment, the financial context that the service is operating in, and an emerging model for the service that was approved as the basis of public engagement.
- 3.2 Following consideration of the results of the public engagement, at its meeting of 13th July 2017 Cabinet approved a revised strategy and delivery model for public consultation (Cabinet Minute 25, 2016/17 refers).
- 3.3 This report builds on that work, and sets out the findings arising from the public consultation that took place between 1st August and 30th September 2016. This

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

report also describes a strategy that secures a sustainable delivery model for Library services in the context of the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges and its medium term financial position.

Findings from Public Consultation

- 3.4 To inform the development of the Council's Libraries Strategy, public consultation took place between 1st August and 30th September 2016. The process followed is set out at Appendix 1 with a data analysis report at Appendix 2.
- 3.5 A total of 1,632 responses have been submitted, including a number of separate written submissions. Almost all responses were from library users (of a total number of active borrowers of 36,306), and most were local residents. In addition there are also a number of responses from other groups and organisations.
- 3.6 As with the previous public engagement, it is clear from the consultation feedback that respondents have taken time and trouble to provide considered and thoughtful responses. Where possible, these have been reflected in the development of the strategy and delivery model described in this report.

Key findings and the Council's response:

Key Findings	The Council's response
Consultation responses show a concentration from the Wroughton area, the south of the urban area, as well as from Highworth. There is also a significant interest from users of Park and Covingham libraries.	This report recommends the inclusion of Parks Library in the core provision of public libraries. In addition, the Libraries strategy includes the continuation and development of outreach services that will provide targeted promotion of literacy and learning in communities where Library services are needed, but library usage is low. This report also seeks approval for the allocation of transitional funding to help secure community-led library services in Wroughton, Covingham and Upper Stratton, and the Council is keen to work with other communities who wish to sustain library services in their local areas.
There was widespread disappointment at the loss of local services and the anticipation of	The Council's impact assessment has included detailed consideration of the accessibility of library services, based

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

reduced accessibility to the service that remains as four out of five respondents choose a library close to home as their first choice. There are concerns about the distance and travel implications of the reduced number of library outlets. This is thought likely to reduce take-up of the service	on service data and insight gained from the public consultation. As well as the addition of Parks Library to the core provision, and support to community-led provision, as measures to ensure opportunities for continued access, the report sets out the range of measures the Council will take to ensure services remain as accessible as possible.
A quarter of people say the proposed changes will make no difference to their use of the library service, one in seven says they will change libraries (with Central the most likely choice), one in five intends to stop using the service if the changes go ahead. A third of all respondents don't know what course of action they will take. Saturday mornings are the most popular time respondents say they will use core libraries, following by weekday mornings and afternoons.	Alongside Library service data, this consultation feedback will inform the opening hours of the core Libraries as the strategy is implemented.
One in seven respondents say they are likely to use the proposed online reservation service, and a third are willing to consider occasional use; two in five library users say they will not use this service.	A paid for reservation and delivery service will be implemented as part of the Libraries strategy and is designed to complement the provision of physical libraries, and to support specialist access to books and information.
There is a strong concern over the loss of staff, both for their knowledge and expertise but also because of their friendliness and for the support they provide. A large number of respondents believe the proposal places excessive reliance on volunteers, there was doubt over the capacity of volunteers to handle the management, financial and legal obligations and responsibilities associated with running a library. A	The strategy maintains professional library services and staffing levels proportionate to the number of libraries included in the core provision. Regarding volunteers, there are examples nationally, including in neighbouring Wiltshire, of community-led library services being successfully delivered with volunteers. In addition, the Swindon library service is currently supported by committed and capable voluntary staff. From the

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number of people point out that voluntary effort is more likely to be forthcoming in areas of relative affluence. There is limited interest in becoming part of a group to establish community-based library services; a quarter of respondents express a degree of interest. There is a similar level of interest in volunteering to help in a library.	consultation, around 400 individuals expressed a degree of interest in contributing to a group to establish community-led services, or to volunteer in a library.
Many respondents explicitly say they see no advantages in this proposal. Where advantages are identified, respondents see primarily the cost savings to the Council, along with the possible advantage of a more focussed service. Most respondents think the proposal is likely to be detrimental to children and families, to the elderly, to those less mobile, and to those less well off. Many point out that a significantly disadvantaged area in East Swindon will be left unserved.	<p>The Council has undertaken a detailed impact assessment that describes the groups that may be adversely impacted by the proposed strategy, the work it has done to engage those groups, and the steps it will take to mitigate that impact.</p> <p>The addition of Parks Library to the core provision will help address the concerns expressed regarding East Swindon.</p>
There is also strong scepticism over reliance on technology, and frequent reference to the regular failure of existing technology. Many respondents express concern over safety and security in unstaffed libraries, or libraries staffed by volunteers.	The Council is keen to ensure its Library services are enabled by effective technology. Service and IT teams are working hard to ensure reliability of existing technology, and that new technology to support access to services beyond staffed hours works effectively. The Council is learning from examples elsewhere as well as working with potential suppliers to ensure appropriate policies and safety considerations are met. Our implementation planning includes risk assessment, training and continued engagement with library users to ensure the practicality of these plans.
There are concerns over the funding of community-based libraries. Some	The financial challenges facing the Council are well documented, and the

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Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

see the transitional funding as inadequate, others as unlikely to be replaced once it runs out, or dependent on the ability and willingness of parishes to make up the cost of keeping libraries operating. There is a prominent view that the Council should seek an alternative solution through raising Council Tax to cover the shortfall.	level of funding set out in the Cabinet reports of December 2015 and February 2016 established a level of funding for Library services that could be afforded to 2020, in the context of Council finances overall. The strategy for the service and additions recommended in this report secure the best outcomes within the resources available.
A significant number of people urge the Council to consider, or to adopt, the staff-led proposal for a trust model.	As reported in the July Cabinet report, there is much to recommend in trust and mutual models, but these would not in themselves deliver the changes to the service required to meet the scale and pace of savings required. This report brings forward work to examine the feasibility of alternative models of delivery, which will be reported back to Cabinet in February 2017.
Some respondents ask the Council to look at delivery models being deployed elsewhere. A service merger with Wiltshire, or a stock-sharing arrangement with another service, are suggested as possible solutions.	The Council continues to review the financial plans of other Library authorities and has found it difficult to draw comparisons – the Council's funding of Libraries has been planned over a four-year period, whilst many other authorities publically budget on an annual basis. As reported in the July Cabinet report, shared services with other library authorities around stock and IT already take place, and will continue to be explored over the coming years.
Several respondents make specific requests for their local library to be retained. The libraries at Park and Wroughton are those most frequently identified but are by no means the only ones. A significant number of people raise concerns over the future of the mobile and deposit collections	In light of consultation feedback, the Council has reviewed in detail its strategy to identify ways to further reduce costs or increase income targets to enable more libraries to be added to core provision, or to redistribute hours across its core provision. Central Library currently

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

services. Concern over reduced hours leads many to suggest that the limited hours available be redistributed to enable the non-central libraries to open for longer.	meets a third of all current Libraries visits, and elsewhere in the consultation is identified as the natural alternative to their local Library by users. To further reduce the core hours at Central would jeopardise its capacity to meet anticipated demand. This report recommends the addition of Parks Library to the core provision, and the allocation of funding to support the development of community-led library services in Wroughton. Alternatives to mobile and deposit collection services are described elsewhere in this report.
Some respondents raised concern about the impact of the loss of the mobile library service.	Evidence shows take up of the mobile service is low (0.7% of current library visits) in comparison with the costs of the mobile service. Consultation with mobile library users identified that some users would be able to access other libraries in the core provision. All parish councils were invited to consultation specifically on this issue and those in attendance acknowledged its limited use. Measures relating to the promotion of the Home Library Service, the reserved items delivery service and on-line services are intended to enable access to library stock throughout the Borough. In addition transitional funding could support communities wishing to establish collection points or small stock collections. During transition the service will work with users of the mobile service to promote alternative ways of accessing library.

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Staff submission

- 3.7 As part of the consultation, a submission was made by Libraries staff that proposed a five Library core provision, additional staffed hours and the establishment of a trust model to deliver Library services. Discussions have taken place between the Cabinet Member for Communities, senior officers and staff representatives to explore the staff proposals. Elements of those proposals have been reflected in this report namely the inclusion of Parks Library in the core provision, more flexibility in how business rate costs for the service are met, and bringing forward work to examine the feasibility of a trust model for delivery of the service. Accepting the staff proposals in their entirety would be unaffordable overall.

Save Swindon's Libraries

- 3.8 A detailed consultation submission was made by Save Swindon's Libraries in addition to 204 printed postcards sent to the Cabinet Member. This raised a number of concerns and objections, with specific emphasis on the impacts of the scale and pace of financial reductions proposed by the Council to statutory requirements for Library services, to other aspects of public policy, to equality and diversity, and to residents the group identified as being unable to access Library services in future. The group also raised a concern that alternatives to the proposed strategy had not been considered and/or presented, and the submission recommended that the Council make a smaller financial reduction to the service, consider alternatives to its proposals, and consider a trust model to run the services, supported by a Friends of Swindon's Libraries charity.
- 3.9 For reasons specified in previous Cabinet reports, the scale of the financial challenge affecting Council budgets overall mean that there is no scope to lessen the financial reductions facing the Library service. The scale and pace of those reductions also limit the viability of alternative approaches that could be meaningfully consulted upon. The Cabinet report of 13 July 2016 described alternative approaches that have been considered and why they could not progress.
- 3.10 As with the staff submission, some elements of the Save Swindon's Libraries proposals have been reflected in the Libraries model recommended in this report, namely the inclusion of Parks Library in the core provision, more flexibility in how business rate costs for the service are met, and bringing forward the feasibility work regarding a trust model for delivery of the service. The Council would welcome an ongoing dialogue with Save Swindon's Libraries regarding the possible establishment of a "Friends of Swindon's Libraries" charity.

Other submissions

- 3.11 In addition to the public responses submissions described above, submissions were also received from ward councillors, Parish Council's, primary school

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

headteachers, UNISON and a petition received from Parks and East Walcot Community Forum. These raised a variety of issues that have been considered in arriving at the recommendations in this report.

Member Task Group

- 3.12 At its meeting of 28 September 2016, the Council's Streetsmart, Highways and Communities Overview and Scrutiny committee approved the formation of a Task Group to review possible savings to the current Libraries budget. The Libraries Task Group has met on three occasions, and at its last meeting of 17 November 2016 approved recommendations, that the parent committee considered on 23rd November 2016.
- 3.13 The Cabinet Member for Communities is grateful to the Task Group for its work in reviewing the Libraries finances. The proposed strategy has incorporated the Task Group's recommendations subject to any further comments by the Streetsmart, Highways and Communities Overview and Scrutiny committee.

Libraries Strategy and Delivery Model

- 3.14 As reported to Cabinet in July 2016, the Library Service strategy is to build communities through literacy and learning. By 2020, the service aims to be recognised nationally for the quality of its services, innovation in delivery, cost effectiveness and the outcomes it achieves for early years, for adult learners, for active citizens and for active ageing.
- 3.15 Reflecting the public consultation, and the feedback of the Member Task Group, the proposed strategy would be delivered through a core provision comprising:
- 3.15.1 A network of five core Libraries of Central, North Swindon, West Swindon, Highworth and Parks supported by investment in technology that would allow access to library buildings beyond staffed hours. Staffed hours will change to 47.5hrs per week in Central, and to 15hrs per week to be available at North, West, Highworth and Parks Libraries.
 - 3.15.2 Professional Library services delivered by qualified Librarians and trained Library staff including service development, learning and outreach, local studies, information and digital literacy, stock management and volunteer co-ordination.
 - 3.15.3 Support ward councillors to develop parish, school, or community-led local Library services, including a menu of optional free and paid-for services.
- 3.16 The strategy and delivery model is founded on a principle of partnership in the design and delivery of Library services, and to secure their ongoing sustainability. The Council would fund expert, professional and innovative Library services, supported by local partnerships and income generation that help meet the costs

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

of the service. This builds on the service's successful track record of partnerships, for example with the Skills and Employment team to deliver adult learning, with Create Studios around joint working and funding bids, with the Arts Council on programmes like Artswords, with Public Health around books on prescription and wellbeing zones, as well as locally based projects with Friends of groups.

Core Provision

- 3.17 In developing this core provision, the Council has sought to balance competing criteria of (i) service reach and accessibility (ii) community need and (iii) affordability. The proposed core network of Libraries meet 80% of current visits, and mean that 84% of current Library users and 91% of Swindon's households are within 2 miles of a Library.
- 3.18 Following the Cabinet's recommendations of 13 July 2016, work has been undertaken to commence the procurement of technology that enables Libraries to be accessible to the public beyond their staffed hours. The procurement process is underway, and the timetable will enable that technology to be implemented in line with the transition to the new core model.

Volunteering approach

- 3.19 The Council's provision would include dedicated resources to support the expansion of volunteering including dedicated volunteer roles in Libraries. Volunteer roles will be defined alongside the new staffing model, with recruitment and training and timed to support the implementation of the Libraries strategy.

Outreach, Learning, IT & Digital Services

- 3.20 As stated in the July report, analysis of current usage also shows that current Library provision has low impact on those communities in Swindon that have the highest indices of deprivation. With the exception of Parks, neighbourhood Libraries in those areas only attract a small percentage of current visits. Whilst visitor numbers are low, it is also recognised that the services delivered from these Libraries are highly valued by the relatively few numbers of people who rely on them.
- 3.21 As a consequence, as part of the Council's future core provision, the strategy proposes that Libraries outreach and learning services are repurposed to deliver targeted literacy and learning programmes – designed in partnership with communities and partners - that meet local need and achieve measurable literacy and learning outcomes. The Libraries team are working with colleagues from the Council's Skills and Employment team to extend and grow the adult learning offer around digital literacy and skills.

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.22 The Libraries team are also working with the Council's IT and Customer Services teams to explore and scope out new approaches to community IT from August 2017, should IT services currently provided through the non-core Libraries not be provided through community-led services. This work is starting with detailed analysis of current IT usage and will continue as part of service development. Current digital and online library services would continue with access to e-books, e-audio, e-magazines available to all library members and available from any location, at home or in a library. There is also access to a range of digital online resources. These are all available 24/7.

Home Library Services

- 3.23 Under this strategy, the Home Library Service will continue to support residents with limited mobility. The Libraries team are working with RVS to promote the Home Library Service offer to those who may be affected by changes to the Mobile Library and Deposit Collection arrangements and unable to access libraries. This includes dialogue with RVS to ensure arrangements support volunteers to collect and deliver books whilst current Library settings are subject to change.

Reservation services

- 3.24 The service will be implementing a paid for reservation service from 1 April 2017. Charges of the order of £1.00 per item if collected from a Library, plus a flat rate charge of £1 per delivery if reserved items are delivered to community collection point are being considered. Users with housebound Library Cards tickets will be exempt from these charges.

Readers groups

- 3.25 After consultation with readers groups there will be an annual fee of £10 per member introduced, to cover the cost of buying in and preparing collections of books for readers groups.

Trust Models

- 3.26 The Council has noted several positive examples of mutual and trusts across the country, and is keen to investigate the service and organisational advantages of that work. Working with DCMS, and other partners, and overseen by the Member Libraries Task Group, officers will assess the feasibility of establishing a form of trust model for Swindon's Libraries and report back to Cabinet at its next meeting of February 2017.

Community Library services

- 3.27 The Council is committed to enabling parishes, schools, and community-led provision to be self-managed, resourced and operated by local communities, partners and volunteers, as part of co-located offers in public and community

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

buildings. Alongside the Council's core provision, ward councillors, communities, and local groups will be encouraged and supported to maintain and develop community-led library services.

- 3.28 Appendix 3 sets out the range of measures and resources the Council would use to support Members and community organisations who wish to sustain local library services in their communities including the provision of advice, guidance, facilitation support and transitional funding that enables community-led provision to be established.
- 3.29 Wroughton Library is used by residents from Wroughton, the surrounding villages and more isolated rural communities, and the Council has looked closely at how the service can continue to be accessible to those communities. Recognising that resource constraints do not allow for Wroughton library to be included in core provision, and the proactive work of the three local Borough councillors, Wroughton Parish Council and the Wroughton Library working group, it is recommended that transitional funding be allocated to help establish continued local library services. Access to that funding will be subject to a successful community bid in accordance with criteria described in appendix 4. If achieved, this will provide a sustainable library service, albeit that Wroughton library will need be managed and funded by the community.
- 3.30 To further improve access to Library services across the Borough, and recognising the partnership that is developing between the Friends of Covingham Library, the local parish councils, the Diocese and ward members, it is recommended that transitional funding be allocated to help secure continued library services in Covingham over the next five years. Access to that funding will be subject to a successful community bid in accordance with the criteria described in appendix 4.
- 3.31 A similar partnership has formed in Upper Stratton, and it is recommended that transitional funding be allocated to help secure library services in that area over the next five years. Again, access to that funding will be subject to a successful community bid in accordance with the criteria described in appendix 4
- 3.32 The Council is also actively working with Liden, Walcot and other community groups to develop further community-led library services. To take these and other proposals forward, community organisations will be invited to participate in a formal bid process. The criteria for that have been reviewed by the Member Task Group, and will be authorised by the Cabinet Member for Communities. The process will ask groups to demonstrate how their proposal contributes to literacy and learning outcomes, its financial viability, the capacity to deliver, and the amount of transitional funding requested. Authority to approve community bids will be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Communities under the recommendations of this report.

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Implementation

3.33 It is proposed that implementation take place as follows:

Stage 1 – 2017/18

3.34 Following feedback from community partners and detailed assessment of operational implications:

3.34.1 All current Libraries, including the remaining ten non-core libraries, will move to reduced hours with effect from 5 April 2017. Extended opening arrangements will be implemented in core Libraries from that date, subject to installation. Where partners and communities wish to contribute funding that helps enhance the Council's core provision, the Council would work with those partners to ensure a common implementation timetable.

3.34.2 Following approval of this report, the Council will initiate arrangements set out in appendix 2 to support the development of community-led library services. Key dates will be an Expression of Interest deadline by 31 January 2017, an application deadline of 31 March 2017, with decisions by 30 April 2017

3.34.3 With the exception of Central Library, for those Libraries currently operating in excess of 15 per week, opening hours for non-core libraries will be reduced to 15 per week from 1 April 2017. This will enable the libraries to remain funded until 31 August 2017, allowing a longer lead-in time for the development of community proposals. Given the pressing need to reduce costs, the mobile library services and deposit collections will cease from 31st March 2017. It is envisaged that funded services (stock, staffing, IT, building costs) will be withdrawn from non-core Libraries with effect from 31 August 2017. Information and support will be provided throughout the transition to users of these services to enable them to access library services in alternative ways.

3.34.4 The transitional funding of £500k approved in July 2016 remains in place to support this work, which may be used to support the one-off costs of establishing local solutions, for example, to meet equipment costs, IT investment, the temporary funding of facilities whilst local funding arrangements are established, and the training and development of local organisations and volunteers.

3.34.5 Establish feasibility of alternative models of service delivery, including trust and mutual models, reporting back to Cabinet in February 2017.

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Stage 2 – 2017-2020

- 3.35 For the Council's core provision, implementation of appropriate governance models, additional shared services, service efficiencies and the generation of additional income streams to further reduce costs to ensure services are delivered within the Council's 2020 affordability limit of £1.1m.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Alternative options, including those arising from the consultation, have been considered. The Council has reflected consultation feedback in the strategy described in the report.
- 4.2 The Council could choose not to adopt this strategy. However, this would then undermine any changes to the current service that might be proposed, including those that might sustain access to Library services.
- 4.3 Public consultation generated a number of responses calling for no change to current Library services. This is not an option given the financial pressures facing the Council and in any event, the current network risks being unsustainable as Library services are spread too thin to ensure reliable access and quality.
- 4.4 A range of different options for the network have been considered. For example, provision at Central Library or the other larger libraries could be further reduced to enable additional resources to be made available to smaller libraries. From data relating to how users access the service, it is clear that this would not maximise service reach and accessibility for the significant majority of current users and residents overall.
- 4.5 Consideration has also been given to other approaches for meeting the Council's criteria of affordability. Given the scale and pace required for cost savings to be made, this cannot be achieved without reducing staffed hours, and as a consequence, reducing the size of the Library network.
- 4.6 Alternative governance and delivery models have been assessed. The Council already works collaboratively with other authorities on its IT systems and stock purchasing and whilst the service will continue to achieve efficiency savings in these areas, in themselves, these are not sufficient to generate the required financial savings.
- 4.7 Representations have been made through the consultation to move Swindon's Libraries into a form of Trust. There are many reasons to consider a Trust model, and other Library Authorities have judged this to be appropriate to their circumstances. The priority focus in Swindon remains to successfully establish and implement the Council's core provision and work to support communities who wish to develop viable and sustainable community-led library services. In

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

the short term, a Trust model in itself will have limited impact on Council budgets overall. However, feasibility work on alternative models of delivery – including trust and mutual models – has been brought forward, with recommendations brought back to Cabinet in February 2017.

- 4.8 New forms of income generation have also been considered. Whilst there are opportunities to create revenue through commercial approaches to use of space, and potentially through events and exhibitions, from experience nationally it is unlikely that any one idea will bring substantial income on its own. Rather a wider commercial strategy for the service is being developed across the range of Library services, to meet the ambition for the service to operate within the overall affordability limit of £1.1m.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The table below sets out the financial framework for the funding of the Council's core provision and transitional funding.

Library (hours it will be staffed)	Buildings	Stock, materials & IT	Staff	Income	Total
Central (47.5 hrs)	88	136	235	(77)	382
West (15 hrs)	44	27	42	(16)	97
Highworth (15 hrs)	20	25	32	(14)	63
North (15 hrs)	37	38	42	(54)	63
Parks (15 hrs)	9	23	43	(7)	68
Professional Library Services		126	416		542
<i>Total</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>375</i>	<i>810</i>	<i>(168)</i>	<i>1215</i>
	New income to be secured through additional income, shared services, further service efficiencies, and alternative models of delivery by March 2020				(115)
					1100
Business rates					292
<i>Transitional funding of £500k to support implementation of the delivery model</i>					

- 5.2 This financial framework has been revised since the Cabinet report of 13 July to include Parks Library in the Council's core provision. This is affordable within the £1.1m financial target for the service if £115k additional income and/or cost reduction, over and above current income is secured by 2020. This will be achieved through generating additional income, development of shared services, further service efficiencies and consideration of alternative models of delivery - including trust and mutual approaches.

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 5.3 Existing income levels have been projected at current levels. At this stage, it is unclear what the effect of reduced staffed hours will have on this rate of income. A risk assessment of current and future income streams has been undertaken and the assumptions identified in the financial model are assessed as a medium level of risk. This will be monitored as the new model is implemented.
- 5.4 The ambition remains to get to a position by 2020 where the costs of the service are absorbed within the overall affordability limit of £1.1m, either through the establishment of alternative models of delivery as referenced in paragraph 5.2 above, or through additional income generation. The feasibility of achieving this will be kept under review as part of the Council's medium term resource planning process.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.5 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.
- 5.6 Swindon Borough Council has a duty as a Library Authority under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 "to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it (section 7), taking into account local needs and within available resources.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.7 As a consequence of this report, there will be substantial change in the Libraries workforce. This will include reductions in the number of posts in the service overall, as well as changing roles that will continue to best deliver the new strategy.
- 5.8 Staff and UNISON have been briefed on the potential implications of the Libraries strategy throughout the year, and have been briefed on the contents of this report. Formal consultation regarding the detail of the proposed Libraries structure will commence on 22 December 2017, and continue through to 13 February 2017. Subject to that consultation process, appointments to posts in a new Libraries staffing structure will commence late February 2017, and continue through March in time for the new model to take effect from 5 April 2017.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.9 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been undertaken to assess the impact of this Libraries strategy and a number of impacts have been identified. These are assessed in more detail in the DIA. A copy of the DIA can be obtained from the report author.

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 5.10 Through the consultation process specific targeted discussions were offered to representative bodies of key groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to understand any potential adverse impacts and to consider what measures could be considered to mitigate these impacts. This included schools, pre-schools, older people's groups and various groups or individuals with characteristics of an equality protected group including; Sexual orientation, Gender identity, Race / Nationality, Older people, Religion and Disability.
- 5.11 The development of the libraries strategy has been presented to four meetings of the Swindon Borough Council Equalities Advisory Forum (EAF). This has provided valued feedback and scrutiny of the strategy development from an equality specific perspective. Prior to engagement and consultation, EAF advised on access to and engagement with groups with protected equality characteristics and helped with evaluating feedback and identifying mitigations that are set out in the DIA.
- 5.12 Users of the library service could be affected by the proposed strategy to varying degrees. The degree of impact and disadvantage would depend on a range of factors including proximity to and ability to travel to a core library, requirement for staff assistance to access different facilities and services such as books and resources, ability to access alternative IT infrastructure, and skills to use IT infrastructure without staff support, and individual circumstances
- 5.13 Particular impacts are likely for older people, children and young people, disabled users including physical disability, mental ill-health, learning disability and visual impairment. There are also likely to be impacts to users on the basis of sex and race. Other groups have been identified who may be particularly affected by the proposed strategy include users of a single library site (including the mobile library), those with a low Financial Economic Status, carers those communities who are facing high levels of deprivation in terms of education, skills and learning particularly around IT access.
- 5.14 It is not known which individual users would be affected by the proposed strategy or to what extent. A range of mitigating measures have been identified which can reduce the adverse impacts for groups impacted by the implementation of the strategy. It should be noted that mitigation measures will not eliminate all adverse impacts and the extent of the impact will depend on individual circumstance and ability to respond to the libraries strategy.
- 5.15 Key measures the service will take forward to mitigate potential adverse impact include:
- 5.15.1 Services, stock and materials available in different formats and languages to meet the needs of the whole range of service users, including provision and promotion of specific services, stock and materials for different groups, including specific materials
-

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 5.15.2 Access statements for each library – statement to be available in libraries and promoted to non-core library users during transition – including map of accessible travel routes including walking and cycling routes, bus networks, bus maps and stops, signposting to nearest accessible facilities including toilets and parking spaces.
- 5.15.3 Information and support will be provided throughout the transition to users of these non-core services to enable them to access library services in alternative ways.
- 5.15.4 Promoting the Home Library Service to those who are unable to access a core library, including expanding and offering this service to carers
- 5.15.5 Replace the deposit collections in residential homes and sheltered accommodation with a purchasable service or a Home Library Service for users who are unable to access a core Library, providing a more targeted service, responding to those individual users needs
- 5.15.6 Promotion of a range of library services though the SAIL programme (Safe and Independent Living). SAIL workers are from a range of agencies who visit people in their homes e.g. social workers, fire service safety checks. This will enable effective promotion of access to services and facilities, core libraries, the home library service and other social contact for older people.
- 5.15.7 SBC is in the process of procuring technology to enable access outside of staffed hours. Details of the technology and the policies and procedures to support its use are unknown at this stage, but it is likely that, this could have particular impacts for: children, young people and students under a certain age who are unaccompanied will be unable to have access to a library during unstaffed hours; older people who may be more nervous of accessing a building using technology or of using an unstaffed library; disabled or older people who need staff support to access library services and facilities.
- 5.15.8 The extent of these impacts are unknown and will depend on the implementation of the technology enabled access. The Council will develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures to support and enable the most appropriate and inclusive access for library users. This could include for example safe and appropriate health and safety and fire evacuation policies and procedures, and child protection policies, as well as training and support particularly for those who may be less confident using technology enabled access to library buildings.

Risk Management

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Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Services

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 5.16 Any risks arising from the recommendations of this report will be managed as part of their implementation.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Libraries Needs Assessment – February 2016
7.2 Libraries Emerging Model – February 2016
7.3 Libraries Strategy and Delivery Model – July 2016

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 Consultation Process
8.2 Appendix 2 Public Consultation Report – Phil Back and Associates
8.3 Appendix 3 Libraries Vision, Strategy and Delivery Model
8.4 Appendix 4 Community Libraries – Transitional Funding Bid Process

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for Month Year.

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Appendix One Consultation Process

- 1.1 The consultation process ran from 1st August and 30th September 2016. It consisted of:
 - 1.1.1 The wide advertisement of the consultation, through all Libraries and also through information provided to each household in the Borough, inviting people to respond either through an online survey or through a paper version, made available at Libraries or from the Council directly on request;
 - 1.1.2 Public information explaining the background to the need for changes in the way the Library service is delivered, and setting out a proposed strategy and delivery model on which views were sought, provided in paper form and electronically through the Council website;
 - 1.1.3 A series of drop-in sessions hosted in all Libraries to promote the consultation and to give local people an opportunity to ask questions about the proposals. In addition, Council officers undertook a programme of face-to-face interviews with local people using the same questionnaire as in the survey. An open public meeting was held on 6th September at which the Cabinet Member for Communities and Council officers met with residents and interested parties to present the proposed strategy, and respond to questions;
 - 1.1.4 A questionnaire survey, made available online and on paper, was developed in consultation between Council officers and independent advisers. People were invited to provide information about their use of the service, their priorities for its future, their views on the proposed strategy, and suggestions for other models the Council might usefully explore.
- 1.2 The data analysis and consultation report at Appendix 2 to the main report has been independently prepared. As with any exercise of this nature, the consultation report presents the views and perspectives of respondents, regardless of how well-informed or justified these opinions may be. All the data presented in this report is subject to a guarantee of confidentiality.

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The future of Swindon's Libraries

Report on consultation, autumn 2016

A report by Phil Back Associates Ltd

for Swindon Borough Council

October 2016

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Executive summary

1. This report summarises the results of a consultation on the future of Swindon's libraries, run in August and September 2016, to which a total of 1,632 valid responses were received. It also includes a summary of a number of separate written submissions received through the consultation concerning the proposal being put forward by the Borough Council.
2. Respondents to the consultation are almost all library users, and most are local residents, but there are also a number of responses from groups and organisations with an interest in the subject. The respondents are more likely to be older people, and women are more likely to have responded than men; a third of respondents have some sort of disability, most frequently related to mobility or long-term health. Two in five respondents is working, and a slightly higher proportion are retired. A quarter of respondents have children at home.
3. There is a particular concentration of response from the Wroughton area and from the south of the urban area, as well as from Highworth; response is more patchy from areas such as Penhill, Pinehurst and Gorse Hill. Response from eastern Swindon is also high. There is a significant interest in the survey from users of Wroughton, Park and Covingham libraries in particular.
4. Three quarters of respondents have access to a car, and two thirds have a bus stop within easy walking distance. One in three has a concessionary bus pass. Around 5% of respondents has none of these.
5. Those who use the non-core libraries tend to visit more frequently than those who regularly use one of the proposed core libraries. Three quarters of those using a non-core library visit at least monthly, but only half of those who use the North or West libraries do so. Highworth has a large group of regular users, who tend to be concentrated at the older end of the age-range. A third of those who use non-core libraries regularly are also monthly visitors to the Central library, and small proportions of those who use the non-core libraries also patronise the North or West libraries, but very few use Highworth, which thus caters primarily for a localised catchment.
6. Four out of five respondents choose a library close to home as their first choice; one in eight choose one close to a workplace. But two in five say there are other reasons for choosing their preferred library, and their responses suggest that these include issues relating to opening hours, stock, staff, and convenience in relation to other activities. Over half of all library visits are made on foot, with a third made by car.
7. A quarter of people say the proposed changes will make no difference to their use of the library service. One in seven says they will change libraries, with Central the most likely choice. One in five intends to stop using the service if the changes go ahead. A third of all respondents don't know what course of action they will take.

8. Saturday morning is the most popular time for those who intend to use a core library if the proposal is implemented; weekday afternoons and weekday mornings are also popular choices, with little difference in result according to the weekday. Weekday evenings are less popular, and Sundays even less so; Sunday evenings would attract very few visitors. Respondents with children especially favour Saturday mornings, and also like weekday afternoons; weekend evenings are not popular with this group. Over 65s prefer mornings over afternoons, but are reluctant to entertain evenings or Sundays. Respondents with disabilities are equally keen on weekday mornings and afternoons, and Saturday mornings; they are much less enthusiastic about weekday or weekend evenings.
9. One in seven respondents say they are likely to use the proposed online reservation service, and a third are willing to consider occasional use; two in five library users say they will not use this service.
10. There is limited interest in becoming part of a group to establish community-based library services; a quarter of respondents express a degree of interest. There is a similar level of interest in volunteering to help in a library.
11. Many respondents explicitly say they see no advantages in this proposal. Where advantages are identified, respondents see primarily the cost savings to the Council, along with the possible advantage of a more focussed service. A number of respondents acknowledge that this proposal is an improvement on its predecessor, primarily because it allows additional libraries to remain open.
12. There is widespread disappointment at the loss of local services and the anticipation of reduced accessibility to the service that remains. There are concerns about the distance and travel implications of the reduced number of library outlets. This is thought likely to reduce take-up of the service.
13. The proposal is widely thought to be likely to be detrimental to children and families, and to the elderly. There are particular concerns about the less mobile, and the isolation that may result from the library being too far away from them to allow easy access, compounded for some by limited familiarity with new technology. Respondents identify a need for access to the service without reliance on technology (for those without IT at home) and also for the IT services provided within the library.
14. There are also significant concerns that the proposal will impact negatively on people who are less well off, both by making it more difficult for them to access services they need and by withdrawing services from areas of greatest socio-economic need. Many point out that a significantly disadvantaged area in East Swindon will be left unserved.
15. There are also significant concerns that the proposal will impact on community life, affecting both informal contact for people (especially older people) and reducing opportunities for groups and activities that utilise library premises.
16. There is a strong concern over the loss of skilled staff, both for their knowledge and expertise but also because of their friendliness and for the support they provide. A

large number of respondents believe the proposal places excessive reliance on volunteers, who may be difficult to find and whose reliability is in doubt.

17. Significant levels of doubt arise over the capacity of volunteers to handle the management, financial and legal obligations and responsibilities associated with running a library. There is also strong scepticism over reliance on technology, and frequent reference to the regular failure of existing technology. Many respondents express concern over safety and security in unstaffed libraries, or libraries staffed by volunteers. A number of people point out that voluntary effort is more likely to be forthcoming in areas of relative affluence, and that this will compound the withdrawal of services in areas such as East Swindon where recruitment of volunteers is likely to be more difficult.
18. For many respondents, there are concerns over the funding of community-based libraries. Some see the transitional funding as inadequate, others as unlikely to be replaced once it runs out, or dependent on the ability and willingness of parishes to make up the cost of keeping libraries operating. There is a prominent view that the Council should seek an alternative solution through raising Council Tax to cover the shortfall.
19. Several respondents reject the proposition on the basis that they already pay for this service through their Council Tax, and resent the idea that they should have to accept voluntary provision, or (if parishes set a precept to fund community-based libraries) pay additional taxation to provide what they view as a core public service.
20. A significant number of people urge the Council to consider, or to adopt, the staff-led proposal for a trust model. There is a level of suspicion that the Council is not being open or transparent about this proposition.
21. Some respondents ask the Council to look at delivery models being deployed elsewhere, where austerity has had a less draconian impact on the library service. A service merger with Wiltshire, or a stock-sharing arrangement with another service, are suggested as possible solutions.
22. Several respondents make specific requests for their local library to be retained. The libraries at Park and Wroughton are those most frequently identified but are by no means the only ones. A significant number of people raise concerns over the future of the mobile and deposit collections services. Concern over reduced hours leads many to suggest that the limited hours available be redistributed to enable the non-central libraries to open for longer.
23. There is a measure of scepticism about the consultation and the willingness of the Council to listen to the response it produces. A number of people are concerned that the opinions expressed in the last exercise have not been taken notice of, whilst others are clearly becoming fatigued at answering what they see as the same questions about a proposition they reject.

1 Introduction and methodology

Swindon Borough Council currently runs 15 libraries and a mobile service. However, financial pressures on the Council mean that significant savings must be made in the cost of the library service over the next few years, and the Council has therefore developed proposals for a redesigned service that it believes will achieve the savings required whilst continuing to meet the need for the service. At the same time, changes in the ways people access books, information and other media give the Council the opportunity to explore the possibilities offered by new technology to deliver aspects of the service.

An engagement process took place in spring 2016 to explore public reaction to an emerging model of library service provision, based around a focus on Council service from the Central Library and the possibility of community-run libraries to replace other library services across the Borough. The results of this engagement process were explored in detail in our earlier report in May 2016.

This further consultation explores public reaction to an alternative option for service delivery based around the retention of Council-run services at Central library, and also (with limited hours) at Highworth, North Swindon (Orbital) and West Swindon libraries. Council services would be withdrawn from other libraries, but support would be provided to enable local communities to take over local libraries and run them as community-led outlets, should they wish to do so. The consultation reported here ran from 1st August to 30th September 2016.

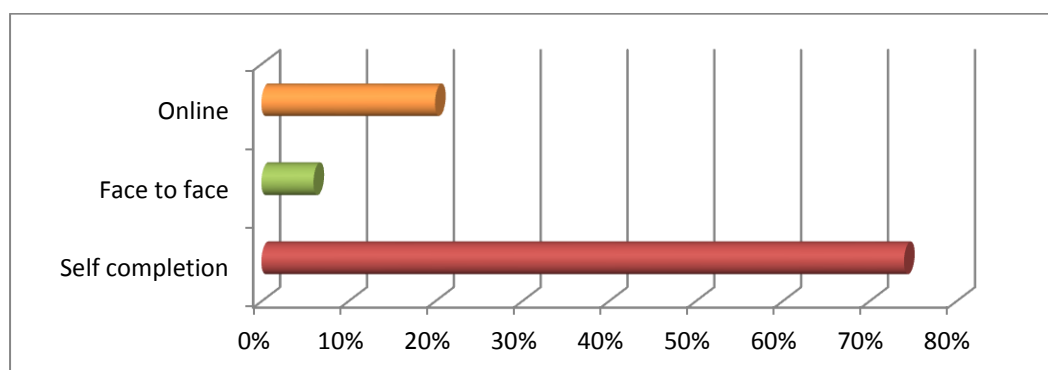
The consultation was widely advertised, through libraries themselves but also through information provided to each household in the Borough, inviting people to respond either through an online survey or through a paper version, made available at libraries or from the authority directly on request. Council officers held a series of drop-in sessions in all libraries to promote the consultation and to give local people an opportunity to ask questions about the proposals. In addition, Council officers undertook a programme of face to face interviews with local people using the same questionnaire as in the survey.

This table shows the response secured from each of the different approaches used.

Table 1: Origin of response

	Number of responses	Proportion of respondents
Self-completion	1,207	74%
Face to face	98	6%
Online	327	20%
N (=100%)	1,632	

Chart 1: Origin of response



The total response of 1,632 valid responses is significantly less than the 2,688 responses to the engagement on the emerging model. The study reaches no conclusions about this difference, although there are some indications as to why response might be lower. The two studies are only capable of limited comparison, because the proposal, the information presented, and in many cases the questions themselves are different.

In addition to the response received through the questionnaire, the Council received a number of written responses from individuals and representative groups, both by letter and e-mail. This report includes a section which attempts to summarise these responses, which are reproduced in full as an appendix.

Responses to the questionnaire are considered as of equal weight, and each is counted only once regardless of the numbers of respondents it may claim to represent. However, the response of groups is also explored separately within the analysis.

The questionnaire used in this consultation was developed in discussion between Council officers and ourselves. The data analysis and the report have been undertaken from a completely independent perspective. As with any exercise of this nature, the report presents the views and perspectives of respondents, regardless of how well-informed or justified these opinions may be.

All the data presented in this report is subject to a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity, and care has been taken not to allow any person participating in the engagement to be identifiable from their response.

Not everyone answered every question. Sometimes this was because their previous answers took them down one of two routes through the questionnaire, but in other cases this was because they chose not to respond to particular questions. Each table in the study therefore shows not only the breakdown of response, but also the numbers of people responding.

Similarly, some people gave more than one answer to a question. Where the question allowed this, these answers are recorded and this can mean that a table's total response exceeds 100%. Where the question explicitly requested only one answer, multiple answers have been disregarded. All data have been rounded to the nearest whole number; where the number of responses exceeds zero, but is less than half of 1%, an asterisk (*) is used to indicate the presence of data.

2 Respondent Profile

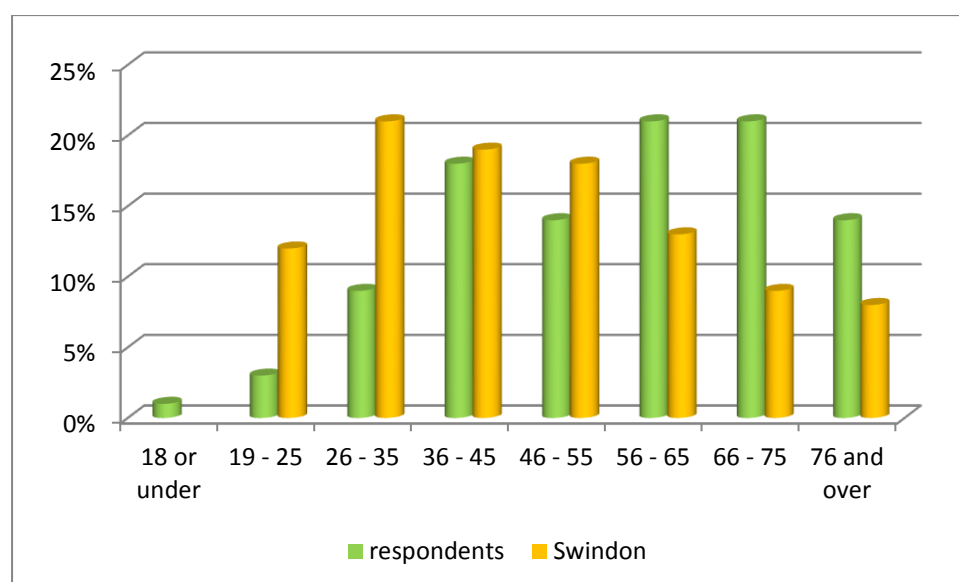
2.1 Age

Respondents were asked to disclose their age, and the results have been grouped into broad age bands, as in this table:

Table 2: Respondent age

Age-group	Proportion of respondents	Proportion of adults in Swindon ¹
18 or under	1%	
19 - 25	3%	12%
26 - 35	9%	21%
36 - 45	18%	19%
46 - 55	14%	18%
56 - 65	21%	13%
66 - 75	21%	9%
76 and over	14%	8%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,438</i>	<i>162,633</i>

Chart 2: Respondent age



¹ All population data in this chapter are drawn from Neighbourhood Statistics, 2011 Census, for the Borough of Swindon.

Although there are respondents from all age-groups, there are more older residents in the response than would be predicted from their presence in the local population. A third of respondents are aged over 65, and well over two thirds are over 45 years of age. A quarter of respondents are aged between 26 and 45, but only 4% are under the age of 25. This figure includes a small number of responses made by, or on behalf of, children.

Comparison with the proportions of adults in Swindon's population indicates a disproportionate response from the older age-groups within the local community. The proportions of people in the survey aged over 55 are significantly higher than their presence in the community and this is especially true among younger retired people, who are more than twice as likely to be present in the survey database than their presence in the population would suggest. In contrast, the participation of under 35s is much lower than a representative figure would be, and this is especially the case among under 25s.²

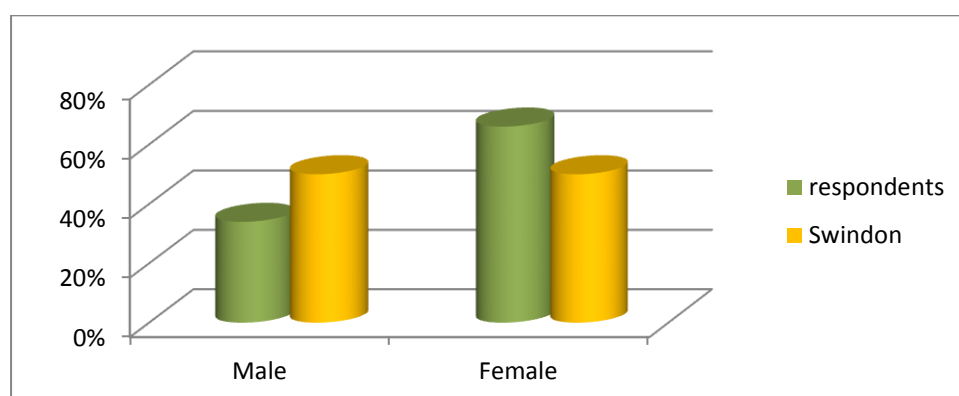
2.2 Gender

This table shows the split of response by gender:

Table 3: Respondent gender

Gender	Proportion of respondents	Proportion of adult population
Male	34%	50%
Female	66%	50%
Transgender	*	
N (=100%)	1,457	162,633

Chart 3: Respondent gender



² This comparison is not strictly accurate, due to the presence in the survey response of a small number of non-adults; but the picture of uneven response across adult age-groups is nevertheless clear.

A third of respondents are male, while two-thirds are female. In the adult population, there is an even split between males and females in the Borough, so the survey response includes a higher proportion of females than might be inferred from population data. A small number of transgender people have identified as such in the survey, less than 1% overall; no data exists to assess how representative this proportion may be of the wider population.

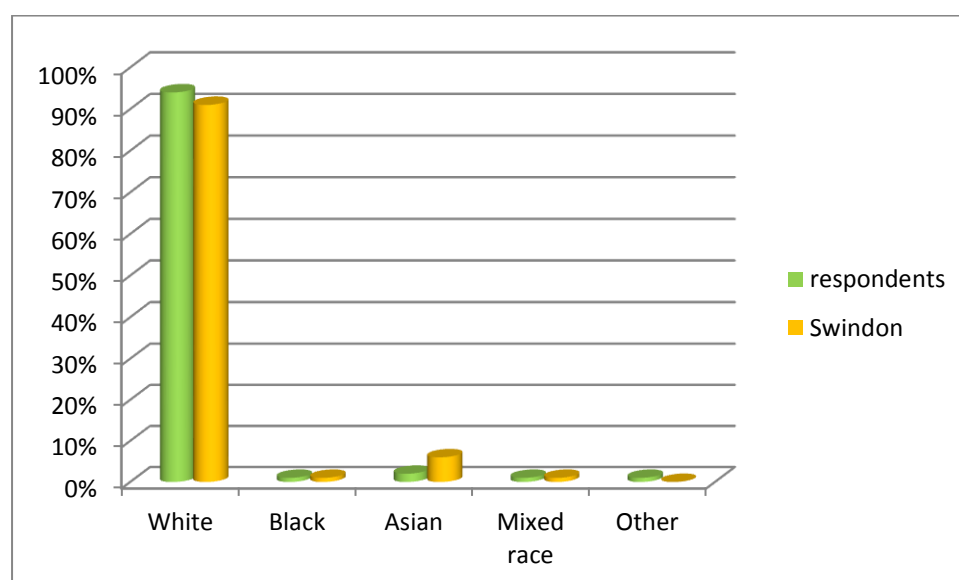
2.3 Ethnicity

The ethnic origin of respondents is shown here:

Table 4: Respondent ethnicity

Ethnicity	Proportion of respondents	Proportion of adult population
White	94%	91%
Black	1%	1%
Asian	2%	6%
Mixed race	1%	1%
Other	1%	*
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,370</i>	<i>162,633</i>

Chart 4: Respondent ethnicity



The response is heavily concentrated in the white population of the Borough; nineteen of out twenty responses come from this part of the community. Other ethnicities are represented, nevertheless, although the comparison indicates that non-white respondents are proportionately fewer than might have been expected from their presence in the local population.

A closer analysis of responses in this regard indicates a small but highly diverse BME population in the Borough, with small numbers of people from a wide range of different backgrounds, cultures and languages, including people from Arab, Chinese and Latin American backgrounds.

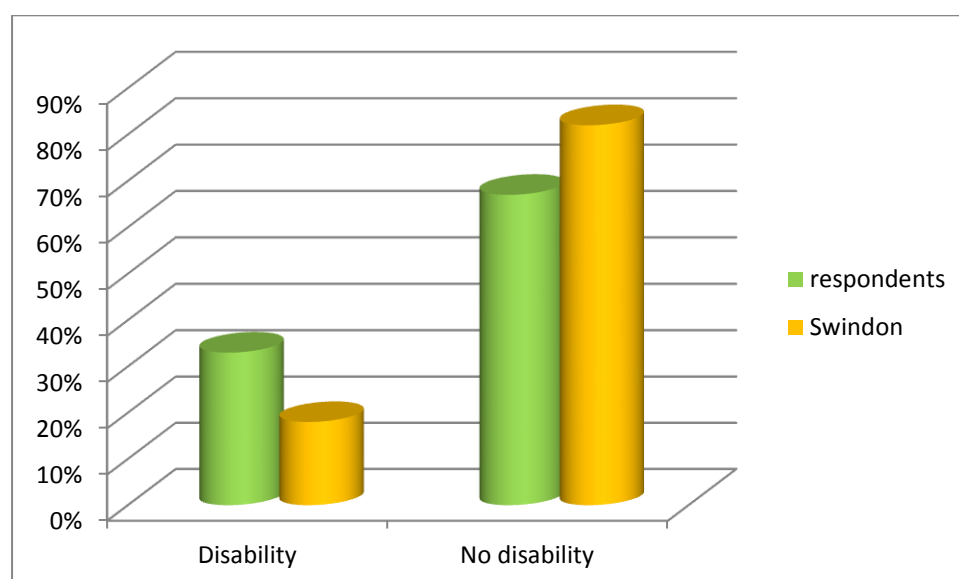
2.4 Disability

Levels of disability in the response are shown in this table:

Table 5: Respondent disability

	Proportion of respondents	Proportion of adult population ³
Disability	33%	18%
No disability	67%	82%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,294</i>	<i>167,774</i>

Chart 5: Respondent disability



³ Because of the way Government statistics on disability are presented, this column actually includes 16 and 17 year olds as well as adults, hence the slightly higher base number than in other comparisons we have made.

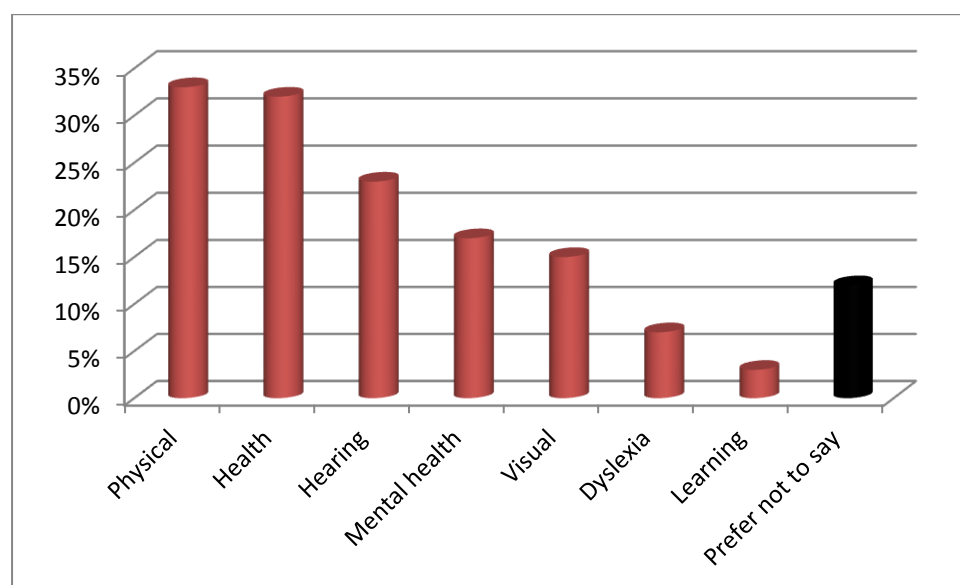
One in three respondents identifies themselves as having some form of disability. The proportion of people with disabilities is significantly higher than would be expected from the general population data, but this is certainly influenced to some extent by the age profile of respondents, as older people are more likely to be experiencing disability. Nevertheless, the proportion of people with disabilities in this study exceeds by some distance the 25% who participated in the engagement exercise.

This table explores the different dimensions of disability among respondents:

Table 5a: Respondent disability by type of disability

Disability	Proportion of respondents who have a disability	Proportion of all respondents
Physical disability	33%	11%
Long-term health problem	32%	11%
Hearing impairment	23%	7%
Depression or mental health	17%	6%
Visual impairment	15%	5%
Dyslexia or reading disorder	7%	2%
Learning difficulties	3%	1%
Prefer not to say	12%	4%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>427</i>	<i>1,294</i>

Chart 5a: Respondent disability by type of disability



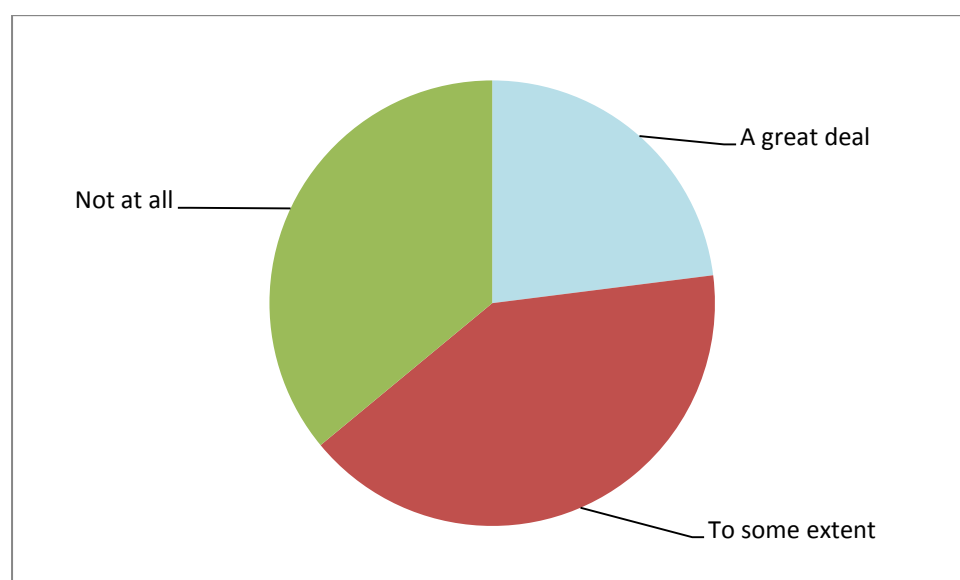
Several respondents have more than one area of disability or impairment, so the proportions add up to more than 100%. The most common aspect of disability among respondents is a physical disability, which affects around a third of those who declare themselves as disabled. Just under a third report long-term health problems (which include diabetes), while a quarter have hearing issues and one in six experience mental health challenges. One in seven are visually limited, and respondents also include smaller numbers of people with dyslexia, or with learning difficulties.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how their disability affects their use of the library, and their answers are reported here:

Table 5b: Impact of disability on use of library

	Proportion of respondents with disabilities
A great deal	23%
To some extent	41%
Not at all	36%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	353

Chart 5b: Impact of disability on use of library



A quarter of those who report a disability say that it has a substantial impact on their use of the library, and a further two in five find their use of the library limited to some extent by the nature of their disability. Over a third of people with disabilities, however, say that their disability has no impact at all on their use of the library service.

Responses later in the survey indicate that several people have mobility limitations that may affect their capacity to walk even moderate distances, or to access public transport; others require parking spaces that are nearby to their destination, or level access. Disability may also limit people's capacity to carry items, to stand, or to find items without assistance. In some cases, these people are confined largely to their own homes and are dependent on services that come to them.

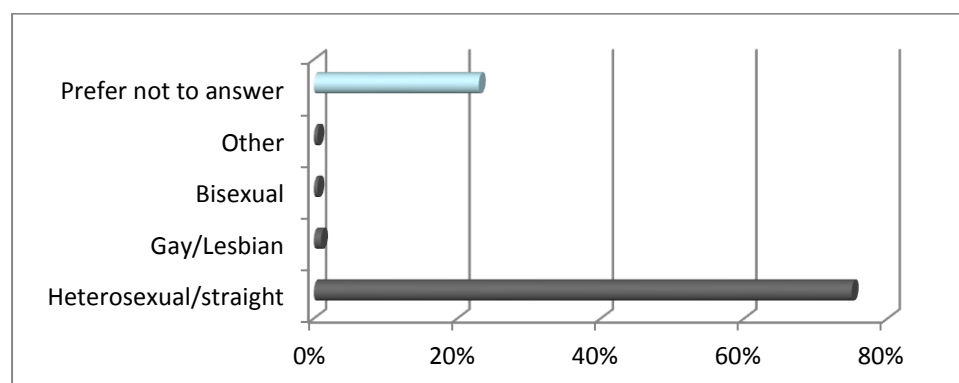
2.5 Sexual identity

Respondents were asked to indicate their sexual identity, and answer as follows:

Table 6: Sexual identity

Sexual identity	Proportion of respondents
Heterosexual/straight	75%
Gay/Lesbian	1%
Bisexual	*
Other	*
Prefer not to answer	23%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	1,361

Chart 6: Sexual identity



The overwhelming majority of respondents are heterosexual in terms of their sexual identity; 97% of those willing to disclose this characteristic identify as heterosexual. Whilst there are no national data that would allow a precise assessment of the representativeness of this result, there is a strong suggestion that gay, lesbian and bisexual people are a relatively low proportion of the response to this survey compared to their presence in their population. The proportion of people unwilling to answer this question has increased substantially from the previous study (when it was 16%).

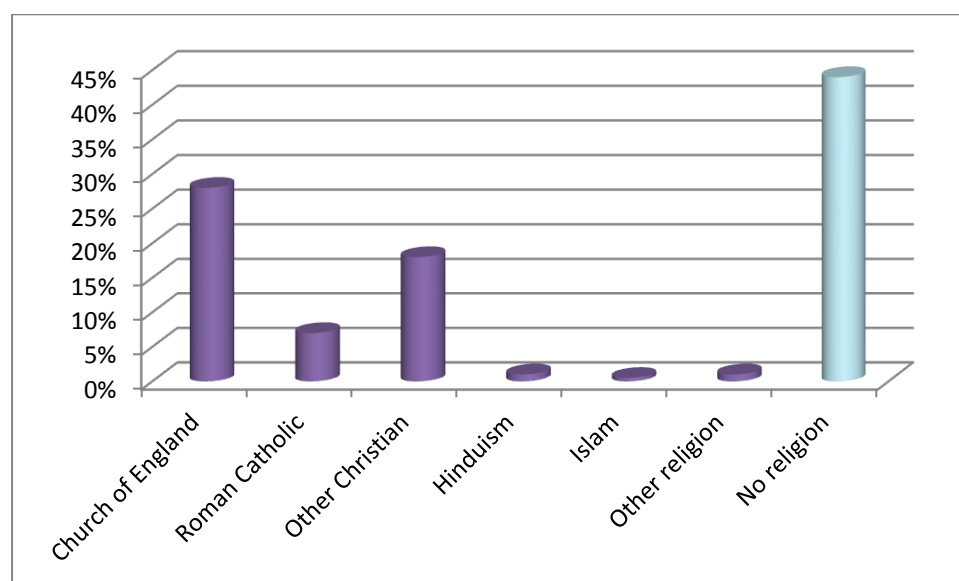
2.6 Religion

Asked to indicate their religion, respondents answer as follows:

Table 7: Religion

Religion	Proportion of respondents
Church of England	28%
Roman Catholic	7%
Other Christian	18%
Hinduism	1%
Islam	*
Other religion	1%
No religion	44%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,272</i>

Chart 7: Religion



Over half of all respondents to the survey have some religious affiliation, though it is clear that this is stronger for some than for others. The largest single group among these are in Christian denominations, who account for 53% of all respondents; over half of these are adherents of the Church of England, while the rest spread across a range of religious preferences that include Catholicism, Methodism, Evangelicalism and Baptists, as well as several who simply describe themselves as 'Christian'.

There are adherents of other religions in the response, but their numbers are very small. Hinduism is the largest, but there are also small numbers of Muslims, and also some Buddhists, Pagans and Pantheists in the dataset. Over two-fifths of people claim no religious affiliation at all.

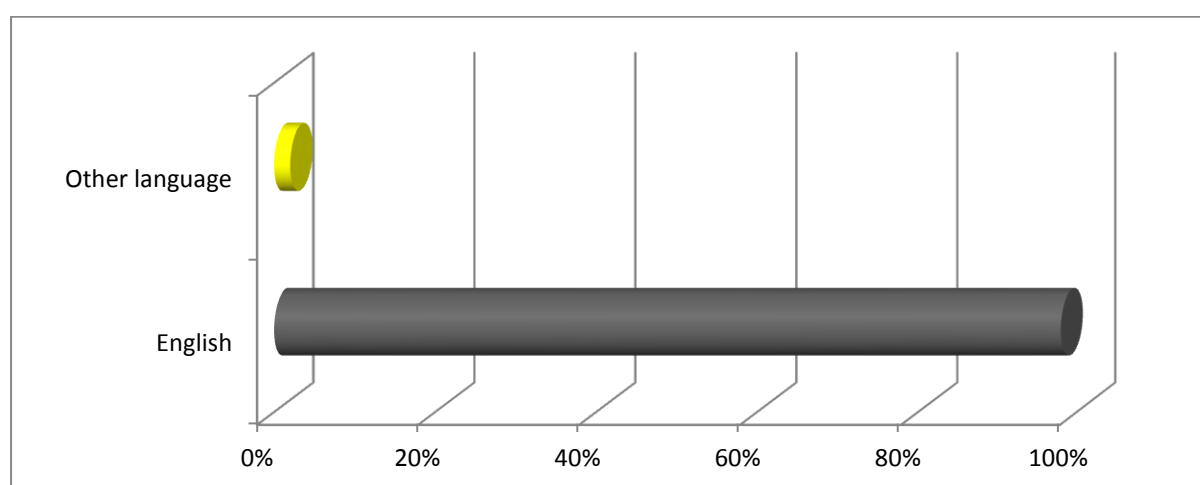
2.7 Language

Respondents were asked to provide their main language, and answer thus:

Table 8: Language

Language	Proportion of respondents
English	98%
Other language	2%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,441</i>

Chart 8: Language



The vast majority of respondents have English as their main language.

Among the very small proportion whose main language is not English, there are around 35 different main languages, indicating an enormous degree of diversity; the most frequently mentioned are the main European languages of French, Spanish, German and Italian, with many other European languages (including Welsh) mentioned. There are also speakers of Asian languages including Nepali, Telugu and Thai as well as Mandarin Chinese, Arabic and Japanese.

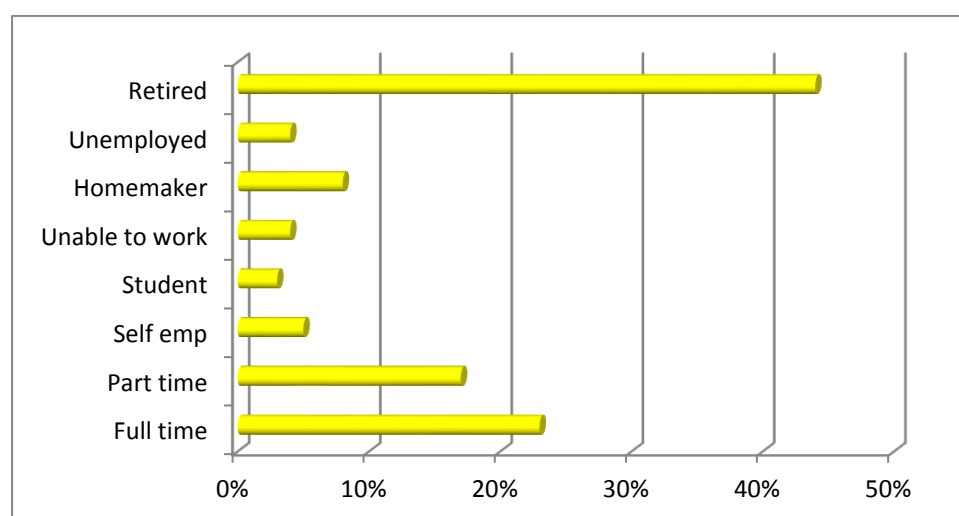
2.8 Working status

The working status of respondents is shown in this table:

Table 9: Working status

Employment status	Proportion of respondents
Working full time	23%
Working part-time	17%
Self employed	5%
Student in full-time education	3%
Permanently sick or unable to work	4%
Looking after the home	8%
Unemployed/looking for work	4%
Retired	44%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,465</i>

Chart 9: Working status



Less than half the respondents to the survey are working in some form; the proportions who work full-time exceed those who work part-time, with a small group of self-employed people making this group add up to 45% of respondents. Almost all the remainder are retired people, who account for an almost equal proportion of the response. Although there are people from the other employment status groups in the survey, their numbers are relatively small in comparison. Whilst there are differences between this table and its counterpart in the earlier study, the overall picture is not dissimilar.

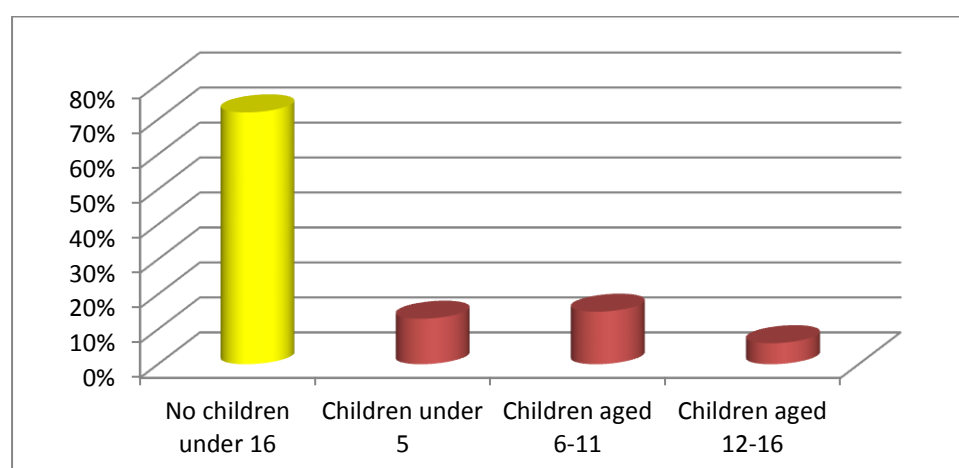
2.9 Household composition

The composition of respondents' households is shown in this table:

Table 10: Household composition

Household with...	Proportion of respondents
No children under 16	72%
Children under 5	13%
Children aged 6-11	15%
Children aged 12-16	6%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,407</i>

Chart 10: Household composition



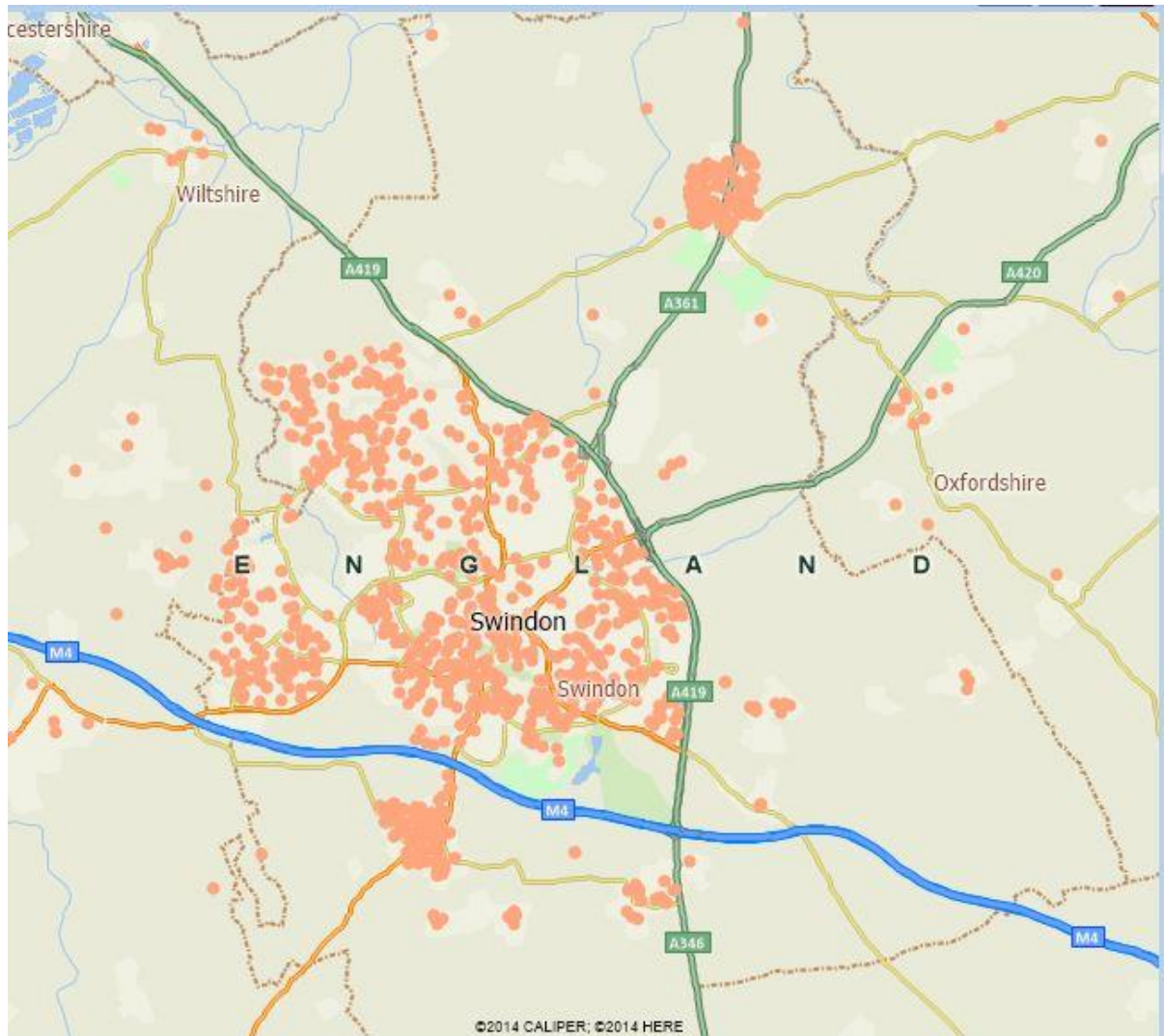
Some households have children in more than one category, so the totals exceed 100%. Just under three-quarters of the households represented in the survey are 'empty nests' with no children living at home, leaving just over a quarter where children are present. This reflects the age profile of the response, where older people predominate. Two in five of those households with children have under fives at home, and a similar, slightly higher, proportion have children of primary school age. One in five of those households that have children in them include one or more teenagers.

Households with teenagers are a little less frequent in this study than in the previous engagement, but the dominance of childless households is unchanged. There is a slightly higher representation of households with younger children, but the difference is small.

2.10 Geography

Respondents were asked to supply a postcode, and those who gave enough information in this respect (1,466 respondents) have been included in the map below:

Map 1: Geography of response



The distribution of response shows participation from most of Swindon, albeit with differences in the concentrations of response. There are concentrations of response in the south of the Borough, in Highworth and in Wroughton. The pattern of response from eastern Swindon is less concentrated, but is nevertheless substantial. Response is comparatively less strong from north Swindon, and even more so from west Swindon. Areas such as Penhill, Gorse Hill and Pinehurst contribute to the survey on a much more limited basis.

It is also noticeable that the survey has attracted interest from outside the Borough, with a scattering of responses from villages outside the boundary but for which Swindon or

Highworth might represent a local library, especially for those residents who work, study or shop in Swindon. Cirencester is well represented; a smaller-scale map would also reveal a small number of individual contributions from Bath, Cheltenham and Worcester, and individuals contributing from Liverpool and Sheffield.

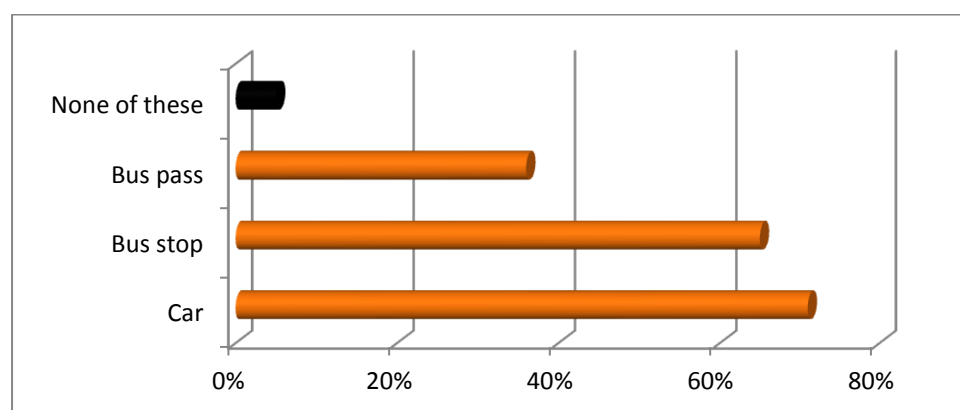
2.11 Access to transport

The table below shows the proportions of respondents who have access to different types of transport.

Table 11: Access to transport

	Proportion of respondents
A car either as a driver or passenger	71%
A bus stop within easy walking distance of home	65%
A concessionary bus pass	36%
None of these	5%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,455</i>

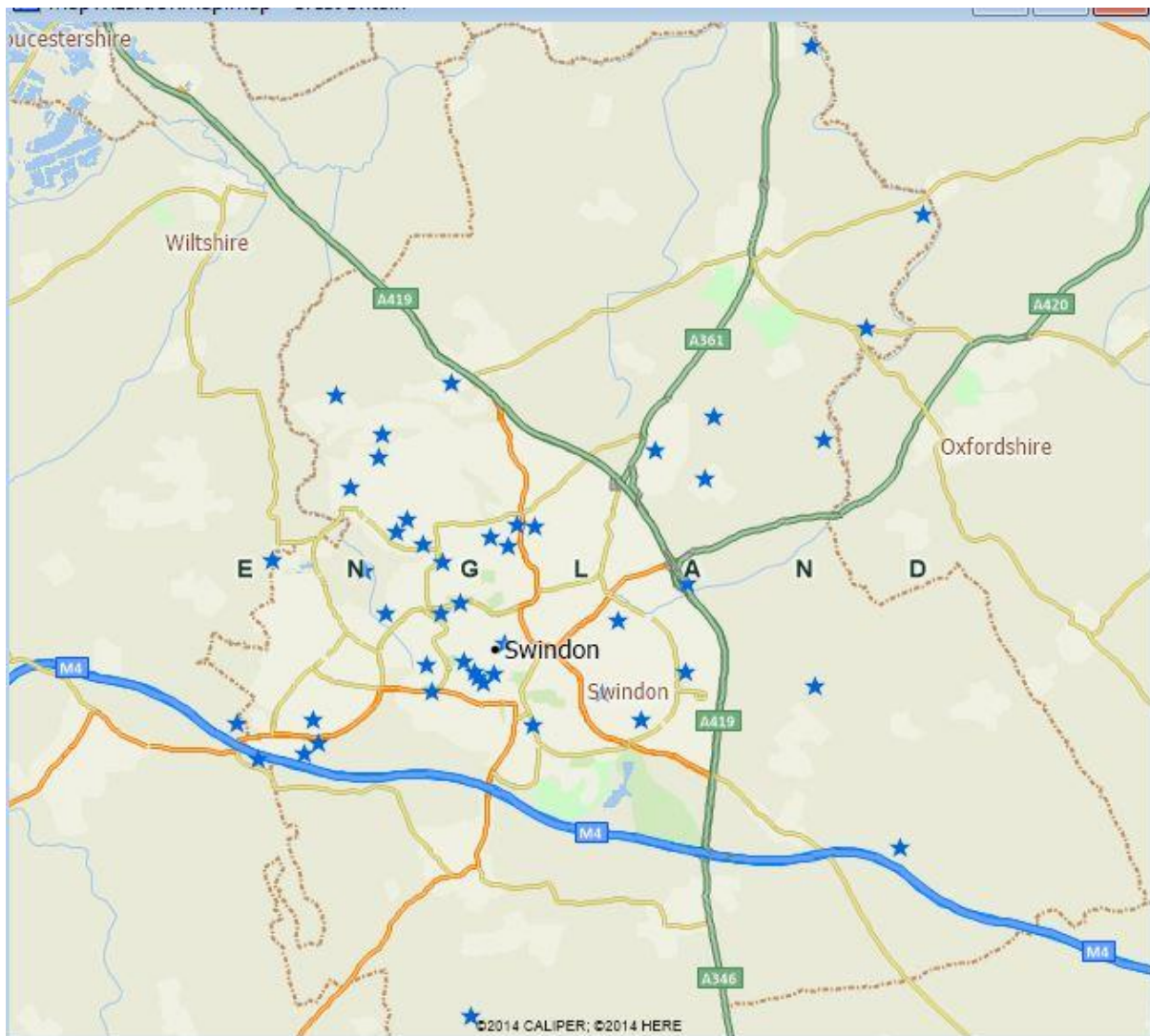
Chart 11: Access to transport



Close to three-quarters of respondents have access to a private car, either as a driver or passenger, while two thirds have a bus stop within convenient walking distance (as defined by the person completing the questionnaire). Over a third possess a concessionary bus pass, either as a disabled person or as an older person. Just one in twenty respondents has none of these, but two-fifths of this group say their disability has a significant impact on their use of the library. The question does not, of course, rule out the possibility of other means of accessing services, such as by bicycle, mobility scooter, or through the agency of another person.

A closer look at those with no access to any of these means of transport indicates that they are more likely to be aged in their thirties and forties; in contrast, relatively few people aged 66-75 have none of these means of transport available to them. They are also more likely to be male. Nearly half (46%) of those with no access to transport are people with disabilities, in contrast to just a third of the total response to the survey. These respondents' geographical locations (of those who provided postcodes) are shown in this map:

Map 2: Location of those with no access to transport



Several of these respondents live in outlying areas of the Borough, but many are resident within areas that are served by public transport. To the extent that there is any concentration at all in this data, it is in the northwest of the Borough around the Rodbourne Cheney area.

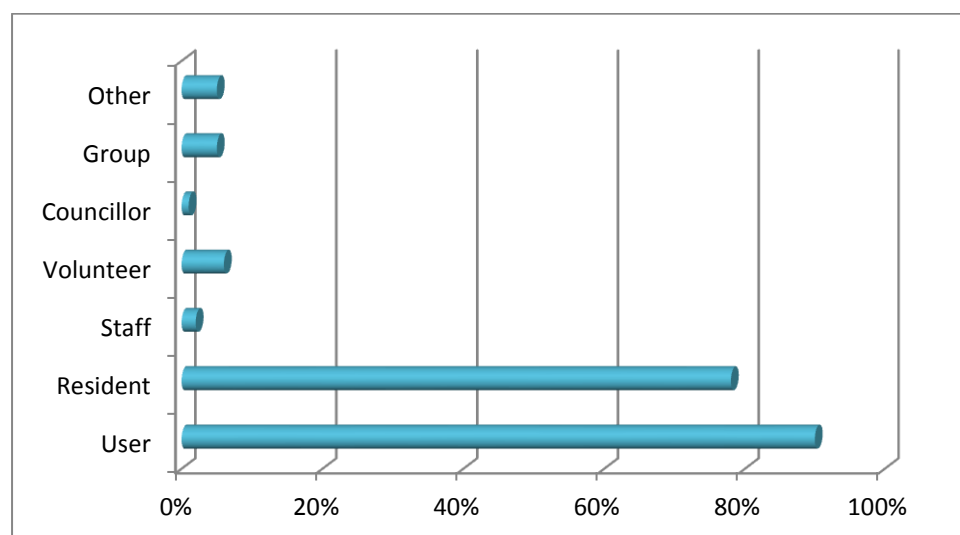
2.12 Nature of interest in the survey

Respondents were invited to indicate the nature of their interest in the survey, and respond as follows:

Table 12: Nature of interest in library survey

Interest	Proportion of respondents
User of Swindon's libraries	90%
Local resident	78%
Library staff	2%
Library volunteer	6%
Local Councillor	1%
Representative of a group/organisation	5%
Interested in some other way	5%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,613</i>

Chart 12: Nature of interest in library survey



The response is dominated by library users; only a small number of people who do not use libraries have taken part in the survey. This is at least partly due to the distribution method chosen, with most forms acquired through local libraries, but also reflects the likelihood of greater interest in the topic from those most likely to be affected by any decision about the service.

Four out of five respondents identify themselves as local residents, and the map shows that not all participants live in the immediate area of the Borough. However, comparison with

postcodes indicates that most of those who do not explicitly identify as local residents are, in fact, resident within the Borough.

Other groups are present in smaller numbers in the survey. Staff, volunteers and local Councillors (Council and Parish) are all present. The organisations taking part include Parish Councils, residents' and community groups, political parties, faith groups, charitable bodies in a variety of fields, and several friends' groups of individual libraries.

There are only minor differences between this breakdown of interest and that from the previous study. The proportion of users and local residents are both a little lower, whilst there is a higher volunteer presence in the current survey, but the differences are not significant.

Those who declare other interests include members of Friends Groups, and also members or leaders of groups who use library premises for their meetings. They also include parents, grandparents and carers (professional and voluntary) who take children to the library. A small proportion are people with more general concerns about library services in general, and there are also retired librarians and teachers, and members of other residents' or interest groups. Other interests include being a local MP, a political party, and people who use the library services to support their professional, student or amateur research interests.

3 Using the library service

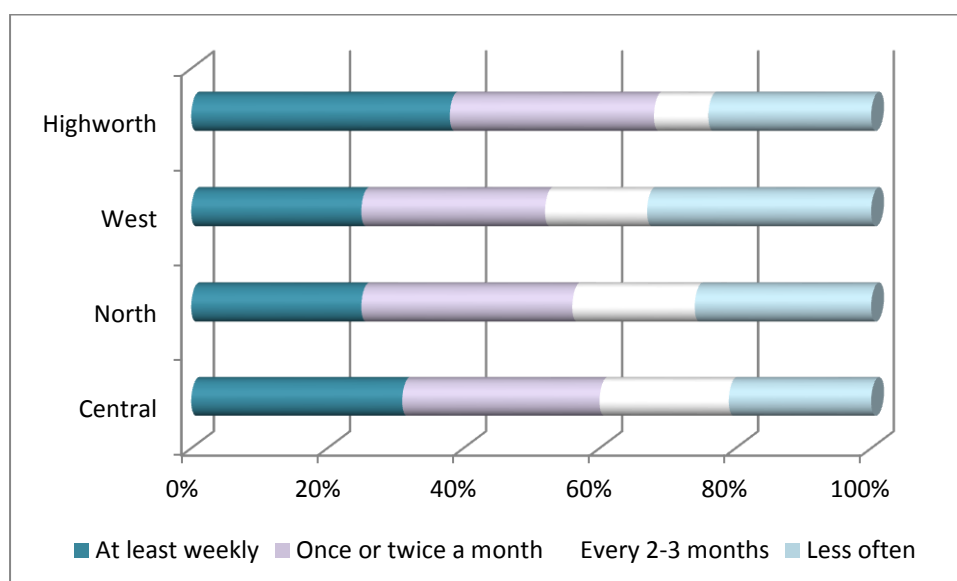
This table analyses data on the frequency of visiting different libraries in the Borough, including the Central library, the three other libraries proposed for retention, and the other libraries where the Council proposes to withdraw its management. The data thus represents respondents' own perspective on their frequency of visiting, and will not necessarily be consistent with data collected by the service itself, since this covers all users rather than just those answering this question. The question was not uniformly answered, however, with some respondents ticking the box to indicate they 'never visit' a particular library, whilst others left it blank. 'Never' responses thus distort the comparison between libraries, and the table that follows removes them to allow that comparison between usage frequencies to be more meaningfully made.

Table 13: Frequency of visiting individual libraries (excluding 'never' responses) by library visited

	Proportion of all respondents for each library				
	At least weekly	Once or twice a month	Every 2-3 months	Less often	N (=100%)
Central	31%	29%	19%	21%	983
North	25%	31%	18%	26%	508
West	25%	27%	15%	33%	422
Highworth	38%	30%	8%	24%	346
Any other library	40%	34%	9%	18%	821

This table summarises the response to the question for each of the identified libraries, with the percentages adding up to 100% along the rows.

Chart 13: Frequency of visiting individual libraries (excluding 'never' responses) by library visited



Of those who use the Central library, the largest proportion are those who visit weekly, who account for a third of visitors; a similar proportion visit Central at least monthly, so three in five (60%) of Central library users are regular visitors (i.e. at least once a month). North library has a slightly lower proportion of weekly visitors, as does the West library, but even so more than half (56% and 52% respectively) of the users of these two facilities are regulars. However, the library with the highest proportion of regular visitors is Highworth; two in five Highworth users attend weekly, and a further 30% at least once a month, giving Highworth a total of two thirds (68%) of its users who can be defined as regulars.

Across the other non-core libraries, weekly visiting is even more the pattern. Two in five of those who use non-core libraries do so weekly, and a further third go at least once a month, meaning that 75% of those who use non-core libraries do so regularly.

Looking at the age distribution of library users, the most frequent visitors to the Central library are those aged 19-25 and those aged 46-55, while 26-45 year olds are much less frequent users of this facility. In contrast, 26-45s visiting the North library do so more frequently, and 19-25 much less often. The West library's most frequent visitors are over 65s, with 26-45s visiting less frequently. Highworth too attracts more frequent visits from its older clientele, and 19-55s tend to visit less regularly. The remaining libraries, taken together as a group, have a particular appeal to 26-45s and to over 75s, but also show a more even pattern of visiting according to age.

Men who use Central library do so more frequently than women, but women are the more frequent visitors to North, West and Highworth libraries. Women are much more frequent users of the non-core libraries than their male counterparts.

Although this summarises the ways individual libraries are used, it is also helpful to look at users as a single group and analyse how they are distributed across the range of libraries

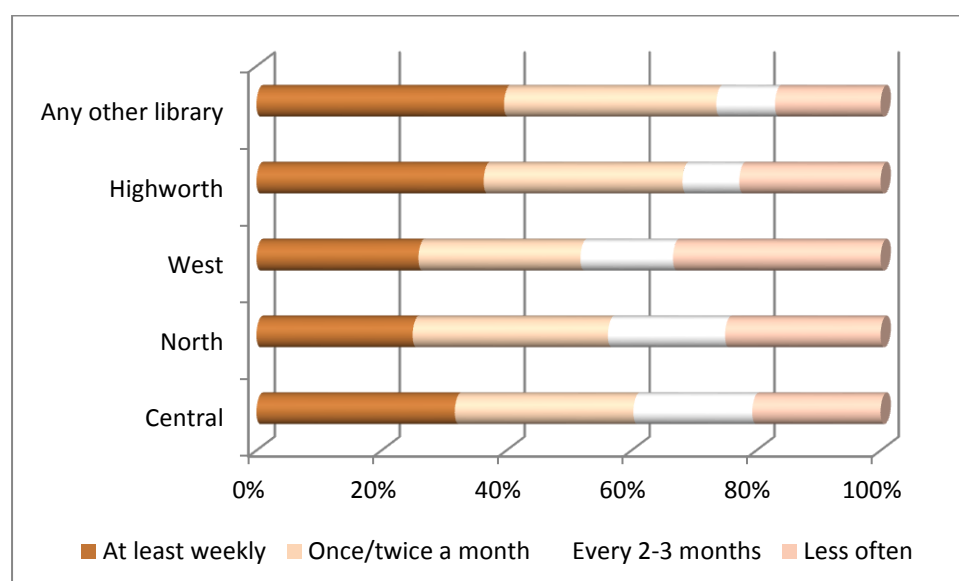
available. This table looks at all respondents who use libraries at all, and examines what proportion of that whole respondent group visits each library and at what frequency.

Table 14: Frequency of visiting libraries (100% = all library users regardless of library visited)

	Proportion of all respondents who visit libraries				
	Central	North	West	Highworth	Any other library
At least weekly	20%	8%	7%	8%	21%
Once/twice a month	18%	10%	7%	7%	18%
Every 2-3 months	12%	6%	4%	2%	5%
Less often	13%	8%	9%	5%	9%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	1,568				

In this table, the percentages add up to a single total representing the entire response from library users.

Chart 14: Frequency of visiting libraries (all respondents taken together)



One in five of all library-using respondents say they use the Central library at least weekly, and a slightly smaller proportion say they visit at least monthly, so that the Central library serves nearly two in five of all library users on a regular basis. A further quarter of respondents say they use the Central library, but on a less frequent basis, so that in all two-thirds of those responding to the survey have some contact with the Central library.

One in twelve respondents visit the North library weekly, and a further one in ten visit at least monthly, so that this library serves one in five participants in this survey on a regular basis.

A further one in seven respondents are occasional users at the North library, meaning that a third of respondents have some sort of contact with this library.

The West library is not as well-attended, but one in fourteen respondents visit weekly and a similar proportion visit once or twice a month, making a total of one in seven respondents (14%) who visit regularly. A similar proportion visit less often, making a total of a quarter (27%) who have contact with this library.

Visiting patterns at Highworth are similar, in that one in twelve respondents visits weekly and a similar proportion visit once or twice a month, so that in all 15% of respondents to the survey visit Highworth at least monthly. A further 7% say they visit Highworth less often, making a total of 22%, just under a quarter of all participants, who have some contact with Highworth library.

The non-core libraries are grouped in this question and analysis of individual locations is not possible. One in five respondents say they visit a non-core library on a weekly basis, and a further 8% visit once or twice a month, so that two in five respondents use a non-core library on a regular basis. The non-core libraries have lower levels of occasional visitors but in total one in fourteen respondents say they visit one or more non-core libraries from time to time.

In total, a quarter of current library users (25%) in the survey use a non-core library either exclusively or more frequently than they visit any other library. These include older people, particularly over 75s; they also include more women, and people with children at home. One in five respondents (20%) say they only use one of the non-core libraries, implying that four out of five respondents are able to access one of the libraries retained in the proposed model, though not necessarily on a frequent or regular basis.

Library users with children are a little more likely to visit the Central library than their counterparts, and are also more frequent visitors to the North and West libraries, though many of their visits to these libraries are occasional rather than regular. They do make use of Highworth, but not to the same extent as those with no children. The major difference is in the use of non-core libraries; a third of people with children (33%) visit a non-core library at least once a week, and three in five (61%) visit at least once a month. People with children are also much more likely to spread their visits across more than one location.

The visiting pattern of people with disabilities shows only small differences from the pattern of usage in general. People with disabilities are more likely to be regulars at Highworth, or at one of the non-core libraries, and are generally less likely to make occasional visits to any library.

The results also indicate that a large proportion of respondents use more than one library; in fact, some respondents use several libraries, usually with one taking precedence but not precluding occasional visits to others. Almost one in five (18%) respondents say they use at least two libraries (sometimes more) at least monthly, and a similar proportion (22%) use at least one library regularly and a second (or more) from time to time.

Given the proposal to withdraw Council funding from non-core libraries, there is clearly interest in knowing what proportion of those who use these libraries also go to one of the

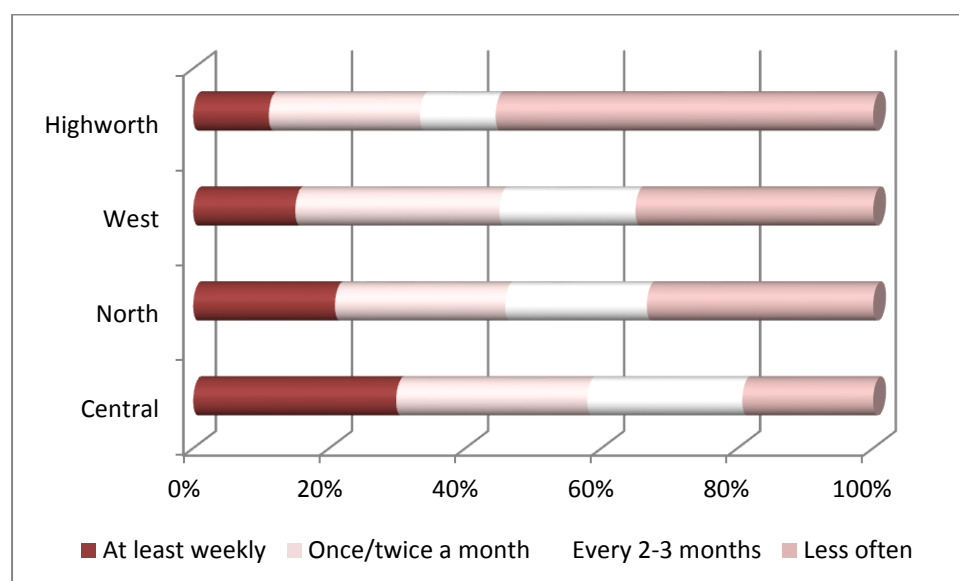
core libraries. The table below analyses the visiting patterns of those who use non-core libraries at least once a month.

Table 15: Proportions of non-core library users who also visit core libraries

	Proportion of all respondents who visit non-core libraries at least once a month			
	Central	North	West	Highworth
At least weekly	17%	5%	3%	1%
Once/twice a month	16%	6%	6%	2%
Every 2-3 months	13%	5%	4%	1%
Less often	11%	8%	7%	5%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	602			

In this table, the base number is those who visit a library at least once a month.

Chart 15: Proportions of non-core library users who also visit core libraries



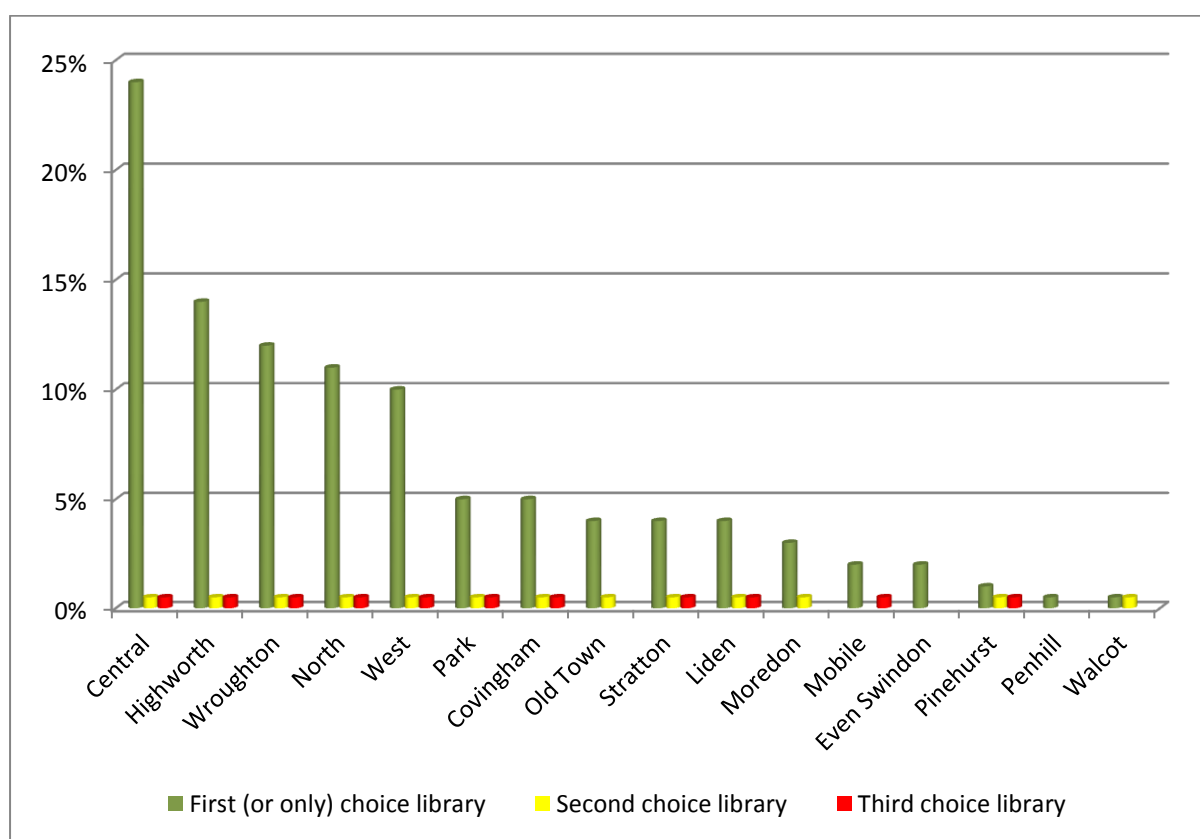
One in six regular users of a non-core library is a weekly visitor to the Central library, and a third of regulars at non-core libraries visit the Central facility at least once a month, with a further quarter of non-core library users visiting less often, making a total of nearly three in five (57%) of regulars at non-core libraries who also use the Central facility, albeit only occasionally in some cases. One in nine small library users is a regular at the North library, and one in eleven regularly visits the West library. Very few users of other libraries also make use of Highworth, however.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the library or libraries they use most often, and the results are set out here, including not only the main library used but also any alternative libraries mentioned.

Table 16: Library visited most often

	Proportion of all respondents		
	First (or only) choice library	Second choice library	Third choice library
Central	24%	3%	*
Highworth	14%	*	*
Wroughton	12%	*	*
North	11%	2%	*
West	10%	1%	*
Park	5%	2%	*
Covingham	5%	1%	*
Old Town	4%	1%	
Stratton	4%	*	*
Liden	4%	1%	*
Moredon	3%	*	
Mobile	2%		*
Even Swindon	2%		
Pinehurst	1%	*	*
Penhill	*		
Walcot	*	*	
<i>N (=100%)</i>	1,324		

Chart 16: Library visited most often



Most people identify a single library in response to this question, but almost one in five (18%) added a second or even a third library that they use regularly, a result which corresponds to the data presented in the previous question about regular use. A quarter of respondents overall (27%) say they use the Central library most often, and no other library approaches this in popularity among this group of respondents; Highworth, mentioned by one in seven respondents, is next, and Wroughton is mentioned by one in eight. As might be expected with more outlying libraries, only a very few respondents use Highworth or Wroughton as second or third libraries, though there are individuals who do so.

This table is not of course necessarily representative of library use as a whole. The previous study had a much stronger response from Highworth than is evident on this occasion, and the same is true of both North and West Swindon. All have been reprieved, to some extent at least, with their incorporation into the new model, and this may have reduced the desire to contribute further from these quarters. There is a correspondingly increased proportion of responses from Wroughton, and to a lesser extent from Covingham and Park libraries in particular.

These are followed by the North and West libraries with around one in eight and one in nine respondents respectively. Most of the non-core libraries have elicited some response, with the largest groups being those using Park and Covingham. In contrast, though, there is very

limited participation in the survey from Penhill or Walcot, neither of which has a response that even reaches double figures in terms of numbers of respondents.

As has already been noted, Central library is more popular with 19-25s and 46-55s, while Highworth has a particular appeal to over 55s and especially to over 65s. The North library is more popular with the 36-45 age-group, while the West attracts both younger and older people. These results are consistent with the previous question in this study, as is the gender split.

Among the non-core libraries with enough respondents to allow analysis, Wroughton has a generally even appeal across all age-groups. There are indications that Old Town is popular with younger adults, and Stratton and Covingham with over 75s, though these are far from the only users at these locations. Similarly, Park appeals most strongly to 36-55 year olds, but not exclusively so.

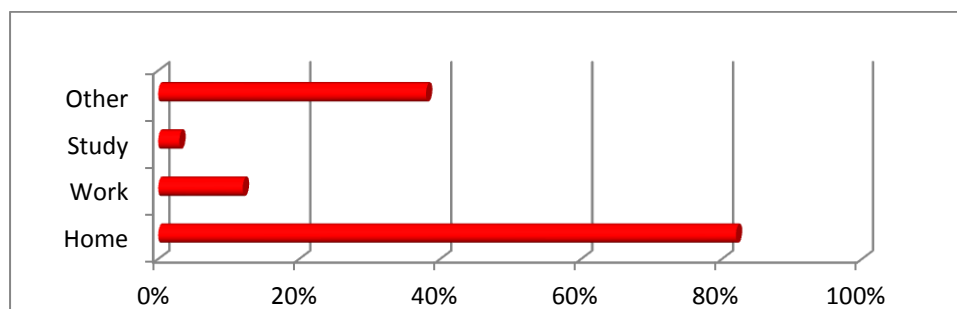
Wroughton also has a particular appeal to respondents with children at home, as does Old Town to a lesser extent; Stratton, Covingham and Park all have children in their customer base, but children are less prominent at these locations. People with disabilities are a little less likely to attend Wroughton, but are prominent at Park and Covingham (this corresponds to the age breakdown in large part). Wroughton, Stratton and Covingham all have an appeal to female library users, a tendency less pronounced at Park or Old Town.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether their first-choice library was close to any other feature of their life, and respond as follows:

Table 17: Location of first choice library

	Proportion of respondents
Closest to home	82%
Closest to workplace	12%
Closest to place of study	3%
Convenient for other reasons	38%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,555</i>

Chart 17: Location of first choice library



Four out of five respondents choose the library nearest to their home, an overwhelming proportion that associates this activity closely with the place of residence. One in eight users visits the library closest to their workplace, and a small proportion visit the library closest to their place of study.

High proportions in all age-groups use the library closest to home, but this is especially true of those users aged 26-45 and, to a lesser extent, those aged over 55. The library closest to home is also more favoured by people with children than by those without, and is more popular with women.

The library closest to work is favoured strongly by those aged 19-25, and by 46-55 year olds; it is naturally much less chosen by those who are beyond normal working age. Similarly, a library close to a place of study is more likely to be chosen by a younger library user, under the age of 25, though this group is still twice as likely to choose the library closest to home.

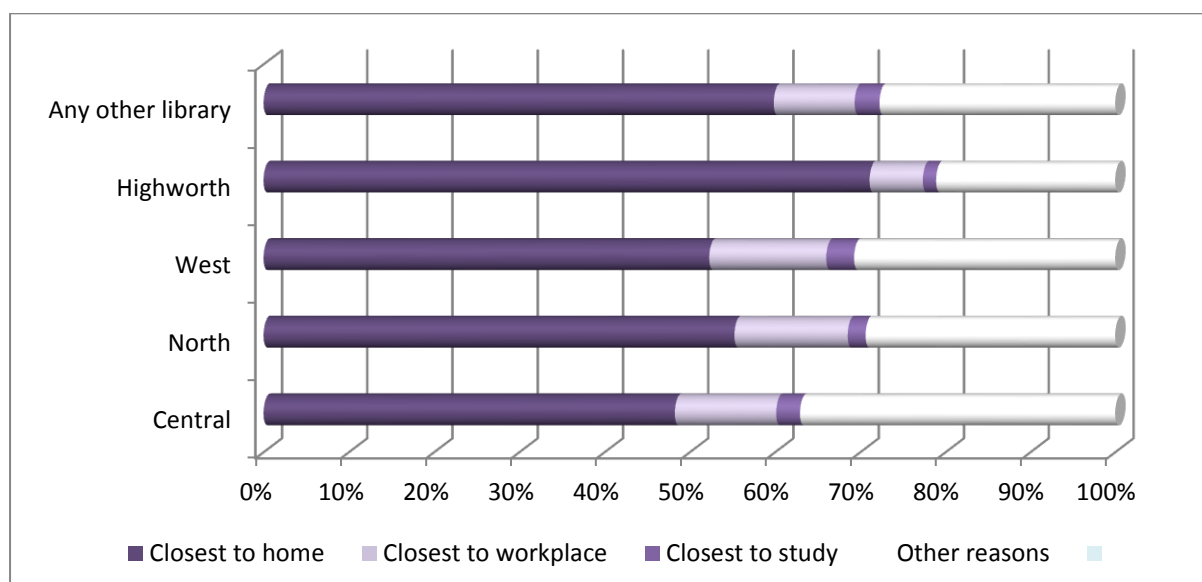
Two in five people say they choose a library that is convenient for other reasons, and this is often an additional reason for choosing the library they use most. Other reasons come into play for all age-groups, but are especially prominent for 19-25s, 46-65s and people with disabilities. The question did not ask what the other factors might be, but responses to other questions suggest accessibility, opening times, staff friendliness, sociability, comprehensiveness of stock, availability of computers, and convenience in relation to other regular activities such as shopping or health appointments are all likely to play a part here.

This table breaks down the reasons why regulars at each library choose the one they do.

Table 18: Location of first choice library for each core library

	Proportion of respondents using each library at least once a month				
	Central	North	West	Highworth	Any other library
Closest to home	69%	79%	80%	91%	82%
Closest to workplace	17%	19%	21%	8%	13%
Closest to study	4%	3%	5%	2%	4%
Other reasons	53%	42%	47%	27%	38%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	69%	79%	80%	91%	82%

Chart 18: Location of first choice library for each core library



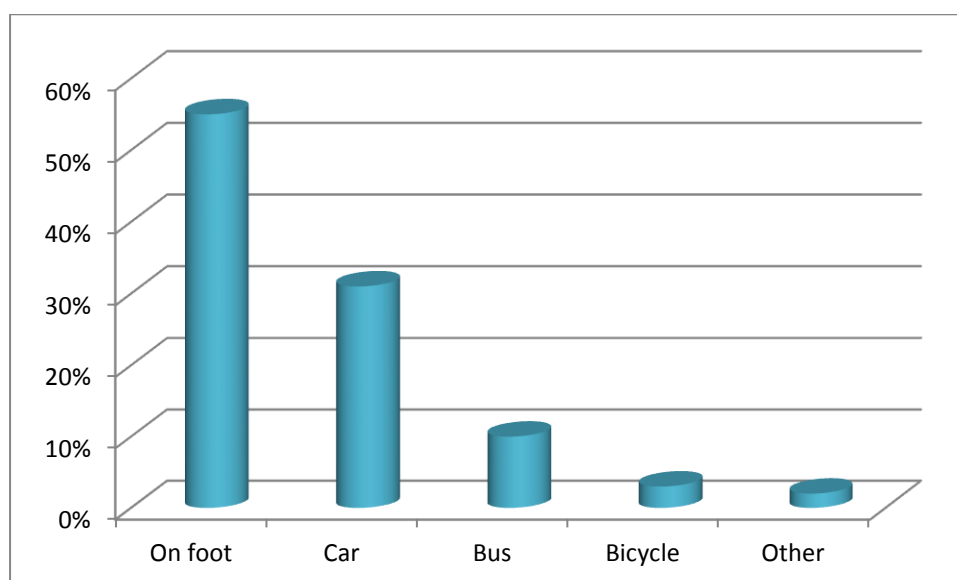
The library closest to home is the strongest factor for all four core libraries, but less so for central than for the other three larger libraries; proximity to home is extremely influential in relation to Highworth, and also for the non-core libraries. Workplace proximity is a factor for a third of regular users at Central, North and West but is less important for non-core libraries and much less so for Highworth. Study proximity is small for all libraries. Other convenience factors play an important role at Central, North and West, but are less influential at non-core libraries and are comparatively unimportant at Highworth.

This table shows how people normally travel to the library they use most often:

Table 19: Travel to library

	Proportion of respondents
On foot	55%
Car	31%
Bus	10%
Bicycle	3%
Other	2%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,438</i>

Chart 19: Travel to library



Over half of the library users in this survey walk to their chosen library. Around a third travel by car, and one in ten use public transport. Small proportions use bicycles or other means of transport (usually motorcycles, and perhaps trains for those who commute into Swindon).

Walking to the library is most likely among those aged 19-45, where over three in five (62%) use this travel mode; it is correspondingly less likely for over 55s, although a little over half of over 55s (52%) walk. The car is most likely to be used by those aged 46-65, a third of whom travel this way (33%), but is much less a feature of access for those aged 19-25, where just 18% use a car to visit the library. Bus travel is more common among over 60s, where one in seven uses the bus (14%), but bus use is much less likely for 36-45s (just 4% use it). Bicycle access is largely, though not completely, limited to under 25s.

Users with children show a greater predisposition towards walking, but those with disabilities are more likely to use other forms of transport, with the bus service much more important to

them. Women are also more likely to walk, while men are more likely users of bus and bicycle.

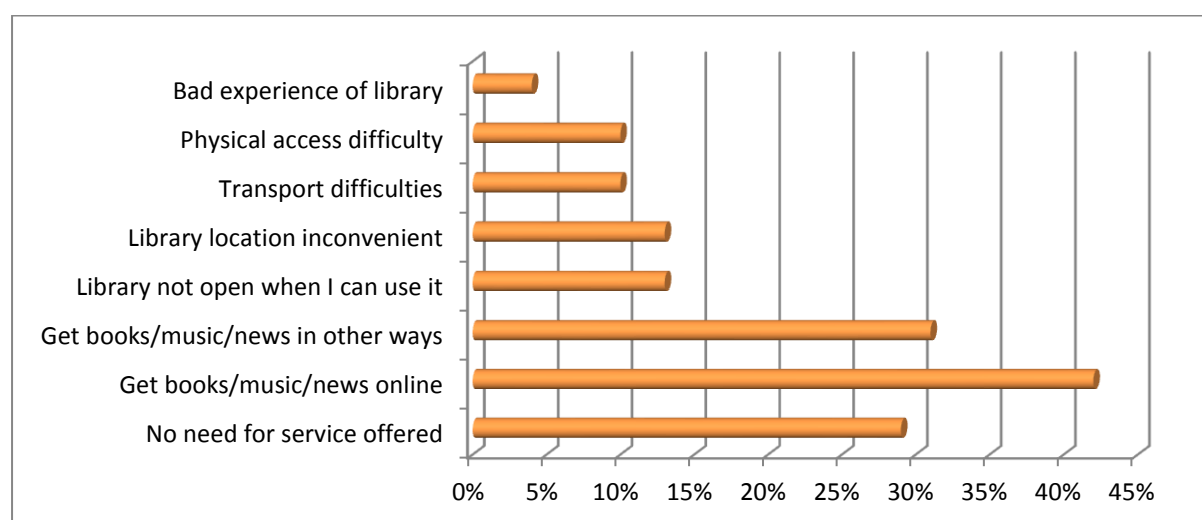
Walking to the library is particularly a feature of Highworth and Wroughton, where around two thirds of visits are on foot. It is also a feature of the non-core libraries, with between two thirds and four fifths of visits on foot. The car is more prominent at North and West libraries, and to a lesser extent at Highworth; at Central, less than a quarter of visits are by car. The bus is very important for Central, and a quarter of visits to this facility involve use of public transport.

The questionnaire also explored the reasons why people do not make use of the library service. The response here is limited, because relatively few non-users participated in the survey, but is summarised in this table:

Table 20: Reasons for not using the library

	Proportion of respondents answering question
No need for service offered	29%
Get books/music/news online	42%
Get books/music/news in other ways	31%
Library not open when I can use it	13%
Library location inconvenient	13%
Transport difficulties	10%
Physical access difficulty	10%
Bad experience of library	4%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>48</i>

Chart 20: Reasons for not using the library



The main reason given for not using the library is that the respondent has no need for the service; over a quarter of the limited number of non-users gave this reason. Two in five non-users get their books, music or news online, and a third use other sources for this material.

There are nevertheless a few non-users who might use the library under different circumstances. They include small numbers for whom the library is not open when needed, or for whom the library is in the wrong place, and a handful who have problems accessing the premises. Bad experiences with the library appear relatively rare, however.

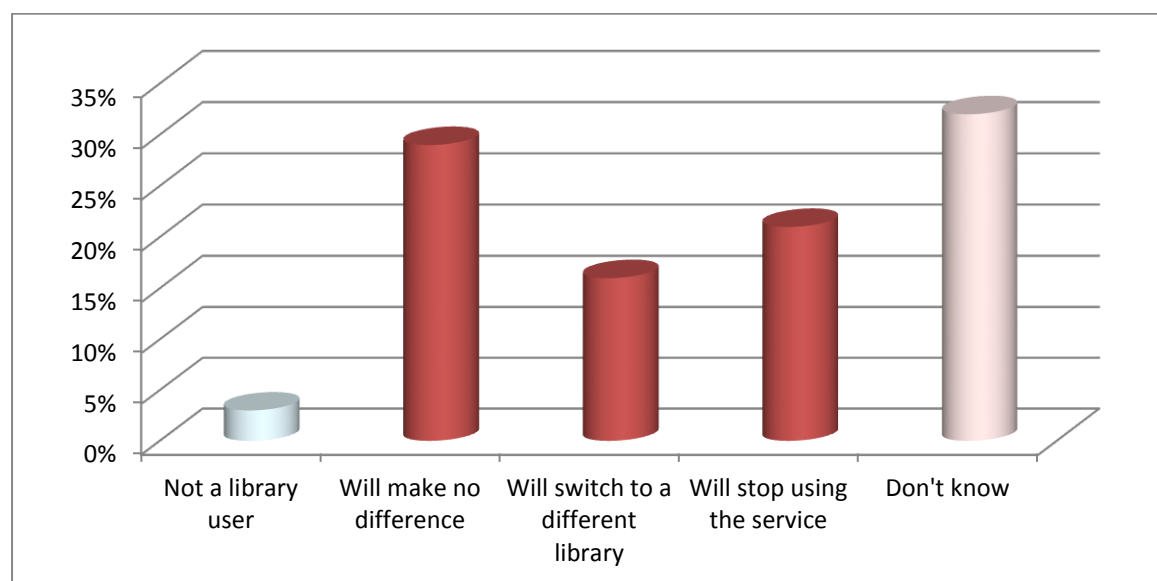
4 Using the library service in future

Respondents were asked to indicate their future intentions in relation to use of the library service, should the proposal go ahead, and respond thus:

Table 21: Future use of the library service

	Proportion of respondents
Not a library user	3%
Will make no difference	29%
Will switch to a different library	16%
Will stop using the service	21%
Don't know	32%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,378</i>

Chart 21: Future use of the library service



A small number of respondents are not library users, so the proposal will have no impact on them. Over a quarter of participants in the survey say that the proposal will make no difference to their future use of the library, and a further one in six say they intend to change the library they use if the proposal moves forward. One in five, however, say they will stop using the library after implementation. A large minority, around a third, are undecided as to what they might do if the proposal goes ahead.

Respondents for whom the proposal will make no difference are more likely to be over 55; over a third of over 55s (34%) say nothing will change for them. Over 65s are marginally more likely than their younger counterparts to switch library, but a third of over 55s (31%) say they don't know yet how they will react to the proposal. There are also older people who

say they will stop using the library, including one in five over 75s, but the main impact in this respect is on people aged 19-45, where a quarter (26%) say they will stop using the library.

Women seem more likely to be affected by the proposal than men; a third of men (33%) say it will make no difference to them, but this falls to just a quarter of women (26%), and although one in eight (13%) men plan to switch library, this is true of nearly one in five women (19%). Similarly, 17% of men say they will stop using the library, but this rises to nearly a quarter of female users (22%).

A third of childless respondents (33%) say the proposal will make no difference, but this falls to just one in six (17%) of those with children at home. One in five respondents with children (19%) will switch libraries, but over a quarter (26%) say they will stop using the service. The proportion of don't knows is comparatively high at 36%.

People with disabilities are less likely to say the proposal makes no difference to them, and are correspondingly more likely to switch to a different library; one in five respondents with a disability (21%) say they will stop using the service. Those who have no access to transport (no car, no bus stop, no bus pass) are less likely to switch library, and more likely to stop using the service.

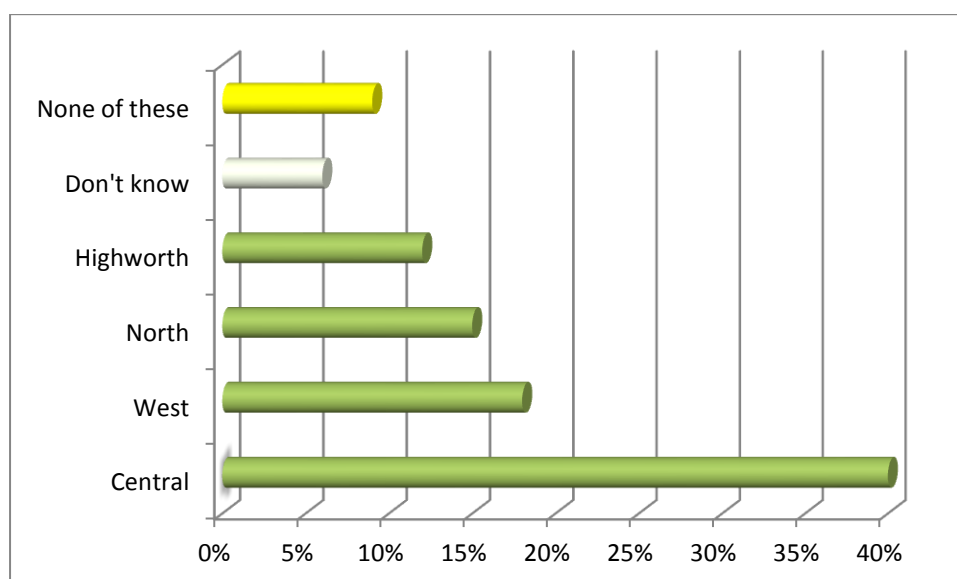
Looking geographically at those who expect to stop using the library, these include nearly half (46%) of those who currently use Wroughton library; Liden users also seem more likely to give up the library, and each of the non-core libraries has a significant proportion of people who say they will stop using. However, there are also people who use the core libraries who say they will stop doing so, with 15% of North library, 10% of West and 10% of Highworth users saying they will no longer use the service, and 5% of those who use Central also pulling out.

This table shows which of the four core libraries is the most likely to be used if the proposal goes forward:

Table 22: Likely library to be chosen for the future

	Proportion of respondents
Central	40%
West	18%
North	15%
Highworth	12%
Don't know	6%
None of these	9%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,264</i>

Chart 22: Likely library to be chosen for the future



There is a discrepancy here with the previous question, where over half the respondents said they would stop using the service or were undecided as to what they would do. In this question, only 9% say they will use none of the libraries on offer, and just 6% are undecided. The level of response on this second question is markedly lower, but even if all of those not answering can be allocated to 'Don't know' or 'none of these' this still does not make up the apparent difference.

Two in five (39%) of those who said they would stop using the service in answer to the previous question, now say they will use one of the core libraries. Half of these say they will go to Central, with small proportions going to each of the other three core libraries. As for the don't knows in the previous question, most identify a core library they might use; just one in six of the previous question's don't knows fail to nominate a core library. Again, Central is the main beneficiary of this but Highworth is also attractive.

Looking at the responses of those who do nominate a preferred library, around half (47%) choose the Central. One in five (21%) choose the west, a similar proportion (18%) would go to the North, and one in seven (14%) choose Highworth. These proportions include both existing users of these libraries and those choosing to switch libraries. Library switchers opt decisively for Central (59%); one in eight switchers would go to the North, and 15% would choose the west. Few switchers – just 3% overall – would choose Highworth.

The analysis also indicates that those displaced from Wroughton, Old Town, Liden, Pinehurst, Covingham and Park will be most likely to migrate to Central, whilst Stratton and Moredon users will mainly go to North. Mobile library users are also most likely to switch to the Central. The users with greatest uncertainty are those in Even Swindon, where half say they don't know what they will do; this also applies to two in five of library users at Stratton and a similar proportion of mobile users.

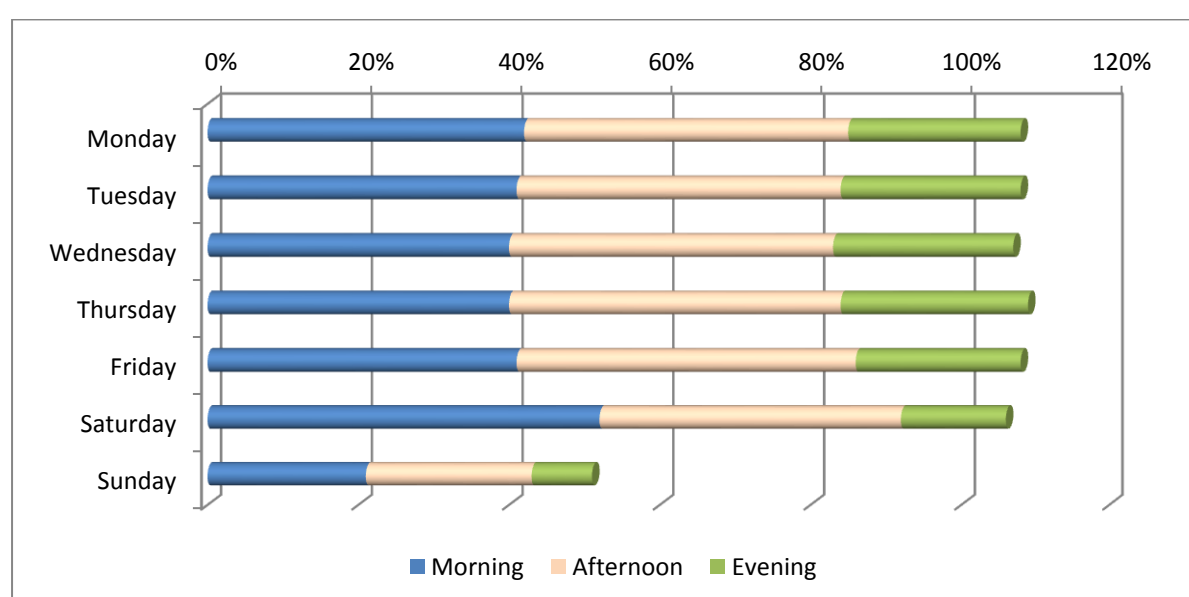
Respondents with cars are less likely to use Central library, but those with nearby bus stops or bus passes are more likely to choose this library. Car users are less likely to go to this library and tend towards the North or Highworth libraries. Those respondents with no access to transport identify the Central library almost exclusively for their future custom.

Those who indicate an intention to use a core library were asked which time and day of the week would be the time most likely to be chosen for their access to the library, and the answers are shown here:

Table 23: Preferred day and time of day

	Proportion of all respondents intending to use a library in future		
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	42%	43%	23%
Tuesday	41%	43%	24%
Wednesday	40%	43%	24%
Thursday	40%	44%	25%
Friday	41%	45%	22%
Saturday	52%	40%	14%
Sunday	21%	22%	8%
Don't know	11%		
N (=100%)	1,225		

Chart 23: Preferred day and time of day



One in nine respondents were unable to suggest a time or day they would prefer, but among those who do express a preference there is a wide distribution across the options offered. During the week, a consistent pattern emerges, with two in five saying they prefer a weekday morning, a marginally higher proportion expressing a preference for the afternoon, and around a quarter interested in the evening service. The most popular time, though, is a Saturday morning, which is selected by over half of respondents. Two in five like Saturday afternoon, but just one in seven suggest Saturday evening. Sunday is a much less popular choice; those selecting Sunday morning or afternoon amount to just half of those interested in the comparable weekday time, and only a small minority of people favour Sunday evening. Over half of all respondents (57%) indicate no interest in any evening session at all.

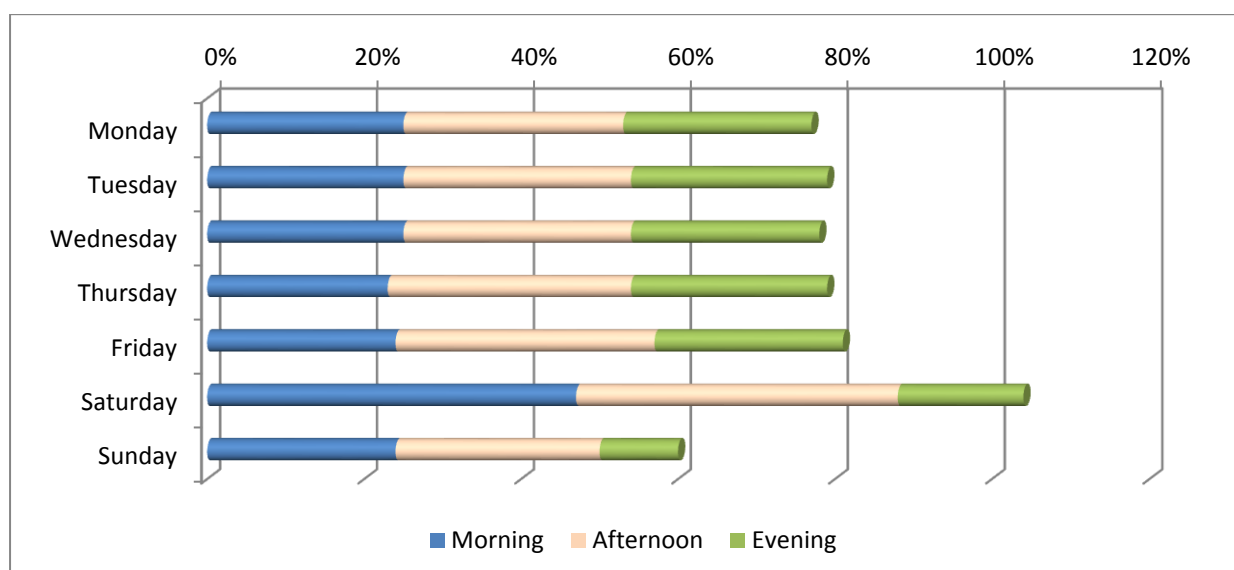
Evidently, many people express a degree of flexibility in their selection. One in forty respondents (2.5%) suggest that any of these times is suitable for them, and one in twenty (5%) are prepared to consider any time of the week excluding Sundays, while a similar proportion say that they can only manage weekends, in whole or in part; in contrast, one in five respondents (22%) say they can only manage weekdays, and select no suitable weekend time. Few people have such straightforward lives, however, and a large number of responses indicate complex permutations where different times of the week are included or excluded according to other commitments and availabilities. Thus, there are individuals who can only access the library on Monday evenings, or on Monday or Tuesday afternoons, for example, whilst others have more flexibility in their week but still need to block out selected times.

This table shows the pattern of response for those who have children living at home:

Table 24: Preferred day and time of day (respondents with children)

	Proportion of all respondents with children		
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	25%	28%	24%
Tuesday	25%	29%	25%
Wednesday	25%	29%	24%
Thursday	23%	31%	25%
Friday	24%	33%	24%
Saturday	47%	41%	16%
Sunday	24%	26%	10%
Don't know	7%		
N (=100%)	389		

Chart 24: Preferred day and time of day (respondents with children)



There are some interesting differences from the overall picture, with enthusiasm for weekday opening a little higher in the afternoon than in the morning, but generally lower than support for weekday daytime opening in general. Respondents with children are just as keen as their counterparts on weekday evenings, however, and there is little variation according to the weekday except that interest rises a little on Thursday and Friday afternoons. Interest at the weekend is similar to the overall picture, with a little less support for Saturdays but a compensating small increase in interest on Sundays.

This table shows the pattern of response for respondents with disabilities:

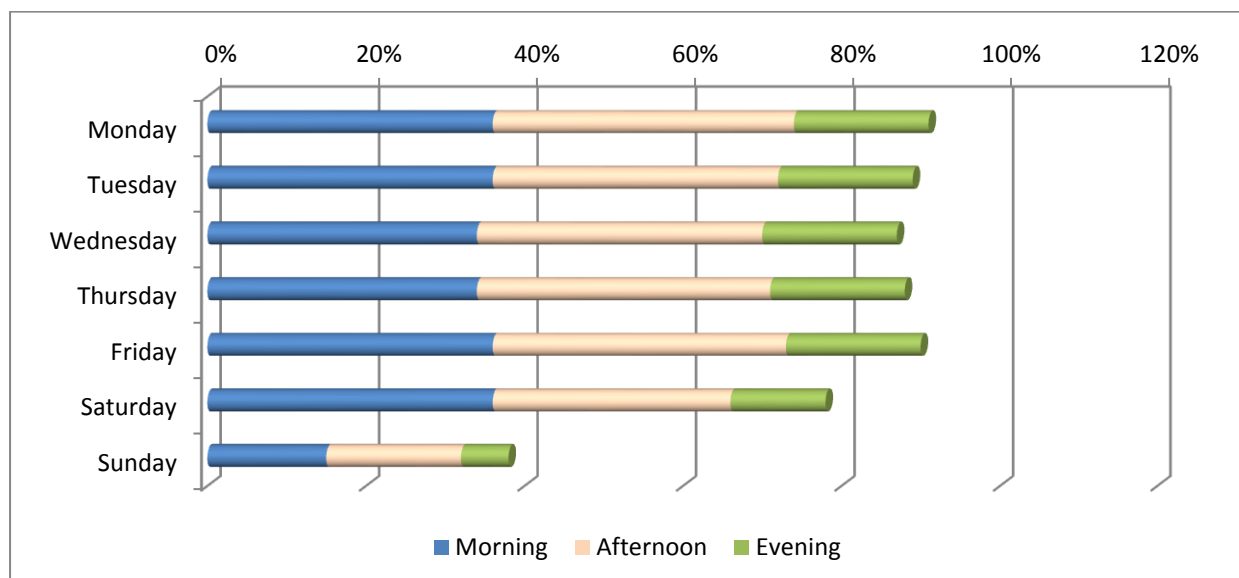
Table 25: Preferred day and time of day (respondents with disabilities)

	Proportion of all respondents with a disability		
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	36%	38%	17%
Tuesday	36%	36%	17%
Wednesday	34%	36%	17%
Thursday	34%	37%	17%
Friday	36%	37%	17%
Saturday	36%	30%	12%
Sunday	15%	17%	6%
Don't know	8%		

N (=100%)

427

Chart 25: Preferred day and time of day (respondents with disabilities)



All the results are lower than in the overall result, suggesting that respondents with disabilities have less flexibility in their schedules, but otherwise the consistent pattern across each weekday remains, with little difference between any Monday to Friday session. Saturday mornings attract the same interest as weekday mornings, but Saturday afternoons and evenings are less popular, and Sundays are much less attractive.

People over the age of 65 show a preference for weekday mornings; between three quarters and four fifths would choose one or more weekday mornings, and this falls to around two thirds of over 65s who choose a weekday afternoon. Weekday evenings are much less popular and only around one in seven (14%) would choose this time; among over 75s, this proportion falls even further. At the weekend, Saturday morning is popular with two thirds of over 65s, but Saturday afternoon interest is only half this level. Saturday evenings and Sunday are not at all popular choices.

There are also variations in the results on this question according to the core library respondents propose to utilise after implementation. At Central library, the weekday pattern is consistent, with around two in five users choosing a weekday morning, and a slightly higher proportion choosing a weekday afternoon; around a quarter choose a weekday evening. Saturdays are more popular, attracting nearly half of all users in the morning (46%) and nearly as many in the afternoon, but weekend evenings are much less popular than this.

The same consistency is evident at North library, with around a third of users interested in weekday mornings, slightly more in weekday afternoons, and around a fifth indicating weekday evenings. Saturday mornings appeal to half of all potential North users (47%) and this level of interest is also sustained into Saturday afternoons; interest in Sunday daytimes

is lower, but is nevertheless the highest of all four core libraries, especially on Sunday afternoons.

In the West, just over a third are interested in weekday mornings, but this rises on Monday and Friday mornings to over two in five potential users. Interest in afternoon visiting is substantially higher than in mornings at this library, with levels of interest approaching half of all potential users. Saturday morning would be a popular time here, but interest reduces on Saturday afternoon and is much lower on Sundays.

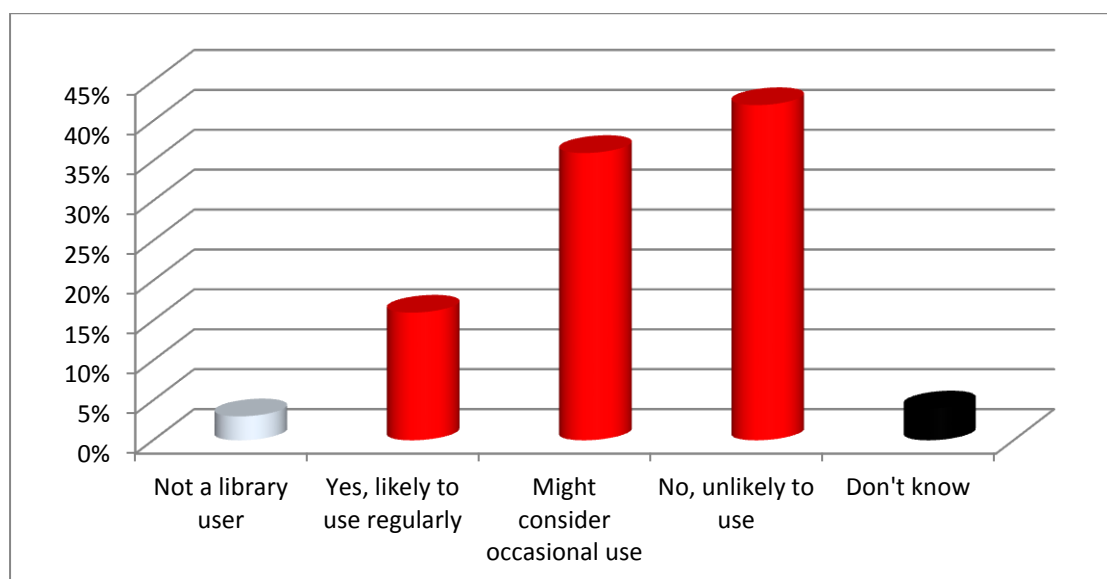
At Highworth, there is significantly higher support for weekday mornings, which appeal to over half of all potential users (other than on Thursdays, when interest falls to 47%). Weekday afternoon interest is lower, but still at a level similar to the overall result; one in five respondents who would use Highworth would be possible evening visitors during the week. Saturday morning would be exceptionally popular at Highworth, with two thirds of users saying this time would suit them (65%) but this figure falls away dramatically on Saturday afternoons, and there is very little interest in any other weekend opening time.

Likely take-up of a paid-for online reservation service is shown in this table:

Table 26: Likely take up of online reservation service

	Proportion of respondents
Not a library user	3%
Yes, likely to use regularly	16%
Might consider occasional use	36%
No, unlikely to use	42%
Don't know	4%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,446</i>

Chart 26: Likely take up of online reservation service



One in six respondents say they are likely to use this service, and a further third of respondents might consider it, totalling around half of all respondents who might make some use of the service. On the other hand, over two in five respondents say they are unlikely to use this service, and there are very few don't knows on this issue.

Those who say they are likely to use the service tend to be younger people; interest in this service falls away significantly after the age of 45 and reduces to just 10% of over 75s. Those who might consider occasional use extend further up the age-range and into the late 60s, but this possibility is still fairly remote for over 75s. Likely non-users include not only over 75s but also under 18s. Women are a little more enthusiastic about this service than men.

Respondents with children show a greater likelihood of using the service than those without; one in five (19%) say they will use the service regularly, and a further 38% are possible occasional users. People with disabilities, however, are less likely to use this service, with just 15% saying they will do so, and 45% rejecting it altogether.

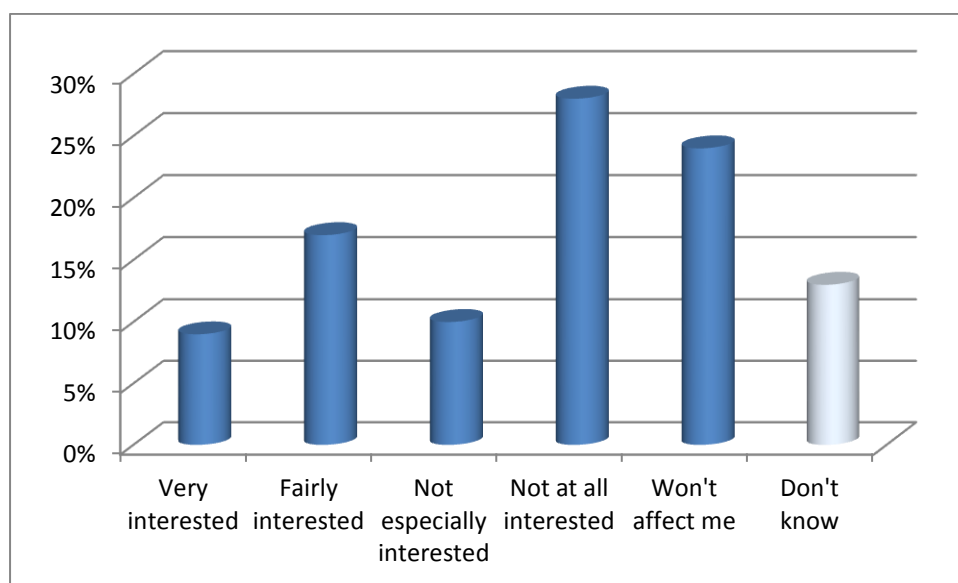
Interest in this service is fairly strong at Central and North, where one in five users say they expect to make use of it regularly. As far as non-core libraries are concerned, interest in this service is greatest at Wroughton and Moredon, where one in five library users say they expect to use it regularly.

The survey also sought to establish respondents' interest in becoming part of a group working to keep or develop community-based library services to replace those from which Council funding is being withdrawn, and also to explore interest in volunteering to help in community-based libraries. This table shows the readiness of people to become involved in establishing a community-based library:

Table 27: Interest in becoming part of a group

	Proportion of respondents
Very interested	9%
Fairly interested	17%
Not especially interested	10%
Not at all interested	28%
Won't affect me	24%
Don't know	13%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,446</i>

Chart 27: Interest in becoming part of a group



Overall, a quarter of respondents express some interest in the possibility of involvement in a group establishing a community-based library; about a third of these are very interested in the possibility. On the other hand, nearly two in five respondents say they are not interested. A quarter of people say the proposal doesn't affect them, and one in eight is currently undecided.

Interest in involvement in this way is highest among those aged 26-45, and to a lesser extent among younger retired people; women are a little more enthusiastic about this than men.

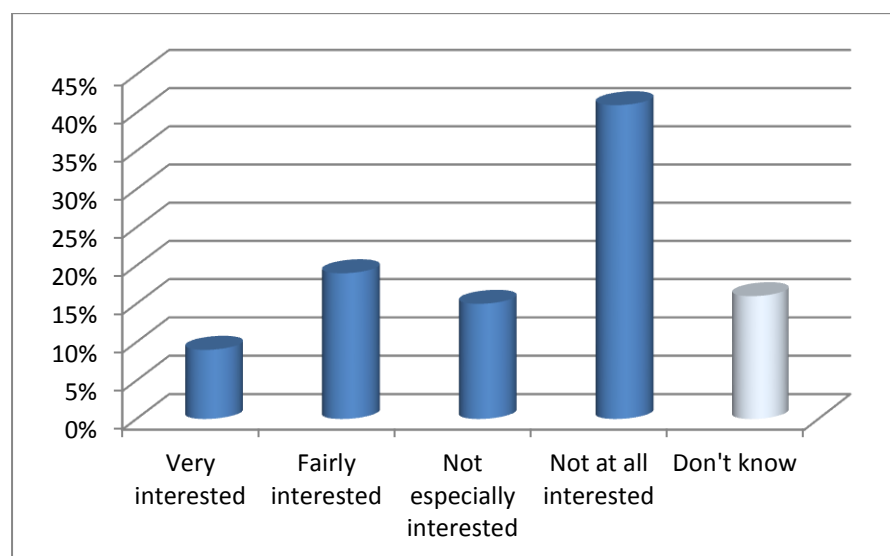
Interest is considerably higher among those with children at home than among their counterparts, and some people with disabilities also express interest.

Interest in becoming part of a group is strongest at Wroughton, where one in six users (16%) express strong interest and a further third (32%) some interest. There is also significant interest at Moredon, Liden and Park (though the numbers involved are much smaller).

Table 28: Interest in becoming a volunteer

	Proportion of respondents
Very interested	9%
Fairly interested	19%
Not especially interested	15%
Not at all interested	41%
Don't know	16%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,439</i>

Chart 28: Interest in becoming a volunteer



All in all, around a quarter of respondents are interested in volunteering, again with a third of these expressing strong interest. On the other hand, well over half of respondents say they are not interest, and most of these are quite certain about this position. One in six respondents is unsure at this stage.

Interest in volunteering is highest among those aged 19-35, and among 56-75 year olds, and is considerably higher among women than among men. There is little variation in interest according to whether a person has children or not, but interest in volunteering is lower among respondents with disabilities.

Interest in volunteering is present at all libraries, but is greatest at Wroughton where a third of users express a measure of interest, and at Liden, Covingham and Moredon where a small number of very keen respondents are supported by a number of users who are fairly interested

The survey document also invited people to provide their details on a separate sign-up sheet, or via e-mail, but this data is not available for analysis on the grounds of confidentiality.

5 Comments and Observations

Three opportunities were provided in the questionnaire for people to respond, in a free-text format, to questions about the proposal and the overall future of the library service. A substantial proportion of people took the opportunity to express their opinions on these matters, and raised a variety of observations - some brief, some lengthy and detailed - covering a fairly wide range of issues that are of importance to them. We have deconstructed these comments and identified a number of broad thematic areas to which they relate, and this chapter presents the resulting analysis.

In this analysis, each comment is broken down into its component parts; some comments make a single observation, and are counted once, while other more wide-ranging comments may appear multiple times in the analysis, although only once in respect of each theme they cover.

5.1 Advantages and disadvantages of the proposal

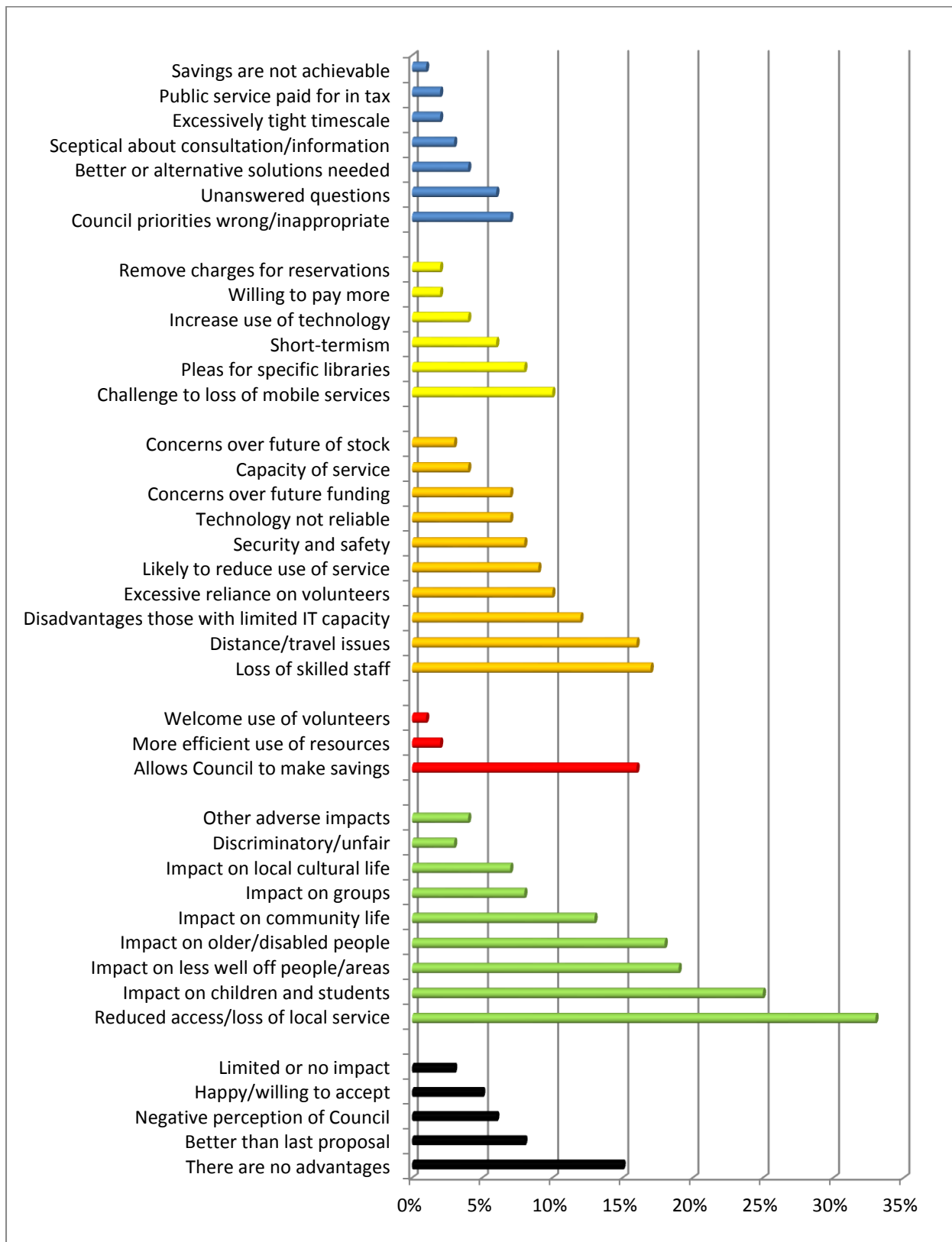
The first of these questions invited respondents to comment on the new proposal, which was described in detail in the questionnaire. Its key elements would be a core network of four libraries, with limited opening times but supported by self-service technology, and possibly augmented by the involvement of volunteers to extend opening hours. In addition, the Council proposes to support local groups and communities to develop community-led solutions for those libraries that would lose Council funding under this arrangement; the Council also proposes to withdraw the mobile library and deposit collections to residential homes. The plan is to implement this between April and July 2017.

Respondents were asked to identify what they see as the advantages and disadvantages of this model, and the results are summarised in the table below. It should be noted that the only prompt given here was the detail of the proposal; the numbers shown as commenting do not necessarily amount to a total who might agree with these comments.

Table 29: Perceived advantages and disadvantages of proposal

Area of comment	No. of comments	Proportion of respondents making comments
General comments		
There are no advantages	195	15%
Better than last proposal	100	8%
Negative perception of Council	75	6%
Happy/willing to accept	59	5%
Limited or no impact	35	3%
Adverse impacts		
Reduced access/loss of local service	425	33%
Impact on children and students	319	25%
Impact on less well-off people/areas	239	19%
Impact on older/disabled people	229	18%
Impact on community life	162	13%
Impact on groups	98	8%
Impact on local cultural life	90	7%
Discriminatory/unfair	44	3%
Other adverse impacts	56	4%
Identified advantages		
Allows Council to make savings	205	16%
More efficient use of resources	21	2%
Welcome use of volunteers	16	1%
Concerns over proposal		
Loss of skilled staff	217	17%
Distance/travel issues	200	16%
Disadvantages those with limited IT capacity	148	12%
Excessive reliance on volunteers	131	10%
Likely to reduce use of service	111	9%
Security and safety	96	8%
Technology not reliable	89	7%
Concerns over future funding	88	7%
Capacity of service	51	4%
Concerns over future of stock	39	3%
Specific requests for modification		
Challenge to loss of mobile services	128	10%
Pleas for specific libraries	101	8%
Short-termism	75	6%
Increase use of technology	50	4%
Willing to pay more	30	2%
Remove charges for reservations	24	2%
Issues with proposition		
Council priorities wrong/inappropriate	91	7%
Unanswered questions	75	6%
Better or alternative solutions needed	57	4%
Sceptical about consultation/information	42	3%
Excessively tight timescale	28	2%
Public service paid for in tax	26	2%
Savings are not achievable	16	1%
Other comments		
	6	
<i>N (=100%)</i>		1,269

Chart 29: Perceived advantages and disadvantages of proposal



A substantial number of respondents explicitly state that they can see **no advantages** to the proposal; many more imply this by not identifying any advantage in their response. About half as many, however, concede that this proposal is **an improvement** on the emerging model previously considered, largely because it allows additional libraries to remain open albeit on a limited basis. A smaller number express a more positive view, stating that they are **happy with the new proposal** or at least willing to accept it as the best alternative available to the authority, given its current constraints, and there are also people for whom the proposal will have **little or no impact**, primarily because their use of their preferred library will be unchanged.

Alongside these, though, there is a small but significant proportion of observations that convey a **negative opinion of the Council** generated in part by this proposal. Some of these comments employ strong language and suggest betrayal of staff and library users, and there is criticism of the Council's apparent passivity in relation to austerity and its willingness to sacrifice the town's reputation and standing.

A large proportion of respondents comment on the adverse impacts they think will result from the proposal. The largest group regret the **loss of local services** and the reduced access to and availability of the service that will result from this, but there also large numbers who reflect on the impact on specific groups of people. **Children and students** are a prominent group here, and no less than a quarter of those commenting make a comment about the negative impact on children, including the possible impact on literacy and achievement at a later educational stage, and the loss of a beneficial reading habit.

Alongside this is a concern that the proposal impacts adversely on **those who are less well off**, in that it reduces the access of people who cannot afford IT access at home and thus penalises people needing to use IT to apply for benefits, or to carry out job searches; several people point out that Government forms increasingly require applicants to complete them online, and compliance will now cost the less well-off more money in bus fares, as well as providing fewer computers overall which they can use. Respondents also note that the geography of the new service will reduce access for areas of the Borough that are less advantaged, particularly the eastern side of the Borough and specifically the Parks estate. They question the withdrawal of services that are intended to increase the life chances of disadvantaged people and communities.

A significant proportion of respondents draw attention to the adverse impact on **older people**, and on people with disabilities (both are often mentioned in the same comment). These concerns centre on the dependency of older people on locally-provided services, and the difficulties in accessing services that are further away and require public transport and/or a longer walk than is comfortable. There is also a perceived **impact on community life**, in that the libraries threatened with closure under the proposal are seen as playing a greater role in their communities than simply the loan of books; they offer a social environment for otherwise isolated people, and a chance for informal contact with staff and with neighbours. A further related impact is on the **community groups** that rely on library premises for their

activities and meetings, and which again provide a service that is valued within the local community.

These adverse impacts are viewed as unfair by some respondents, in disadvantaging some groups in comparison to others; there are respondents who go further than this and accuse the authority of being **discriminatory**.

There is also a group of people who see the proposal as having a wider impact on the **cultural life of Swindon** generally, sending a message about the reduced importance of the benefits of a library service which some see as incongruent with the Borough's history as a pioneer of library services. Other adverse impacts identified include an impact on mental health because of increased isolation, an impact on rural communities from withdrawal of services, an impact on users of other statutory services which rely on libraries to disseminate information on their behalf, and an environmental impact as a result of an increased need to travel.

There is nevertheless a large minority of people who can see **advantages in the proposal**. Chief among these is an acceptance that the Council will be able to **make the savings** it needs to achieve through this approach; a small number of people welcome what they see as a more **efficient use of limited resources** as a result of the proposal, and the benefits to the community of greater community and voluntary involvement.

Concerns about the proposal focus particularly on the **impact on the workforce**. Several people regret that people they value greatly will lose their jobs, while others suggest that the service will be diminished by the loss of the expert knowledge and guidance these staff bring, and which adds value to the service generally. There are also significant concerns over the **distance, and travel difficulties**, implicit in accessing the core libraries; this is especially a concern of people living in more outlying communities such as Wroughton.

The proposal's increased reliance on new technology is seen as a disadvantage for those people who do not have **personal access to this technology** at home, or who are unable or unwilling to learn the skills needed to use technology independently. Many say that the library is their service provider in this respect, and that they cannot therefore be expected to access library services in this way without having a convenient library and staff available to help. People are not confident in the ability of volunteers to replace this knowledge, and this **lack of confidence in volunteers** extends to their reliability over the medium to longer term, and in their general availability at a time when volunteers' effort is so widely sought to offset other service reductions.

Concerns over **security and safety** are associated with the expected use of new technology to allow out of hours access, and also on the use of untrained volunteers to control behaviour in the library. Staff are trained to deal with disruptive or anti-social elements in the library, and to monitor and enforce rules on computer usage, but access to an unstaffed library implies for several people an increased risk that they will be put in a situation that threatens safety, or that valuable stock and equipment will be vulnerable to pilferage and

theft. Several people point out that the libraries' **track record in deploying new technology** has not been especially successful, and for several this reinforces the need for staff trained to resolve problems with the technology when these arise. There is a view that the **take-up of the library service** will be affected by this proposal, in that people who find access more challenging or time-consuming will find it difficult to visit as often, or perhaps at all.

Other concerns focus on the **future availability of funding**, particularly after the transitional period ends; some are uncertain that parishes will feel able to make up the shortfall or increase their precepts to meet this extra funding requirement. Others suggest that the reduced service envisaged in the proposal will **struggle to meet the demand** that will be placed on it, not least in the provision of computers for those needing to make use of them, and there are also concerns about **what may happen to the book stock**, and whether funds for a regular refresh will be available. A fragmented service may also find exchanges of stock with other libraries more difficult to co-ordinate.

Several respondents take the opportunity to request modifications to the proposal. The most frequent is for the **mobile service** to the housebound (or to isolated communities) to be replaced, or even extended, to offset the loss of a locally accessible service; others are concerned at the withdrawal of **deposit collections** to residential homes, where residents are by definition very limited in their capacity to access alternatives. There are also several pleas for individual **libraries' futures to be reconsidered**, with Wroughton and Park the most frequently mentioned but by no means the only ones identified as worth sparing.

The proposal is criticised for its **short-term view** of the future, making savings in current budgets but seen as likely to cause increased demand for other services such as health and personal support, and damaging literacy and achievement levels for the future. However, there are others who welcome the **increased use of new technology** as an innovative and entirely appropriate approach for a service whose delivery context has been transformed by e-readers and on-demand services; many want to see this aspect extended to provide a wider range of services in these delivery channels.

Small numbers of people express a **willingness to pay** for the service, either through charge or donation, as a means of reducing the financial pressure and save parts of the service; but others are unwilling to pay for a **reservations service** and call for the charges here to be removed.

There are also a number of wider issues with the proposition as a whole. Several respondents suggest that the Council's priorities are misplaced; these include some who think the Council's focus should be more specifically directed towards addressing disadvantage, and others who think the Council's spending priorities are wrong. There is specific criticism of some well-publicised Council projects including northern area wi-fi and roundabout beautification, which people see as much lower priorities, and significant concern at the Council's willingness to increase members' allowances at a time of austerity

and service reductions. Some feel the Council should be more pro-actively lobbying national government for policy change.

Unanswered questions are especially focussed on the future opening hours of the core libraries; without this detail, some people feel unable to comment, as they cannot assess the effect this will have on them. There are a number of people who feel that a **better solution than this one** is achievable, or at least worth considering, and several of these draw attention to the staff proposal for a trust model. These naturally include library staff themselves, but also those who have read about this possibility in the local newspaper. Others see solutions in a more entrepreneurial approach, such as the provision of coffee shops or other retail or premises-based income streams.

There are **concerns about the consultation** in some quarters. Some respondents are concerned to have been consulted again on proposals that they see in a very similar light to the emerging model, and to which they wish to address the same concerns they raised on the previous consultation; this leads on to accusations that the Council is failing to listen, that the consultation is token, and that the decision has already been made. there is also concern that the Council is not being transparent about the staff proposal, and that people should have had the opportunity to comment on this as a viable alternative that is, for some reason, being suppressed (as they see it). There are also **concerns about the timescale**, and some respondents question why the proposal is being pushed through so quickly - too quickly, some think, for communities to organise an effective response - when the timetable for savings is a longer one.

The view remains that libraries are a public service that is **paid for through Council Tax** and therefore an entitlement that ought to be sustained; this is often linked to resentment at the possibility of being charged twice for the service, through the imposition of a parish precept to support a community-led library. A small number of people **doubt that the savings claimed for the proposal are achievable**, and that the service will be severely damaged without achieving the aim the Council seeks.

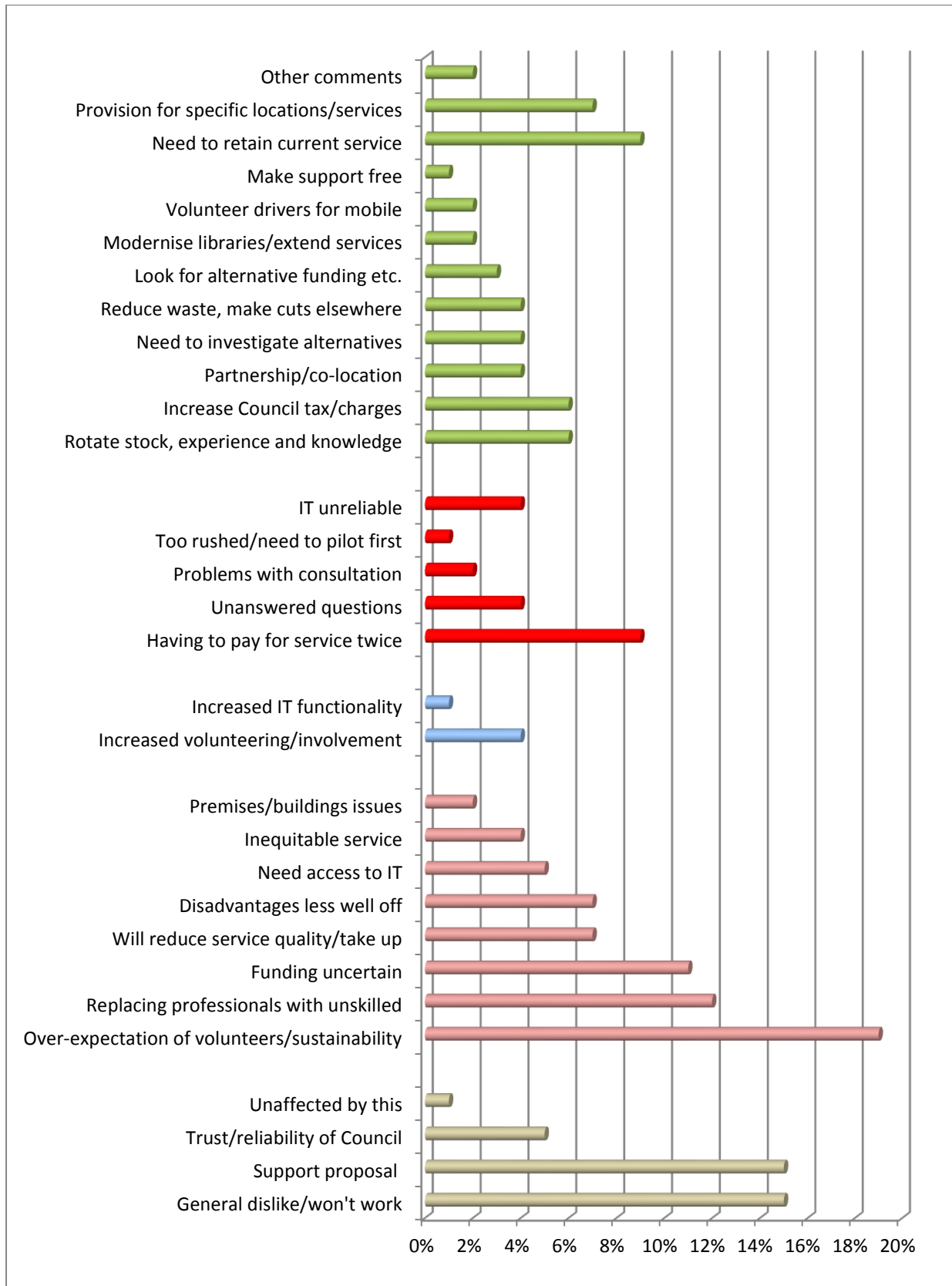
5.2 Community-led approaches and support

The second open-ended free response question invited respondents to comment on the proposal to create and support community-led libraries in those areas where the library may otherwise close. the question also asked what additional help might be needed to help communities develop solutions for local library service needs. The results are summarised in this table:

Table 30: Opinions on proposals for community-led libraries

Area of comment	No. of comments	Proportion of respondents making comments
General observations		
General dislike/won't work	150	15%
Support proposal	149	15%
Trust/reliability of Council	51	5%
Unaffected by this	10	1%
Identified problems with proposal		
Over-expectation of volunteers/sustainability	192	19%
Replacing professionals with unskilled	122	12%
Funding uncertain	114	11%
Will reduce service quality/take up	73	7%
Disadvantages less well-off	69	7%
Need access to IT	48	5%
Inequitable service	45	4%
Premises/buildings issues	22	2%
Identified positives		
Increased volunteering/involvement	45	4%
Increased IT functionality	8	1%
Objections to principle		
Having to pay for service twice	87	9%
Unanswered questions	38	4%
Problems with consultation	19	2%
Too rushed/need to pilot first	15	1%
IT unreliable	14	4%
Alternative approaches		
Rotate stock, experience and knowledge	59	6%
Increase Council tax/charges	56	6%
Partnership/co-location	43	4%
Need to investigate alternatives	37	4%
Reduce waste, make cuts elsewhere	36	4%
Look for alternative funding etc.	29	3%
Modernise libraries/extend services	24	2%
Volunteer drivers for mobile	20	2%
Make support free	10	1%
Need to retain current service	88	9%
Provision for specific locations/services	74	7%
Other comments	18	2%
N (=100%)		1,005

Chart 30: Opinions on proposals for community-led libraries



Some of the comments here reiterate points already made in the preceding analysis, but there are several new issues raised in relation to the community-led library element of the proposal. In terms of general observations, 15% of respondents express a general dislike of the idea, or suggest that it will not work, while a similar proportion express support for the idea, though it has to be said that many do so grudgingly or reluctantly. This apparent parity of views should not be allowed to conceal the fact that the general tenor of comments in this question is critical and negative, however. Issues of **trust and reliability** re-emerge here, along with a challenge to the legal responsibilities of the Council.

Many comments identify potential problems with the proposal. The most frequently raised is the viability of a proposal that **depends on volunteers**, who may prove difficult to find in sufficient numbers, may be unable to commit to a level needed to maintain the service, and who are likely to give up their role once the initial enthusiasm wanes; this in turn raises questions of the sustainability of this model. There are also doubts about **substituting skilled and knowledgeable professional staff** with untrained volunteers, both in respect of the library knowledge and their training in handling customers more generally. There is a view that **service quality will suffer**, and take up will reduce in response.

Questions are raised about the **ongoing funding** of these libraries. Some suggest that parishes should be invited to commit to funding packages to keep their libraries open, but others point out that such a commitment is open-ended in the absence of detailed costings or details of what would be transferred, including the **future of the existing buildings** and responsibility for their ongoing care and maintenance. Others suggest parishes may find it difficult to raise their precepts to meet these costs, especially in less well-off areas where affordability is an issue. This links to the idea that **disadvantaged communities will suffer more**, because volunteering is a stronger characteristic of more affluent areas; these may succeed in finding volunteers, but areas with a lower tradition of volunteering (and arguably a lower capacity to volunteer) may struggle. In turn, this raises the likelihood of a service that is **inequitable** between different parts of the Borough, something the Council should not tolerate. The **need for IT access** is also most keenly felt in areas which rely on IT provision to make claims and access statutory services.

There are nevertheless some who see positives in this approach, most commonly in raising the profile and **significance of volunteering** and providing more local opportunities for volunteers, and in expanding the **IT functionality** of the service, for example in expanding the e-book stock.

Objections in principle include the problem of **paying twice** for what is seen as a service paid for in Council Tax; there are also again **unanswered questions**, usually related to the detail of what assets and responsibilities will be devolved to communities. Problems are again raised over the consultation, and the absence of information needed to give an informed response, and the **speed of implementation** is again raised, with the suggestion that this solution should first be piloted before being launched across the Borough, so that lessons can be learned to smooth over wider implementation. The **reliability of the IT** on which the community-led services may depend is again raised.

Several respondents identify what they see as alternative approaches, in whole or in part, which they would wish to see investigated. In particular, there is a desire to ensure that stock does not become stale, and one way of reducing the problem here would be to set up a mechanism to rotate stock from non-core libraries across the new community-led libraries; similarly, there is no advantage in each library pursuing and resolving its own challenges when they can learn from one another and benefit from shared professional knowledge.

There is also a significant number of respondents who suggest that **co-location and partnership** could help to reduce overheads and generate revenue streams for libraries; school liaison is especially encouraged, and the possibility of integration with the school library service is offered as a suggestion. In addition, **external funders and sponsors** could be sought to support retention of the service, and imply that the Council has had recourse too quickly to the option of cuts without investigating other possibilities first. Some call for the libraries to modernise, to embrace the technology of change, and to review the services they provide for a 21st century marketplace. They also encourage the Council to consider **what other authorities are doing**, and challenge Swindon's approach in comparison with the less severe cuts they see in other authorities - some going so far as to suggest shared services with neighbouring authorities to reduce overheads.

Several people urge the Council to **raise Council Tax** to a level that will allow retention of the current service, in whole or in part. There are again suggestions that the Council could make savings elsewhere in place of the library cuts, and a call to make the support on offer to community libraries free. The loss of the mobile service is lamented and several people suggest the **recruitment of volunteer drivers** to deliver an informal mobile service.

Several respondents simply urge **retention of the existing service**, rather than proceed with this plan, and others repeat specific pleas for retention of individual libraries, again most frequently Wroughton, Park and the mobile, but also several of the others.

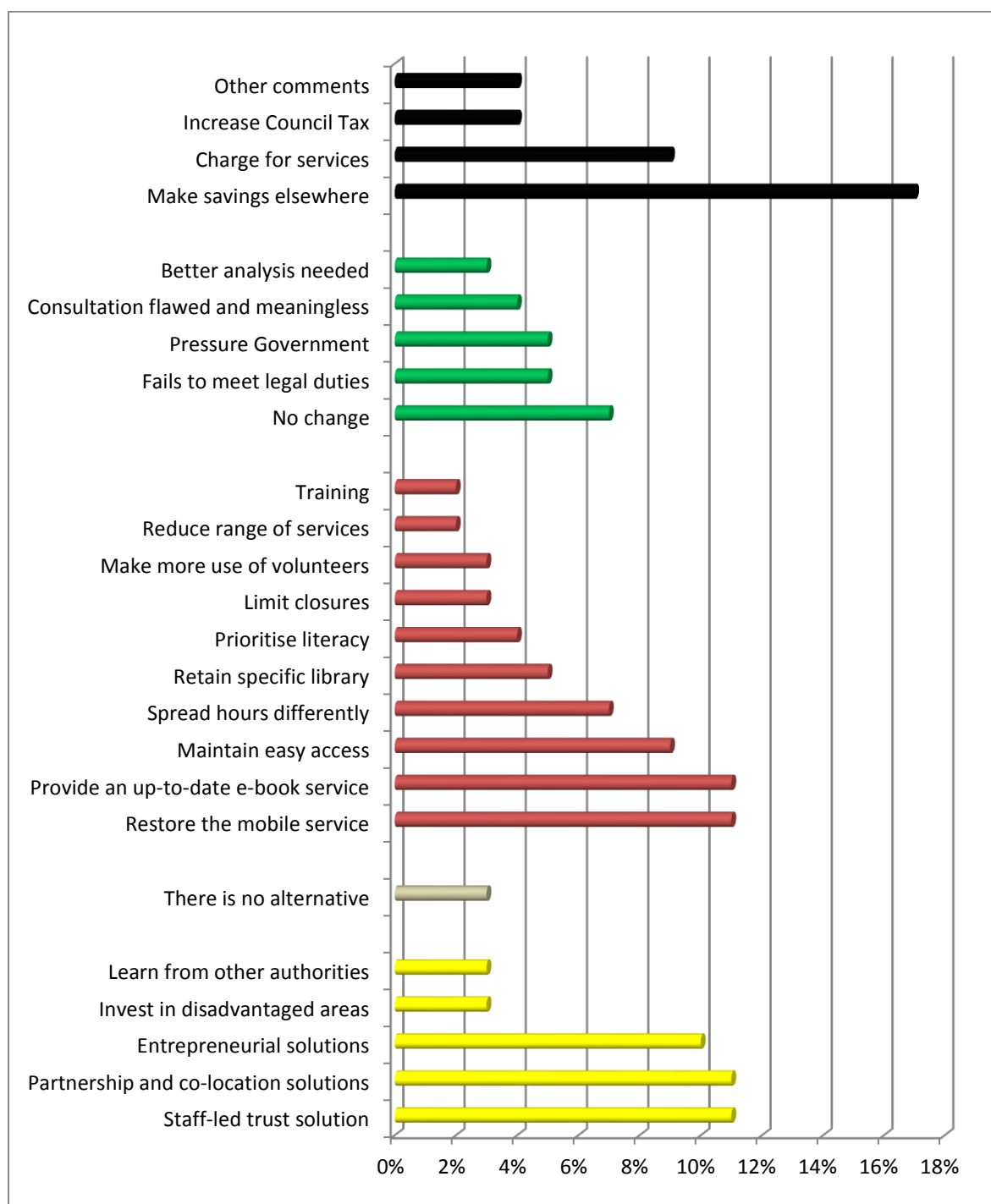
5.3 Alternative approaches

The third open-ended question asked about alternative approaches, and unsurprisingly respondents again take the chance to reiterate several points already made in the other two opportunities, whilst also raising some further new thoughts. The results are summarised here:

Table 31: Alternative approaches

Area of comment	No. of comments	Proportion of respondents making comments
Alternative approaches		
Staff-led trust solution	87	11%
Partnership and co-location solutions	84	11%
Entrepreneurial solutions	77	10%
Invest in disadvantaged areas	25	3%
Learn from other authorities	20	3%
No alternative		
There is no alternative	21	3%
Adjustments to proposal		
Restore the mobile service	89	11%
Provide an up-to-date e-book service	83	11%
Maintain easy access	68	9%
Spread hours differently	53	7%
Retain specific library	36	5%
Prioritise literacy	31	4%
Limit closures	26	3%
Make more use of volunteers	22	3%
Reduce range of services	17	2%
Training	13	2%
Problems with approach		
No change	57	7%
Fails to meet legal duties	40	5%
Pressure Government	37	5%
Consultation flawed and meaningless	32	4%
Better analysis needed	24	3%
Alternative fundamentals		
Make savings elsewhere	133	17%
Charge for services	70	9%
Increase Council Tax	31	4%
Other comments	32	4%
<i>N (=100%)</i>		<i>787</i>

Chart 31: Alternative approaches



The response to this question is less voluminous than to the other two open-enders, and is again repetitive in nature, with several themes expressed already recurring here, along with some new material. These include some alternative approaches the Council is encouraged to consider, with the list headed by the **staff proposal for a trust model**, which several people feel should be examined and consulted on as a genuine alternative approach that would, among other things, save Park library from closure. There is also interest in

partnership and co-location options, including fairly familiar ideas of raising revenue through letting space in libraries to groups, or even commercially, moving libraries into co-location with supermarkets, pubs or other commercial outlets, and taking a generally more **entrepreneurial approach** that looks at new ways of attracting a market for libraries. This includes better **promotion and marketing** of the services currently or potentially available through libraries.

There is a school of thought that wants to see the council take a more pro-active approach to its **disadvantaged areas**, echoing earlier concerns that the proposal as it stands adds to disadvantage for those who live in these localities, and the authority is again urged to look at the **solutions adopted elsewhere** in the hope that good practice elsewhere can inspire an as yet unknown alternative approach.

A small number of people accept that the authority has done all it can, and cannot think of **any viable alternative**. However, several people want to adjust the proposal - not changing it fundamentally, but making minor adjustments that will address some of their main concerns about it. The main one is the desire to restore a **service to the housebound** and to those living in residential homes, but there are also calls for **expansion of the e-book service**. The maintenance of **easy access** is called for, with reference both to remote access and to local service provision, and several people want to see the **available hours spread differently**, generally increasing the staffed hours at the three outlying core libraries at the expense of the Central library.

Smaller numbers of people call for **retention of specific libraries** currently scheduled for closure or transfer, or for an amended proposal that allows more libraries to remain open. Some people point out that **population growth** is projected for the areas where services are being withdrawn. There is a call for a **prioritisation of literacy** to support the local economy and skills marketplace, and a suggestion that the proposal could usefully include an increased level of **volunteering**. Library service cuts are seen as part of the solution by some, **reducing the availability of more marginal activities** such as DVD rental, and there is also a suggestion for **increased training**, both for older or remotely located people in the use of IT to access the library, the use of e-readers, and the possibility of apprenticeships for young people in the community-led libraries.

A number of people simply want to **retain what they currently have**, and are not therefore willing to suggest alternative approaches; there is also a significant level of attention to the **Council's legal obligations**, which people feel are not being honoured by what is currently on offer. Some people urge the authority to **pressure Government** to change an unpopular policy, and see an opportunity for this is the post-referendum scenario of a new administration no longer bound to austerity.

The **consultation is again criticised**, mainly for not putting forward the staff trust alternative (we understand this was not made available to the council before the consultation began) but also for tokenism, and the service's **needs analysis is challenged** with doubts expressed that the nature of use of libraries, and the extent of cuts proposed, are properly founded on accurate statistical analysis.

As before, others' alternative approaches include **raising revenue in other ways** (through charges, or through Council Tax) and **making savings** in areas of Council spend seen as less important.

Looking at the **views of library staff** on these questions, they focus attention on the disadvantages they see in the proposal, and especially on the loss of a local service, the impact on areas and people seen as already disadvantaged, and (unsurprisingly) the likely impact on skilled and experienced staff. On community libraries, there are concerns over the replacement of professional staff with volunteers, and a sense that the Council has excessive expectations as regards volunteers running and day to day delivery of the service. On alternative models of delivering the service, the most prominent response from staff is in favour of the staff's own model for delivery through a trust.

Responses from representative groups largely reflect those of the service users generally. They focus on negative impacts on specific groups of people, especially children and young people, older people, those with disabilities and those who are less well off. They point out that services would be withdrawn from (or made more difficult or costly to access from) less well-off areas of the Borough, where the capacity to adopt new ways of accessing the service is limited by time and expense. Linked to this are concerns that the proposals will have adverse impact on community life, and on the community groups that make use of library facilities. Several groups draw attention to the reliance of the proposals on new technology, to which many people in Swindon (and especially in disadvantaged areas) have no access or no understanding. A number of the groups see no advantages in the proposals, but some acknowledge that the Council will make savings from this approach.

Groups share the widespread concern that the community libraries proposal relies too heavily on a volunteer workforce that may be difficult to recruit, unreliable in practice, inexperienced in managing public access premises, and hard to retain. They draw attention to the need for volunteers to be properly trained and supported, not only in day to day operations but also in the management and financial dimensions of running this service. They also suspect that the future funding of these community-led libraries may not materialise, and that parishes may be reluctant to impose further financial pressures on their residents, especially in the less well-off areas which will also be the most difficult recruiting ground for volunteers.

Representative groups also share residents' views that the Council should look to make savings elsewhere, and share their concerns about current spending priorities. Some add their support to the staff trust model, and others encourage the Council to seek solutions through partnership approaches such as co-location with other services, with the private sector, or sharing services with schools or neighbour authorities.

6 Additional material

Alongside the responses received through the survey, a number of additional responses were sent directly to the Council either as e-mails or letters. The Council has asked us to summarise this feedback as part of this report, and a precis of each is noted in this section; the full text of the more detailed responses has also been made available in the form of an appendix to this report.

6.1 Responses from Parish Councils

Wroughton Parish Council has written to express its serious concern at the proposals, and especially the withdrawal of services from the southern side of the Borough with the closure of Park and Wroughton libraries, which they believe will have an adverse impact on these communities generally and on vulnerable people especially. They strongly urge the Council to consider the staff trust proposal, and express strong interest in working with the future trust to retain a library within Wroughton, an approach they see as significantly preferable to the community-led model set out in the proposal.

Haydon Wick Parish Council say that Swindon Borough Council is the best placed body to provide a comprehensive library service. They think that the proposal relies too much on volunteers, and suggest seeking funding from the private sector to help with this challenge. They are concerned about the health and safety implications of unstaffed premises. They also indicate that parish council funding can only be spent in the parish where it is raised, and that they are unwilling to offer financial assistance to library provision in the Borough as they believe this is the responsibility of SBC.

Highworth Town Council point out that they have already responded to the earlier consultation. They express significant concern at the limited hours proposed for Highworth library. They ask the Council to reconsider its proposal and to consider the Trust proposal put forward by library staff.

Chiseldon Parish Council express their serious concern at the proposed library service cuts. They point out the high proportion of older parish residents with no independent transport, and the difficulty of accessing the alternatives provided by the proposal; they believe this will risk increased social isolation of elderly residents. They also point out that young people in the community are similarly disadvantaged by the absence of independent transport, and the level of use (not least by families with younger children) of the mobile library that calls at Chiseldon. Access to a library will cost significantly more for residents in Chiseldon if the proposal goes forward, a situation that is compounded by the absence of any direct bus route to one of the four core libraries, and by threatened reductions to local bus services.

The Parish Council therefore expresses its particular concern at the proposed closure of Wroughton library, and the loss of the mobile service. It asks to be kept informed as an

interested party in any proposals to save Wroughton library, or to establish an alternative service in Wroughton, which it might wish to assist.

A parish councillor has also written in to raise doubts about the consultation; they suggest that the Council has already made its decision and has failed to listen to the response given to the earlier consultation; they would like to see the results of this earlier consultation. They regret the proposal, which they believe is based on an arbitrary decision to reduce the service budget by over 60%.

6.2 Response from eleven Swindon library staff

A written response has been received from eleven members of library service staff. This sets out what they describe as a fully-costed viable alternative to the Council's proposal, and claims to have the support of a majority of service staff. It retains Park library and allows for an increase in opening hours compared to the Council's proposal; staff want to see this model given due consideration as part of the consultation process.

The staff believe the Council's proposals risk legal challenge under libraries legislation, and suggest there are two serious erroneous premises in the Council's own proposals. One of these is the rapid implementation of the proposals, which allow little time for any viable community initiative to be established; the other is the Council's conviction that a Trust model cannot deliver the required savings. They also question the capacity of the service to raise the revenue assumed in the proposal.

They point out that the engagement on the emerging model earlier this year drew attention, among other things, to the value and importance placed by library users on the friendly and professional staff and the help they can provide, something they feel is not adequately recognised in the Council's proposals. They propose the retention of Park library, alongside significantly more staffed hours at North, West, and Highworth libraries, and the development of a strategy to serve the town's growth areas effectively.

The staff model also provides advice and support, as well as transitional funding, to any group seeking to set up a community-led library, but accepts the removal of the mobile service. It claims that to align closely with the most recent ministerial guidance on library provision. It expects its model to achieve a lower level of savings (it presents a cost of £1.4 million, in comparison to the £1.1 million the Council seeks to achieve), but argues that this is affordable under a Trust model since the Council would no longer need to charge non-domestic rates to the service budget.

In summary, the staff response calls for an extension of timescales to allow a more robust implementation of change in the service; a change in the Council's affordability limit; the establishment of a staff trust to manage the future core service; to maintain premises funding for the non-core libraries until 2020 whilst working with communities and groups to develop community hubs which include library services; to withdraw other funding from non-core libraries in April 2018; and to close the mobile service in April 2017.

6.3 Response from Save Swindon's Libraries

A comprehensive and detailed response has been submitted by Save Swindon's Libraries (SSL). The full response is provided in the Appendix but some of its key points are rehearsed here.

SSL believes that the future budget for the service determined by the Council is inadequate to meet the statutory obligation, and has been driven by financial constraints rather than local need for the service. They suggest that this makes the Council liable to intervention from DCMS, as has happened elsewhere, and provide evidence to support their contention that a community library staffed by volunteers is not adequate to address statutory requirements; they also argue that the proposal fails to meet Government aspirations for standards of library provision. The possibility of Judicial Review is also raised.

SSL thinks the budget is excessively low for a population of this size, and points out that a large part of the budget is reserved for payment of National Non-Domestic Rates, and has already been allocated to other Council spending. At the same time, the budget does not provide for ongoing premises costs at the core libraries.

SSL draws attention to the lack of provision for the south and east of the Borough, and regards the two-mile catchment in the proposal as flawed in that it does not recognise ability to travel or to walk the four-mile round trip; the proposal also fails to cohere with recently-proposed changes to bus services in Swindon and its outlying areas.

The group believes the proposal contravenes equalities legislation, and that this is evidenced by the Council's own Diversity Impact Assessment, for which no mitigation has been proposed. SSL also believes the impact of the reduction in service will tend to increase levels of vulnerability in the Borough, and will disproportionately affect disadvantaged areas of Swindon. SSL quotes other sources in identifying typical costs that may result. They call for a longer-term view that sees services like these as preventative of increased vulnerability, and cost to the public purse, at a later time. They accuse the authority of failing to consider impacts on worklessness and economic growth, in contravention of the Council's own Child Poverty Needs Assessment. SSL point out the inconsistency of the proposal with DWP requirements for Universal Credit claimants and job seekers. They do not believe the proposal caters adequately for groups such as those with Special Educational Needs, or the blind and partially-sighted.

SSL deplores the reduction in staffed hours for core libraries, and suggests that experience elsewhere indicates a likely reduction in take up of the service. They also echo wider public concerns over safety and security in unstaffed libraries accessed through self-service technology. They point out that schools without libraries, which currently rely on the local library service, will be adversely affected and that no provision has been made for this in

education budgets, with consequential detriment to child literacy and learning; they also say that schools have not been consulted about this.

The group also point out the importance of the local library's social and community role, especially in the lives of people who live alone or who have mobility limitations. This has been raised separately with the relevant Scrutiny Committee but no answer has yet been received. They state that alternatives to the Council's proposal exist but have not received due consideration; one alternative they believe to be viable, and describe, could retain at least ten of the Borough's libraries.

On the proposal itself, SSL believes the reliance on parish council funding is optimistic and unsustainable, and that most of the unfunded libraries will end up closing. The reliance on volunteers will at best result in a reduced quality of service. In the meantime, a fragmented service will be wasteful and inefficient. The group identifies areas of wastage within the service that could be addressed, and commends co-location with other services to generate revenue, whilst a Friends Group could also access (and organise) funding opportunities that might make a significant contribution to revenue. They strongly criticise a timescale that will inhibit successful transition to a community-led model even in the most advanced parishes, and believe this makes a mockery of the consultation. Meanwhile, the public meetings have emphasised the importance of several local libraries as a home for groups and activities.

The group insists that Park library justifies retention due to the level of usage it attracts and its location in an area of lower literacy and higher deprivation; its closure would impact adversely on adjacent local businesses.

SSL also note that even relatively affluent areas may hesitate before committing to the precept increases required to sustain their local library; in disadvantaged or low-band housing areas, this is even less likely, as is the probability of recruiting enough volunteers when voluntary organisations are already having difficulty recruiting. It agrees that volunteers can supplement the service, but not with the replacement of skilled staff by volunteers.

SSL is very exercised about the inclusion, in the present consultation, of just a single option for the future, despite its awareness of other options, and the representations made to the authority in this respect, which it believes have been ignored. An FOI request has been submitted on this issue, and SBC is also urged to consult other authorities and their response to similar pressures.

SSL does not believe that the present consultation is properly sampled and contends that it is not sufficiently representative; it draws attention to a failure to consult head teachers, or to inform ward councillors. The unrepresentative nature of the approach, which is likely to result in a disproportionate response from older women, was raised at the previous engagement but has not been adjusted or rectified. They allege that a discussion on a community trust in Wroughton has already taken place and signals that this consultation is tokenistic; the decision has already been taken.

In conclusion, the group recommends: a review of the budget to allow for a less damaging reduction in budget; the full investigation of all alternatives; the consideration of a trust model for management of the service, and an associated Friends Group with revenue raising responsibilities.

6.4 Response from 25 local Head Teachers

A group of 25 local Head Teachers has collaborated on a response to the proposal. They raise serious concerns about the detrimental impact they think the proposal will have on local children, and especially those who are disadvantaged, and the loss of staff knowledge and guidance which promotes the love of reading to children. While recognising the financial pressures the Council faces (and which they share), they urge that savings be sought in other areas of spending, and that this proposition be reconsidered.

6.5 Response from Swindon UNISON

UNISON in Swindon is opposed to any cuts in the library service. Whilst it recognises the pressures faced by the Council, it believes there are alternatives both to the proposal put forward and to the timetable for implementation, and calls for alternatives to be set out with costings, and a timetable which only implements cuts after exhausting other options, and after full consultation. The union believes that the proposal does not meet the requirements placed on the authority by statute.

The union wants to see a comprehensive and transparent review that assesses the profile and needs of local communities (now and projected), reviews approaches adopted elsewhere, and compares the impacts of alternative methods of delivering the service; it raises several questions around the needs of local people, the availability of resources, and the adequacy of consultation. It also seeks to explore the potential for partnership-based solutions, and requests evidence that the proposal will in fact provide an adequate service to meet local need.

The union raises further questions about service efficiency and the ways in which the arguments for and against professional staff presence and the use of modern technology have been assessed. They also ask about the extent to which the authority has appraised the possible shared use of its library premises, and of collaboration with neighbouring authorities (for instance, on the provision of a mobile service).

UNISON asks whether the staff proposal has been considered, and why it has not been presented as an option. They call for a proposal from UNISON members to receive proper consideration, and state their intention to fight to defend services and to protect their members' jobs, to ensure the Council meets its legal obligations, and to ensure the Council explores all other alternatives fully and transparently before implementing any service reductions.

UNISON has also made a second submission, having received no acknowledgment of its first response outlined above. This adds to their initial response by referring to the Diversity Impact Assessment and the Needs Assessment, which although placed in the public domain have not been shared with UNISON. UNISON has now consulted further and wishes to raise additional questions. These are: whether the proposed Trust model has been considered and why it has not been put forward as an option; how the savings target was arrived at and what methodology was used; why a four-year plan to reduce costs is being implemented largely in 2017; and clarification of the proposal to raise revenue through use of space at the core libraries and the implications of failure to meet the target set.

UNISON also formally requests the authority to discuss the staff proposal with UNISON members and staff who have suggested an alternative.

6.6 Response from Swindon Liberal Democrats

The party stresses the importance of addressing issues raised in the Council's Diversity Impact assessment.

The local Liberal Democrat party's response notes that the Council's proposal is among the most draconian proposed in England. The party believes that the future of the service should be led by popular need rather than by financial constraint, and notes concerns raised by the Council's own Diversity Impact Assessment in relation to older and less IT-capable service users. It also notes that libraries remain a popular service with lower-income groups, and that Government guidance encourages local authorities to maintain this as part of their legal obligation.

The party draws attention to levels of deprivation in Swindon, and suggests that the reduced service planned in the proposal would impact adversely on access to education, skills and services for jobseekers. It regards this as unfair. It also points out that disadvantaged areas typically find it more difficult to generate volunteers, so that the proposal could result in fewer resources being available in the areas of greatest need. There is little material available to help community-led libraries learn from their counterparts elsewhere and it is easy to foresee significant management and financial difficulties that might threaten the levels of savings sought.

The Liberal Democrats regard the closure of Wroughton library as unacceptable, noting the lack of future provision in the south of the Borough, and the distance to any alternative either in Swindon or Wiltshire. They also oppose the closure of Park library, because of the level of current usage. The group also point out that the proposal fails to consider plans for future development in the south of the Borough, which will require library service provision.

6.7 Responses from individual members of the public

A member of the public expresses concern at the proposed closure of Old Town library and the impact this will have on her grandchildren specifically and on older people, especially those who do not have IT access or skills, and who are unable to get to the Central library as an alternative. Another contributor expresses strong opposition to library closures and urges the Council to pressure Government to provide the resources needed to keep libraries open; they believe the proposal is morally wrong and that replacing trained staff with volunteers is unfair on both.

A member of the public asks that no decision be taken until the staff's trust model has been given full consideration. They believe the present proposal relies excessively on volunteers and that the reduction in hours will lead to a reduced usage of an important service, threatening literacy levels and increasing access costs for disadvantaged people, whose children have already lost their Children's Centres and now stand to lose free services provided by local libraries. They also regret the loss of skilled staff and do not believe volunteers can provide a service of the same quality.

A local resident asks how the Council will communicate effectively with local people once it has removed one of the most important sources of information, especially for those who have no computer access at home. They believe that Government policy is contradictory, in urging a better educated workforce while cutting the resources that can support this. They urge retention of Park library which serves a poorer area of the Borough. They also ask what the Council is doing to put pressure on Government to invest more in education for the benefit of an underachieving local population.

One resident accepts the need for financial savings, including reluctant acceptance of the closure of the non-core libraries, but asks that hours at the remaining four should not be reduced. They point out the need for increased capacity at these libraries, to meet demand transferring from the non-core libraries. Another raises the same point, asking for staffed hours at the core libraries to be maintained and similarly raising the issue of increased demand for the service.

A local resident expresses reservations about the increased reliance on technology. They have recently experienced anti-social behaviour at one of the core libraries, which was reported to and addressed by a member of staff. They are concerned that unstaffed premises and those using them legitimately may be vulnerable to this kind of behaviour, and point out that bank ATMs suffer from anti-social activity outside banking hours. They want to see longer staffed hours at the core libraries.

A regular user of the service deplores the proposal and wants to see all libraries retained and professionally staffed; they say that staff have a level of knowledge and training that cannot be expected of volunteers, and that the libraries have an important role as community hubs and as supporters of community cohesion. Another user reports on their recent visit to Covi9ngham library and the number of children using the premises, and expresses concern that this service, clearly of value to local children, is being withdrawn.

One member of the public wishes to stress the importance of retaining Park library, not least because of its presence in a disadvantaged community and the lack of a nearby alternative.

They regret the likely impact on community groups that use the library, as well as noting the high level of computer usage at Park by a range of different people, including children and jobseekers who need to meet their obligation to search for 35 hours a week. They point out that Universal Credit will place obligations on all benefit recipients, with the only alternative a premium rate phone line. They ask the Council to reconsider the future of Park library.

A resident of a small rural community (outside the borough boundary) urges retention of the mobile service to such communities, due to their remoteness from physical libraries.

Another local resident raises a question about the future of a small satellite library run at low cost through Gorse Hill Baptist Church should the proposals go ahead, and suggests the Council promote the library service more effectively.

A member of the public expresses concern over the consultation, believing that the decision has already been made, and asking that residents be asked about the acceptability of an increase in taxation to allow residents to decide whether they wish to pay for their libraries. They also take the opportunity to reject perishing in their locality.

Two members of the public have emailed in to say how much they value library services.

The Leader of the Council has received 49 identical letters from individual residents protesting the proposal to withdraw support from the Park library. The letters draw attention to Cllr Renard's personal knowledge of the locality and its severe levels of disadvantage, which make book purchases or home access to IT much less likely, and the need for IT support for children to do homework and for job seekers. They also note the important role of the library as a community hub which has a positive impact on social isolation and learning. They also anticipate difficulty in recruiting volunteers with the skills and capacity to take on this service. They urge the Council to reconsider its proposals in relation to Park library.

6.8 Responses from Councillors

Three Borough Councillors have submitted responses in writing to the officers managing the consultation. All three are opposed to the proposal, and two specifically endorse the response from 'Save Swindon's Libraries'.

Appendix: Detailed written submissions made separately from the consultation

A1 Responses from Parish Councils

Highworth Parish Council

Highworth Town Councillors instructed me at our last Full Town Council meeting to write to you in response to the Public Consultation on the Future of Swindon Library Service. This follows a letter sent to you on the 20th January of this year.

Councillors are very concerned and disappointed that only 15 'staffed hours' are proposed for Highworth. They request that the Borough re-visit this as a solution and to look at the alternative solutions being put forward, including the proposal put forward by the Library Staff.

Haydon Wick Parish Council

Following a discussion at the Full Council meeting on Monday the Councillors have asked for the following comments to be considered:-

Swindon Borough Council are best placed to provide a comprehensive library service;

The proposed strategy contains an over reliance on volunteers;

Funding from commercial organisations should be sought;

Any unattended service provision would need to be fully assessed for health & safety risks;

To advise of the requirement that any parish council funding to be spent only in the parish and cannot to be used to replace Borough funding for use elsewhere;

It is not intended at this moment to offer any financial assistance to the library provision in the Borough as this is the responsibility of the Borough Council.

Chiseldon Parish Council

After discussion at various Parish Council meetings, our council was very concerned at the proposed library service cuts to come into force in June 2017.

We outline below our concerns over the closure of many of the areas libraries, leaving a core service of 4 libraries.

- Our Parish has a high population of elderly residents who do not have access to their own transport. Losing access to their nearest library would mean a longer and often

unpractical journey into Swindon to one of the 4 proposed remaining libraries. The end result of this would mean the elderly losing a means of engaging with the community at large and therefore increasing social isolation.

- Our young residents who do not have their own transport would face the same transport issues as the elderly stated above. It is vitally important that the young be able to access readily available information from a library and an inconvenient public transport journey may put some off from using their library service.
- Families with young children can currently easily visit the mobile library that stops in the village, therefore encouraging the young to enjoy books and reading. Families will find this increasingly difficult if they have to travel to one of the central libraries. Our elderly and mobile restricted residents are increasingly reliant on the mobile library, withdrawal of this service will further disadvantage an already vulnerable group in the community.
- Travel costs would automatically increase if users had to visit one of the 4 central library. Whether these be public transport costs, fuel costs, parking costs or taxi costs. Currently the cost is zero as we have a mobile library provision within the village.
- The current bus network in place to get to one of the 4 main libraries has no direct route. The route involves a change of bus and several instances of crossing busy main Swindon roads. This is not an ideal or feasible situation for the elderly, disabled, and those with young children.

We are also greatly concerned over the proposed closure of our two closest library services; Wroughton Library and the mobile library service.

The mobile library provides a provision for all those who would struggle to leave the village to access a library service. The elderly and disabled can access the provision and parents can easily take young children there. Due to the other service cuts that Swindon Borough Council are proposing in terms of the Bus consultation it seems short sighted to also remove the mobile library service and further isolate those in rural communities.

Likewise the Wroughton Library at least provides a service for those who can travel, without the extra time, inconvenience and expense a journey into central Swindon would incur.

Should there be a subsequent plan to try to save either Wroughton Library or the mobile library service visiting Chiseldon then the Parish Council would like to be kept informed so it can debate what level of assistance we can provide moving forward.

We would appreciate it if someone from your office would confirm receipt of this letter via an email to the Clerks office on the email address above.

When all the paperwork has been reviewed after the 30th September, would you please keep us updated on any proposed changes.

Wroughton Parish Council

Future of Swindon Library Services

Wroughton Parish Council are very concerned about the proposals to make significant cuts to Swindon's Library service and are particularly anxious that, if the closure of Parks and Wroughton Libraries go ahead, there would be no library provision to the South of the Borough. This would have huge implications for social inclusion and the wellbeing of vulnerable people within the communities affected by the proposals.

The Parish Council are however very encouraged by the Library Staff's alternative proposal for a Trust run Library service and believe that this offers an opportunity to retain a credible and sustainable Library service within Swindon and retain library provision within Parks.

Should Cabinet be minded to support this proposal, Wroughton Parish Council would be very interested to work with and help the Trust to retain a Library within Wroughton. This would be much preferable to any library provision in Wroughton being provided by a Community Trust.

Whilst Wroughton Parish Council are opposed to significant cuts in library provision across Swindon we would be grateful for any influence you can bring to encourage Cabinet Members to support the Staff proposal, this provides the best opportunity to maintain a sustainable library service within Wroughton.

A2 Response from 11 Library Staff

Please find attached a document outlining an alternative proposal for remodelling Swindon's library service.

This is a fully-costed viable alternative with the support of the majority of library staff.

Our alternative proposal retains Park Library and offers increased staffed opening hours.

Please feel very welcome to share this document as and where appropriate

Please consider this the official feedback from Swindon Libraries staff and ensure that it is submitted into the consultation process accordingly.

A. Introduction

Swindon Libraries have a long and proud history of supporting the residents of Swindon and improving life chances and opportunities. They continue to play an essential role in the social, educational and cultural value of our communities: for families, children and young people; for students of all ages, job-seekers seeking employment, older people, and community groups.

This proposal acknowledges the Library Strategy presented to Council, July 2016. We also acknowledge the financial pressure facing the Council, the reduction in the central government grant, and the increasing demands for adult social care and children's services.

However, Swindon Libraries are well placed to reinforce the Council's vision and pledges including supporting education, generating economic growth, and enabling self-sufficient communities.

Therefore, this proposal presents a different funding and delivery model to those accepted by Cabinet. The alternative proposal aims to deliver substantial savings to the library budget by 2020 while building a sustainable future beyond that date. This plan also takes into account the expanding nature of Swindon as a member of the Fast Growth Cities group.

B. Current Council proposals

While acknowledging the financial pressures we consider the current proposals too limited in scope and failing to reflect the growing and dynamic nature of Swindon. As such the town deserves a library service commensurate with its ambition.

We believe that the current proposals might leave the Council open to a legal challenge under the Libraries and Museums Act, 1964, and the avoidable high costs this will entail. The current proposals also contain 2 erroneous premises:

1. The final savings target was to be delivered by the 2020 but in practice 80% is to be frontloaded in 2017 with the remaining 20% delivered over the following three years.

This allows little time to develop and deliver the most efficient model for the long-term future of Swindon Libraries.

The pressure to deliver savings within such a short timescale is not in the long-term interest of the library service.

2. That a Trust model is unable to deliver the savings needed to help the Council achieve its financial targets.

This would be correct if the savings mitigation related to NNDR only rather than as part of a wider restructuring of the service.

A further erroneous assumption is the service's ability to raise substantial funds through income generation. Added to the current income target, which form part of the Council's financial modelling, the additional £318,000 would make an unrealistic target of £457,000 per year.

This proposal challenges the above assumptions and suggests a different delivery model and timescale but one that still delivers substantial savings by 2020.

C. Alternative Proposals

We acknowledge the Libraries vision as outlined and its mission to 'build communities through literacy and learning'.

However, we believe this would be more comprehensively delivered through a core network of 5 libraries with longer staffed hours. This will provide wider coverage both geographically and demographically, and provide face-to-face staff support, which many library users value.

The recent engagement with Swindon residents and subsequent report highlighted that "many library users value the staff, not only for their friendliness and warmth but also for their help and professionalism" and that users "place high value on the availability of professional and trained staff who can help customers with queries."

This value on staff is not sufficiently recognised in the Council proposals with proposed staffed hours at odds with the findings of the report.

Therefore, we recommend:

Library	Staffed Hours
Central	47.5
North	31
West	31
Highworth	27
Park	27

In addition we agree that this can be complemented by:

- Investment in self-service and public access technology (outside of staffed hours)
- A professionally managed and delivered service by a team of qualified librarians and paid library staff including: service development, learning and outreach, local studies, information and digital literacy, stock management and volunteer co-ordination

Consideration will also be given on how best to develop services to the growth areas of the town such as the Eastern Development Area.

Libraries would also need the opportunity to generate greater income to further decrease the Council's financial input post 2020. However, this can only be achieved by maintaining sufficient space in the core libraries to allow the development of income generating strategies. In addition we propose that the building costs for the remaining libraries (below) are met until 2020, when a second review would take place in light of the Council's finances. Support, advice and transitional funding would be offered to develop community-led solutions, with support from partners, community groups and volunteers to maintain a library offer or develop a community hub.

- Moredon
- Upper Stratton
- Wroughton
- Even Swindon
- Covingham
- Liden
- Old Town
- Walcot
- Penhill
- Pinetrees

We propose that the mobile library should be decommissioned by March 2017.

D. Advantages of a trust model

There are significant advantages to establishing a libraries trust or similar for Swindon including relief on NNDR, which would substantially reduce the running costs of the core libraries.

This approach would also be in keeping with advice from the new Minister for libraries, Rob Wilson. Mr Wilson sent a letter, 25th July 2016, to local authorities outlining overlap between his Civil Society work and his library portfolio including the “exploitation of new governance models (like mutuals, trusts and co-operatives) and new funding opportunities (such as social impact bonds and crowd-funding).”

A staff led model would be best placed to take such work forward.

The cost of providing 5 core libraries plus the building costs for the remainder, and with the removal of NNDR charges, would be £1.4m. We therefore propose that the Council increases its affordability limit from the £1.1m in order to maintain a more robust library service.

As part of the changes a new staffing structure would need to be implemented.

E. Recommendations

1. To extend the timescales to allow a robust and realistic delivery strategy to be developed and implemented, while still retaining the 2020 target date
2. Increase the Council's affordability limit from £1.1m to £1.4m (to increase in line with inflationary factors) and remove NNDR charges.
3. To establish a staff led trust to take on the management and delivery of a core set of 5 Libraries by 1st April 2018
4. To maintain the current space within the five libraries and allow the Trust to establish income generating partnerships within the premises, reinvesting profits to maintain a comprehensive & efficient library service for the benefit of Swindon
5. To maintain funding for the building costs of the remaining libraries until March 2020 but to work with communities and other organisations to transition them into 'community hubs' offering a range of services and facilities, which could include a book collection and/or IT facilities
6. To withdraw all funding, other than building costs, from the remaining libraries to take effect 1st April 2018

7. To discontinue the mobile library service to take effect 1st April 2017

F. Conclusion

We believe that these alternative proposals offer a practical and realistic solution, delivering substantial savings, while maintaining a comprehensive and efficient service for the residents of Swindon, and reflecting its expanding and dynamic nature.

A3 Response from Save Swindon's Libraries

SAVE SWINDON'S LIBRARIES SUBMISSION TO FUTURE OF SWINDON'S LIBRARIES CONSULTATION – SEPTEMBER 2016

Summary of Key Points and Recommendations

- The budget of £1.1m is inadequate to provide a public library service in compliance with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964;
- This proposal has been generated from a statement of fiscal limit, rather than an understanding of user need, and is therefore a flawed solution;
- The overall budget of £1.1m is not completely dedicated to the library service because £337,015 of that total is to service NNDR. This is a figure that could be reduced by 80% if a trust model was adopted, but that has already been committed to other areas of the Council budget- this is merely an internal market within the budget that reduces the real amount for libraries to £762,985. This figure is unrealistically low for a compliant Public Library Service for a town the size of Swindon;
- Community libraries that are not part of the council-funded 'core', where the risk and responsibility for the service is not held by the Borough Council as the Public Library Authority, are not included as part of the statutory provision;
- The metric of inclusion of living within 2 miles of a core library- as the crow flies- does not take into account ability to travel the more than 4-mile round trip on public transport or on foot;
- The lack of provision in the south and east of Swindon Borough excludes all those who cannot travel on a single bus, or easily on foot to a library;
- The current proposal contravenes equality legislation, as is recognised in the Council's own Diversity Impact Assessment, and no adequate mitigation has been evidenced;
- The dramatic reduction in staffed hours at the core libraries reduces their service to such an extent that usage will drop, as evidenced in Lewisham and other authorities with reduced hours;
- The installation of self-service technology is a safety risk for library users, and should only be used to increase opening hours, not to offset reductions in staffing;
- The Local Government Association identified libraries as one of the key indicators of the sustainability of local communities;
- The current proposal will reduce by 60% a universal public service that currently saves money on delivery for acute services for vulnerable adults and children, particularly the 'hidden vulnerable' who are making use of universal services but are not known to the Council. The long term cost to Swindon Borough Council of ceasing library funding will be to push more into the expensive 'vulnerable' category;
- The current proposal disproportionately impacts areas of deprivation and relative low

- income in Swindon. The impact on joblessness and future economic growth has not been considered in this proposal, even though the impacts are laid out in the Council's own Child Poverty Needs Assessment 2011;
- Local schools are dependent on branch libraries where they do not have school libraries. No alternative provision within the education budget has been made to mitigate this need. The direct impact will be a detrimental one on children's literacy and learning across Swindon. Schools have not yet been engaged in the consultation which is now drawing to a close;
- The local library is a point of social contact for many elderly or limited mobility residents. To force them into social exclusion, even if the Home Library Service is extended to them, is proven to increase their chances of mental ill health. A written question was submitted to the Streetsmart Scrutiny Committee to ask how much extra money has been put aside to meet the increased mental health problems that will arise as a result of forcing older people into social exclusion- no response has been forthcoming from SBC;
- This consultation has not included alternative options for the consideration of the residents. Important alternatives exist and must be given due consideration (with evidence available that this has taken place);
- The ability for parish councils and community groups to sustain a library service for residents is overly optimistic and will result in the closure of most of the unfunded libraries;
- Divesting responsibility for library provision to diverse groups will result in a piecemeal and inefficient service;
- Transfer of the library service to a Trust would increase public confidence in the service and could increase the chances of community buy-in to supplement core funding;
- Over-reliance on volunteers has been shown to 'run down' public services under the radar of public scrutiny;
- Co-location of matched services could bring fiscal benefits to both the libraries budget and the budget for adult social care and vulnerable children;
- There are many efficiency savings that can be made already in the library service where money is being wasted. The most glaring examples are telephone and utilities;
- A Borough-wide Friends Group could provide a significant fundraising opportunity. Grants are available for certain elements of a library service that could heavily subsidise revenue and capital costs of branch libraries. Additionally, an ongoing membership subscription to the Friends (not to the Library Service) could be introduced, alongside year-round largescale fundraising to benefit all remaining libraries in Swindon.

Budget

1. It is well understood that Swindon Borough Council faces budgetary pressures. The choice to cut the libraries budget by 60% was a political one, and the Council could have chosen to make a smaller cut.

2. The cost of statutory services for vulnerable adults and children will rise significantly by 2020. Simply cutting budgets (including for statutory services) to pour money into services to the vulnerable is to misunderstand the need and lacks coherence. **Universal services prevent people slipping into vulnerability and save money in the long term.**
3. Reliance on parish councils to raise adequate revenue to run the majority of libraries will benefit areas where residents can afford to pay more. In the more deprived areas of Swindon, there are already incidences of default on payment of Council Tax- to ask residents to pay even more is not a workable solution.
4. Frontloading savings into 2017 is unnecessary since the agreed budget saving of £1.5m is by 2020, and this is what the public were consulted on. A move to frontload all this into 2017 is not what was agreed by Cabinet in December 2015. This also disregards a need for a 'soft landing' for local communities who may be exploring how they can support their local library. The timeframe is too compressed to be realistic, even for established groups. For example, Wroughton Parish Council is the group most likely to make a successful transition to managing their own library, but to do this by June 2017 requires budget decisions to be made by the Parish before the final decision has been taken by the Borough Cabinet. **This is not democratic and makes a mockery of the consultation process.**
5. The Department for Work and Pensions has a legal responsibility to ensure all its forms are available to those who need to use them. By December 2016, Universal Credit will roll out online in Swindon, meaning that the DWP must make sure all claimants can make online applications. Libraries allow 2 free hours of network access, and then charge £3/hour. If only available in core libraries, there will not be enough computers for all claimants, and jobseekers may lose their allowance. DWP should be paying for the provision of IT/ networks. This is also true where jobseekers must prove jobseeking time up to 35 hours per week; the majority of which will now be online.
6. Libraries will also print forms (at a cost) that Job Centres cannot do as they lose their own resources. **This proposal has not been drafted in coherence with the DWP.**
7. **If an alternative governance model were to be established, it would still be possible to keep open at least ten of the Borough's libraries** by doing the following:
 - NNDR reduced to 20%;
 - Staffing across 6 of the ten libraries cut to 70% of current, and 4 down to 60%;
 - Better value for money found in utilities to see a cut to 90% of current in ten libraries;
 - Cleaning costs cut to 70%/60% of current;
 - Better value for money found on telephone charges and cut to 70%/60% of current: current variance between £0.51/ hour open and £74.60/hour open! Median is £10.24/ hour open;
 - Charge of £32,000 at West Swindon cut to £16,000;
 - Disproportionately large 'other' cost at Highworth cut by 50%;

- Income generation maintained at current levels for ten libraries and supplemented by trust and Friends fundraising;
- Reducing stock and core service costs to 60%.

To refuse to consider a governance model that reduces NNDR because they feed an internal market for the Council makes the real library budget £762,785 – this is not enough to run a public library service.

Statutory Requirement and the DCMS

8. The proposal quotes the Council's responsibilities under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Public Library Authority in question (Swindon Borough Council) cannot divest its responsibilities under this Act, although it can contract others to deliver the service. Divestment of responsibility for funding, management and sustainment of branch libraries does therefore not contribute to the Council's compliance with its duty under the Act.
9. In 2001, the DCMS published a standard definition of a library to mean a staffed service point in a dedicated building, room or vehicle. It does not cover book-borrowing facilities in other premises. The dramatic reduction in staff of this proposal reduces the service to rooms only and therefore fails to provide a library when unstaffed.
10. The Act requires a library service to be both efficient and comprehensive. A service that does not serve the majority of the Borough residents is not comprehensive. The metric to measure the comprehensive nature of this proposal is an arbitrary figure of a 2-mile radius as the crow flies from each core library. This measure includes 85% of residents. However, this metric does not measure the ability of residents to access the library service on public transport or on foot. Many library users are elderly, have small children or have limited mobility; **a more than 4-mile round trip on foot, with heavy library books, is not a reasonable expectation.** If the radius is reduced to 1-mile, thereby making the round trip 2 miles (which will still exclude elderly and disabled people on foot), the percentage of residents served by the library service reduces to below 50%.
11. The four core libraries were chosen as they were the four most visited. This has been acknowledged by Council officers throughout the consultation as a "crude" figure. It does not take into account the reasons why and the manners in which people visit libraries. Park Library is 5th most visited in the Borough, but ranks 4th for network hours used. No justification has been given for choosing one metric over another; the impact of choosing an arbitrary metric will have a profound social impact, and contributes to the factors that set this library proposal in contravention of equality legislation.
12. The proposal leaves the southern and eastern areas of Swindon Borough completely unserved by the council-funded service. Communities within these areas might make use of alternative provision in adjacent wards, where transport exists between them, but to expect everyone from Wanborough, Dorcan, Liden, Eldene, Chiseldon, Wroughton, Lawn, who might use the Park Library, to come all the way

in to Central, or up to one of the other core libraries, is disadvantageous to those communities.

13. The new proposed bus strategy has not been developed in conjunction with the library proposal and reduces the ability of residents to reach one of the core libraries in a single bus journey; taking 2 buses through a 'hub' will become the norm and will make it less viable for many residents.

This proposal is not comprehensive or efficient and may be subject to intervention from the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, as has been the case in Berkshire and is likely in Lancashire.

14. The DCMS Libraries Deliver Document

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-inengland-2016-2021>) makes clear the benefits of libraries and what efforts public library authorities should be making to achieve higher, not lower, standards of provision. The proposal from Swindon Borough Council to cease funding to 11 of the 15 libraries in Swindon **fails to comply with this central government vision** in the following ways:

- Reduced access to reading and a decrease in digital literacy;
- Reduced access to free study space and homework clubs;
- Reduction in social spaces;
- Undermines health and well-being as access to health advice is reduced;
- Limits access to job clubs and employment resources;
- Limits access to computers and to the free wifi which will not be available in community libraries.

The DCMS document also highlights which targeted services libraries deliver for acute needs:

- **Health:** Books and information for long term health issues and meeting spaces for groups; disability support through access to equipment and facilities, accessible spaces and information; mental health issues through books on prescription and autism and dementia friendly libraries.
- **Services:** English language learning and citizenship test support; job clubs and CV support; access to IT for jobseeking; start-up business support; digital skills training and e-resources.
- **Urgent needs:** Access to legal services, information about foodbanks, other emergency information.

15. The real costs are indicated as follows (figures from Age UK and corroborated by Herefordshire Libraries: Impact of libraries on communities 2013) for elderly people who use libraries for social contact and intellectual stimulation;

a. Preventing cognitive decline saves £12,050 per person: a Mayo Clinic study found that reading books, playing word games and participating in computer activities led to a 30 to 50 % decrease in the risk of developing mild cognitive impairment (MCI). Bibliotherapy (reading therapy) can be used in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and is used in therapy at residential homes, hospitals and hospices.

b. Preventing a diagnosis of depression saves £2085 per person;

- c. Savings of up to £90,000 per year can be made by reducing the need for contact with mental health services.
 - d. According to DCMS 'Libraries Deliver', libraries save the NHS £1.32 per person per year in reducing contact with primary care services. In Swindon (pop 217,160, ONS figure) this presents an annual saving of £286,651 that has not been considered for its impact on other budgets when libraries close.
 - e. Additionally, libraries provide access to health information, reading lowers stress levels, and reading fiction improves empathy and problem-solving skills.
16. In providing a library service, local authorities must, among other things have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area. This proposal falls far short of this requirement, and actively undermines it by making the library service inaccessible to many residents.
17. There are approximately 100 families home-educating their children in Swindon. The local library forms a very important part of the education of home-educated children. The ability to access a local library on foot, or cheaply (single bus or free parking) is essential since most home educating families are on one-earner low to middle incomes by the nature of having to dedicate so much parental time to education rather than work.

Consultation Process

18. In spite of sustained pressure from campaigners and library users, Swindon Borough Council has only put one option before the residents for consultation. The evidence for, and detail of, alternative options was presented to SBC during the public engagement period. Detailed submissions have also been made verbally to Councillors and officers. **In all instances the prospect of any alternative has been ignored.**
19. A Freedom of Information request was submitted to SBC on 4 Aug requesting evidence that alternative strategies have at least been considered. There has been a statement of exemption under section 36 of the FOI Act but no statement from a qualified person, written at the time of the exemption being applied, has yet been seen.
20. A letter was sent to the Leader of the Council by the Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals stating the case to keep more than 4 libraries within the public sector. This letter was ignored by the Council.
21. **If Swindon Borough Council does not fully consider the alternatives put before it and has pre-determined the outcome of the public consultation, it will lay itself open to legal challenge under Judicial Review.**
22. Furthermore, the size and spread of the consultation sample has not been designed to ensure a fair representation of responses. Not only have headteachers not been approached by the Council (they were written to by the Save Swindon's Libraries campaign), there are many ward councillors who have not been consulted either (as

at 29 Sep with one day of consultation remaining). There has been no attempt to tailor consultation to any particular group of library users so, like the public engagement, there is likely to be an overwhelmingly skewed sample of women over 50. This is not representative of the Swindon population as a whole. These problems were recognised in the report on the public engagement earlier this year, but no arrangement has been made to rectify this problem.

Impact of non-provision in non-core libraries

23. Submissions have been made to Swindon Borough Council from interested groups and individuals across the library user-ship of the Borough. The need for ongoing branch library provision where local communities can access it has been seen throughout the consultation period as members of the Save Swindon's Libraries group have visited drop in events. The key points are summarised below. They are not exhaustive or exclusive:

a. **Upper Stratton:** This library serves some of the most deprived areas of Swindon

from the north of Penhill, Upper Stratton and Gorse Hill. The local school makes use of the library for class visits to access book stock, and when this is no longer available a trip into town or North Swindon with small children during the school day will be impossible. A direct impact of closure of this library will be on childrens' literacy in the Upper Stratton area. The Advice Point is located in the library and cannot afford to keep going if rates are to be paid. This longstanding source of advice to members of the community to help them to access government services, if no longer available, will contribute to the number of people falling into vulnerability in the Borough. The Advice Point is a key preventative service and must be maintained at an accessible place in the community.

b. **Penhill:** This library is co-located in a building with a local youth service. The small

number of IT terminals are used for government applications for housing and benefits, and will be even more necessary when Universal Credit is rolled out across Swindon at the end of 2016, and all applications will have to be made online. Penhill has a high proportion of residents living on low incomes, who are limited in their ability to volunteer locally, or to travel large distances to access a library service. Families with low incomes are not able to prioritise purchasing a large number of books to improve literacy and learning. There is a direct link between low literacy rates and joblessness (see SBC Child Poverty Needs Assessment and Libraries Needs Assessment) which will only be exacerbated when job searching online at the library becomes impossible as it closes.

c. **Pinehurst:** The library is the only permanent service in the Pinetrees Community

Centre. The Pinetrees Community Centre is the only community facility in the Pinehurst area and the library is key to keeping its function as a hub for residents ongoing. The demographic in the area is similar to Penhill and the loss of the library will make low literacy rates and joblessness in the area worse. The likelihood of a community solution with adequate funds is low in Pinehurst.

d. **Liden:** This is a library with a lot of potential for income generation. Some of the building has been leased to Swindon 105.5, thereby reducing library costs already. Similarly to Pinehurst, this library serves an area with no other community centre and, as such, fulfils that function locally. If all libraries are to have no further funding, residents of Liden will not have a nearby library to access (Covingham and Park would be the next most likely for Liden and Eldene residents to use, but are also likely to close).

e. **Park: This library must be included in the core staffed provision as it is the largest and best used library in South Swindon.** The area served by Park Library extends well beyond the Parks and it is fifth most visited in the Borough. It is fourth in ranking for network hours used which underlines its importance as an access point for IT for the local community. This library is a vital part of the education service for local children who attend weekly storytelling and borrow the books they cannot afford to buy. These young families do not all have the resources to journey to Central Library. The children and adults who browse regularly at Park Library are broadening their own horizons and are being inspired by what they find at the library. The encouragement by the library staff to read for pleasure makes a difference to those whose literacy skills are below average and who do not have the confidence to access literature alone. Jobseekers rely on the IT and staff support available at Park Library. Some claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance have to undertake up to 35 hours per week of job searches, predominantly online. 20% of the UK population do not have access to the Internet at home, and this is likely to be higher in an area of high deprivation such as the Parks. Jobseekers will lose their benefits and face destitution if they cannot look for work. This will increase joblessness, default on rent, evictions, homelessness, and ongoing poverty with its consequent effects on health and well-being. All of this brings many more people into vulnerability and costs the Council significantly in services and lost economic input from salaried residents. The library brings people to the other businesses on Cavendish Square. If the library closes, those businesses will suffer and an area that already seems dilapidated will become a ghost town with no economic output, and a space that will become a focus for crime and anti-social behaviour. **These businesses have a stake in Park Library, and must be included in this consultation.**

f. **Wroughton:** By discussing setting up a Trust for Wroughton Library in whatever guise, both Wroughton Parish Council and SBC are jumping the gun when SBC consultation has not yet concluded. This signals a pre-determined outcome.

g. **Old Town:** This small library serves a need for children and adults who find the journey up and down the hill to Central too difficult, or whose educational needs mean that a smaller, quieter environment is needed. **Regard must be given to people with Special Educational needs who cannot access large libraries.**

Equality and Diversity

24. **Blind and Partially-sighted people.** There are an estimated 5,300 people living with sight loss in Swindon. Of this total, 620 are living with severe sight loss (blindness)-source RNIB. By 2020 the number of people living with sight loss in Swindon is projected to have increased to 6,950; and the number of people with severe sight loss will have increased to 840. Public libraries have an obligation to provide services to blind and partially sighted people as members of the community. Management of libraries by community groups and volunteers could have an unfair impact on minority groups whose needs are not understood or addressed. Library closures have a disproportionate impact on blind and partially sighted people. **No alternative provision has been made for blind and partially sighted people.** This presents a breach of the Equality Act 2010 on grounds of disability as a protected characteristic.
25. The Council's own Diversity Impact Assessment recognises the impact of this proposal on other groups with protected characteristics: the very young, the very old and those with physical disabilities. The impacts of this discrimination are not only in breach of the law, but will have adverse social, health and well-being impacts on those groups. The evidence is as follows (taken from a study by Herefordshire Libraries: Impact of libraries on communities 2013):
- a. **The very young: Children:** Challenging the brain early in life is crucial to building up more "cognitive reserve" to counter brain-damaging disease. Reading-habits prior to age 18 are a key predictor of late cognitive function, so a lifetime of using libraries protects against neurological degradation. Fluent readers are more likely to:
- Be physically and mentally independent in older age;
 - Make informed choices about their finances, health care and housing;
 - Have contributed to the community through volunteering;
 - Be upwardly mobile through their working life;
 - Contribute more financially into the system than they take out of it.
- They are less likely to:
- Feel socially isolated;
 - Be dependent on the local authority for their long-term care;
 - Develop neurological degeneration and the onset of memory loss.
- According to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee report on library closures, although adult visits to libraries declined between 2005/06 and 2010/11 from 48.2% to 39.7% of the adult population, there has been no statistically significant decrease over the last few years, and children's visits remain at a very high level (75.6%). Lending of children's books has risen for seven years in a row.

Support for children, young people and families through library use:

Improved language skills for under-fives through shared reading, storytimes and rhyme time sessions;

Improved performance by early years and primary school pupils through access to free books and on-line educational resources; Support families through children's events and parenting collections;

Access to a much greater range of free books and other materials than any family could possibly afford to buy;

Building socialisation skills through access to a free neutral community space;

Combating social isolation, especially for single-parent families and newcomers to Swindon, including those requiring access to English language learning;

Trusted access to information;

Developing a reading habit at an early age ensures better health in later life: children who are read to every day at age three have a more developed vocabulary at age five. Studies have shown how reading for pleasure and engagement in reading impact upon later life success. Where households are not affluent enough to have books themselves, access to a choice of books, i.e., at the library, can have the same effect:

"These results show unequivocally that improvement in reading literacy performance relies not just on improving student cognitive skills but also on increasing their engagement in reading. Students who have better educated parents in better jobs, and who have books and other resources in their homes, have more chances of coming to school more engaged in reading, and of entering into a virtuous circle of increasing reading interest and improving reading performance. Yet not all of engaged readers come from privileged homes, and those from more modest backgrounds who read regularly and feel positive about it are better readers than people with home advantages but weaker reading engagement." Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

b. **Older people:** libraries help older people retain independence:

- Public libraries are the only place readers can have free access to books in Large Print;
- Libraries provide talking books for readers who can no longer use printed books;
- Libraries reduce social isolation by providing a safe neutral environment;
- The library service provides collections for residential homes and sheltered housing complexes.
- The service to deliver books to the residential homes in Swindon is set to stop. The residents are often very limited in terms of mobility and a large proportion does not have the money to pay for taxis to and from the library. The cessation of their service will impact negatively on their well being (see paragraph 15).

c. **Low income residents/ residents from more deprived areas.** "Proportionate use of libraries in the most deprived areas of England is strong, demonstrating the role these unique public services play in improving life chances through literacy, learning and access to knowledge for those communities with the most to gain," said Mark Taylor, spokesperson for the Chartered Institute of Library Professionals. Around 9 million people of working age in England have low basic skills. The proportion of 16

to 19 year-olds who have low literacy is the highest of the 23 countries in the OECD's 2012 survey. As a child they will not succeed at school; as a young adult they will be locked out of the job market; and on becoming a parent they will not be able to support their child's learning, leading to a cycle of deprivation over generations. 100% literacy for all adults would boost the UK economy by some £80 million a year. The latest pilots suggest that public services overall save £3 for every pound invested.

Likelihood of community solutions in non-core library areas

26. Of the proposed unfunded libraries, Wroughton has the highest likelihood of managing and maintaining a library. This is because it is a well-established council with a coherent community of parishioners who contribute to the precept. It also has an annual precept income of around £312,000. In the case of Wroughton agreeing to fund and maintain its own library, it will need to raise its precept (already at £114 for Band D properties) significantly. Wroughton is not a deprived area, and yet this is a significant responsibility for a Parish Council comprised of volunteers. There is no established governance in place or guarantee of ongoing funding beyond the precept. It is much less likely that more deprived areas, or much newer parishes with fewer high band properties, will be able to raise an adequate precept, or establish a business plan with adequate governance by the time funding ceases in June 2017.
27. In areas where a parish council solution is not at all realistic, the next group to consider to run a library service would be a local community or voluntary group. There is already an abundance of these across Swindon, and many are finding recruitment challenging. The amount of money required to run even the smallest and cheapest of the branch libraries is more than £13,000 per annum, and this would be a sum that groups would need to find year on year, in addition to a circa £3000 annual fee to renew stock. **Unless building costs can be met, or a 'soft landing' provided in the form of a delay before funding ends, small libraries will close.** Even if volunteers come forward in the first instance, the future of unfunded libraries will remain precarious henceforward since there will be no reliable funding, staffing or management system in place.
28. Professional library staff are not just custodians of stacks of books, they love knowledge and know how to encourage and guide people in accessing knowledge both from books and computers. The Council says they will "support" volunteers in running their libraries: for how long and in what manner? The library in Walcot has shown that volunteers cannot do it alone. Quite aside from finance, volunteers need to be (1) adequately educated to be more than shelf-stackers (2) adequately trained (3) adequately supported and respected. (4) there has to be a sufficient supply of the right kind of volunteers to keep an organisation running. **Volunteers are beneficial in supplementing paid staff under a well-drafted protocol, but cannot take their place completely.**

The 'Core' libraries

29. The four core libraries are not 'saved'. The budget for their ongoing building costs has not been established, and the huge drop in staffed hours will result in them being closed for much of the week, or with limited opening through swipe cards.
30. Highworth: Highworth library is upstairs within the Co-op building. It is accessed by stairs and can be reached by a single lift. In the event of a fire this lift cannot be used. If the library is to be unstaffed and accessible only by swipe card, there is a high risk of people becoming trapped in the lift and not being able to signal for assistance. Also, access for disabled people will be limited at best, unsafe at worst. The swipe card system in place in other areas of the country is only designed to increase the number of hours libraries can stay open, not to remove a need for staff. In South Gloucestershire, they have the right approach: "While the Open Plus approach is an exciting opportunity to extend basic library services far beyond their current offering in terms of opening hours, it would only be as an extra to the full-service provision that our library staff deliver."
31. **West, North and Central:** Swipe card systems already in place in UK libraries exclude children under 16 when the library is unstaffed. This will make it impossible to cater adequately during the course of one week for preschool users and school children coming in after school unless staffing is split for a few hours in the morning and some after school. This would use the full 15 hours and thus be disadvantageous to adult users who use the library at different times.

Alternative models

32. During the public engagement, Save Swindon's Libraries provided evidence to SBC on alternative solutions in place around the UK. None of these have been given due consideration. The evidence of the lack of consideration is the subject of an ongoing FOI request. Solutions that must be thoroughly researched are:
 - Sharing the delivery of the service with other council(s) – close examination ought to be undertaken of the steps being taken in Greater Manchester towards the creation of single service in place of those provided by the individual boroughs;
 - Appointing an outside entity (e.g. a social enterprise or mutual) to deliver the service. By way of example, the use of a mutual to manage Devon's libraries (without closures being required) warrants scrutiny and the carrying out of a market test via a tendering process (as Bromley and Bexley councils have recently done) to ascertain whether there might be interest in taking on the service as a whole (and obviously proper consideration must be given to expressions of interest received), which is surely preferable to the fragmentation inherent in such approaches as individual community interest companies;
 - Seeking out whether there is room for internal efficiency improvements, notably in the way staff are deployed and timetabled and potentially with a targeted and planned complementary usage of volunteers in non-core libraries: see the report prepared for Sutton Council which has enabled the

preservation (with the closure of only one small branch and a mobile) of the service, at a greatly reduced cost, and

- Seeking out whether there are underspends in other Council departments that might be usefully applied to the conservation of a viable statutory library network in the Town or to proper investigation of alternative models.

The Council is still required to fulfill its duty of Best Value as described by the DCLG in 2011: "The Duty of Best Value is important because it makes clear that councils should consider overall value – including social value – when considering service provision."

33. Examples from other local authorities:

Libraries West consortium: <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/librarieswest>

Explore York: <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/explore-york-libraries-and-archives>

Bexley and Bromley: <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/bexley-and-bromley-workingtogether>

Northampton CIC: <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/northamptonshire-library-andinformation-service-cic>

Devon Libraries – as of 1st April 2016, the county's library service has been provided by a staff and community owned social enterprise <https://librariesunlimited.org.uk/> [suggested contact: Ciara.eastell@devon.gov.uk]

Dudley has also decided to pursue the mutual approach –

http://www.halesowennews.co.uk/news/13890156.Dudley_Council_set_to_create_a_mutual_to_run_libraries_and_associate_services/

York library services have been delivered by a mutual for two years, with the Cabinet Office

providing some funding <http://www.yorkmix.com/things-to-do/books/york-library-service-all-you-need-to-know-about-thechanges/> [contact: Fiona Williams]

Suffolk have formed an IPS <http://suffolklibraries.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Routes-to-membership-2013-11-05.pdf> [contact: Alison Wheeler]

Report | The future of Sutton's library service : Feb 2016

<https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/documents/s44294/The%20Future%20of%20Suttons%20Library%20Service.pdf>

Greater Manchester – the creation of a single service is work in progress but the stage has been reached of moving towards unified borrowing facilities (note involvement of Blackburn)

http://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/14262665.Bolton_library_card_holders_to_get_access_to_millions_more_books_stored_in_libraries_across_North_West/

Amazon lockers for income generation.

Bedford consulted on four different options to allow real choice for library users.

The experiences of other libraries transferred to the community at Blackheath and Sydenham suggest that the scramble for volunteers and resources to keep both the

building open and a reliable service running is both exhausting and never ending. Moreover, official Lewisham figures monitoring footfall show that after transfer, book lending rates and school visits plummet.

34. **Recommendation:**

Firstly to revisit the libraries budget to make a less damaging cut.

Secondly, fully investigate all alternatives.

Thirdly, to strongly consider a trust to manage up to 10 core libraries, with an associated Friends of Swindon's Libraries charity that could apply for grants and fundraise in excess of £100,000 annually for capital and revenue costs to support services for children, adults and specific library user groups in Swindon.

These grants are available from different organisations with specific requirements on how funds are spent, are not available to Councils and would provide a budget to support the elements of library provision that are most at risk under the Council's proposal: children's' literacy, social inclusion for elderly and vulnerable adults, and employment support for specific groups in the Borough. A large Friends could also undertake fundraising to raise money to meet staff or buildings costs to extend the provision of the Trust to smaller libraries across the Borough.

A4 Response from 25 Head Teachers

This is in response to your consultation on changes to the Library Service in Swindon.

The undersigned Headteachers believe that the move towards closure of most Branch Libraries and Mobile library provision will be very detrimental to Swindon Children.

It will also place disadvantaged children at a much greater risk of not having adequate literacy resources in the home and therefore lower attainment in their most crucial years.

Branch libraries are more than a book repository. They are a staffed resource. Which provides information, access to and lifelong enjoyment of books.

We appreciate the financial pressures on the local authority, but believe that other areas of expenditure should come under much closer scrutiny before Library closures.

We ask, on behalf of our children, that as part of the Consultation, Swindon Borough Council reconsider this drastic step and seek an alternative.

Some individual Headteacher observations:

- We are really disappointed with the thought of losing Upper Stratton library on Beechcroft Road. We regularly take the children there to borrow books, to see visiting authors and have story times. This is going to be a massive loss to all of our children*
- This is very important to me personally. As a FSM child myself, my mum took me regularly to the library for books of all kinds and we collected leaves and conkers along the way! We didn't have money then so this was crucial and instilled a love of books and learning. I fully support the libraries staying open. What annoys me most – is that we are taking provision and opportunity once again from the children who need it most.*
- My own family is from a social housing background, it was only through school and using my local library that I became aware of the possibilities for my own life and was the first member of my large family to go to university.*
- I am aware that you are trying to do the best you can with a reducing budget, I am in the same circumstance for my school. However, please ensure that the priority for maintaining services is focused upon the poorest areas of the town in order to reach those children and families who need them most.*
- Library facilities do not merely represent access to books for children, they represent high academic aspirations and raised levels of social understanding within their communities. The lack of a university for a town this size is already a limiting factor but the removal of the libraries will strike at the heart of social and academic aspiration for the people of the town.*

A5 Response from UNISON

Swindon UNISON Branch Statement on the Proposed Libraries Strategy of Swindon Borough Council

Swindon UNISON Branch is in principle opposed to any cuts in the Library Service within the Swindon Borough and particularly to the swinging cuts proposed by the Council to close 11 out of the 15 Libraries and the Mobile Library Service.

However, we understand the financial pressures being placed on SBC by Central Government and the proposed targets for 2020 but are also aware that some of the proposed cuts are a matter of choice and there are alternatives to their proposal and to the timescales for implementation.

We believe residents of Swindon, Wroughton, Highworth and the Villages deserve to be shown the alternatives, properly set out with the estimated costings and reasoning for their preferred option or choice of options?

The timescales for implementation of any cuts should be based on the premise that all other options have been exhausted and would only then be phased in accordingly following proper consultation.

Swindon Borough Council has a Legal Statutory Duty to provide a Comprehensive and Efficient Library Service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 Section 7 and under Section 11 a Supplemental provision as to transfers of officers, assets and liabilities. We believe that the current proposal does not meet this requirement.

Before proceeding we would ask for a substantial review providing a full and transparent understanding of:-

- How this meets the Council's agreed local priorities and given their financial constraints this must still comply with the above
- The current & projected profile and needs of the different local communities within the Borough of Swindon
- Alternative delivery models and best practice from other Local Authorities be fully considered
- The comparative impact of alternative approaches to delivering the service be set out full and simple terms for all to see

What resources are available and how does this match the needs?

- Have the needs and demands been properly considered and analysed? By looking at the specific needs of young people, adults and the elderly, of all ages? Are any of the communities willing or able to make a contribution and if so what?

- What are the needs of those living and working and studying in the area?
- How accessible will the proposed service be to all residents considering public transport and physical access?
- Have all the communities been properly consulted? How has this been done?
- Have the Libraries user's views been sought and do we also know the views of non-users?
- Has a proper Diversity Impact Assessment been carried out?
- What implications are there for any other strategies and is all the information available, including from other partners?
- Are there any other possible partnerships that could be looked into?
- Can it be evidenced that the proposed service will be adequate and how would you promote it to be better used?

How efficient is the current service?

- Has an audit of all the Library buildings been carried out to show if they are fit for purpose in terms of access, suitability, maintenance and conditions etc?
- Could the existing or other facilities be used more flexibly?
- What possible other delivery partnerships could be formed within Swindon and the surrounding area?
- Who else could service the needs of the communities with the proposed Library closures?
- If the current delivery mode is both meeting the demand and cost efficient why change it? Why not just seek alternative funding? If not why?
- Given modern technologies is a physical presence of a Library/Librarian always needed? Have all the arguments for & against this been properly considered?
- What is Swindon Borough Council doing to encourage the use of all the existing Libraries and to maximise any possible income?
- What scope is there for combining services, for example with Wiltshire's mobile Library Service and has this been explored?
- Has the alternative of a Libraries Trust been fully considered and if so, what was the reasoning for not presenting this option?
- Should any decision on the Library Service be deferred until after the Community Governance Review has been completed and the possibility of transferring some of

the Library Provision to Parish Councils could be considered instead of the mass closures that are currently proposed?

UNISON members have suggested an alternative proposal to the Councils Library Strategy which UNISON would ask for this to be considered notwithstanding the above and they have also called for a more measured approach to any cuts.

Swindon UNISON Branch will fight to protect the jobs of its members within the Library Service of Swindon Borough Council and seek to minimise the cuts to the Service by working with our members, Library users groups & organisations, the public, Council Officers and Councillors to ensure the residents of Swindon Borough have a Comprehensive and Efficient Library Service and that all options and alternatives have been fully explored and communicated before any cuts are implemented.

Swindon UNISON Branch Statement, Supplementary Questions on the Proposed Libraries Strategy of Swindon Borough Council

Further to our original statement previously submitted, UNISON has had no response or acknowledgement from Swindon Borough Council. We have gathered some information required which Swindon Borough Council had not shared with UNISON:-

- The Diversity Impact Assessment
- The Needs Assessment

These were put into the public domain and should have been shared directly with UNISON.

Following consultation with UNISON Library members, other local groups and the public who are all opposed to the proposed closures we would like to submit additional questions.

Therefore, UNISON now formally call upon Swindon Borough Council to clarify the following areas:

1. Has the alternative of a Libraries Trust been fully considered and if so, by whom, and what was the reasoning and evidence for not presenting this as an option?
2. Explain clearly how the saving target of £1.1m was arrived at and to clarify the methodology and process used for arriving at this figure?
3. Why, despite presenting this as a four year plan to 2020, the vast majority of the cuts (80%) are proposed for 2017 instead of being phased?
4. To clarify the proposed reduction in library space at the core libraries to meet the projected income target of £450,000. How much space will be lost and what will happen if this income target is not met?

We also formally request that the Council immediately engages with UNISON and Library members who have suggested an alternative proposal to the Council's Library Strategy, which we regard as a more measured approach to the cuts.

Swindon UNISON Branch will continue the fight to protect the jobs of its members within the Library Service. We will seek to minimise the cuts to the Service by working with our members, Library users, groups, and organisations, the public, Council Officers and Councillors to ensure the residents of Swindon Borough have a Comprehensive and Efficient Library Service and that all options and alternatives have been fully explored and communicated before any cuts are implemented.

A6: Response from Swindon Liberal Democrats

Please find attached the comments of the Swindon Liberal Democrats regarding the proposed changes to the Library Service. Please note our concern that issues identified in Equality Impact Assessments must be fully addressed in the final policy.

- 1) The overall proposal – to maintain only four of the current libraries (and at a reduced level) and to close any of the remaining eleven if they cannot secure voluntary staffing – is among the most draconian currently proposed in England.
- 2) Swindon Lib Dems believe that even in a time of pressure on public services, a library service should be driven by the needs of its populace rather than demand or budget led. The Council's own Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) raises concerns over an adverse impact on older users, who may find it difficult to travel further and who are less IT savvy. The same concerns apply to disabled citizens.
- 3) Swindon has the dubious distinction of having some of the most deprived small areas in the country (DIA). This deprivation shows itself most severely in education, skills and training – all areas where literacy and digital skills will become more important in the future.
- 4) Nationally, library use has declined among the financially secure. It has however been maintained among the less advantaged, demonstrating a need that libraries must meet if they are to fulfil the duties laid on them by legislation. (DCMS, "Taking Part", 2016)
- 5) In particular we consider that the potential loss of public network access hours in the proposed model runs totally counter to attempts to increase fairness and equip disadvantaged citizens for employment.
- 6) The model proposes a "community style" library system critically dependent on volunteers. Deprived areas find it more difficult to attract volunteers. The result therefore will be that in the areas with the greatest need, there will be fewer resources. We consider this aspect of the model is not fit for purpose.
- 7) Although there has been considerable discussion over the role of "community" – ie "volunteer" libraries, there is not much hard data on what works and what doesn't. (Chartered Institute of Library and information Professionals). Without a body of best practice, the Council may find themselves reinventing the wheel – or worse, the first into a minefield of financial and governance issues which require so much management time to sort out that the hoped-for savings do not materialise. Swindon Lib Dems support the contention of the Arts Council of England that low income communities require a more supported approach.
- 8) With regard to individual libraries, we regard the possible closure of Wroughton Library, which is 3 miles from the facilities of the Central Library as unacceptable. The three other continuing libraries offer provision to the North, West and East (Highworth). The South of Swindon would be left with minimal provision. Use of Wiltshire Council facilities would not be the answer as it is 6 miles to Wootton Bassett and further to Marlborough.
- 9) In the context of development in the southern part of the Borough, future residents of Coate and Wichelstowe will require library provision, and the retention of Park Library, which receives over 1000 visits per week and has high public network usage, is supported.

**A7:
Letter
from 49
members
of the
public**

14120

2. 11. 17

Dear Councillor Renard

It has been recently announced that Parks library will be closed unless some way of volunteer or other form of management can be found. Our cabinet councillors tell us that this is due to government restraints on their funding of council run services, more services being requested and the caps on raising more revenue from council tax.

You have visited this "deprived" area so you will hopefully have some understanding what this means for some of our residents. We do already have a few charity run shops requiring volunteers and but the skills required to do this are less than those needed to run and organise a library.

A lot of residents are benefit applicants or on low incomes so do not have the financial means which allows them to buy books to support their children's and their reading, find the money to fund the internet to their homes or buy the technology which enables access to that learning route. Many schools request homework which can only be done via those two routes thus depriving their children even further. The parents of these children can also be job seekers, which require internet access and the technology so to do which many have to do via the library at Cavendish Square.

Our library at Cavendish Square is also used by other residents from outside this area who come here to shop.

It is the hub of our community, a place to ease social isolation, the meeting place for groups as well as an information centre and place of learning. Taking all of those away by shutting the library would deprive this area of a very important hub and it's staff who are a much valued part of our community.

PLEASE RECONSIDER AND DO NOT CLOSE OUR LIBRARY.

Yours sincerely

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The background of the cover features several stylized illustrations of books. In the top left, a teal book is shown at an angle. In the top right, three books with brown, yellow, and orange spines are standing upright. On the left side, a stack of six books with brown, teal, orange, yellow, teal, and brown spines is shown. In the bottom left, an open book with white pages and a teal bookmark is visible. In the bottom right, two books with yellow and orange spines are shown at an angle. The entire cover has a light blue background.

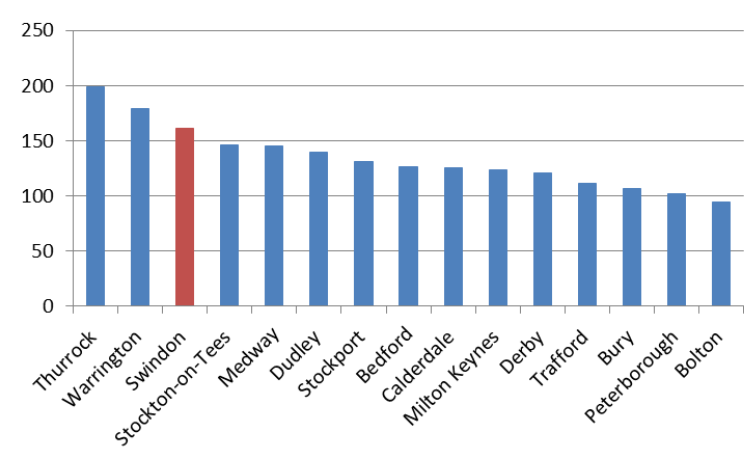
Swindon Library Service

Vision, Strategy and Delivery Model

November 2016



Swindon has historically been a pioneer for library services. Predating the first public lending libraries in the 1850s, a lending library was established in 1843 when toolmakers in the Great Western Railway works organised the circulation of donated books. In 2016, Swindon’s Library Service currently comprises 15 Libraries and a Mobile Library Service, including a brand new Central Library opened in 2008. The service supports over a million visits per year and around 36,000 registered Library users. Swindon’s Library service ranks in the top quartile of near neighbours in the total number of libraries, and number of libraries per 100,00 population and its revenue expenditure on the service is around average.

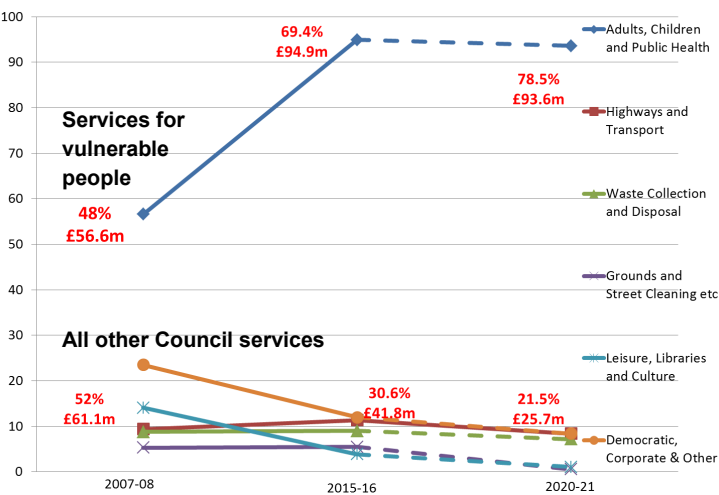


Number of active borrowers per 1,000 population (31/03/15, Source: CIPFA return)

The library service is in the top quartile of its comparator authorities (3rd out of 15) in terms of active borrowers and engaging with library users and the service has continued the tradition of innovation in service delivery. This includes 24/7 online services, e-books, e-audio and e-magazines, self-service technology, free wifi, and improving life opportunities through the Universal Offers (Reading, Information, Digital Literacy, Health, and Learning)

the 21st century is subject to debate at national level. Recent reports (the independent Library Report for England of 2014, the DCMS Libraries Ambitions publication of 2016 and others) have all highlighted common themes regarding the future role and relevance of Libraries in supporting literacy and learning, promoting digital inclusion, supporting community health and wellbeing, and as important venues for social interaction in communities, all of which contribute to achieving Council’s Vision for Swindon

At the same time, as with all Council services, Libraries are facing unprecedented financial pressures in the context of Local Government financing. Swindon’s financial context has been set out in recent Cabinet reports, and the Cabinet report of 10th February 2016 described the detailed implications for Swindon’s Libraries and set out a requirement to achieve savings in the service of £1.5million by 2020, reducing service costs from £2.6m to £1.1m.



Predicted expenditure trends for Swindon Borough Council displaying increasing budget demands from services for vulnerable adults and children

The same report of 10th February 2016 also set out a detailed needs assessment for Library services, proposed an emerging model for Swindon’s Library Service which identified services that support participation in Swindon’s growing economy as a particular driver arising from the needs assessment.

In responding to these drivers, and following extensive public consultation that has taken place since August 2016, this strategy sets out a vision of Swindon’s Libraries that responds to need in Swindon, and proposes an innovative delivery and resourcing model that through partnership, aims to secure a sustainable future for Library services in Swindon.

Swindon Library Service Vision

In the context of the Council's Vision for Swindon, and its Priorities and Pledges, the Swindon's Library Service vision is:

To build communities through literacy and learning, to encourage a love of reading, and to provide access to information that inspires enjoyment and learning, and that increases health, wellbeing and economic participation. We will connect communities by providing welcoming spaces to meet, socialise and learn through a core network of Libraries, and support a wider network of community-led provision and resources. By 2020, we aim for Swindon's Library services to be recognised nationally for the quality of its services, innovation in the way services are delivered, cost effectiveness and the outcomes it achieves for early years, for adult learners, for active citizens and for active ageing.

Libraries Strategy

The Libraries vision will be delivered through a core provision comprising:

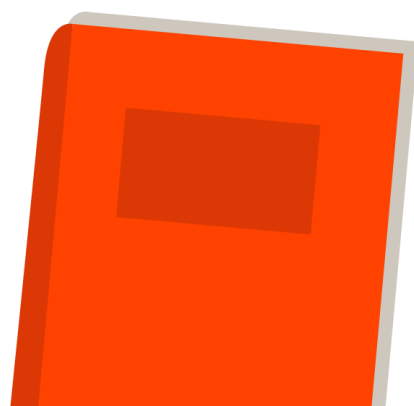
- a network of 5 core Libraries of Central, North Swindon, West Swindon, Highworth and Parks—supported by investment in technology that allows access beyond staffed hours;
- professional Library services, delivered by professional Librarians and trained Library staff including service development, learning and outreach, local studies, information and digital literacy, stock management and volunteer co-ordination;
- enabling support to develop community-led local Library services, including transitional funding, a menu of optional free and paid-for services.

The Council is committed to sustaining and developing a network of Library services in Swindon, and it is clear that with pressures on its resources, it cannot do it on its own. Achieving this requires a radically different delivery approach to that which exists today and depends on the active contribution of partners, local communities and volunteers. This will require change both in the Council's approach, and in the role of the users and communities that Libraries serve. This strategy sets out how the Council proposes to work with Library users, communities, partners and all stakeholders to bring wide resources and contributions to the service, and collaboratively develop Library services over the months and years ahead.

The strategy and delivery model is founded on a principle of partnership in the design and delivery of Library services, and to secure their ongoing sustainability. The Council will fund expert, professional and innovative Library services, supported by local partnerships and income generation that help meet the costs of the service. This builds on a number of recent discussions where partners have stated their willingness to work with the Council to develop solutions that secure the accessibility of Library services. This principle is also consistent with the aims of the Council's Community Assets Review that is exploring a range of options for the co-location of services and income generation for the Council's community buildings.

Delivery Model

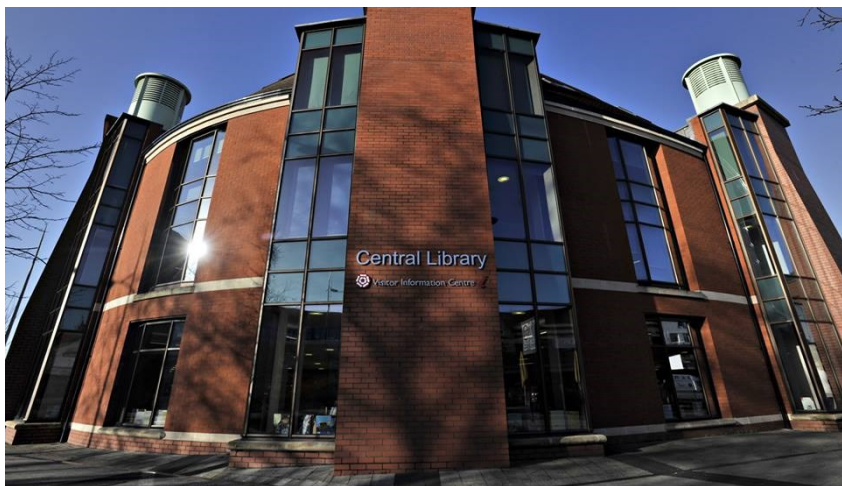
The delivery model proposed for Library services has been informed by the needs assessment and emerging model for the service published in February 2016, and the results of subsequent public engagement and consultation. In developing this model, the Council has sought to balance competing criteria of (i) service reach and accessibility (ii) community need and (iii) affordability. This model proposes some amendments to the previous core service model in terms of the number of core Libraries



The delivery model comprises the following:

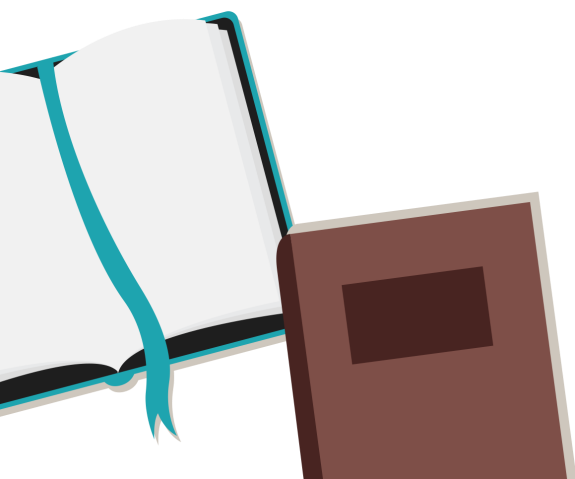
Core Network

- A network of 5 core Libraries of Central, North Swindon, West Swindon, Highworth and Parks. The core network of Libraries mean 84% of current Library users and 91% of Swindon's households live within 2 miles of a Library.
- Staffed hours will change to 47.5hrs per week in Central, and to 15hrs per week to be available at North, West, Highworth and Parks Libraries. The distribution of those staffed hours will be determined based on the analysis of when services are most accessed, local priorities and efficient staffing requirements
- Opening hours outside of staffed hours will be of the core network of Libraries will be enabled through the use of technology



Professional Library Services

- The services will be delivered by a core staff comprising professional Librarians and trained Library and Information staff, learning and outreach services, local studies, professional stock management and volunteer co-ordination
- Libraries staff will develop a hub of reading, information, digital, health and wellbeing, and learning offers that will continue to support valued services ranging from story and rhyme time, Read Ahead, summer Reading Challenge, reading for pleasure, books on prescription, free e-books and magazines, access to information, Visitor Information Services, provision of IT to support benefits applications, housing bids and job searches, free wi-fi, adult and community learning, cultural and heritage activities. There is also access to a range of digital online resources available 24/7
- The core Library service will include dedicated work to more effectively support literacy and learning in those communities with higher levels of deprivation, and lowest levels of education, skills and training. The Library service will develop need-led, targeted literacy and learning programmes via repurposed learning and outreach services. These programmes will be developed in co-ordination with service users and partners and develop in ways that meet the needs of local communities



- The Library service will provide a paid for reserved item delivery service to enable books reserved online or by telephone to be delivered and returned to libraries and defined community locations across the Borough. This service will be self-funded through charges for reserved items, and developed in conjunction with local communities.
- The Library Service will work with RVS to continue the current Home Library Service and to develop it further, to ensure that people with limited means at all of accessing library services, who are affected by the proposals, can continue to do so.

Enabling services for Community-led provision

- The Council is committed to enabling community-led provision to be self-managed, resourced and operated by local communities, partners and volunteers, as part of co-located offers in public and community buildings.
- The Council will support community organisations who wish to sustain local libraries in their communities by providing transitional funding that supports the development community-led local arrangements and:
 - Professional guidance and support to new and existing “Friends of” and volunteer groups who wish to maintain library services in their communities to develop viable plans for local action
 - Connections to other community venues and groups to enable Library provision to be dovetailed to other community activity at local level
 - Advice on forming and constituting community groups
 - Support with financial planning, income generation and fundraising
 - Transitional funding to support the development of local solutions
 - A free donation of a core collection of books to community locations
 - Paid for services can include a regular refresh of new book stock for community eg top 20 published books or a fully maintained library stock for community –led library provision and options to extend Public Network IT access at cost

Implementation

Stage 1 – 2017/18

All current Libraries, including the remaining ten non-core libraries, will move to reduced hours with effect from 5 April 2017. Extended opening arrangements will be implemented in core Libraries from that date, subject to installation. Where partners and communities wish to contribute funding that helps enhance the Council’s core provision, the Council would work with those partners to ensure a common implementation timetable.

The Council will actively seek, encourage and support the development of local arrangements that ensure continued access to Library services. Transitional funding of £500k has been reserved to support this work, which may be used to support the one-off costs of establishing local solutions, for example, to meet equipment costs, IT investment, the temporary funding of facilities whilst local funding arrangements are sought, and the training and development of local organisations and volunteers.

Stage 2 – 2017-2020

For the Council’s core provision, implementation of appropriate governance models, additional shared services, service efficiencies and the generation of additional income streams to further reduce costs to ensure services are delivered within the Council’s 2020 affordability limit of £1.1m.

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Community Libraries – Applications for Transitional Funding

Introduction

1. This document sets out information about the process required to access transitional funding to support the development of community-led local library services.
2. As part of its Libraries Strategy, the Council will work with community groups who wish to develop community-led library services, and to support their formation, the Council will make available transitional funding of £500,000, provide enabling support to work with groups to develop their proposals and will provide a menu of services that groups can choose to purchase as part of their local provision

Key requirements

3. Decisions on transitional funding will be made by the Cabinet Member for Communities, based on the criteria and timetable described in this document. Applications for sums less than £10,000 may be “fast-tracked” at the discretion of the Cabinet Member as long as this is not to the detriment of the overall objective of enabling the establishment community-led library services.
4. Transitional funding can either be used to establish community-led library services in areas currently served by non-core libraries, whose funding will be cease from 31 August 2017 or, the development of new forms of community-led library services to complement the Council’s core service.
5. Community-led library services are the priority for those non-core library buildings over other possible uses and if no viable proposal is made the buildings may be made available for other uses.
6. In considering applications, the Council will need to be assured that ongoing revenue incurred as a result of one off investment can be sustained within business plans outlined in appendix A
7. Initial advice and guidance to community groups will be provided by the Council free of charge to enable the design and formation of community-led services.
8. Community organisations may purchase ongoing library services or support from Swindon Libraries as part of their community offer. Library services are in the three key functions of stock, staffing and ICT, and can be adapted to meet local requirements and budgets, within the framework set out in appendix A.
9. Community-led provision must be viable and sustainable in the longer term; transitional funding is available to support the formation of community-led

library services and is not intended to be used for ongoing revenue costs. The Council recognises that it may take time to establish new services, and is willing to discuss ways of supporting groups through this process.

10. The exact nature of community-led library services will vary depending on the area, how the offer is delivered and the nature of the community organisation, but community-led services should include at least one of the following:
- (i) relevant stock provided by the library service or other provider at the point of transition.
 - (ii) activities that encourage literacy and learning, reflecting the skills and interests of the community organisation's main function, reflect the needs and interests of local residents. Examples of these could include:
 - projects to encourage children to read, such as the summer reading challenge and rhyme time.
 - reading groups for all ages and communities of interest
 - school class visits
 - homework/job clubs
 - (iii) Access to IT and digital information. The Council will support groups to understand the options of different approaches.

Evaluation criteria and weighting

11. Applications will be evaluated in two stages. Stage one is against the following requirements which will be scored on a pass/fail basis. Any application that scores "fail" against any of these requirements may be deemed non-compliant and rejected without further evaluation.

Confirmation of receipt of audited accounts demonstrating that the organisation is a going concern	Pass / Fail
Confirmation relating to required insurances	Pass / Fail

Applications remaining will at stage 2 be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria and the information requested within Section 4 'Your Application':

Each question will be scored between 0-10.

- 0 to 2 = not acceptable or major areas of weakness
- 3 to 4 = less than acceptable more weaknesses than strengths
- 5 to 6 = acceptable but with some minor areas of weakness

7 to 8 = highly acceptable strong with few weaker areas
 9 to 10 = extremely competent, many strengths no weaknesses

<i>Criteria Ref</i>	<i>Question Header</i>	<i>Weighting</i>
4.1	Proposed use	30%
4.2	Organisational capacity	20%
4.3	Capital expenditure & transition funding required	10%
4.4	Financial Sustainability & Governance	30%
4.5	Community & Volunteering Planning	10%

Submitting an Application

12. Key dates for application will be an expression of interest deadline by 31 January 2017, an application deadline of 31 March 2017, with decisions by 30 April 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.
13. Applications must be submitted in accordance with these dates and will not be considered afterwards except in the case where additional information has been explicitly requested.
14. Applicants are responsible for obtaining all information necessary and shall bear all costs, expenses and liabilities incurred with the preparation and delivery for which applicants will receive no recourse from the Council.
15. Any questions or clarification about the process can be raised through librariesfutures@swindon.gov.uk

Detailed provisions

16. No warranties or opinions as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided in, or which accompanies this document or otherwise or as to the powers and/or status of Swindon Borough Council shall be given at any stage by Swindon Borough Council and any liability for any inaccuracy or incompleteness is therefore expressly disclaimed by Swindon Borough Council.
17. Any person considering making a decision to enter into an agreement with Swindon Borough Council or any other person on the basis of the information provided by or on behalf of Swindon Borough Council must make their own

investigations and form their own opinion in relation to the status, completeness and accuracy of all such information and in relation to the status and/or powers of Swindon Borough Council.

18. By seeking proposals to take on management of the specified buildings, Swindon Borough Council is in no way committed to entering into any agreement and reserves the right to cancel the process at any point.
19. As previously advised Swindon Borough Council shall not be liable for any costs resulting from any cancellation of this process nor for any other costs incurred by those expressing an interest in or submitting an application whether successful or not.
20. The lease: The terms required by Swindon Borough Council will be determined on a case by case basis following the selection of the preferred Applicant(s) through the Councils Community Asset Transfer Criteria (CAT).
21. Community Library Service Agreement: The terms required by Swindon Borough Council will be determined on a case by case basis following the selection of the preferred Applicant(s).
22. Insurance: Swindon Borough Council will insist upon the successful Applicant(s) ensuring sufficient Public Liability Insurance (PLI) is or will be in place. Applicants must state that they are insured to the required levels, or confirm, if they do not already hold the necessary level of insurance, that they will procure it. Minimum insurance levels for all SBC buildings include Public and Third Party Liability Insurance should be for not less than £5,000,000 with a minimum of £2,000,000 in respect of any one claim.
23. Equal opportunities: Swindon Borough Council is an equal opportunities employer and has various statutory duties to ensure that it carries out its business in a way that promotes equality and eliminates discrimination; in particular Swindon Borough Council must adhere to equality legislation. Swindon Borough Council also expects that the successful Applicant will promote equality, comply fully with all UK equality legislation, or European equivalent, and have an adequate equalities policy and be an equal opportunities employer. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have relevant Equal Opportunities policies in place and where possible demonstrate a proven track record of equality working.
24. Freedom of Information (FOIA): In addition to Swindon Borough Council's commitment to public disclosure, transparency & accountable government, Applicants should note that Swindon Borough Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA") and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR"). This means that, subject to certain exemptions, an individual may request access to any information held by Swindon Borough

Council and Swindon Borough Council may disclose the information sought. This may include information on an application or details relating to the procurement process.

25. If you consider that any specific information supplied by you is either commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, please clearly state this in your Application Pack and mark it as such. You must also give us the reasons for such confidentiality.

Applications

26. Applications must contain a response to all of the questions set out under sections 26.1 to 26.5 below and should also include:
- Constitution/Trust Deed/Memorandum and Articles of Association (as applicable)
 - Most recent audited accounts demonstrating that the organisation is a going concern
 - Details of an adequate equal opportunities policy
 - Evidence of Insurance held or undertaking to obtain necessary insurance

26.1 Proposed use:

Provide details of the proposed use of the Library including:

- a) Which library or libraries your proposal relates to:
- b) The use of the library, and the services that would be delivered:
- c) The length of the lease that you are seeking
- d) If relevant, the estimated number of residents benefiting from each of the services identified and what the community benefit will be:
- e) An identification of the key risks and factors that will affect delivery and/or cost.
- f) Details of how a community-led library service will be offered within the Library.

26.2 Capacity

Provide details of the lead organisation contact that would be responsible for entering into the lease and overall management of the building or buildings and details of partnerships and other arrangements that would be in place to deliver the services and activities.

- a) The name of your organisation & Main Contact (This person shall be the only person the Council will contact):
- b) Copy of constitution/Trust Deed/Memorandum and Articles of Association (as applicable):
- c) The names of partner organisations, what their role would be and whether this arrangement is confirmed or proposed
- d) The solicitors you intend to instruct if your Application is successful:
- e) Details (including names and/or job titles where possible) of the individuals or organisations involved in delivering your proposal:
- f) Confirmation of the relevant accreditation, licences, skills and any other requirements in order to deliver these services:
- g) Details of any previous property management experience:

26.3 Capital Funding and Transitional Funding required

The Council will provide information about building conditions and current running costs. Provide details of the capital expenditure costs anticipated in relation to the buildings:

- a) The amount of capital costs expected in the first 5 years:
- b) Details of funding or grants secured:
- c) Details of the sources of funding secured or proposed sources of funding:
- d) Formal request for one off year 1 Transitional Funding and accompanying evidence that any revenue liabilities can be met for a period of up to 5 years.

26.4 Financial Sustainability and Governance

Provide details of the revenue expenditure anticipated in relation to the buildings:

- a) Expected income and expenditure in year 1 including staffing, management, fees, rates and all other operating costs – add rows as required.

YEAR 1 (1 st July 2017-31 March 2018)			
Expenditure		Income	
Identify Expenditure Type	Amount (£)	Identify source of Income	Amount (£)

Total Year 1:		Total Year 1:	

b) Forecast income and expenditure for years 2-5 (excluding Year 1)

YEARS 2-5 (1 st April 2018- 31 March 2022)			
Expenditure		Income	
Identify Expenditure Type	Amount (£)	Identify source of Income	Amount (£)
Total Year 1:		Total Year 1:	

26.5 Description of plans to involve the local community & Volunteering Opportunities

- a) Provide details of your established links within the local community (including groups) to date and plans to involve local people and organisations in the design and delivery of your services.
- b) This may include plans for recruiting and supporting volunteers, service user groups and links with local voluntary and community groups, clubs and associations:

Appendix A

Purchasable services - Stock

The costs for stock are based on the costs for different categories and are very flexible. The Library services can work with communities to tailor the stock in community-led library collection to the evidenced demand in current libraries. Data exists to show the items currently held in stock, how many loans each area of stock receive. The tables for stock costs show illustrative examples of stock that could be purchased and include staff costs for selection and rotation as appropriate.

	Option	Detail	Costs
1	Community book stock - static	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBC could provide a base collection of books for a partner organisation to host and allow people to browse and borrow. Customers would be able to donate their own books to the collection and could borrow books through a local system monitored by the partner organisation. This means books would not be linked to the SBC issuing system and book stock would not be refreshed. If a community collection is displayed in a generally accessible area of an existing offer, there are thought to be no additional revenue implications unless partner organisation wished to extend service beyond current opening or operating hours. 	No cost
2	Community book stock – refreshed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An initial base collection of books for customers to browse and borrow, which would be refreshed on a regular basis. Costs would include stock refresh and delivery. A refreshed collection would be refreshed on a monthly basis and could include top 20 titles. This means customers would have a regular supply of material. Books would not be linked to the SBC library system but could be borrowed through a local system. 	Refresh monthly with top 20 titles approx. £175 per month (£2100 annually) includes Service charge of 15% to cover staff costs & delivery

	Option	Detail	Costs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a community collection is displayed in a generally accessible area of an existing offer, there are thought to be no additional revenue implications unless partner organisation wished to extend service beyond current opening or operating hours. 	(Furniture & furnishings would need to be negotiated if appropriate)
3	Core stock access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A larger collection of SBC stock for customers to browse and borrow which is refreshed on a regular basis. This would need to be accompanied by a self-serve machine or web-based access for staff or a trained volunteer to issue and return SBC stock items 	<p>Dependent on level of expenditure. Would need to be negotiated on individual basis</p> <p>IT costs – to be provided based on self-service & web access.</p>

Purchasable services - Staffing

Community-led library services may wish to purchase staffing either on an occasional or a regular basis. The table below shows the costs for different levels and types of staffing.

	Option	Detail	Costs
3	Occasional hours from hub of professional services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained staff hours could be purchased from SBC 'hub' of professional services on an occasional basis. This could include support and advice to groups that wish to set up and establish reading groups, song and rhyme time training etc. Staffing could also be purchased to provide advice and support to groups wishing to develop funding bids, consider options or promote partnership 	Charge is dependent on hourly rate of staff needed or training rates to be negotiated

		working in their area.	
4	Library service delivery hours – annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing for service delivery would be at the level of Library and information assistant and/ or supervisor level to provide day to day services on an annual basis. Community led libraries could choose to buy additional staffed hours to ‘top up’ the hours of provision at the core libraries, or purchase staff support for community libraries. Hourly costs, including on-costs have been shown 	Hourly rate for Library & Information Assistant = £11.74 (includes on-costs) plus 10% management fee Hourly rate for Library supervisor = £14.23

Purchasable services – IT

The costs for IT provision in the community led libraries can relate to library related IT costs, or ICT costs relating to Swindon Borough Council's infrastructure such as IT lines, wifi, PCs and callout costs.

	Option	Detail	Costs
5	Book loaning technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to Library Management System to issue, return and reserve books 	Free under existing contract but training fees would be applied
6	Self-serve loans/ returns machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A self-serve machine could be located in a community site. This would enable customers to issue and return SBC core stock books directly through the SBC loans system. Self-serve machines need to connect to the internet through a secure SBC internet line. Annual maintenance and support cost would need to be purchased. Costs also include access to self-service machines and associated hardware, software and licences 	Costs bespoke to each facility
7	Public IT access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of a Public IT access point for general use, connected to the internet to support customers to access online information, search for jobs, access resources 	Costs bespoke to each facility

	point – libraries people's network	<p>and complete benefits claims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT support would need to be purchased to support, maintain, security protocols, firewalls required for a public IT access point. • Groups could independently purchase and local manage and control public IT provision i.e. not through the people's network. Organisations who wish to offer an independent IT service would need to consider specific risks and responsibilities on user policies and protections. Advice can be provided on what these are. 	
8	Printing, copying, scanning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing and scanning are a common requirement for customers and would complement a computer • Consumables cost of printing are currently recharged to users. 	Costs bespoke to each facility

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Affordable Housing Development Programme

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The report sets out the current position of the Affordable Housing Development Programme and emerging projects.
- 1.2 Approval is sought to use Housing Revenue Account (HRA) resources to develop sites set out in the report.
- 1.3 This project contributes to Pledge 7 of the Council's Vision: to build new affordable homes and Pledge 9 to develop brownfield sites as they become available.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to authorise:

- 2.1 The Head of Housing and Community Safety to proceed with the consultation, design and development of the proposed sites.
- 2.2 The use of Right to Buy receipts for the 4-bed houses at Sussex Place.
- 2.3 The proposed development of Penhill United Reform Church.
- 2.4 The proposed developments on the Queens Drive renewal programme and note the phasing set out in the report for the demolition of George Gay Gardens, the "T" Blocks and St Ives Court, Nythe.

3. Detail

Affordable Housing Development Programme 2015 - 2018

- 3.1 The current Affordable Housing Development programme is proceeding broadly as planned to meet the funding requirements of the Affordable Housing Programme 2015 – 2018.
- 3.2 Sussex Place is under budget and ahead of schedule, and is likely to complete in early 2017. 10 of the properties will be sold at 80% of market value with restrictive covenants ensuring they will be discounted in perpetuity.
- 3.3 Townsend House is under budget but behind schedule, due to a number of issues with the building itself and coordinating utility companies. The project will complete in November 2016, and the flats have been allocated.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from James Graham, 01793 464474, jgraham@swindon.gov.uk.

Affordable Housing Development Programme

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.4 Brookfield in Highworth is behind schedule due to challenges arising from the Planning application. The Construction is scheduled to begin in January 2017 and will take 32 weeks.
- 3.5 Delivering new homes that allow those with Learning Disabilities to live independent lives remains a key feature of the programme. The developments will also provide much needed savings for the Adult Social care budget. The new development at The Hawthorns is a great example of this. On this 24 bungalow site tenders have been received bids are being assessed and start on site is expected late November/early December and will take 32 weeks. The design has been significantly updated from previous proposals at Cabinet to accommodate more bungalows.
- 3.6 The table below summarises the programme to date and identifies the type, purpose and size of the accommodation.

Scheme Name	Progress	House type	Need group	Budget
Sussex Place	Completion due early 2017	8 1-bed flats 6 2-bed flats 16 2-bed houses 15 3-bed houses 4 4-bed houses	38 units General needs rented housing 10 units for low cost home ownership	£9,678,365 Small surplus expected
Townsend House	Completion November 2016	7 1-bed flats 8 2-bed flats	Keyworker housing	£1,967,000 Small surplus expected
Brookfield	Construction starts November 2016	1 2-bed bungalow 2 2-bed houses	People with mobility or care needs General needs rented housing	£637,000
Royal British Legion	Planning permission November 2016	10 2-bed houses 4 3-bed houses	General needs rented housing	£2,525,000

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from James Graham, 01793 464474, jgraham@swindon.gov.uk.

Affordable Housing Development Programme

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Cranmore Avenue	Planning permission November 2016	14 1-bed flats	General needs rented housing	£1,500,000
Hawthorns	Start on site November 2016	22 2-bed bungalows 2 3-bed bungalows	People with care needs or mobility issues	£4,101,000

- 3.7 The Planning Applications for Cranmore Avenue, Park South and the former Royal British Legion site in Penhill, have been submitted, with approval scheduled in November and construction is forecast to begin in February 2017.

Use of Right to Buy receipts

- 3.8 The Council has permission to retain a proportion of Right to Buy receipts, which must be spent on building new homes. This money needs to be spent within 3 years of receipt.
- 3.9 In order to spend some this receipt, the Housing Development Team enabled the procurement of the former Penhill United Reform Church site for £100,000. This site includes a 3-bed manse house, as well as sufficient land for further homes once the existing hall is demolished.
- 3.10 The planning application is being prepared for the site to be developed as scheme of 12 2-bed houses, and the refurbishment of the existing 3 bed manse house. The estimated cost of this is £2,066,000.
- 3.11 The Council has secured the country's first Local Development Order for residential development, at Bembridge Close and Linden Avenue. The contractor is finalising plans with Building Control, and construction will start in November 2016, and will take 26 weeks.
- 3.12 Sussex Place has 4 4-bed houses that were excluded from the bid for Affordable Homes. However, in order to ensure the Council does not have to return any Right to Buy receipts it is proposed that the said money is used to fund the 4-bed units. This means that the rent will be £158.49 per week or £686.79 per month, which compares extremely favourably to the market rate for a 4-bed which is approximately £1,000 per month. All applicants will be assessed to ensure that the property is affordable to them. This investment will also reduce the payback period for the project by 2 years, and thus strengthen the HRA business plan.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from James Graham, 01793 464474, jgraham@swindon.gov.uk.

Affordable Housing Development Programme

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.13 Officers are completing an assessment of all of the Council's land holdings, and will identify further sites for development to spend Right to Buy receipts as they are received. The current proposals ensure that the Council will not have to return any receipts until at least December 2017, and proposals will be brought forward to take us through to 2019.

The Queens Drive Regeneration Project

- 3.14 The reconstruction of Sussex Place is proceeding ahead of schedule, and provides a positive example of the benefit of physically regenerating a neighbourhood. The public realm has been significantly improved, and asset values have increased substantially ahead of the general market growth in Swindon.
- 3.15 There are opportunities to continue this improvement further along Queens Drive, by demolishing expensive to maintain, outdated buildings and replacing them with better quality housing built at higher density.
- 3.16 The regeneration scheme represents a major investment in the Borough. The budget for the development is estimated to be £23 million, this involves the demolition of 122 non-traditionally built council homes (and leaseholders) built in the late 1950's that now require significant investment. The proposal is to replace these with a development of 160 new homes. The Housing Revenue Account would replace rented units as close as possible to one for one. Central government currently does not provide grant for the development of affordable housing for rent. Therefore, this project would propose to offer a proportion of homes for open market sale, with the additional income from those sales helping to fund the construction of homes to rent with the remainder of the costs coming from borrowing against the future income from those rented homes. Discussions with the Homes and Communities Agency have led them to offer a loan to assist the development. This loan would be at commercial rates and worse than the Council could secure itself, so this option has been discounted.
- 3.17 The Head of Housing and Community Safety proposes three phases to continue with the much-needed regeneration. The following phases are draft proposals only, and will necessarily be shaped by the consultation responses, and subsequently with more detail following survey, design and contracting stages, as well as marketing and financial considerations.
- 3.18 The proposed sites for regeneration are George Gay Gardens, which is north of Wolsely Road on Queens Drive in Park South, the T-Blocks south of Wolsely Road on Queens Drive in Park South, and St Ives Court on Tyneham Road in Nythe.
- 3.19 Phase 1 is proposed to be the demolition of George Gay Gardens, which has been identified as a sheltered housing scheme that is no longer fit for purpose and excess to need. This has been the subject of extensive discussions with

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from James Graham, 01793 464474, jgraham@swindon.gov.uk.

Affordable Housing Development Programme

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

tenant groups over the last 5 years. The building is an Easi-form non-traditional construction type, which would require significant investment to make it fit for an additional 30 years. The proposed demolition of the 50 flats on this site would provide an opportunity to for a new extra-care facility for approximately 50 households, and a dementia care facility for 20 people. Feasibility work is being carried out on this option. Alternatively the site could be brought forward as mixed tenure residential housing scheme.

- 3.20 Phase 2 would be the relocation and reconstruction of St Ives Court. St Ives Court is a former sheltered housing scheme that was converted into temporary accommodation for the homeless. The demand for housing for the homeless is such that the current provision would have to be re-provided elsewhere. The building is outdated, requires significant investment, and is too large for its current purpose. The approach would be to transfer residents to Baileys Farm Gardens, and an as yet unidentified sheltered housing scheme. Baileys Farm was originally built as a supported housing project, and this proposal returns it to this use. Once the residents have moved out of St Ives Court the site would be demolished and rebuilt as 10 homes for sale at full open market sale in order to fund Phase 3 of the regeneration scheme.
- 3.21 Phase 3 would see the demolition of the T-Blocks that face onto Queens Drive, south of Wolsely Road. These flats are built at low density, with four blocks each of 9 x 2-bed flats, four of which have been sold under the Right to Buy. The flats are of non-traditional construction, being Easi-form flats which will require significant investment to be maintained to the Decent Homes Standard. The demolition of these 36 flats would clear a site suitable for the construction of approximately 90 new homes.
- 3.22 The phases could be run independently or even simultaneously if resources allow. One of the constraining factors will be on the time required to decant large numbers of residents to suitable housing elsewhere.
- 3.23 The construction phase would be likely to last from late 2017 to 2020. The redevelopment would provide employment opportunities, and ultimately an improved public realm on a major gateway into Swindon, better housing for tenants, a new care facility for people with dementia, and good quality market housing in a popular location between Junction 15 of the M4 and the town centre.

The Consultation

- 3.24 The Council has a legal duty to consult tenants on matters of housing management that may affect them as set out in the Housing Act 1985.
- 3.25 The phased regeneration programme has broad timelines set out, and the consultation timeline will need to support that.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from James Graham, 01793 464474, jgraham@swindon.gov.uk.

Affordable Housing Development Programme

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 3.26 Where individual schemes are affected consultation will take place on the premises. People who do not wish to attend or who are unable to attend will be able to make representations by phone, email or post. Within Sheltered Housing, Officers are aware that this is an extremely sensitive matter given the age, health and length of tenancy of some residents. Family members and carers are invited to all consultations. Officers will discuss alternative housing at other Sheltered housing schemes with de-canted residents directly matched to vacancies as they arise. In addition, tenants will receive support during this time as well as statutory home loss compensation of £5,300 and discretionary disturbance payments.
- 3.27 Due to the high number of empty properties held at George Gay Gardens and the greater awareness of residents that this particular scheme is under review a consultation has already commenced in line with details set out in a Cabinet Member Briefing Note. Overall residents accept that the building is far from ideal and understand the reasons for demolition. However, understandably moving home will be stressful and officers will fully support residents in their move to a new home. Residents at the as yet unidentified sheltered housing scheme will be consulted in early 2017. Residents at St Ives will be consulted in early 2017. This is a complex project, so there is likely to be some variation in the proposed dates.
- 3.28 This means that all residents of affected schemes would be consulted prior to beginning the process to move people to new homes. Timings would be scheduled to avoid unnecessary distress to affected tenants. Family members and affected neighbours would also be invited to comment on proposals.
- 3.29 A report on the proposals has been presented to the Tenants' Association Sheltered Housing (TASH), and the Housing Advisory Forum (HAF). Overall the regeneration proposal is supported but concerns remain over the rehousing of many elderly residents.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to proceed with the Affordable Housing Developments, but this would mean returning the grant to central Government. The Council could also choose not to proceed with developments funded by Right to Buy receipts, but this money would have to be returned to central Government along with an interest charge.
- 4.2 The Council could choose to retain and refurbish George Gay Gardens, but due to its inherent design flaws the building is unlikely to meet the needs of other groups. The building needs large investment to make it decent, and does not represent a good investment.

Affordable Housing Development Programme

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The development has been assessed at an early stage, it is estimated to cost £23 million and can be delivered within the existing HRA business plan.
- 5.2 The development will require a procurement process, and the Council's Contract Standing Orders will be complied with.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 The Council has a legal requirement to consult, so will be meeting its legal obligations as a result of the consultation. There is no statutory guidance that specifies the way that a consultation should be carried out but the process will be guided by the Council's own consultation policy (Cabinet Minute 89, 2013/14 refers).
- 5.4 There will be human rights implications once tenants are asked to leave their homes, the Housing Service will comply with the legal framework for decanting tenants, and providing statutory compensation for the loss of their homes.
- 5.5 All other legal and human rights implications were taken into account in preparing this Briefing Note. It is considered that the recommendations are compatible with Convention Rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.6 None.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.7 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been carried out on the Housing Development Programme, and there are no adverse implications for consideration that are not addressed in the body of the report. A copy of the DIA is available from the report author.

Risk Management

- 5.8 A risk register has been done for each project, and forms part of the standard project management approach.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from James Graham, 01793 464474, jgraham@swindon.gov.uk.

Affordable Housing Development Programme

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

7. Background Papers

7.1 None.

8. Appendices

8.1 None.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for July 2016.

Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centre and Recycling Bring Sites

Cabinet

Date 7th December 2016

Author:	Cabinet Member for StreetSmart and Head of StreetSmart
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To agree changes to acceptance criteria and charges for some types of household waste at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).
- 1.2 To agree controls on commercial waste and household waste brought to the centre in vans and trailers.
- 1.3 To agree withdrawal of recycling bring sites across the Borough.
- 1.4 If approved, these recommendations support the Vision's Priority Three: to ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the report presented to the StreetSmart, Highways and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 28th September 2016, which outlined its proposals for additional controls at the HWRC (shown in Appendix One).
- 2.2 Approve the restrictions and controls on commercial waste and household waste brought to the HWRC as set out in this report.
- 2.3 Approve withdrawal of recycling bring sites operated on the Council's behalf, subject to consultation with Parish Councils to establish sites which will transfer under their control. If any Parish Councils decide to take on the costs of operation of the bring sites then the service will continue at these locations.
- 2.4 Authorise the Head of Streetsmart, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, to implement, monitor and amend controls at the HWRC to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.

3. Detail

Controls on waste acceptance at the HWRC

- 3.1 Changes are proposed to waste acceptance policy and processes at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to control the disposal of commercial waste, waste

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Leon Barrett, Direct Dial Telephone Number 07818 510602, lbarrett@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centre and Recycling Bring Sites

Cabinet

Date 7th December 2016

delivered in vans, and to update restrictions on some types of household waste. These changes reflect best practice.

- 3.2 Public Power Solutions (PPS) Ltd operate the civic amenity site on the Council's behalf, providing a site for householders to deposit waste and recycling from their property that is not collected through the kerbside Waste and Recycling collection services. There are currently restrictions in place to prevent commercial waste from being deposited free of charge, ensuring that the costs of disposing of commercial waste are not borne by council tax payers. Many councils also apply other restrictions to ensure that the facilities operate cost effectively and safely and to ensure that legitimate users are able to access the sites without delays. It is proposed to apply the following controls on which waste will be accepted:
- 3.3 Any waste that is defined as Commercial waste within the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 (or any subsequent updated regulations) will not be accepted by PPS Ltd in discharging the Council's duties under section 51 of part 2 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Any commercial waste brought to site can be accepted by PPS and the charges for its handling, treatment and disposal will be set by PPS, who are under no obligation to accept waste. In practical terms this means that any commercial waste brought to the site will be handled by PPS outside the scope of its obligations to provide a facility for household waste, charges will be applied and criteria for its acceptance will be set by PPS.
- 3.4 Household waste delivered to the site in vans or trailers will be subject to the following controls to ensure that no commercial waste is 'passed off' as household waste:
 - 3.4.1 Site users must provide evidence that they are a resident of the area, for example driving licence or utility bill;
 - 3.4.2 If the van is being used under a short term hire agreement then a copy of the agreement must also be shown to establish that it is in the name of a Swindon resident;
 - 3.4.3 Waste will be inspected by site staff to ensure it is legitimate household waste;
 - 3.4.4 Records will be stored of the name, address, vehicle details and waste type to monitor patterns of usage;
 - 3.4.5 Vans and trailers will be limited to 12 visits per year. Additional visits can be arranged by a written request to PPS;

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Leon Barrett, Direct Dial Telephone Number 07818 510602, lbarrett@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centre and Recycling Bring Sites

Cabinet

Date 7th December 2016

- 3.5 In most cases vans and trailers will be directed to use a dedicated area adjacent to the main household tipping area. This is to improve traffic flows and improve safety by providing a larger area for vehicles to manoeuvre.
- 3.6 Vans and trailers will be accommodated in a separate area of the site and this will require additional staff to maintain safety. Due to the costs associated with operation these vehicles will be allowed on site at the following times:
- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Monday to Friday | 08:00 to 16:30 |
| Saturday and Sunday | 10:00 to 14:00 |
- 3.7 Household waste from properties outside of Swindon Borough will not be accepted. Section 51 of part 2 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 only requires the Council to provide the facility for use of residents of the area. PPS will be directed to undertake periodic monitoring of where site users are coming from. This monitoring will be reported to the Head of StreetSmart who will evaluate if stricter controls would avoid costs of operating the site and who is delegated to make decisions to apply appropriate controls in consultation with the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart. Appropriate signage will be displayed at the entrance and adjacent to the queuing lanes at the HWRC to advise and guide customers. A list of what can be disposed of through the HWRC as a householder and commercial waste handler is shown in Appendix Two.
- 3.8 The Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, set out which wastes from households are not classed as household waste and where charges can be applied for collection or disposal. Subject to these regulations, the following changes to restrictions are proposed:
- 3.8.1 Household DIY waste created by the occupier will be limited to no more than five 25kg bags per vehicle. Waste must be brought to site in sturdy bags to avoid excessive unloading time;
- 3.8.2 All plasterboard and mixed waste containing plasterboard will be charged at £3.50 per bag for up to five bags or at published commercial rates for larger quantities. Plasterboard requires specialist disposal therefore incurs higher charges by disposal sites;
- 3.8.3 Household asbestos must be in a sealed bag or fully wrapped in plastic sheeting. Charges will not be applied for household asbestos waste produced by the householder;
- 3.8.4 Car and motorcycle tyres from residential premises will be charged at £2.80 per item; and
- 3.8.5 Household chemicals will only be accepted if they are in secure, sealed containers.
-

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Leon Barrett, Direct Dial Telephone Number 07818 510602, lbarrett@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centre and Recycling Bring Sites

Cabinet

Date 7th December 2016

Proposal to withdraw the remaining Recycling Bring Sites

- 3.9 There are currently around 12 public recycling sites across the Borough operated by contractors on behalf of the Council. The sites provide facilities for recycling of paper, glass, cans and tetrapak cartons. The annual operating cost of the sites is approximately £25,000 and 900 tonnes of material is collected for recycling.
- 3.10 In addition to the direct operating cost of the sites, there are often cases of fly tipping at the Bring Sites as people treat them as mini HWRCs and leave all materials at the site, which generate additional pressures on our Street Cleaning resources who are frequently required to clear away the fly tipped waste.
- 3.11 With the exception of tetrapak, the sites provide facilities for collection of materials that can also be recycled at the kerbside, therefore the value of the sites is questionable given that residents can have this collected through their fortnightly recycling collections. Tetrapaks can be disposed of with the household waste as these will then be converted into a Solid Recovered Fuel along with the other household waste in the PPS plant at Waterside.
- 3.12 The proposal to withdraw the recycling bring sites will deliver a direct saving of circa £25,000 through elimination of all of the associated direct costs. It will also remove the need to direct Street Cleaning resources to remove fly tipping which will deliver a further saving in the wider StreetSmart operation, the exact scale of this further saving is unknown as the work to clear away the fly tipping is part of the daily operation.
- 3.13 It is expected a large proportion of the material currently deposited at the sites will be diverted to the kerbside recycling box system, negating the environmental impact of withdrawal. The kerbside service currently collects around 12,000 tonnes per year, equating to just less than 50 tonnes per day.
- 3.14 There are currently arrangements in place with two contractors to service the sites; these arrangements would need to be terminated in a controlled manner. There would also need to be communication targeted at the sites to notify residents that the facilities are being withdrawn and reminding residents of the opportunity to recycle at the kerbside or by bringing the material to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).
- 3.15 Cabinet are asked to note that prior to implementing any closure, the Waste Service will consult with Ward Members and Parish Councils to establish their appetite and willingness to take ownership of specific Bring Sites and cover the operating cost through other means. This will form part of the ongoing discussions with Parish Councils following the decision by Full Council on 10th November 2016.
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Leon Barrett, Direct Dial Telephone Number 07818 510602, lbarrett@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centre and Recycling Bring Sites

Cabinet

Date 7th December 2016

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Cabinet could decide not to implement the changes proposed within this report. This would result in ongoing costs of providing bring sites and will limit opportunity to prevent avoidable costs of commercial waste being passed off as household at the HWRC.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The proposals will deliver a direct cost saving of circa £25,000 per year by withdrawing the bring sites. There is potential for further costs savings by preventing unauthorised use of the HWRC, however it is not possible to establish the likely saving as there is no data available on current misuse of the site.
- 5.2 The existing arrangements with contractors for provision of bring sites can be terminated with reasonable notice with no costs or penalties to the Council.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 Legal and Human Rights implications have been taken fully into account in the preparation of this report. It is considered that the recommendations of the report are compatible with Convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 There are no other direct implications associated with this report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been undertaken and a copy is available from the report author. The assessment has established that there are no specific groups adversely affected by the proposals and that alternative recycling provision is in place. Specifically, the assisted collection service ensures that residents who are unable to move or set out recycling containers and provided with a bespoke service.

Risk Management

- 5.6 There are none linked to this report although failure to comply with the statutory procedures would be a legal and reputational risk to the Council.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Leon Barrett, Direct Dial Telephone Number 07818 510602, lbarrett@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centre and Recycling Bring Sites

Cabinet

Date 7th December 2016

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Interim Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.
- 6.2 StreetSmart, Highways and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 28th September 2016.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix One: StreetSmart, Highways and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 28th September 2016.
- 8.2 Appendix Two: Materials that can be accepted at the HWRC.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for November 2016.

StreetSmart Waste and Recycling Changes 2016/17

StreetSmart, Highways and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28th September 2016

Author: Cabinet Member for Streetsmart
Head of StreetSmart

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the StreetSmart, Highways and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on the upcoming changes to Waste and Recycling service from 31st October 2016, supported by a revised Policy and Waste Charter. This follows approval by Cabinet on 16th June 2016 for changes to the waste service to deliver service improvements and efficiency savings, and this paper sets out the impact of those changes.
- 1.2 Alongside the changes to the Waste and Recycling collection service, this paper sets out proposed changes to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) and withdrawal of the Recycling Bring Sites.
- 1.3 These changes are aligned with the Council's focus to deliver value for money services and Priority 3 of the Council's Vision for Swindon of ensuring clean and safe streets.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Take note of the report by the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart.
- 2.2 To ask further questions of the Cabinet Member about the upcoming changes to the Waste and Recycling service.
- 2.3 To provide the Cabinet Member with feedback on proposals in relation to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) and withdrawal of the Recycling Bring Sites.

3. Waste and Recycling Collections

Reason for the change

- 3.1 The current refuse and recycling collection services are based on collection rounds developed over five years ago. A review of the collection schedules has

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Leon Barrett, 07818 510602, lbarrett@swindon.gov.uk.

established that efficiency savings can be achieved by developing new collection routes that balance the workload between the crews and optimise the productivity of each crew over a ten day operating period. Efficiencies will be achieved by reducing the number of front line collection crews by introducing optimised schedules, a new waste fleet, implementing new in-cab technology. Additional savings are expected by the reduction in overtime caused by imbalances in scheduling and incorporating new housing developments into front-line schedules.

- 3.2 The review of collection schedules has been undertaken by the management team working closely with frontline crews and with support by a specialist route optimisation supplier, Webaspx. A new detailed operating model has been developed which has resulted from a root and branch review of current routes.
- 3.3 The new routing incorporates new housing developments built since the last routing exercise and takes into consideration planned housing growth over the next three years. It also takes into consideration other factors that influence productivity such as the performance of the new vehicle fleet and the volumes of waste being generated by the public. Reflecting the increasing pressure on public finances, the focus was to deliver the most efficient service possible and includes engaging with residents to understand the role they can play to help protect frontline services, for example, by increasing levels of recycling, and self-sorting their recycling enabling the crews to collect the material more efficiently.

Impact on residents

- 3.4 The Waste and Recycling Service collects from circa 95,000 households. There is currently an imbalance of workload between the collection days within the ten day cycle. Part of this is due to the increasing number of people taking up the Green Waste service which is a paid service that collects green waste from households rather than them having to transport it to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC). It is therefore necessary to change the collection days in many areas to balance workloads and separate the collection day for Green Garden Waste from the other collection days in some cases.
- 3.5 The new operating model means that 55% of households will experience a change to the day in the week when their waste is collected. Analysis of the change is as follows:
 - 27% of households will come forward on their collections;
 - 16% will be a day after their old collection day;
 - 12% will be two days after their old collection day;
 - 0.9% will be three days after their old collection day;
- 3.6 A comprehensive communication plan is in progress to help inform residents of the upcoming changes.
- 3.7 In terms of Green Waste (circa 15,500 households), 80% of subscribers will experience a change in their collection day but similar to the general refuse

service, this will not be more than 3 days and we will communicate to each household that is affected.

- 3.8 With the increasing take-up of the Green Waste service, we have experienced very good interest in the service resulting in us needing to collect green waste in some areas over two days instead of just one. This means that around 45% of subscribers will have their green waste collected on a different day to the rest of their household waste. The purpose of this change is to ensure we have capacity to collect all green waste on the day we promise.
- 3.9 Every household affected will receive a communication from the Council with personalised information as to the new arrangements. A new web page, showing collection arrangements per property, will be available on the SBC web site. Other measures are planned using local media, social media and other communication methods.
- 3.10 It is planned to implement the new routes on 31st October 2016, to avoid the introduction of services changes during known busy periods such as the build up to Christmas and New Year.
- 3.11 No interim collections are planned given the limited range of the time lapses between collections, but the service will operate with support crews to ensure all rounds are covered and any missed bins can be recovered as easily as possible.
- 3.12 The collection start times for all services will be 6.30am with the exception of Kerbside Recycling, which has a start time of 7.30am. This means the collection of Green Garden Waste and Plastics will change from their existing 7.30am start time. This key message for residents is to put all your waste and recycling out by 6.30am, which is generally what happens already.

Benefits of the change

- 3.13 In addition to the financial savings described in paragraph 5.1, the new service is likely to deliver additional savings through improvements in reliability and resilience, cutting the costs of rectifying service failures such as missed collections.
- 3.14 There will be improved information available in customer services to assist with residents' enquiries, and real-time information provided back to the crews to assist with frontline collections. The in-cab units, currently being deployed in the Waste and Recycling vehicles, allow crews to record events such as: bin not presented, side waste, contaminated recycling (e.g. with broken glass) etc. This can then be used to provide live feedback to any resident calling the Contact Centre to report a problem. It is also expected the even distribution of workload to have a positive impact on the wellbeing of our crews.
- 3.15 Optimised routing is also an opportunity to improve safe working methods by considering traffic and safety issues. The new routes include integrated route risk assessments, reflecting best practice and reflecting requirements of the Health and Safety Executive. The routes also help to avoid operating in high risk areas

during peak traffic, such as near schools during drop-off and pick-up, reducing congestion caused by waste collections.

Future Waste Strategy

- 3.16 While work is underway to drive out efficiencies and improvements to the waste and collection service over the next couple of years, we will be completing an exercise throughout 2016/17 to develop a future waste strategy. This will provide the framework for maintaining and developing waste services in the medium and long term, encompassing all waste collection, treatment and disposal under the authority's control. The strategy will consider statutory obligations, targets and local objectives alongside service improvements and efficiencies.
- 3.17 There may be the potential to achieve further savings through reconfiguring waste services and considering alternative waste and recycling models such as co-mingled recycling or communal provision in locations that are not well suited to individual bins. Such fundamental changes to the service are outside of the scope of the current re-routing exercise, but will be considered within future waste strategy, and may be subject to significant capital investment.

Proposed changes to waste acceptance controls at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)

- 3.18 This section sets out proposed policy changes to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to control commercial waste, vans, and to update restrictions on some types of household waste. These changes reflect best practice.
- 3.19 Public Power Solutions (PPS) Ltd operate the civic amenity site on the Council's behalf, providing a site for householders to deposit waste and recycling from their property that is not collected through the Waste and Recycling collection services. There are currently restrictions to prevent commercial waste from being deposited free of charge, ensuring that the costs of disposing of commercial waste are not borne by council tax payers. Many councils also apply other restrictions to ensure that the facilities operate cost effectively and safely and to ensure that legitimate users are able to access the sites without delays. It is proposed to apply the following controls on which waste will be accepted:
- 3.20 Any waste that is defined as Commercial waste within the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 (or any subsequent updated regulations) will not be accepted by PPS Ltd in discharging the Council's duties under section 51 of part 2 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Any commercial waste brought to site can be accepted by PPS and the charges for its handling, treatment and disposal will be set by PPS, who are under no obligation to accept waste. In practical terms this means that any commercial waste brought to the site will be handled by PPS outside the scope of its obligations to provide a facility for household waste, charges will be applied and criteria for its acceptance will be set by PPS.

- 3.21 Household waste delivered to the site in vans or trailers will be subject to the following controls to ensure that no commercial waste is 'passed off' as household waste:
- 3.21.1 Site users must provide evidence that they are a resident of the area, for example driving licence or utility bill;
 - 3.21.2 If the van is being used under a short term hire agreement then a copy of the agreement must be shown to establish that it is in the name of a Swindon resident;
 - 3.21.3 Waste will be inspected by site staff to ensure it is legitimate household waste;
 - 3.21.4 Records will be stored of the name, address, vehicle details and waste type to monitor patterns of usage;
 - 3.21.5 Vans and trailers will be limited to 12 visits per year. Additional visits can be arranged by a written request to PPS;
- 3.22 In most cases vans and trailers will be directed to use a dedicated area adjacent to the main household tipping area. This is to improve traffic flows and improve safety by providing a larger area for vehicles to manoeuvre.
- 3.23 Vans and trailers will be accommodated in a separate area of the site and this will require additional staff to maintain safety. Due to the costs associated with operation these vehicles will be allowed on site at the following times:
- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Monday to Friday | 08:00 to 16:30 |
| Saturday and Sunday | 10:00 to 14:00 |
- 3.24 Household waste from properties outside of Swindon Borough may not be accepted. Section 51 of part 2 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 only requires the Council to provide the facility for use of residents of the area. It is not intended to apply rigorous controls at this stage; however, PPS will be directed to undertake periodic monitoring of where site users are coming from. This monitoring will be reported to the Head of StreetSmart who will evaluate if stricter controls would avoid costs of operating the site and who is delegated to make decisions to apply appropriate controls in consultation with the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart.
- 3.25 The Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, set out which wastes from households are not classed as household waste and where charges can be applied for collection or disposal. Subject to these regulations, the following changes to restrictions are proposed:
- 3.25.1 Household DIY waste created by the occupier will be limited to no more than five 25kg bags per vehicle. Waste must be brought to site in sturdy bags to avoid excessive unloading time;

- 3.25.2 All plasterboard and mixed waste containing plasterboard will be charged at £3.50 per bag for up to five bags or at published commercial rates for larger quantities. Plasterboard requires specialist disposal therefore incurs higher charges by disposal sites;
- 3.25.3 Household asbestos must be in a sealed bag or fully wrapped in plastic sheeting. Charges will not be applied for household asbestos waste produced by the householder;
- 3.25.4 Car and motorcycle tyres from residential premises will be charged at £2.80 per item; and
- 3.25.5 Household chemicals will only be accepted if they are in secure, sealed containers.

Proposal to withdraw the remaining Recycling Bring Sites

- 3.26 There are currently around 12 public recycling sites across the Borough operated by contractors on behalf of the Council. The sites provide facilities for recycling of paper, glass, cans and tetrapak cartons. The annual operating cost of the sites is approximately £25,000 and 900 tonnes of material is collected for recycling.
- 3.27 In addition to the direct operating cost of the sites, we often experience cases of fly tipping at the Bring Sites as people treat them as mini HWRCs and leave all materials at the site which generate additional pressures on our Street Cleaning resources who are frequently required to clear away the fly tipped waste.
- 3.28 With the exception of tetrapak, the sites provide facilities for collection of materials that can also be recycled at the kerbside, therefore the value of the sites is questionable given that residents can have this collected through their fortnightly recycling collections. There are five sites for tetrapak which together generate around 50 tonnes of recycling annually.
- 3.29 The proposal to withdraw the sites will deliver a direct saving of circa £25,000 through elimination of all of the associated direct costs. It will also remove the need to direct Street Cleaning resources to remove fly tipping which will deliver a further saving in the wider StreetSmart operation, the exact scale of this further saving is unknown as the work to clear away the fly tipping is part of the daily operation.
- 3.30 It is expected a large proportion of the material currently deposited at the sites will be diverted to the kerbside recycling box system, negating the environmental impact of withdrawal.
- 3.31 There are currently arrangements in place with two contractors to service the sites; these arrangements would need to be terminated in a controlled manner. There would also need to be communication targeted at the sites to notify residents that the facilities are being withdrawn and reminding residents of the opportunity to recycle at the kerbside or by bringing the material to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).

Revised Waste Policy and Charter

Reason for the change

- 3.32 Part of the purpose of the changes to the Waste Service is the fact that it offers the opportunity to look at service standards, the behaviours of SBC staff, but also it affords the opportunity to engage with the residents with regard to the expectations the council has of residents to help us deliver a value for money service.
- 3.33 In an effort to help promote a value for money service, we are looking to develop a revised Waste Policy and Charter. It would commit to a level of service and also describe all the behaviours required of the residents in terms of the presentation of their waste and recycling. This involves not only the segregation of recycling, but also, it refreshes information relating to contamination, access, presentation, dangerous animals, timing, side waste, non-SBC container etc.
- 3.34 By publishing a Waste Charter, it presents an opportunity to provide clear feedback to households as why their waste or recycling has or has not been collected. It will also deliver a cost saving in that the Service will not commit resources to revisit households where there is a genuine reason why the waste has not been collected (i.e. not out or recycling contaminated with shattered glass).
- 3.35 In improving the segregation of recycling material, we can safely increase the speed of the kerbside sorting process, which will result in a more efficient service and less time spent in a location.

Impact on residents

- 3.36 The impact on the residents will be: a full definition of SBC services and standards, a full understanding of their obligations as to the timing and presentation of their waste and recycling, a full explanation of what constitutes a 'missed collection' and the reasons why the staff will not return to collect until the next schedule collection.

Benefits of the change

- 3.37 The revised Policy and Charter will clarify the service standards. It will also outline all the behaviours required of the residents, in order to maximise the efficiency of the service. It should reduce costs through the reduction of contaminated waste and reduce the incidence of crews returning to locations where the waste or recycling is incorrectly presented.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 In relation to the changes to the waste and recycling service, consideration was given to adopting different operating models (four day week / double shifts etc). However, it was concluded the chosen model delivered greater benefits for residents and enabled a circa £300,000 annualised saving with minimal risks to service delivery.

- 4.2 With regard to the proposed changes to the HWRC, the proposals reflect best practice.
- 4.3 In relation to the withdrawal of the Recycling Bring Sites, we could continue to provide the service at £25,000 per annum plus regular clear up costs. However, given the free fortnightly collection of recycling at the kerbside and opportunity to bring the material to the HWRC, it is felt the withdrawn service will have little impact on the level of recycling and will deliver financial savings and potentially less fly tipping in these specific areas.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The efficiency savings that will be delivered by the waste and recycling re-routing exercise will reduce the number of front line vehicles by 3 and staff by 9. The net annual saving will be circa £287,000 from 2017/18. The savings in year one will be lower due to being implemented part way through the year and one-off costs, giving a net saving in 2016/17 of £100,000 taking account of implementation costs described below.
- 5.2 Initial Implementation costs are projected to be around £45,000, primarily covering printing costs for communications materials and operational costs during the change-over period. There will also be ongoing costs of £24,000 per year for the in-cab routing system which is accounted for within the annualised saving of £287,000. Additional annualised savings of circa £50,000 are expected to be realised from reduce fuel costs following these changes.

Staffing implications

- 5.3 The service changes will result in a reduction of 9 posts within the Waste and Recycling collection service. These posts are currently delivered by agency staff, therefore, no compulsory redundancies of permanent staff have occurred.
- 5.4 It is expected the revised Waste and Recycling Policy and Charter will positively impact the staff because it will offer clear guidance as to the standards of the service as well as the expected behaviours of the residents.
- 5.5 Staff and unions have been engaged throughout the process of designing these changes and all necessary staff consultation has been completed.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.6 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) requires every Local Authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to account, undertake policy development and review, monitor and improve performance.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.7 The changes will improve the efficiency of collection crews and this is expected to reduce overall fuel use and traffic impacts through better routing. We expect the fuel saving to exceed £50,000, this is in addition to the £287,000 annualised saving. This will improve the environmental sustainability of the collection service.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.8 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been produced and is available on request. The outcome of the Diversity Impact Assessment is that 55% of all households will be impacted by the change of collection day but that no minority group would be disproportionately impacted. Those individuals on assisted waste collections will remain on assisted collections despite the potential change in collection day.

Risk Management

- 5.9 Changes to routes and collection days can lead to service delivery issues in the weeks immediately after the changes are implemented. This can be caused by a number of different factors including crews being unfamiliar with routes and unanticipated issues with vehicle access. Householders will also need time to become accustomed to the new schedules and may make mistakes; wherever possible it is intended to assist householders to ensure they are not left with excess waste. This support may be in the form of interim collections, personalised communication and improved (and more accurate) messaging subject to requirement.
- 5.10 In so far as the proposed changes impact on staff, the team have engaged with unions and staff to agree the changes and undertaken a full process of formal consultation. Continued working with the staff to ensure the smooth introduction of these changes is essential.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 There are no background papers associated with this proposal

The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports. The Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, The Board Director, Communities and Place.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 There are no background papers associated with this proposal.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 There are no appendixes associated with this proposal.

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Appendix Two: Materials that can be accepted at the HWRC

The following materials can be recycled at the HWRC:

- Glass
- Cans
- Paper
- Textiles
- Cardboard
- Electrical household products (including fridges and freezers)
- Personal computers
- Scrap metal
- DIY/hardcore
- Wood
- Garden waste
- Plastic bottles
- Batteries (including car batteries)
- Used engine oil

The following materials are accepted and will be disposed of through energy recovery or landfill:

- Carpets/underlay
- Mattresses
- General household waste

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Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author:	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services Interim Corporate Director, Resources
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet's approval to adopt a Commercial Investment Strategy that will allow the Council to innovate and invest wisely on a commercial basis, taking advantage of opportunities as they present themselves. These investments will be key to achieving a balanced budget position and securing a sustainable financial future for the Council.
- 1.2 Following further work to examine the scope for such initiatives this report sets out:
 - 1.2.1 An investment strategy to enhance income to the Council in the longer term (the Commercial Investment Strategy),
 - 1.2.2 The proposed governance framework, including establishment of a Commercial Investment Strategy Board,
 - 1.2.3 A proposal to establish a Commercial Investment Fund (CIF) to provide a mechanism for financing the strategic acquisition and development of high income producing assets.
- 1.3 These recommendations support the Council's Vision Theme 1, Growing Swindon's Economy and Identifying New Forms of Funding, which includes growing the tax base and pursuing commercial investment opportunities that generate new revenue income streams to support the continued delivery of vital services to Swindon residents.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 **Recommend to Council** that a Commercial Investment Fund (CIF) for the commercial management, disposal of and investment into key assets be established, and that a sum of £50m be allocated within the capital programme to provide pump priming funding for the CIF (including the £15m already allocated to the Housing Development Programme) and, subject to this:
- 2.2 Approve:

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Paul Smith on Direct Dial No.463976, or Email psmith2@swindon.gov.uk.

Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

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- 2.2.1 The Commercial Investment Strategy including the proposed gateway process for assessing investment opportunities, as set out in this report.
 - 2.2.2 The governance arrangements as set out in this report and establish a Commercial Investment Strategy Board comprising the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, Chief Executive, Corporate Directors for Resources and Economy and Transformation and Director of Law and Democratic Services, supported by appropriate internal and external advisers (including the Council's s151 Officer if that role is not assigned to the Corporate Director for Resources) who will determine detailed investment and appraisal criteria.
 - 2.2.3 An annual budget of up to £60,000 to provide further capacity within the Council's Property Assets team to support an expanded programme of commercial property acquisitions, funded from the investment income generated.
- 2.3 Authorise:
- 2.3.1 The Director of Law and Democratic Services to draw up detailed terms of reference for the Commercial Investment Strategy Board.
 - 2.3.2 The Corporate Director for Resources to (i) determine the detail of funding arrangements for the CIF, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Finance and Corporate Resources and (ii) commence a procurement exercise for the appointment of external investment and specialist advisors to the Board.
 - 2.3.3 The Corporate Director for Resources, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Finance and Corporate Services, to approve investments involving expenditure of up to £10m where these have cleared the gateway process described in the Commercial Investment Strategy.
 - 2.3.4 The Head of Property Assets, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to approve the investment purchases, subject to the Board completing a robust appraisal of each investment proposal against the principles and criteria set out in the Commercial Investment Strategy.
 - 2.3.5 The Director of Law and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Head of Property Assets, to complete the investment purchases and related documentation on such terms as he considers necessary to protect the Council's interests.
 - 2.3.6 The Director of Law and Democratic Services to make appropriate amendments to the Constitution.
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Paul Smith on Direct Dial No.463976, or Email psmith2@swindon.gov.uk.

Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

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- 2.4 Request that the Leader of the Council reviews the terms of reference for the Leader's Asset Management Advisory Group, with advice from the Corporate Director Resources and the Director of Law and Democratic Services.

3. Detail

Commercial Investment Strategy

- 3.1 Over the next three years, the Council faces a challenging financial environment as a result of reduced Government funding and increasing demand. The ability to innovate and invest wisely on a commercial basis, taking advantage of opportunities as they present themselves, will be key to achieving a balanced budget position and securing a sustainable financial future for the Council.
- 3.2 The Council's response to its financial position and challenges is focused around 3 key themes, as set out in the 2016/17 Budget Management, 2017//18 Draft Budget and Medium Term Resourcing Plan taken to Cabinet in October 2016 (Cabinet Minute 57, 2016/17 refers).
- 3.3 This report proposes the development of a portfolio of commercial investments to be delivered through:
- 3.3.1 the adoption of a commercial investment strategy,
 - 3.3.2 the establishment of appropriate governance arrangements, including the creation of a Commercial Investment Strategy Board to oversee the implementation of the strategy, and
 - 3.3.3 the creation of a ring fenced account (the Commercial Investment Fund) that will provide an efficient mechanism for funding commercial investments.
- 3.4 These arrangements would also allow for investment in schemes that will support the Council's wider economic and regeneration objectives, provided these are consistent with the over-riding aim of the investment strategy, which is to generate income for the Council to help deliver long-term financial resilience.
- 3.5 The proposed strategic approach to investment is based upon the following key principles:
- 3.5.1 Prioritising the use of capital receipts, the Council's cash reserves and balances to support investments through a Commercial Investment Fund that will deliver savings and enhance income in the longer term.
 - 3.5.2 Investing in a diversified portfolio that provides the optimal balance between risk and return.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Paul Smith on Direct Dial No.463976, or Email psmith2@swindon.gov.uk.

Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

3.5.3 Investing in schemes that have economic development and regeneration potential and meet the over-riding aims of the Commercial Investment Strategy.

3.5.4 Retaining assets where appropriate and if necessary undertaking effective investment in order to enhance income generation.

Governance

3.6 There are a number of possible options around the governance of the Commercial Investment Strategy which could include:

3.6.1 Delegation to a newly established Member/Officer Commercial Investment Strategy Board.

3.6.2 Delegation to an Officer.

3.6.3 Full Cabinet as now.

3.7 Each of these options is likely to have different advantages and disadvantages, but it is essential that:

3.7.1 Decisions can be made quickly if required to enable the Council to respond in a timely manner to market opportunities.

3.7.2 Business cases are scrutinised with a degree of rigour against a clear set of investment criteria that prioritise the delivery of additional income or savings and give explicit consideration to the management of risk.

3.7.3 There is a clear separation between strategic management of the overall portfolio of investments and the development and delivery of income generating initiatives.

3.8 The governance option that best meets these criteria is the establishment of a Commercial Investment Strategy Board and accordingly Cabinet are recommended to agree to establish such a Board with the following membership:

3.8.1 Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services,

3.8.2 Chief Executive,

3.8.3 The Corporate Director for Resources (the post is currently held on an interim basis until the permanent post holder is appointed),

3.8.4 Corporate Director for Economy and Regeneration, and

3.8.5 The Director of Law and Democratic Services.

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Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

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- 3.9 The Board would be supported by appropriate professional advisers including the Council's s151 officer and external property investment advisers, legal, financial and tax specialists. Officers will commence the procurement process to put in place appropriate arrangements. The cost of these advisers will be set against income delivered from investments.
- 3.10 The remit of the Board would be to consider all proposals that contribute to the delivery of the investment strategy, operating a gateway process to ensure that proposals are supported by a robust business case and meet agreed investment criteria including a consideration of risks, delivery mechanisms and financing. The Board will also be responsible for monitoring all commercial investments against agreed performance benchmarks. This includes existing commercial investments.
- 3.11 It is suggested that the Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, be authorised to approve investments involving expenditure of up to £10m where these have completed the gateway assessment process described below. The Board will provide advice to Cabinet on investment decisions involving expenditure in excess of £10m.
- 3.12 Decisions about asset disposals would continue to be made by Cabinet, as at present.
- 3.13 Currently, the Leader of the Council operates a Leader's Asset Management Advisory Group, which is a Cabinet Member advisory body as defined by Article 7.07 of the Council's constitution. With the adoption of a Commercial Investment Strategy and Board, it is recommended that the Leader seek advice from the Interim Corporate Director Resources and the Director of Law and Democratic Services on any amendments required to the terms of reference for LAMAG to ensure that any potential areas of overlap with the remit of the Board are clearly delineated.

Assessment Process and Investment Criteria

- 3.14 The objective of the Commercial Investment Strategy is to help ensure that the Council has a sustainable financial position over the medium to long term. The Board will set detailed investment and appraisal criteria against which all opportunities that require an initial investment will be evaluated, including the acquisition or development of property, assets and commercial delivery models and vehicles. Each investment opportunity will be assessed through a two-stage gateway process.
- 3.15 **Gateway One** comprises evaluation against a number of criteria to determine whether there is a viable commercial proposition. This includes whether the investment or acquisition is within the Council's legal powers and can be undertaken with regard to test of reasonableness, fiduciary duty and value for

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Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

money, the amount of investment required, the period over which the return will be made, the balance of risk and rate of return and whether the opportunity will fit within any limits that may be set in terms of the balance of property and other investments. Any proposals that clear the Gateway One process will proceed to the development of a much more detailed business case to be considered for approval.

- 3.16 Property investments will additionally be assessed by a **Gateway Two** process. This will identify whether the investment is appropriate to achieve the recommended balance between types of property, geographic mix and risk profile. Proposals will be assessed against specific criteria set out in a Property Investment Strategy. These criteria, which will be developed by the Board with specialist external advice for Cabinet approval, will ensure that there is a balanced portfolio with an acceptable risk profile. Additionally, a specialist adviser would review any proposed property investments with the Head of Property Assets alongside the investment strategy. If an acquisition is considered to meet the criteria, the reasons supporting a recommended acquisition would be set out to the Board.
- 3.17 Where further work is required to develop a full business case the Board may sanction any additional spending required to complete due diligence and the development of a full business case.
- 3.18 The existing commercial property acquisition process requires funding to be approved on a site-by-site basis. This can be a lengthy process and in an active, fast moving and increasingly competitive property investment market there is a significant risk that attractive investment opportunities will be missed if the Council is not able to respond quickly enough to exploit any commercial property acquisition opportunities that may arise.
- 3.19 Accordingly, it is recommended that Cabinet give delegated authority to the Head of Property Assets, in consultation with the S151 officer, to approve investment purchases upon the completion of a robust financial appraisal in accordance with the principles and criteria set out in the investment strategy. This will require appropriate amendments to the Scheme of Delegations and Designations of Proper Officers.
- 3.20 It is further recommended that an additional post be created in the specialist team within Property Assets who manage the current non-operational property portfolio to ensure the on-going active management of both the existing commercial property portfolio and its expansion at a cost of up to £60,000 per annum, funded from the investment income generated.

Risk Management

- 3.21 The implementation of the investment strategy means the Council will be managing different financial risks. Investments will be subject to inherent

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Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

economic and market risks and therefore it is essential that a diversified and balanced investment portfolio is maintained. This will take some time to create and will be dependent on suitable opportunities coming to market.

- 3.22 The governance process recommended is designed to mitigate these risks. All investments will be based upon a robust business case, informed by specialist external advice, and which give due and proper consideration to the balance of risk and reward and the underlying security of the investment to ensure compliance with the Council's fiduciary duty.
- 3.23 Specific mitigation measures with regard to commercial property investment additionally include:
- 3.23.1 Annual reporting plus valuation by an investment advisor to achieve the acquisition and disposal strategy to achieve a balanced portfolio at any given time
 - 3.23.2 A target rate of return which ensures that the financing costs of delivering the investment strategy are covered and that an annual surplus is delivered which is consistent with assumptions made in the Medium Term Resourcing Plan
 - 3.23.3 Each investment acquisition will be subject to detailed business case that clearly sets out the risks and associated mitigation measures.
 - 3.23.4 Property assets will be of good quality with income derived from good covenanted tenants in good or growth locations on full repairing leases or where all costs are recoverable via occupiers by way of a service charge.
 - 3.23.5 An overall investment scheme provision that there will be an agreed cap on the percentage of income that is derived from a single organisation or tenant and a cap on the single asset value as a percentage of gross asset value.
 - 3.23.6 Professional advice on asset management will be sought as part of the appointment of investment advisors given the significance of asset management to the generation of returns.

The Commercial Investment Fund

- 3.24 The Commercial Investment Fund is a ring-fenced account designed to support implementation of the investment strategy. An important underlying principle is that funding is recycled over time to develop a sustainable long-term revenue stream. This means that after consideration has been given to the delivery of financial targets within the Medium Term Resourcing Plan, any surplus income from investments, together with receipts from asset disposals, will be recycled back into the Fund.

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Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

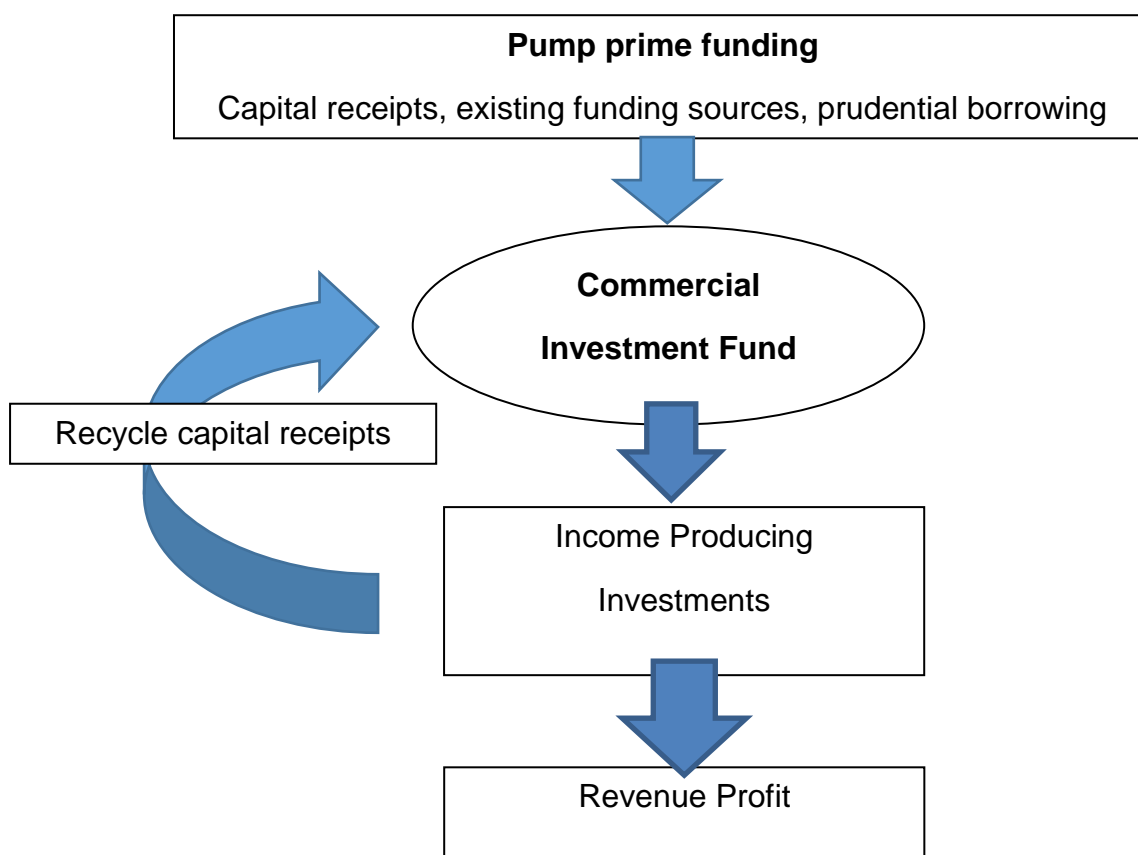
Date: 7th December 2016

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- 3.25 The establishment of a Commercial Investment Fund will enable investment decisions to be made in the context of a commercially driven programme aligned to the Council's strategic priorities and the Medium Term Resourcing Plan. The pooling of funding and ability to recycle capital receipts and a proportion of returns, together with the use of existing reserves and cash balances to "cash flow" funding requirements in a more efficient way based on anticipated investment needs and capital receipts plans, would enable the Council to minimise long-term borrowing and the associated revenue costs (interest and Minimum Revenue Provision).
- 3.26 Examples of investments that could be financed from the CIF include:
- Additions to the Council's commercial property portfolio
 - Development of housing for sale on Council owned land
 - Development of private rented sector housing solutions
 - Redevelopment of the civic campus
 - Investment in solar projects
 - Strategic commercial investments or acquisitions
 - Strategic land acquisitions.
- 3.27 The CIF could also be used to provide funding for asset acquisition or development to companies in which the Council has an interest (for example, a newly established housing company) by way of a loan or line of credit on commercial terms.
- 3.28 The diagram on the next page shows in outline how the CIF would work.

Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016



- 3.29 It is important to note that the ring-fenced account remains part of the overall Council capital programme and treasury management activities. Ultimately the Council is not formally bound by the ring fence itself as it is an internal mechanism.
- 3.30 It is recommended that the initial value of the CIF be set at £50m. This will be kept under review as the shape of the investment programme becomes clearer and specific opportunities are brought forward for approval.
- 3.31 The Interim Corporate Director for Resources will determine the detail of funding arrangements for the CIF, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources. Initial pump priming funding for the ring-fenced account could include unallocated capital receipts, transfers from existing reserves and prudential borrowing together with an element of revenue funding. As the model develops, other funding sources can be added such as New Homes Bonus and retained business rates.
- 3.32 Any borrowing requirements would be considered with regard to the principles of the Prudential Code and as such will explicitly consider affordability, prudence

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Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

and sustainability. Any such proposals will also need to operate within the agreed treasury management borrowing levels set each year by Council.

Financial Implications

- 3.33 The objective of the Commercial Investment Strategy is to use the Council's resources to invest in income generating assets and commercial opportunities to partially offset the loss of government grants over the longer term and to protect service provision while minimising the burden on local Council tax payers.
- 3.34 The Council may fund investment using reserves, capital receipts, prudential borrowing and revenue contributions where the Council has powers to do so. Any borrowing required would need to be made in accordance with the Prudential Code. The Code requires borrowing to be affordable, sustainable and provide value for money. The return on any investment would therefore need to be in excess of the capital financing costs of the borrowing, which consist of the interest payable and the statutory Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) that sets aside funds for the repayment of borrowing.
- 3.35 All investments will require a robust business case to ensure that the investment is affordable, sustainable and provides value for money. Some investments will generate a return in the medium to long term but incur losses in the early years. The Commercial Investment Fund will provide £50m that will be used to fund the initial capital financing costs in the short term until investments generate a net return. Returns made on investments will need to be sufficient to repay the Fund so that further investments can be made as well as generate a surplus to meet revenue funding requirements set out in the Council's Medium Term Resourcing Plan.
- 3.36 Assets created through these investments and the associated liabilities will be consolidated in the Council's Balance Sheet and treated in accordance with the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting in the UK, which is supported by International Financial Reporting Standards.
- 3.37 Investment property is that which is held solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation or both, rather than for use in the delivery of service or as part of wider regeneration or community development schemes. The proposal to buy property purely for their rental income streams, would mean such assets expect to be classified as investment assets.
- 3.38 Where an investment property is purchased, the initial cost comprises the purchase price, and any directly attributable expenditure. This includes professional fees for retaining the services of a specialist acquisition agent who will act for the Council in identifying and negotiating the legal purchase of suitable properties, legal services, property transfer taxes (such as stamp duty) and other transaction costs. This would be the initial balance sheet valuation of the assets. As an investment asset it would require annual valuation to ensure

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Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

that at year end the carrying value was materially accurate to its fair value. Such assets are not depreciated but are, instead, automatically reflected in the property's fair value. This re-measurement gain or loss is taken through the accounts within the financing and investment income section, but reversed back out so as not to impact on Council tax requirements.

- 3.39 As with any financial accounting standards there is the risk that regulations may change in future that might affect this reversal, which could then impact on the general fund, but officers are not aware of any impending or proposed changes to this classification of asset.
- 3.40 Any proceeds from future disposal of such assets will, like other items of property, plant and equipment, be classed as capital receipts and recycled through the CIF.
- 3.41 Whilst the Investment Strategy has the potential to generate substantial income for the Council in the future it entails significant risks. In implementing the strategy the Board will need to ensure that decisions made recognise the unique fiduciary duty owed to local residents.
- 3.42 The governance arrangements outlined, including the requirement for each investment to have a robust business case approved by the Commercial Investment Strategy Board, provide the necessary control of these risks. In approving each business case, the Board will satisfy itself that the investment is within the Council's legal powers, it has properly considered the advice of its external advisors (both internal and external) and that full due and proper consideration has been given to the balance of risk and reward and the underlying security of the investments proposed to ensure compliance with the fiduciary duty to ensure that the financial standing of the Council is protected.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Funding could continue to be allocated for commercial investments and property acquisitions on a case-by-case basis as it is currently. This would entail the risk of investment opportunities being missed due to the Council's inability to take speedy decisions as well as the potential for higher financing costs arising from the absence of a strategic and planned approach to the funding and assessment of commercial opportunities.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 These are contained within the body of the report.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Paul Smith on Direct Dial No.463976, or Email psmith2@swindon.gov.uk.

Commercial Investment Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no such direct implications.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 There is no impact on DIA associated with management of the Councils cash balances.

Risk Management

- 5.5 All risks are included in the body of the report

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Interim Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 1.1 This is not a key decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme / Forward Plan for September 2016.

Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Authors:	Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services and Interim Corporate Director, Resources
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report presents the second quarter's monitoring position for the capital programme and some proposed changes to the Council's capital programme.
- 1.2 The effective management of financial resources through robust financial management processes underpins the Council's ability to achieve its plans and priorities.
- 1.3 Responsible budget management underpins the Council's strategic objective of consistently making the best use of all available resources as well as providing focus for its change programmes.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the forecast capital expenditure set out in Table 1 & 2 and Appendix 1,
- 2.2 Agree to the release of £100k to Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Trust (para. 3.3.4 to 3.3.7
- 2.3 Authorise the Interim Corporate Director for Economy, Regeneration & Skills to agree, with the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Trust Director/Chief Executive, the staging and mechanism of payments provided for the next stage of the development.
- 2.4 Approve the changes to the programme in section 3.3.
- 2.5 Agree to the distribution of £300,520 of Devolved Formula Capital to Local Authority ("LA") maintained schools.
- 2.6 Note the contents of Tables 3 - 6 regarding the 2015-16 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and to approve that these be published on our website.
- 2.7 Approve the annual retention of 5% of the total annual CIL receipts to cover administration costs per paragraph 3.10 below
- 2.8 Approve the distribution of the non-parished CIL Neighbourhood Proportion to the new parishes as if they had existed at the date of the receipt.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Burbidge on Direct Dial No. 464384 or Email iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk

Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 2.9 Note the intention for CIL receipts to support capital programme proposals that will be taken to Cabinet in February 2017 as part of the annual capital budget setting process.

3. Detail

Capital Programme – 2016/17 monitoring

- 3.1 Table 1 below shows the current status of the 2016-17 capital budget and forecast outturn position. The significant budget movements are detailed in paragraph 3.3.1 - 3.3.3 below. Table 2 shows how the capital programme is being funded.

Table 1 - Budget Forecasts and Variances

Service	Approved Budget 2016-17 Onwards	Forecast Scheme Spend to Completion	Projected Variance
Group	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Community Works	1,903	1,903	0
Corporate Projects	37,961	40,824	2,864
Section 106	10,413	10,413	0
Schools	15,431	12,112	-3,319
Social Care	2,329	2,329	0
Transport	57,984	58,069	85
Total General Fund	126,021	125,650	-371
HRA	35,129	35,129	0
Service Totals	161,150	160,779	-371

Table 2 - Capital Programme funding

	Current Funding Requirement
Expenditure	£'000
Budget	161,150
Balance to be financed:	161,150
Capital Receipts	3,308
Section 106 Deposits	23,654
Grant Funding	75,432
Revenue Contributions	3,082
HRA balances	33,602
Increase in Borrowing Requirement	22,072
Total	161,150

- 3.2 The detailed capital monitoring for quarter 2 is attached at Appendix 1.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Burbidge on Direct Dial No. 464384 or Email iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk

Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Changes to the Programme

- 3.3 Cabinet is asked to approve the following changes to the existing programme:
- 3.3.1 The Junction 16 improvements that are linked to the Wichelstowe development are predicting an overspend of £2.863m (Appendix 1, Line 49). This is a cash flow issue that will be initially funded via Council borrowing and then the Wichelstowe Joint Venture will be responsible for reimbursing the Council once the Joint Venture is in place.
 - 3.3.2 As previously reported, there is an overspend on the Bruce Street Bridges improvements (Appendix 1, line 82), this will be offset by a reduction in the budget for North Star roundabout (Appendix 1, line 108)
 - 3.3.3 Cabinet had previously agreed to fund the expansion of South Marston Primary School (Appendix 1, Line 142). This project has been suspended and future education needs in the village will be addressed via the free school bidding process or alternative external sources of funding.
 - 3.3.4 Cabinet formally approved in December 2014 a one-off contribution from Swindon Borough Council of up to £5m for the development and construction costs of a New Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, of which up to £475k would be needed to develop the outline proposals into a more detailed Stage 2 grant application (Cabinet Minute 51(3), 2014/15 refers.)
 - 3.3.5 The Trust, via the Chief Executive, has now approached the Council to formally request Swindon Borough Council's agreement that the Trust submit the Stage 1 application for Heritage Lottery Fund financial support for the New Swindon Museum and Art Gallery project during the 2017, rather than 2016, round. This request has been made following guidance from and with the support of colleagues at Heritage Lottery Fund - South West. The Trust will be bidding for circa £10,000,000 toward the overall costs of the New Museum and Art Gallery project - one fifth of the HLF budget available nationally.
 - 3.3.6 It is therefore recommended that £100,000 of the previously allocated £475,000 for bid development be made available to support the further Stage 1 application on the basis that the Trust also provide a development match of £100,000.
 - 3.3.7 It is also recommended that the Corporate Director for Economy, Regeneration & Skills agree, with the SMAG Trust Director/Chief Executive, the staging and mechanism of payments provided for the next stage of development.

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Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

New Approvals

- 3.3.8 An additional budget of £81k for Havelock Square Public Realm funded from Section 106 Planning Agreement (S106) contributions. The original programme agreed by Cabinet faced a number of delays due to complications in moving an electrical cable that had become entangled with tree roots at the corner of the square. In addition the Brunel centre management requested additional method statements before they would agree to the movement of the Brunel statue. These issues have resulted in an increased cost of delivering the project which can be met by the use of s106 Public Realm contributions.
- 3.3.9 A budget of £34.5k, funded from S106 income, to increase the capacity of the Friends of Pentylands Country Park. The group will carry out improvements to the site infrastructure and enhance the wildlife habitat. The funding to the group will be released over a three year period.
- 3.3.10 A budget of £160k, funded from S106 income, to enhance the appearance of Blagrove and Greenbridge roundabouts. The funding will provide platforms for creative images and artwork to promote the impact of local industries on the town.
- 3.3.11 A budget of £20k, funded from S106 income, to fund the resurfacing of the Haydon Wick Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). The MUGA was provided via Big Lottery funding and is now in need of re-surfacing. The parish council have agreed to accept and maintain the site via a long lease once this has work been completed.
- 3.3.12 A budget of £17k, funded from S106 income, to fund the relocation of the main reception desk at STEAM museum. The museum is proposing to relocate the existing reception to a location between the entrance and exit. This will release additional retail floor space, and enable the museum to direct all visitors via the gift shop as they exit the museum which is expected to increase retail income.
- 3.3.13 A budget of £174k, funded from S106 income, to fund improvements at Fessey House, Whitbourne House and OK4U day centres. These sites were returned to the borough as part of the reintegration of SEQOL, but it has become apparent that improvements are required at each of the sites. A full audit is currently under way to identify all of the requirements. The improvements will include upgrades to bathrooms, and hoist equipment, as well as a need to replace some of the catering equipment and various chairs and other furniture.
- 3.3.14 A budget of £106k, funded from £61k of S106 income & £45k from Environmental Services Land Contamination Reserves. This bid is to consult on and provide a better all season leisure offer on the open space
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Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

at Spring Gardens are to meet the evident leisure demand, improve boundary planting, help support a more secure entrance and cross site access with tree works, improved furniture where appropriate and in doing so, address historic land contamination issues.

- 3.3.15 The Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) service and Tuition services are looking to rationalise the number of sites that they operate. An opportunity has arisen to acquire an ex-school building and to refurbish an existing council property. These new premises will enable the service to improve the safeguarding and educational provision to this group of vulnerable students. Once the services occupy these refurbished premises it will leave the current 6 sites vacant or available for disposal, redevelopment or alternative operational usages, a budget of £2.605m funded from a combination of grant funding and S106 capital receipts has been identified to support the proposals. Disposal or re development of the vacated properties will generate a capital receipt, which will be set aside to fund any additional costs associated with this proposal.

Devolved Formula Capital Funding ("DFC") for Schools

- 3.4 The LA has received notification from the Department for Education (DfE) of an allocation of £300,520 DFC to be distributed to all LA maintained schools. These funds are provided to the schools to enable them to fund capital works required agreed by the schools governing body. Academy schools receive their capital funding directly from the DfE.
- 3.5 Cabinet is requested to approve the distribution of the DFC to the LA maintained schools.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Monitoring 2015/16

- 3.6 The Council has a legal obligation to report annually on CIL receipts for the previous financial year and publish that report on its website by no later than 30th December of the following financial year.
- 3.7 The Council commenced charging CIL on 6th April 2015, thus the first reporting year is 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 and this report is due to be published by 30th December 2016. Table 3 below provides details of the CIL receipts in 2015/16. Table 4 and 5 provide details of the funding received by ward and parish area. Table 6 contains details of other items that the Council is required to publish as part of its CIL annual report.

Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Table 3 – CIL receipts monitoring

	Amount Received	Allocated	Expenditure	Retained at end of 2015/16
CIL General Fund	£32,484.06	£0	£0	£32,484.06
CIL Administration	£2,030.25	£0	£0	£2,030.25
CIL NP* Non-Parish areas	£4,787.26	£0	£0	£4,787.26
CIL NP* Parish areas	£1,303.50	£0	£0	£1,303.50
CIL Passed to other persons	£0.00	£0	£0	
Total CIL receipts received 2015/16	£40,605.08			£40,605.08

*CIL NP – represents the Neighbourhood Proportion (NP) of CIL receipts

Table 4 – CIL NP receipts by Ward

CIL Non-Parish Ward Breakdown	Value of CIL NP (£)
Central	£3,126.75
Eastcott	£231.00
Lydiard & Freshbrook	£373.68
Old Town	£247.50
Rodbourne Cheney	£808.34
TOTAL Non-Parish	£4,787.26

Table 5 – CIL NP receipts by Parish

Parish Breakdown	Value of CIL Parish NP (£)
Blunsdon	£1,303.50
All Other Parishes	£0

Table 6 – CIL details required as part of the annual report

Other Matters in lieu of CIL Payments	
Infrastructure Payments	None
Land Payments	None
Notices Served to recover CIL From Local Councils	None
Repayment Request from Local Councils (Parishes)	None

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Burbidge on Direct Dial No. 464384 or Email iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk

Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

3.8 Cabinet is requested to note the content of the tables above and approve that these be published on our website thus discharging the Councils legal reporting requirements.

3.9 5% of CIL receipts for Administration

3.10 The CIL regulations allow for up to 5% of the total annual CIL receipts to be retained to provide the resources required to manage the overall CIL process.

3.11 Cabinet is requested to approve the annual retention of 5% of the total annual CIL receipts.

CIL Neighbourhood Proportion ("CIL NP")

3.12 The CIL Regulations require that the CIL Neighbourhood Proportion (CIL NP) is passed to local parishes for them to fund works to support the development of their area. Following the Community Governance Review officers are proposing that the CIL NP that has been received for the non-parished areas of the borough will be transferred to new parishes as if they had been in existence when the receipt was received.

3.13 Cabinet is requested to approve the distribution of the non-parished CIL NP to the new parishes as if they had existed at the date of the receipt.

CIL Infrastructure Account (CIL General Fund)

3.14 The majority of CIL Receipts are retained by the Council to help fund the provision, and where appropriate, maintenance of its infrastructure; these receipts are held in a CIL Infrastructure Account (CIL regulations refer to this as the General Fund).

3.15 The Council has discretion around how this is spent and can allocate it to either a single project, or to multiple projects. The expenditure should be aligned with infrastructure identified on the adopted CIL Regulation 123 Funding List which is drawn from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that supports the adopted Local Plan 2026 (approved March 2015).

3.16 The CIL Infrastructure Account use will be agreed by Council as part of the annual Capital Programme Budget setting process to support Council priorities. This would remove the option for independent bids to be made for CIL Infrastructure Account funding from Members, Service Areas, Parish Councils, and Community Groups. The CIL Neighbourhood Proportion is transferred to Parish Councils to enable them to support local requirements arising from development.

3.17 Cabinet are asked to note the intention to allocate CIL receipts to support capital programme proposals that will be taken to Cabinet in February 2017 as part of the annual capital budget setting process.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Burbidge on Direct Dial No. 464384 or Email iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk

Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Cabinet could choose not to approve the proposed additions to the capital programme.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 Where there are specific financial implications these have been reflected in the body of the report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no such direct implications.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has not been done as this report does not make any new recommendations that would have a detrimental impact on services.

Risk Management

- 5.5 None other than those highlighted in the body of the report. Individual schemes will have individual Risk Assessments and DIAs.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Detailed Capital Budget Monitoring 2016-17 Schemes

Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a key decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for December 2016.

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Cost Centre	Updated Grouping	Scheme Name	16/17 Budget Remaining £	16-17 Actual Spend £	Projected Outturn for Report £	Projected Variance for Report £
1	Community Works	Asset Liability Management	112,456	-	112,456	0
2	Community Works	Crematorium Replace Cremators	146,814	- 15,145	146,814	0
3	Community Works	Cricklade Road Footway Reconstruction	202,541	-	202,541	0
4	Community Works	Croft New 2FE School	0	- 778		0
5	Community Works	Flood Defence Grant	124,047	-	124,047	0
6	Community Works	Hay lane Caravan Site	205,109	3,807	205,109	0
7	Community Works	Hodson Road embankment stabilisation	339,082	341	339,082	0
8	Community Works	Kingsdown Cemetery	11,133	-	11,133	0
9	Community Works	Lydiard Site traffic management	30,935	28,026	30,935	0
10	Community Works	Playground Refurb	318,977	158,278	318,977	0
11	Community Works	Private Sector Renewal Grants	223,695	- 42,416	223,695	0
12	Community Works	Reinvestment in Allotments	102,809	-	102,809	0
13	Community Works	Street Smart IT	5,433	-	5,433	0
14	Community Works	Town Centre surplus street furniture removal	30,428	-	30,428	0
15	Community Works	Village Centres 13/14	49,710	36,761	49,710	0
		Community Works	1,903,169	169,651	1,903,169	0
16	Corporate Projects	Asbestos Management	407,498	33,452	407,498	0
17	Corporate Projects	Aspen House Public Realm	489,013	-	489,013	0
18	Corporate Projects	Barbury Castle	239,615	295	239,615	0
19	Corporate Projects	Capital Repairs and Maintenance	3,450,089	597,152	3,450,089	0
20	Corporate Projects	Carriage works @ Railway Village	1,000,000	-	1,000,000	0
21	Corporate Projects	Contact point, Clarence House Refurbishment	0	6	0	0
22	Corporate Projects	Contribution to Superfast Broadband	239,958	-	239,958	0
23	Corporate Projects	Disabled Facilities Grant	782,810	625,215	782,810	0
24	Corporate Projects	Dynamics	3,693,905	1,000,000	3,693,905	0
25	Corporate Projects	Equity Share Properties	250,000	-	250,000	0
26	Corporate Projects	Feasibility Studies	468,566	42,536	468,566	0
27	Corporate Projects	Growth Feasibility	1,481,151	6,904	1,481,151	0
28	Corporate Projects	Kimmerfields Compulsory purchase	0	12,899		0

Cost Centre	Updated Grouping	Scheme Name	16/17 Budget Remaining £	16-17 Actual Spend £	Projected Outturn for Report £	Projected Variance for Report £
29	Corporate Projects	Localities - buildings	64,186	-	64,186	0
30	Corporate Projects	Localities - IT element	188,642	-	188,642	0
31	Corporate Projects	Mechanics Institute	0	1,345		0
32	Corporate Projects	Museum Artefacts Storage	168,839	5,310	168,839	0
33	Corporate Projects	NWOW IT	123,703	-	123,703	0
34	Corporate Projects	Office Moves	350,000		350,000	0
35	Corporate Projects	Pollution Control - Borough Farms	26,368	-	26,368	0
36	Corporate Projects	Redevelopment of Dorcan House / Eldene Shopping Centre	367,542	31,262	367,542	0
37	Corporate Projects	Shaw Forest Park Restoration Works	0	3,475		0
38	Corporate Projects	SMAG	5,000,000	88,647	5,000,000	0
39	Corporate Projects	Stanton Park & Peatmore Reservoir Refurbishment	131,000	-	131,000	0
40	Corporate Projects	Strategic Acquisition (Aspen)	51,491	- 12,532	51,491	0
41	Corporate Projects	Stronger Together	169,065	38,188	169,065	0
42	Corporate Projects	Unit 2 Seymour Road	108,000	-	108,000	0
43	Corporate Projects	Waterside Depot - New Lift (DDA Requirement)	70,000	-	70,000	0
44	Corporate Projects	Waterside Depot - Proposed New Road Layout	2,188,379	1,188,079	2,188,379	0
45	Corporate Projects	Waterside Fleet Vehicles	4,474,628	1,146,412	4,474,628	0
46	Corporate Projects	Wellington Street	154,288	-	154,288	0
47	Corporate Projects	Wichelstowe - Development Expenses/Maintenance	0	281		0
48	Corporate Projects	Wichelstowe Infrastructure Expenditure	1,599,928	313,652	1,599,928	0
49	Corporate Projects	Wichelstowe J16 Improvements	9,736,338	686,779	12,600,000	2,863,662
50	Corporate Projects	Wichelstowe play area	28,600	-	28,600	0
51	Corporate Projects	Windmill Hill - Self Build	457,000	-	457,000	0
		Corporate Projects	37,960,602	5,791,359	40,824,264	2,863,662
52	HRA	Aids & Adaptations (was contingency)	1,300,122	313,064	1,300,122	0
53	HRA	Bathrooms	1,542,620	198,011	1,542,620	0
54	HRA	Brookfield, Highworth	90,000	-	90,000	0
55	HRA	Central heating	2,280,248	296,328	2,280,248	0

Cost Centre	Updated Grouping	Scheme Name	16/17 Budget Remaining £	16-17 Actual Spend £	Projected Outturn for Report £	Projected Variance for Report £
56	HRA	Contingent Major Repairs	50,863	27,250	50,863	0
57	HRA	Cranmore Ave, Park South	308,000	-	308,000	0
58	HRA	Electrics	1,075,475	604,976	1,075,475	0
59	HRA	Environmental & Communal Areas	419,544	8,386	419,544	0
60	HRA	Estate Rationalisation Project - Bulidings	0	4,915		0
61	HRA	Exceptional Extensive	9,957,460	156,770	9,957,460	0
62	HRA	External Walls	99,938	-	99,938	0
63	HRA	External/Entrance Doors	483,890	3,063	483,890	0
64	HRA	Hawthorn, Gorse Hill	382,000	-	382,000	0
65	HRA	Housing Options - Shared Living Accommodation	1,200,000	-	1,200,000	0
66	HRA	Improvements	486,187	80,868	486,187	0
67	HRA	Kitchens	2,851,324	676,485	2,851,324	0
68	HRA	Marlowe Ave Residention	0	192		0
69	HRA	Planned Maintenance	2,027,551	- 81,998	2,027,551	0
70	HRA	Regeneration and Acquisition Programme	1,486,395	696,615	1,486,395	0
71	HRA	Related assets	99,510	32,782	99,510	0
72	HRA	Roofs	1,926,146	514,590	1,926,146	0
73	HRA	Royal British Legion, Penhill	360,000	-	360,000	0
74	HRA	Scooter stores sheltered	314,078	-	314,078	0
75	HRA	Sussex Place	5,264,340	1,597,112	5,264,340	0
76	HRA	Townsend House	325,000	789,214	325,000	0
77	HRA	Windows.	797,972	- 156,547	797,972	0
		HRA Projects	35,128,661	5,756,967	35,128,661	0
78	S106	Broome Manor Lane/Marlborough Road Traffic Management	10,300	703	10,300	0
79	S106	Alexander Park	40,000	10,902	40,000	0
80	S106	Alley Gate Public Art	10,500	-	10,500	0
81	S106	Angel Ridge Play Area	28,008	-	28,008	0
82	S106	Bruce Street Bridges and Newcombe Drive	(1,800,205)	- 215,170		1,800,205

Cost Centre	Updated Grouping	Scheme Name	16/17 Budget Remaining £	16-17 Actual Spend £	Projected Outturn for Report £	Projected Variance for Report £
83	S106	Bus Service Improvements at Eldene Drive	16,500	-	16,500	0
84	S106	Catalint UK Ltd Blagrove	16,935	-	16,935	0
85	S106	County Ground Athletics Track Resurface and Clubhouse	253,000	8,380	253,000	0
86	S106	Croft School Highways Works	494,968	-	494,968	0
87	S106	Cycle Improvements at Dorcan Way / Eldene Drive	67,222	417	67,222	0
88	S106	Drove Rd / Upham Rd Junction	13,844	13,844	13,844	0
89	S106	East Wichel Major Open Space	385,367	19,320	385,367	0
90	S106	Enforcement of bus lanes at Mead	14,421	-	14,421	0
91	S106	Europa Business Park - Signage	25,554	-	25,554	0
92	S106	Even Swindon School - Highway Works	13,407	12,228	13,407	0
93	S106	Great Western Community Forest	486,352	428	486,352	0
94	S106	Green Spine	4,536	-	4,536	0
95	S106	Havelock Square - Public Realm	571,240	334,511	571,240	0
96	S106	Hesketh Crescent play area improvements	25,449	4,656	25,449	0
97	S106	Highdown Play Area	38,507	-	38,507	0
98	S106	Holy Cross School Safety Zone	14,089	2,652	14,089	0
99	S106	Incab monitoring for waste vehicles	53,000	-	53,000	0
100	S106	Kingsdown Crossroads	42,259	29	42,259	0
101	S106	Lawn Park - Improvements to High St Entrance	55,020	-	55,020	0
102	S106	Library IT infrastructure	84,752	-	84,752	0
103	S106	Mead Roundabout	1,128,970	-	1,128,970	0
104	S106	Moulden Country Park - Provision of Car Park	9,900	-	9,900	0
105	S106	Mouldon Hill Country Park	225,341	9,660	225,341	0
106	S106	NDA - Management of Protected Species Reserve	43,422	-	43,422	0
107	S106	New College 2001/02 Open Space and play area improvements	25,000	-	25,000	0
108	S106	North Star roundabout and Cocklebury Roundabout Great Western Way	3,464,940	-	1,664,735	(1,800,205)

Cost Centre	Updated Grouping	Scheme Name	16/17 Budget Remaining £	16-17 Actual Spend £	Projected Outturn for Report £	Projected Variance for Report £
109	S106	Pre-adoption maintenance period for playgrounds	57,424	-	57,424	0
110	S106	Relocation of CCTV room to Plus One	36,283	-	36,283	0
111	S106	St Francis - SSZ	19,680	3,292	19,680	0
112	S106	St Marks Recreation Ground	122,051	- 9,839	122,051	0
113	S106	STEAM - Operations & Retail Management System	39,000	-	39,000	0
114	S106	Thamesdown Drive Speed Amelioration	113,319	54,248	113,319	0
115	S106	The Street & Thames Ave - Pedestrian crossing	81,325	-	81,325	0
116	S106	Town Centre CCTV	0	1,088		0
117	S106	Transfer Bridges	3,474,207	- 300	3,474,207	0
118	S106	Tree and Landscape Improvements	20,300	-	20,300	0
119	S106	Wanborough Footpaths Upgrade	121,075	-	121,075	0
120	S106	Whitbourne / Fessy Renovations	36,000	-	36,000	0
121	S106	Whitworth Road safety scheme	130,000	82,964	130,000	0
122	S106	Wichelstowe Conservation Project	20,000	-	20,000	0
123	S106	Wichelstowe Off Site Landscape and Nature Conservation	177,689	10,782	177,689	0
124	S106	Wroughton War Memorial	71,926	9,259	71,926	0
125	S106	WW1 Memorial Restoration Project	30,000	-	30,000	0
		S106 Projects	10,412,877	352,964	10,412,877	0
126	Schools	Aiming High Short Breaks	1,565	1,098	1,565	0
127	Schools	Condition Works Identified within the Asset Management Plan	1,165,107	187,957	1,165,107	0
128	Schools	Crowdys Hill	3,021,658	1,326,216	3,021,658	0
129	Schools	Devolved Formula Capital		7,881	0	0
130	Schools	Disadvantaged 2-year Old's Nursery	217,888	-	217,888	0
131	Schools	Early Years places - Tick Tock Nursery - Mobile Replacement	96,800	- 1,000	96,800	0
132	Schools	Early Years provision - Grow 2gether dis-advantaged 2 Year Olds	100,000	-	100,000	0

Cost Centre	Updated Grouping	Scheme Name	16/17 Budget Remaining £	16-17 Actual Spend £	Projected Outturn for Report £	Projected Variance for Report £
133	Schools	Haydonleigh School expansion	138,185	-	50,000	(88,185)
134	Schools	Headlands School	509,464	-	509,464	0
135	Schools	North Swindon Primary School 1FE - Orchid Vale PFI Expansion	263,426	-	263,426	0
136	Schools	North Swindon Primary School 2FE - Tadpole Farm	101,129	-	0	(101,129)
137	Schools	Plas Pencelli Lodge Extension	167,000	- 573,206	167,000	0
138	Schools	Primary and Early Years provision to serve Commonhead development	3,203,500	-	3,203,500	0
139	Schools	Primary BESD	111,000	- 154,000	111,000	0
140	Schools	Primary Complex Needs SRP (Specialist Resource Provision)	636,500	-	636,500	0
141	Schools	Secondary School Places 1 - 6 FE by Sept 18	125,000	-	125,000	0
142	Schools	South Marston Primary School Expansion	3,176,550	500	46,000	(3,130,550)
143	Schools	St Lukes Special School	77,558	- 20,000	77,558	0
144	Schools	Swindon Academy - DFE Loan Repayment	745,189	383,000	745,189	0
145	Schools	Tadpole Farm Primary School	153,000	-	153,000	0
146	Schools	THE CIRCLE	0	36,393		0
147	Schools	Town Centre Primary School - Holy Cross 2FE	1,140,608	-	1,140,608	0
148	Schools	Westrop Expansion	127,500	60,416	127,500	0
149	Schools	Wichelstowe Primary School - Middle Wichel	153,000	-	153,000	0
		Schools	15,431,627	1,218,861	12,111,763	(3,319,864)
150	Social Care	ASC Equipment	386,441	8,080	386,441	0
151	Social Care	Assistive Technology	587,671	-	587,671	0
152	Social Care	Estate Rationalisation - CSS systems upgrade	538,481	-	538,481	0
153	Social Care	Extra care sheltered accommodation	111,945	-	111,945	0
154	Social Care	H&SC Joint Working Projects	616,997	27,000	616,997	0
155	Social Care	Housing Options - Shared Living Accommodation	60,000	-	60,000	0
156	Social Care	On line care assessment tool	25,500	-	25,500	0
157	Social Care	Wheelchairs & Other Equipment	2,456	-	2,456	0

Cost Centre	Updated Grouping	Scheme Name	16/17 Budget Remaining £	16-17 Actual Spend £	Projected Outturn for Report £	Projected Variance for Report £
		Social Care	2,329,491	35,080	2,329,491	0
158	Transport	Bus lane enforcement infrastructure	33,089	43,994	33,089	0
159	Transport	Car Parks - Major Maintenance of MSCP	309,865	41,040	309,865	0
160	Transport	Concrete Light Column replacement	107,898	-	107,898	0
161	Transport	Davis Place	255,518	-	255,518	0
162	Transport	Demolition of MSCP	0	36,310	85,000	85,000
163	Transport	Drainage Schemes	543,431	123,596	543,431	0
164	Transport	Footway Maintenance	610,000	28	610,000	0
165	Transport	Gateway signage (incl car park directions)	360,143	1,629	360,143	0
166	Transport	Great Stall Bridge	7,600,000	-	7,600,000	0
167	Transport	Highways Asset Management Grant Elements 1 and 2	105,050	47,865	105,050	0
168	Transport	Local Sustainable Transport Fund	1,182,301	- 87,323	1,182,301	0
169	Transport	Locality Schemes	0	44,412	0	0
170	Transport	LTP Bus Priority & Infrastructure	209,337	38,312	209,337	0
171	Transport	LTP Integrated - Traffic Management	481,210	24,721	481,210	0
172	Transport	LTP Maintenance	1,061,882	206,293	1,061,882	0
173	Transport	LTP Safety Schemes	172,863	158,260	172,863	0
174	Transport	LTP Sustainable Transport	203,955	750	203,955	0
175	Transport	NEV A420 Corridor	709,459	320	709,459	0
176	Transport	NEV Dft Business Case	118,080	- 37,442	118,080	0
177	Transport	NEV Greenbridge Roundabout	4,708,502	2,302,688	4,708,502	0
178	Transport	Non Highways Structures (bridges within parks etc.)	325,648	24,671	325,648	0
179	Transport	NON LTP Bridge Maintenance	116,957	-	116,957	0
180	Transport	NON LTP Maintenance	493,459	- 72,373	493,459	0
181	Transport	NON LTP Traffic Signals	158,236	249	158,236	0
182	Transport	Public Realm at Wyvern MSCP Site	48,393	6,040	48,393	0
183	Transport	Queens Drive Amelioration	0	567		0
184	Transport	Rights of way Improvement Plan	61,740	35,866	61,740	0
185	Transport	Rodbourn Lagoon	0	- 63,773		0

Cost Centre	Updated Grouping	Scheme Name	16/17 Budget Remaining £	16-17 Actual Spend £	Projected Outturn for Report £	Projected Variance for Report £
186	Transport	Southern Connector Road	11,600,000	83,782	11,600,000	0
187	Transport	Strategic Highways Model update (£200k/£200k/Nil)	53,791	- 14,168	53,791	0
188	Transport	Street Lighting	855,140	96,351	855,140	0
189	Transport	Street Lighting - NON LTP	0	-	0	0
190	Transport	Structural Maintenance	408,998	68,255	408,998	0
191	Transport	Town Gardens Footbridge	118,483	- 2,386	118,483	0
192	Transport	UNION SQUARE CAR PARK	357,047	38,745	357,047	0
193	Transport	West of A419 - Package 2	2,000,000	-	2,000,000	0
194	Transport	White Hart Junction	22,500,000	20,915	22,500,000	0
195	Transport	Wroughton Park and Ride bus entrance Traffic Signals Removal and other entry modifications	113,250	16,030	113,250	0
	Transport	57,983,725	3,247,431	58,068,725	85,000	
	Total	161,150,152	16,572,314	160,778,950	(371,202)	

Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7 December 2016

Author: Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
Interim Corporate Director, Resources

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out the mid-year Treasury Management performance for 2016/17 and proposals for amendments to the Councils Minimum Revenue Policy.
- 1.2 The effective management of financial resources through robust financial management processes underpins the Council's ability to achieve its plans and priorities.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the mid-year Treasury Management performance;
- 2.2 Recommend the amendment to the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, as set out in Appendix 1, for approval by Full Council on 26 January 2017

3. Detail

- 3.1 The CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice recommends that Treasury Management performance is reported at least twice a year. This report sets out the mid-year performance for the Council to the end of September 2016.
- 3.2 The Council is involved in two types of treasury activity, both of which are affected by the economic environment:
 - 3.2.1 Borrowing long-term for capital investment purposes, and short-term for temporary cash flow purposes;
 - 3.2.2 Investment of surplus cash.
- 3.3 The performance in respect of each of these two activities is summarised below.

Borrowing
- 3.4 There has been no new long term borrowing (loans with a maturity of greater than a year) in the first 6 months of this financial year.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Burbidge on Direct Dial No. 464384 or Email iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk

Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7 December 2016

- 3.5 In addition to long-term borrowing, the Council also undertakes short-term borrowing in order to smooth out peaks and troughs in its daily cash flow. As at the 30th September 2016, the Council had £12m of short-term borrowing running at an average rate of 0.39%. It should be emphasised that as short-term borrowing is undertaken in respect of daily cash flow activities, this figure can fluctuate significantly from day to day dependent on income received or payments due out.
- 3.6 The Council's total long-term debt decreased from £285.8m on 31st March 2016 to £285.0m as at 30th September 2016 as a small element of loans matured and were not replaced. The overall long-term borrowing rate remains at 3.53%.
- 3.7 The Council's average rate on all debt (both long term and short term) for the year to 30th September 2016 is 3.41%, which is a slight increase from 3.39% at the end of the previous financial year.
- 3.8 There is a significant long-term borrowing requirement to fund the underlying capital programme and loans will be taken out as and when officers deem rates to be advantageous. It is currently still financially advantageous for the Council to fund capital expenditure from using internal cash balances as opposed to new external loans.

Investments - Lending

- 3.9 As at the 30th September 2016, investments stood at £77.2m running at an average rate of 1.48%.
- 3.10 There are three main categories of investment:
- 3.10.1 Liquid Investments – investments that are instantly accessible and are used primarily to smooth the peaks and troughs in the Council's daily cash flow. These include money market funds, instant access accounts and any balances in our own bank account. The average balance on these funds was £19m over the first 6 months of the year achieving an average investment rate of 0.40%.
- 3.10.2 Fixed Term investments – these are locked in for a specific period of time and therefore gain the maximum return (once security and liquidity have been ensured using the Council's creditworthiness parameters.) These investments are made with banks for a fixed term up to 2 years. The average balance of these investments over the first 6 months was £43.2m, achieving an average rate of 0.90% comparing favourably with the benchmark 3 Month LIBOR rate of 0.51%.
- 3.10.3 Local Authority Property Fund ("LAPF") - £15m is invested in this fund and the average rate of return on this investment so far is 4.54 %.

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Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7 December 2016

- 3.10.4 The LAPF gives local authorities an exposure to a diversified portfolio of commercial property throughout the UK and its objectives are to generate long-term growth in capital and an attractive income over time (5 years or more). The trustees of the fund are the Local Authorities' Mutual Investment Trust (LAMIT) a body controlled by representatives of the Local Government Association, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee and investors in the Fund.
- 3.11 The standard comparator for investment performance for portfolios similar to ours is the 3 Month LIBOR rate, which for the year to 30th September 2016 stood at 0.51%. The Council exceeded this rate with an average return on its investments over the 6 month period of 0.75% on an average investment balance of £62.2m. (Excluding the property fund)
- 3.12 The Council's debt and investment position as at 30th September 2016 compared with 31st March 2016 is shown in the table below:

Analysis of Debt and Investments

Debt & Investments	31/03/2016		30/09/2016	
	£'000	Rate (%)	£'000	Rate (%)
Long Term Debt PWLB	240,757	3.54%	240,007	3.54%
Long Term Debt Market	45,000	3.43%	45,000	3.43%
Total Long Term Debt	285,757	3.53%	285,007	3.53%
Short-term Borrowing	7,680	0.46%	12,000	0.39%
Total Debt	293,437	3.39%	297,007	3.41%
Investments	(59,000)	1.36%	(77,200)	1.48%
Net Borrowing Position	234,437		219,807	

Compliance with Treasury Limits

- 3.13 During the 2016/17 Financial Year to date, all Treasury activity has been carried out within the Council's Treasury limits and Prudential Indicators, as set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

Proposed Changes to Minimum Revenue Policy

- 3.14 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is statutory requirement to make a charge to the Council's General Fund to make provision for the repayment of the Council's borrowing liabilities (past capital debt and other credit liabilities such as PFI)

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Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7 December 2016

- 3.15 The scheme of MRP was set out in former regulations 27, 28 and 29 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 ("The 2003 Regulations"). This system was radically revised in 2008 by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008, which shifted the emphasis from regulations to guidance. The new system and accompanying guidance replaced the prescriptive MRP calculation with a statutory duty "to determine for the current financial year an amount of MRP which it considers to be prudent" and in doing so to "have regard" to the guidance and recommendations within it. The key principle is that an authority's debt liability should be repaid over a similar period to that which the asset associated with the capital expenditure provides benefits or, in the case of borrowing supported by Revenue Support Grant, in-line with the period implicit in the determination of that grant (i.e. 4% p.a.). The guidance sets out four options that are consistent with this principle. Local authorities are asked by the Secretary of State "to prepare an annual statement of their policy on making MRP for submission to their full Council".
- 3.16 The type of approach intended by the MRP guidance is clearly to enable local circumstances and discretion to play a part, as the guidance in general contains a set of recommendations rather than representing a prescriptive process. The guidance makes it clear that councils can follow an alternative approach, provided they still make a prudent provision.
- 3.17 Officers have reviewed the Council's current approach in consultation with the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Capita Asset Services, and make the following recommendations:-

The annuity method for unsupported borrowing

- 3.18 For all unsupported borrowing, a change from the 'straight line method' to the 'annuity method' - one of the options set out in the Guidance – is recommended in place of the straight-line charge currently applied across the asset life.
- 3.19 The annuity method results in a back loaded charge and results in savings in earlier years, with higher costs in later years. It makes provision for an annual charge to the General Fund which, unlike the current Straight Line method, takes account of the time value of money (whereby paying £100 in 10 years' time is less of a burden than paying £100 now). The schedule of charges produced by the annuity method thus results in a consistent charge over an asset's life, taking into account the real value of the annual charges when they fall due.
- 3.20 It is proposed that the annuity method is applied to all unsupported borrowing incurred going forwards and from 2016/17 onwards, over the remaining life, for unsupported borrowing expenditure incurred prior to 2016/17.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Burbidge on Direct Dial No. 464384 or Email iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk

Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7 December 2016

- 3.21 It is also proposed that the annuity method is applied retrospectively for all unsupported borrowing incurred since April 2008 when the 2008 regulations and guidance were brought in.

PFI – annuity method over asset life

- 3.22 The Annual Unitary Charge (“U/C”) payment for the Council’s schools PFI is split into a services element and a finance lease element (representing the debt finance for the buildings). The Council charges MRP on the asset (in line with how it would treat any capital expenditure financed from borrowing) and this is currently provided at the amount equivalent to the finance element of the U/C. The U/C is funded fully through schools/council contributions and government grant so currently there is no real revenue impact of charging MRP in this way.
- 3.23 MRP on the Council’s PFI project is currently provided for on the basis of the contract life through to 2032. This is inconsistent with how the Council provides for MRP on other buildings financed from borrowing as MRP is currently provided for these assets on the basis of their expected asset life, typically 50 years. The PFI contract specifies that the buildings were designed with a 60 year asset life to 2065, an additional 33 years beyond the existing contract expiry date.
- 3.24 It is proposed that from 2016/17 MRP relating to PFI schemes is charged by using the annuity method over the remaining useful economic lives of assets. This would mean that MRP better matches the life of the assets associated with the debt liability arising from the contract, in accordance with the main principles of the MRP guidance, and is consistent with the Council’s proposed treatment for all other unsupported capital expenditure.

Use of capital receipts to fund PFI liability repayment

- 3.25 Regulation 23 of the 2003 Regulations, introduced via Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 3146, provides that capital receipts can be used “to meet any liability in respect of credit arrangements, other than any liability which, in accordance with proper practices, must be charged to a revenue account”.
- 3.26 The finance repayment element of the U/C is a “liability in respect of a credit arrangement” and therefore could be funded through using capital receipts rather than revenue funding. At the time of writing, £600k of non-ring-fenced capital receipts had been identified, which could be used to repay the debt liability in lieu of an equivalent amount of MRP, which would release an equivalent amount of revenue funding.

Financial Implications of change to MRP policy

- 3.27 The impact of the proposed changes to the MRP policy, if all changes were made, is shown in the table below. These are indicative and will be finalised as
-

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Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7 December 2016

part of the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts process, which is also subject to external audit. Consideration will also be given as to how these savings will be taken into account with the budget position.

Policy change	Indicative Saving 2016/17 (£'000)	Indicative saving 2017/18 (£'000)	Indicative saving 2018/19 (£'000)	Indicative saving 2019/20 (£'000)	Indicative saving 2020/21 (£'000)
Change to Annuity method for unsupported borrowing from 2016/17	2,652	2,568	2,485	2,406	2,323
Annuity method for unsupported borrowing backdated to 2008	1,538	2,196	2,164	2,084	2,025
Annuity method for PFI MRP on asset life basis	565	700	856	1,032	1,230
Sub-total annual recurring savings	4,755	5,464	5,505	5,522	5,578
One off - use of estimated capital receipts to fund PFI repayment	800est	800est	n/k	n/k	n/k
Total potential recurring and one-off	5,555	6,264	5,505	5,522	5,578

3.28 Appendix 1 details the current MRP policy as well as the proposed revised policy

4. Alternative Options

4.1 Any alternative options for specific areas are set out within the report.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 These have been reflected in the body of the report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Burbidge on Direct Dial No. 464384 or Email iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk

Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2016-17

Cabinet

Date: 7 December 2016

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no such direct implications.

Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA)

- 5.4 There is no impact on DIA associated with management of the Councils cash balances.

Risk Management

- 5.5 There are no direct risks arising from this report.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Interim Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Revised minimum Revenue Provision Policy.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a key decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for September 2016.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Burbidge on Direct Dial No. 464384 or Email iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 1 - Proposed changes to the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

1. Swindon Borough Council's Current MRP policy

Since 2007, Swindon Borough Council has adopted the following policy as prescribed by previous statutory guidance:

- For capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 or which in the future will be Supported Capital Expenditure, the MRP will be based on the CFR. This option provides for an approximate 4% reduction in the borrowing need (CFR) each year.
- From 1 April 2008 for all unsupported borrowing the MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, in accordance with the regulations. MRP charges commence in the first year after the asset becomes operational.
- MRP in relation to capital expenditure funded through borrowing incurred on the Wichelstowe project, will be deferred and the liability repaid through future capital receipts from the site. Should there be a shortfall between the debt and eventual receipts, the balance will incur an annual MRP charge.
- This methodology will also be applied to other capital expenditure funded from borrowing where there is an intention to repay the borrowing from future receipts and where there is a strong likelihood that this will happen”
- No revenue charge is currently required for the HRA, although the existing voluntary policy is to repay £5m per annum
- For finance leases and “on Balance Sheet” PFI contracts, the MRP requirement is met by a charge equal to the element of the unitary charge applied to write down the liability.

2. Proposed MRP policy for 2016/17 onwards

- For capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 or which in the future will be Supported Capital Expenditure, the MRP will be based on the CFR as per the regulatory method in the MRP guidance. This option provides for an approximate 4% reduction in the borrowing need (CFR) each year.
- From 1 April 2008 for all unsupported borrowing the MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, on an annuity basis, in accordance with the regulations. Annuity method charges will be calculated using the relevant PWLB annuity rates for the estimated asset lives as at 31st March in the year of expenditure. MRP charges commence the year after the asset becomes operational.
- MRP in relation to capital expenditure funded through borrowing incurred on the Wichelstowe project, will be deferred and the liability repaid through future

capital receipts from the site. Should there be a shortfall between the debt and eventual receipts, the balance will incur an annual MRP charge.

- This methodology will also be applied to other capital expenditure funded from borrowing where there is an intention to repay the borrowing from future receipts and where there is a strong likelihood that this will happen.
- For PFI contracts MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, on an annuity basis, in accordance with the regulations. Annuity method charges will be calculated based on the PWLB annuity rates at 31st March in the year that the assets became operational.
- Where non-ring-fenced capital receipts are available, these can be applied to meet the cost of PFI liability repayment (or part thereof). Where capital receipts are applied in this manner, the MRP charge for the PFI would be reduced by an equal amount in that year.
- For any future finance leases the MRP requirement would be met by a charge equal to the element of the charge applied to write down the liability.
- No revenue charge is currently required for the HRA, although the existing voluntary policy is to repay £5m per annum.

Polling District and Places Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author:	Leader of the Council Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	Blunsdon and Highworth, Covingham & Dorcan, Eastcott, Gorse Hill & Pinehurst, Rodbourne Cheney, St Andrews and St Margaret and South Marston.
Locality Affected:	North East, Town Centre, North Central, North, East
Parishes Affected:	Highworth and Stratton St Margaret

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To undertake a review of polling places within the wards of Eastcott and Rodbourne Cheney, to adjust the polling district boundaries within the Blunsdon & Highworth and Stratton & South Marston wards and to create new polling districts in Covingham & Dorcan, Gorse Hill & Pinehurst and St Andrews wards.
- 1.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner, Borough Elections and European Referendum earlier this year highlighted that some venues were either no longer suitable for use as polling stations or were unavailable for use at future elections.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to request the Council to:

- 2.1 Endorse the recommended changes to Polling Places within the Borough as follows:
 - 2.1.1 Blunsdon & Highworth Ward - that an adjustment to the polling district boundary for electoral registers BHH and BHF be made and the streets listed in Appendix 1a are moved from electoral register BHH to BHF.
 - 2.1.2 Eastcott Ward - that the polling place for electoral register ETC relocate to Savernake Street Social Hall from King William Street Primary School.
 - 2.1.3 Rodbourne Cheney Ward - that the polling place for electoral register RCC relocate to St Andrews Church Hall from Rodbourne Cheney Primary School.
 - 2.1.4 St Margaret and South Marston Ward - that an adjustment to the polling district boundary for electoral registers SMA and SMB be made and the streets listed in Appendix 4a are moved from electoral register SMA to SMB.
 - 2.1.5 Covingham & Dorcan – that a new polling district CDE be created and the streets listed in Appendix 5 be moved from electoral register CDC to CDE.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Sally Sprason*
Direct dial 3999 or email ssprason@swindon.gov.uk

Polling District and Places Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

- 2.1.6 Gorse Hill & Pinehurst ward - that a new polling district GPF be created and the streets listed in Appendix 6 be moved from electoral register GPA to GPF.
- 2.1.7 St Andrews - that a new polling district SAE be created and the streets listed in Appendix 7 be moved from electoral registers BHC and SAD to SAE.
- 2.2 Note that the Director of Law and Democratic Services (as Returning Officer) will implement the proposed changes for future Borough, Parish and Parliamentary elections.

3. Detail

Blunsdon and Highworth Ward

- 3.1 Electors on the BHH & BHF registers currently vote at Highworth Community Rooms (BHF electorate total 1,658) and Highworth Community Centre (BHH electorate total 2,076).
- 3.2 Following the elections in 2016 a number of complaints were received from electors in specific areas stating that the Community Centre was not a convenient polling station. They stated that the Community Rooms were much closer and provided easier access and a more convenient polling station, and they therefore requested the polling station be changed to the Community Rooms.
- 3.3 Ward members were consulted and supported the proposed change. It is therefore recommended that the BHH and BHF polling district boundary be adjusted to move the following streets from BHH to BHF:

Cherry Orchard; Downs View; Orange Close; Queens Ave; Turnpike Road and Vorda Road

This will result in the new electorate totals of BHF (2,133) and BHH (1601). See Appendix 1 for a map and Appendix 1a for a street list showing the proposed adjustment to the polling district boundary for BHF and BHH.

Eastcott Ward

- 3.4 The ETC register in Eastcott Ward (electorate of 2,399) currently vote at King William Street Primary School. Using the school as a polling station does mean that the school has to close on polling day which causes considerable difficulties for the school and parents. The Elections Team do try to avoid using schools where there is an alternative suitable premises available. Savernake Street Social Hall has been identified as a polling place within the polling district. Contact has been made with the owners who are happy for us to use the

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Polling District and Places Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

premises. There is a large room with good disabled access and car parking making it suitable to use as a polling station.

- 3.5 Ward councillors have been consulted prompting a mixed response to the proposal. One Councillor felt there was a historical usage of the school but was happy to support the change. Another Councillor suggested the Moose Hall as an alternative location, we have written to them but to date have not received a response. As an attempt is always made to use locations other than schools, due to the disruption a whole school closure creates; the recommendation is that the polling place should be moved from King William Street School to Savernake Street Social Hall. See Appendix 2 for a map of ETC showing the current and proposed polling place.

Rodbourne Cheney Ward

- 3.6 The RCC register (electorate of 2,977) currently vote at Rodbourne Cheney Primary School. However, feedback received from the school, the school's Parent Teacher Association and parents after elections in 2016 was that the use of the school as a polling station caused significant difficulties and disruption as the school needs to close on polling day. Again as an attempt is always made to use locations other than schools St Andrews Church Hall has been identified as a polling place within the polling district. Contact has been made with the owners who are happy for us to use the premises. The premises has been inspected and will provide a large hall with good disabled access and car parking making it suitable to use as a polling station.
- 3.7 During the consultation period the local MP and a ward member confirmed that they were in support of the proposal, no comments were received from the other ward members. Therefore, it is recommended that the polling place be moved from Rodbourne Cheney Primary School to St Andrews Church Hall. See Appendix 3 for a map for RCC showing the current and proposed polling place.

St Margarets and South Marston Ward

- 3.8 The SMA and SMB registers currently vote at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (SMA electorate total 2,867) and Grange Leisure Centre (SMB electorate total 2,766). Feedback received from some electors in SMA after the elections in 2,016 stated that they had difficulty in accessing the polling station at the church as it was too far for them to walk. The Grange Leisure polling station was much nearer and provided easier access and, therefore they requested that the polling station be changed.
- 3.9 The local MP and ward members were consulted on the proposed changes and the responses received supported the change. Therefore it is recommended that the boundary be adjusted to move the following streets from SMA to SMB:
- Blake Crescent; Church Street; Ermin Street (Nos. 73 to 289); Hatherall Close;

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Direct dial 3999 or email ssprason@swindon.gov.uk

Polling District and Places Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Kenwin Close; Park Street; Slaters Orchard; St Margarets Green; Walnut Tree Close; and Watermead

This will result in the new electorate totals of SMA (1,890) and SMB (3,743). See Appendix 4 for a map and Appendix 4a for a street list showing the proposed adjustment to the polling district boundary for SMA and SMB.

Covingham and Dorcan Ward

- 3.10 As a result of the recent Community Governance Review it is recommended that a polling district CDE be created and the following streets be moved from CDC to CDE:

Avocet Close; Bullfinch Close; Firecrest View; Hawfinch Close; Mallard Close; Moorhen Close; Nuthatch Close; Owl Close; Pheasant Close

This will result in the new electorate totals of CDC (2,887) and CDE (436) and the polling place for electoral register CDE will be St Pauls Church, St Pauls Drive, Covingham. See Appendix 5 for a street list of CDE.

Gorse Hill & Pinehurst Ward

- 3.11 As a result of the recent Community Governance Review it is recommended that a polling district GPF be created and the following streets be moved from GPA to GPF:

Claremont Court; Eastville Road; Haydon View Road; Mendip Close; Orchard Close; Sunningdale Road; Whitworth Road (Nos. 68-114 evens)

This will result in the new electorate totals of GPA (2,682) and GPF (358) and the polling place for electoral register GPF will be Pinetrees Community Centre, The Circle, Pinehurst. See Appendix 6 for a street list of GPF.

St Andrews Ward

- 3.12 As a result of the recent Community Governance Review it is recommended that a polling district SAE be created and properties be moved from BHC and SAD to SAE.

BHC to SAE:

The Cottage, Tadpole Farm and Flats 1&2 and the Annex, Tadpole Cottages

SAD to SAE:

Bluebell House, Tadpole Mews; and Primrose House, Tadpole Mews; and Orchard House, Tadpole Mews

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Sally Sprason*
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Polling District and Places Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

This will result in the new electorate totals of BHC (1467), SAD (3300) and SAE (8) and the polling place for electoral register SAE will be Redhouse Community Centre, Frankel Way, Redhouse. See Appendix 7 for a street list of SAE.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 A number of options have been considered in the report. No other options have been put forward by interested parties.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The cost of the alternative polling places will be approximately

5.1.1 Savernake Street Social Hall (ETC) £192

5.1.2 St Andrews Church Hall (RCC) £160

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights implications have been taken fully into account in the preparation of this Briefing Note and it is believed the recommendations are compatible with Convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 No other specific implications were identified during the preparation of this report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed in relation to this report. Good practice has been implemented through good and appropriate consultation in relation to all proposals. Good inclusion practice has been implemented when considering changes in polling venues to ensure they are accessible for voters. This demonstrates our duty to advance equality of opportunity.

Risk Management

- 5.5 Risks were considered when looking at the possibility of moving to an alternative polling place. It is believed there are no unmitigated risks. For example new polling places were visited and assessed regarding their suitability for use as a polling station.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Sally Sprason*
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Polling District and Places Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

6.2 The two Members of Parliament for Swindon North and Swindon South have both been consulted.

6.3 Relevant Ward Councillors have been consulted.

6.4 The Parish Councils were consulted on initial suggestions and interim recommendations.

7. Background Papers

7.1 None.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – map for BHF.

8.2 Appendix 1a- street list for BHF.

8.3 Appendix 2 - map for ETC.

8.4 Appendix 3 - map for RCC.

8.5 Appendix 4 – map for SMB.

8.6 Appendix 4a- street list for SMB.

8.7 Appendix 5- street list for CDE

8.8 Appendix 6 – street list for GHF

8.9 Appendix 7 – street list for SAE

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

9.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for October 2016.



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Appendix 1a

List of Streets to be moved from BHH to BHF:

Cherry Orchard

Downs View

Orange Close

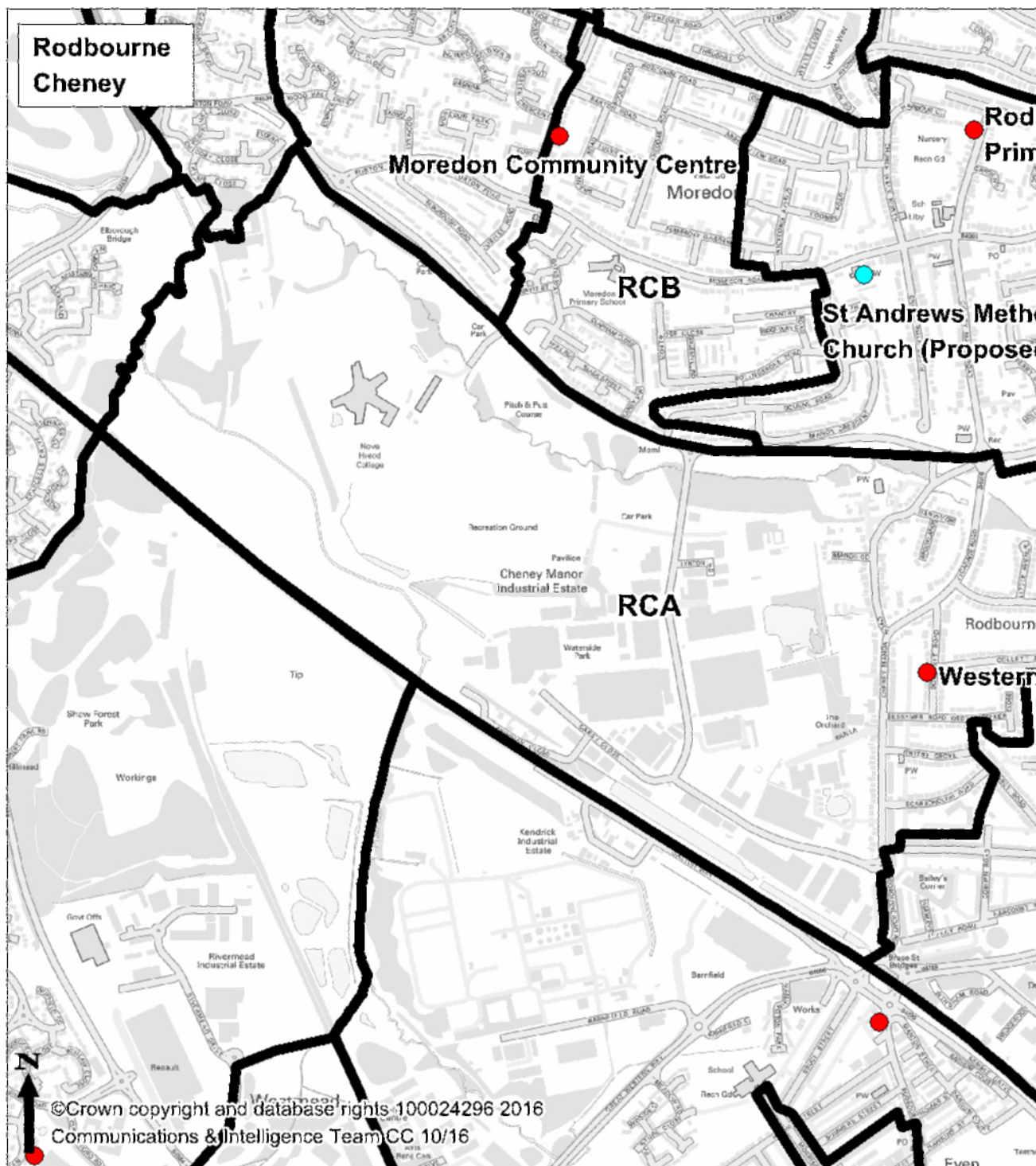
Queens Ave

Turnpike Road

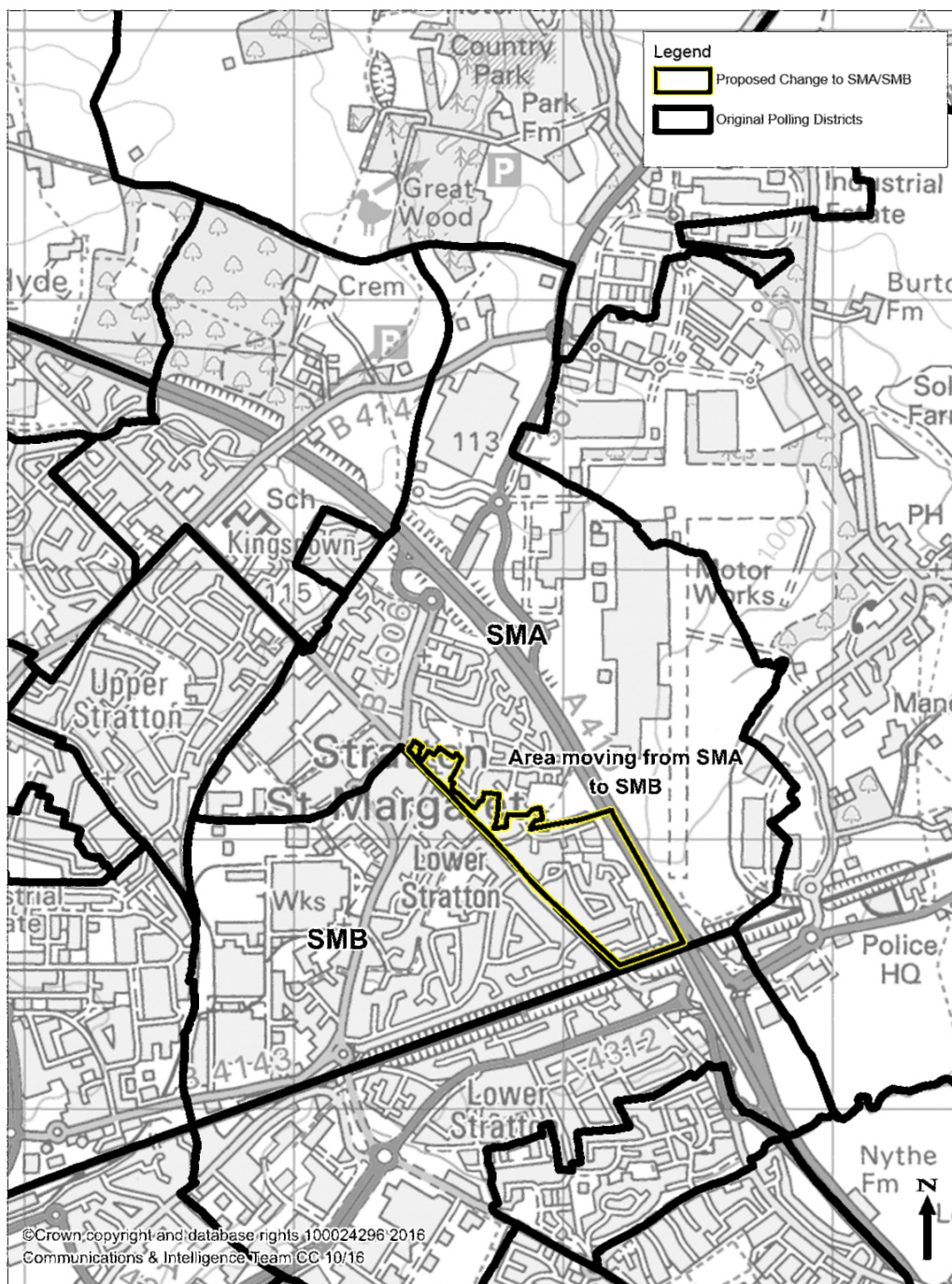
Vorda Road

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Appendix 4a

List of Streets to be moved from SMA to SMB:

Blake Crescent

Church Street

Ermin Street (Nos. 73 to 289)

Hatherall Close

Kenwin Close

Park Street

Slaters Orchard

St Margarets Green

Walnut Tree Close

Watermead

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List of Streets to be moved from CDC to CDE:

Avocet Close

Bullfinch Close

Firecrest View

Hawfinch Close

Mallard Close

Moorhen Close

Nuthatch Close

Owl Close

Pheasant Close

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Appendix 6

List of Streets to be moved from GPA to GPF:

Claremont Court

Deatsville Road

Haydon View Road

Mendip Close

Orchard Close

Sunningdale Road

Whitworth Road (Nos. 68-114 evens)

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List of Streets to be moved from BHC and SAD to SAE:

BHC to SAE:

The Cottage, Tadpole Farm

Flats 1&2 and the Annex, Tadpole Cottages

SAD to SAE:

Bluebell House, Tadpole Mews

Primrose House, Tadpole Mews

Orchard House, Tadpole Mews

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School Organisational Changes for September 2017

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author: Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Head of Education Services

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The report sets out the legal processes required to make organisational changes to maintained mainstream and special schools and requests permission to consult on proposals to lower the age range and a proposal to increase the admission number across seven schools in Swindon.
- 1.2 The report sets out the preferred options and timescales for consultation in order for the proposals to be implemented by September 2017 subject to consultation.
- 1.3 This report supports the Priority Two of the Vision to "Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places" and in specifically pledge 15 "in addition to two new Free secondary schools, build one secondary and 12 primary schools to meet the needs of our increasing population".

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Authorise the Head of Education to consult on proposals to make the following school organisational changes from September 2017:
 - 2.1.1 To lower the age range of Abbey Meads Primary School from 4-11 years to 2-11 years,
 - 2.1.2 To lower the age range of Chiseldon Primary School from 4-11 years to 2-11 years,
 - 2.1.3 To lower the age range of Even Swindon Primary School from 3-11 years to 2-11 years,
 - 2.1.4 To lower the age range of Lawn Primary School from 4-11 year to 2-11 years,
 - 2.1.5 To lower the age range of Westrop Primary School from 4-11 years to 2-11 years,
 - 2.1.6 To lower the age of the Eldene Primary School Special Resource Provision (SRP) from 7-11 years to 6-10 years, and

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Gareth Cheal, Direct Dial 01793 465802, gcheal@swindon.gov.uk.

School Organisational Changes for September 2017

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

2.1.7 To increase the admission number at Brimble Hill Special School from 70 to 77 places.

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 It is the statutory duty of the Local Authority to ensure sufficient school places and sufficient early years provision. In order to carry out that duty the Local Authority is proposing a number of changes to school provision to ensure a greater level of access to provision and to ensure children are receiving education in quality provision.
- 3.2 The proposals in the report below are in relation to an increase of early years provision in school settings and changes to how special education needs places are organised at two special settings.

Early Years

- 3.3 Across the Borough, the early year's education and childcare places are provided by a total of 254 small and large nursery chains, independent nurseries, preschools, maintained primary schools and childminders.
- 3.4 At present, there are 22 maintained primary schools delivering early years education for 3 and 4 year olds across the Borough. Of these, 4 schools also deliver 2 year old funded education.
- 3.5 It is acknowledged by Ofsted that a primary school which also has a nursery provision achieves better outcomes for children; The Chief Inspector of Schools, Sir Michael Wilshaw, noted in his 2012 -13 annual report that 'It is widely accepted that progress in early years for children from low income backgrounds depends on attendance in the highest quality settings. The only early education provision that is at least as strong, or even stronger, in deprived areas compared with wealthier areas is nursery schools.'
- 3.6 Furthermore, a direct recommendation of the report was that 'the Government should promote the expansion of nursery schools into those local areas where they are not currently present – in particular disadvantaged areas - to raise quality and improve outcomes both through direct provision of places, and system leadership of the local early years sector.' It was also a recommendation that where a nursery school was established then 'It should be a priority to make the best possible use of the maintained nursery schools to deliver 2-year-old places, in preference to lower quality settings.'
- 3.7 A recent report by Save the Children 'How England's nursery lottery is failing too many children' states that children who benefit from high quality childcare start school on average around three months ahead in their literacy and language skills compared with children who attend low quality settings. These children are

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Gareth Cheal, Direct Dial 01793 465802, gcheal@swindon.gov.uk.

School Organisational Changes for September 2017

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

20% more likely than children who go to low quality settings to get 5 A*-C GCSE's and earn more as adults. Multiple studies show that having highly qualified staff is the biggest indicator of childcare quality. Studies consistently show that the presence of a trained teacher and staff with relevant degree level qualifications in nurseries brings an added impact for a child's early learning and development, particularly for those growing up in poverty.

- 3.8 Swindon Borough Council is keen to respond to the recommendations made by both reports by encouraging more primary schools to establish their own maintained nursery classes to include 2, 3 and 4 year old's which in turn will mean more children are able to access high quality provision with a qualified teacher, improving their outcomes throughout life.
- 3.9 There are five schools proposing to lower their age range;
- 3.9.1 Chiseldon Primary School graded 'Good' by Ofsted in November 2014. The school currently operates a maintained nursery provision from both the school site itself, and from the former Bright Start Nursery premises. The decision to temporarily lower the age range, following consultation conducted by the schools Governing Body, was made by Cabinet Member for Children's Services following briefing note dated 12th August 2016 for a period of 12 months.
- 3.9.2 Abbeymeads Community Primary School graded 'Good' by Ofsted in September 2014. At the site Little Scholars, a PVI setting is currently leasing premises and operating early years provision on the school site for 3 and 4 year old children. Little Scholars are aware of the schools intention and will be supported by the early years commissioning team to seek premises elsewhere. A full terms notice to end on the last day of the academic year will be formally given to the preschool, as per the terms of their lease. This will give the school the required premises to open their own maintained nursery provision, with a view to expanding in the future.
- 3.9.3 Lawn Primary School graded 'Good' by Ofsted July 2012. At the site, Lawn preschool currently leases premises and operates early year's provision for 3 and 4 year old children. Lawn preschool committee have made the recommendation to parents for amalgamation with the school from September 2016. The parents have voted in favour.
- 3.9.4 Westrop Primary School graded 'Good' by Ofsted July 2012. Highworth preschool currently leases premises and operates early years provision on the school site for 2, 3 and 4 year old children. Highworth preschool is aware of the schools intentions and will be offered support by the early years commissioning team to seek premises elsewhere. Highworth preschool has no formal lease agreement to occupy space at Westrop Primary School, however will be given notice to the end of an academic

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Gareth Cheal, Direct Dial 01793 465802, gcheal@swindon.gov.uk.

School Organisational Changes for September 2017

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

school year to cause minimal disruption for families and offer a smooth transition for those families wishing to take up places at the proposed maintained nursery provision.

- 3.9.5 Even Swindon Primary School graded 'Good' by Ofsted November 2014. The current age range of the school is 3-11; however, Even Swindon does have provision for 2 year olds, but this hasn't been through a formal process to establish. The school would like to retrospectively lower their age range to ensure these 2-year old children to become part of the maintained provision and school pupil numbers.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

- 3.10 For pupils with a Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) that requires an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and specialist provision, there are six special schools and fifteen special resource provisions (SRP), which are attached to mainstream schools.
- 3.11 As reported to Cabinet in September 2014, Swindon has a high proportion of specialist provision compared to other Local Authorities and a high percentage of pupils with an EHCP (Cabinet Minute 30, 2014/15 refers).
- 3.12 There is a growing need for additional specialist provision as a consequence of a growing town and a secondary Free School was approved in September for 70 pupils and another Free School application is under consideration by the Department for Education. It is expected that the outcome of the second special Free School will be announced in February/March 2017.
- 3.13 In parallel to the Free School process, the Local Authority is proposing changes to 2 settings specifically for pupils with SEND as follows:
- 3.13.1 Brimble Hill Primary Special School, which has an admission number of 70 for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). However, in recent years the school has been able to flex the intake to accommodate 77 pupils as an increase is permitted within a 10% limit. There is still demand for this high level of specialist provision in Swindon and the school has a waiting list. Therefore, the proposal is to increase the admission number to 77 and allow flexibility for the school to admit up to 84 pupils within the 10% threshold if necessary.
- 3.13.2 Eldene Primary School SRP offers and additional 10 places for children with a range of needs aged between 7 to 11 (KS2). The SRP enables children to access a range of specialist support whilst still accessing and being included in a mainstream school environment. At present a number of children are placed at the SRP late in KS2, before transferring to secondary which gives Eldene very little time to introduce measures or

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School Organisational Changes for September 2017

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

support to try and reintegrate children back into mainstream. This late inclusion means that the children don't get the maximum benefit of the SRP placement and so progress is limited. Therefore, there is a pathway that usually ends up with additional children in secondary aged Special Schools which could have been avoided. These children have often struggled to learn in their mainstream classroom without specialist support, resulting in slow rates of progress, and a negative effect on their social and emotional well-being.

- 3.13.3 Commissioners have identified a requirement for a lower age range at Eldene SRP within the same number of places. This will enable earlier intervention in a child's school life. This will give the opportunity for children after a period of time in the SRP to be reintegrated back into their catchment mainstream primary. If this isn't appropriate they would then transfer for Y6 to a primary class attached as the SRP would have a maximum year group of Y5. An alternative placement in mainstream or a special primary school can be identified early and the transition planned.

Next Steps

- 3.14 The Department for Education have stated in their statutory guidance titled 'Making prescribed alternations to maintained schools' that local authorities must consult for a minimum period of 4 weeks when proposing permanent lowering of an age range by up to 2 years.
- 3.15 The proposed timeline and key dates are as follows;

Expected date	Action
Monday 12 th December 2016	Consultation with stakeholders begins
Friday 20 th January 2017	Consultation with stakeholders ends. A 6 week period has been allowed for to take into account the Christmas period to allow a full 4 weeks of consultation during school term time.
February 2017	Report circulated detailing consultation analysis for each proposal
March 2017	Cabinet panel for school organisation to make final decision regarding each individual recommendation, based on feedback of report.
End of March 2017	Schools notified of outcome of consultation

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Gareth Cheal, Direct Dial 01793 465802, gcheal@swindon.gov.uk.

School Organisational Changes for September 2017

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

September 2017	Changes come into effect (subject to final decision)
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- 3.16 Consultation would take place in the form of an online survey, which would be documented online as part of the Swindon Borough Council's consultation, engagement and survey page. This survey would be promoted directly through the schools that are part of this process and via Swindon Borough Council social media accounts. A public notice would also be posted in the Swindon Advertiser.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The alternative option is not to proceed with consultation on these options. However, not proceeding on the range of proposals would mean places could not be created. This could affect the Council's responsibility to ensure sufficient provision and in the case of Brimble Hill could lead to high cost in securing alternative specialist provision outside of the Borough.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 Early education and childcare places are funded by the Department for Education through the early year's block of the Dedicated Schools Grant on a participation basis. Swindon Borough Council fund all providers of funded places the same rate regardless of the type of provision therefore there are no financial implications for creating additional maintained nursery places as opposed to places in the private and voluntary sector.
- 5.2 All associated costs of undertaking the proposed consultations would be met by the education place planning budget.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient early education places available for all eligible families to access.
- 5.4 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken into account fully in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.5 The proposals for additional school places comply with Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 to develop school policy to maximise school attendance.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Gareth Cheal, Direct Dial 01793 465802, gcheal@swindon.gov.uk.

School Organisational Changes for September 2017

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.6 A DIA for the School Place Planning Strategy was attached to the September 2016 Cabinet report, a copy of which is available from the report author. No further implications have been identified.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Making prescribed alternations to maintained schools – Department for Education guidance.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for December 2016.

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Renewable Investment

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author: Leader of the Council
Corporate Director, Economy, Regeneration and Skills

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out the plans to develop the ex-landfill site at Barnfield, Swindon, into a solar farm, which directly supplies energy to Public Power Solutions Ltd.
- 1.2 With the launch of the Vision for Swindon, the Council has committed to “improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low carbon economy”. This report builds on the work for Pledge 2 of Swindon Borough Council’s Vision which outlines that by 2020, the Council will “construct solar arrays on Council-owned land at Common Farm, Chapel Farm and a solar noise barrier along roads including the M4 at Wichelstowe”.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Authorise the Interim Corporate Director, Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, to invest up to £3.2m in the Barnfield solar scheme, subject to all required due diligence around the financial and operating models being completed, and the project demonstrating sufficient risk/reward by the date of investment.

3. Detail

- 3.1 In the report to Cabinet on 23rd April 2014 (Cabinet Minute 114 (1), 2013/14 refers), a number of Council owned assets were identified as having solar development potential towards achieving Pledge 2. Subsequently these sites received planning permission via the Council’s Local Development Order (LDO) initiative. The LDO also granted planning permission for solar development on a number of other council assets and subsequent feasibility work has revealed further development potential for solar at Barnfield, Mannington and on a number of car parks currently owned by Swindon Borough Council.

Part 1 - Barnfield Landfill

- 3.2 Public Power Solutions is now progressing a 2.5MW ground mounted solar park on Council-owned land at the former Barnfield Landfill site, which will be physically connected to the Waterside Depot by means of a private wire

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Philippa Venables, 07824 550469, PVenables@swindon.gov.uk.

Renewable Investment

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

connection. Public consultation was rerun in August and no adverse comments were received back.

- 3.3 Engineering and construction contractors have been appointed through PPS' Dynamic Purchasing System. Subject to Cabinet approval and agreement of contracts, works should begin on site in December, completing in order to generate by 31st March 2017.

Financial Viability

- 3.4 PPS has produced a number of financial models for a range of operational scenarios. These have been reviewed and scrutinised to ensure that the proposal provides a sound financial investment to the Council, and that risks are fully understood. An internal rate of return of 8.1% has been modelled for this scheme.
- 3.5 There is ongoing work to identify the best form of vehicle for the proposal, either through a Council-owned Special Purpose Vehicle similar to Common Farm and Chapel Farm, or directly through the Council. There will be financial and legal implications of either route that need to be understood fully.
- 3.6 SBC and PPS officers will continue to work through these issues as part of the due diligence process and further detail will be provided to Members when a definitive position is reached, and a further report to Cabinet if required. Due diligence on the technical, financial and operating models will be undertaken by officers in consultation with PPS to ensure the project delivers the predicted financial benefits and demonstrates an acceptable level of risk and reward
- 3.7 The proposal requires the Council to invest up to £3.2m, funded through borrowing, to be repaid over a 25 year period. The project will generate an annual income through Renewable Obligation Certificates ("ROCs"), and through selling energy to the PPS plant. In addition to operating costs such as maintenance, insurance, equipment replacement, there are returns to the Council in the form of business rates and rent for the site.
- 3.8 The model assumes that a grid connection is possible from 2018 and any excess energy that cannot be used by PPS would be sold for a further revenue stream.
- 3.9 Selling energy to PPS whilst generating an income stream for the Solar Farm, also generates a saving in electricity costs to PPS as it will be at a lower cost than currently paid, but at a higher price than is obtainable from selling directly to the grid.
- 3.10 The financial model shows a projected Internal Rate of Return of 8.1% and therefore comfortably exceeds the Council's cost of borrowing. However, a number of the assumptions underpinning the model are highly variable, such as

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Philippa Venables, 07824 550469, PVenables@swindon.gov.uk.

Renewable Investment

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

energy inflation, and therefore the financial performance will need to be monitored closely.

- 3.11 There is inherently some risk in the operating model as it relies on an income stream from the sales of energy to the PPS plant, and energy inflation is difficult to predict over the long term.

Part 2 – Renewables Investment Fund

- 3.12 In October 2016, having consulted with the Leader and Cabinet colleagues, the Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways, and Transport requested that officers pursue the principle of the creation of a renewables investment fund which would be managed by SBC/PPS
- 3.13 The fund would be used to invest in renewable schemes across the country and would aim to generate return in excess of the Councils cost of borrowing, as set periodically by the Council's Section 151 Officer. This could be used to support the funding of other Council services, or to re-invest in other similar opportunities.
- 3.14 Officers are in discussion with PPS to understand what potential opportunities may exist, how they are identified on an on-going basis, as well as the Governance and criteria around any decision for the Council to invest.
- 3.15 Should opportunities be identified, these would need to be progressed through the proposed Commercial Investment Strategy Board which is subject to a separate Cabinet paper.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 PPS could continue to develop the Barnfield scheme and sell to a private sector bidder; the Council would incur no expenditure or risk but equally would not achieve any benefits from generated revenue.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 These are detailed in the body of the report. The funding of the solar scheme would be from the commercial investment fund assuming this is approved by Cabinet. Alternatively, it would be funded from borrowing.
- 5.2 Approval of the scheme would be subject to the Gateway process outlined in the proposed Commercial Investment Strategy as referred to in paragraph 3.15 above.

Renewable Investment

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 Legal and Human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the proposals within this report are compatible with convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 Sustainability is key to this report and such implications are set out in the body of the report and in its recommendations. No other specific implications have been identified at this time.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 This share offer will not be issued as in the case of Common Farm and Chapel Farm and is a straight commercial transaction between SBC, the contractors and PPS. Therefore there is no direct impact upon community groups and therefore no requirement for a Diversity Impact Assessment

Risk Management

- 5.6 Construction – risk of scheme failure due to construction related issues.

Mitigation

- 5.6.1 An experienced engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) partner has been appointed with a track record of delivering similar schemes
- 5.6.2 Extensive due diligence has been undertaken by both funding and construction partners.
- 5.6.3 A client-side project manager will be employed to monitor the build and related health and safety issues, reporting back to PPS and SBC on a regular basis.
- 5.6.4 A set of measures involving funding agreement and conditions, contingency and close financial management is being developed.
- 5.7 Financial – risk that the scheme does not generate the operational surpluses that are expected.

Mitigation

- 5.8 The scheme has been fully modelled by experts in the field, with lessons from the first two schemes being incorporated.

Renewable Investment

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Interim Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for October 2016.

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Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author:	Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services and Head of Internal Audit
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report summarises the changes to the arrangements for appointing External Auditors following the closure of the Audit Commission and the end of the transitional arrangements at the conclusion of the 2017/18 audits.
- 1.2 The report also sets out the various options the Council has with regard to appointing and putting in place new arrangements in time to make a first appointment by 31st December 2017.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Recommend to Council that the appointment of an External Auditor be made through the national sector led body, Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd.

3. Detail

Background to the issue

- 3.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") brought to a close the Audit Commission and established transitional arrangements for the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for all local government and NHS bodies in England.
- 3.2 On 5th October 2015 the Secretary of State Communities and Local Government determined that the transitional arrangements for local government bodies would be extended by one year to also include the audit of the accounts for 2017/18.
- 3.3 The Council's current external auditor is Grant Thornton, this appointment having been made under a contract let by the Audit Commission. Following closure of the Audit Commission the contract is currently managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, the transitional body set up by the Local Government Association (LGA) with delegated authority from the Secretary of State Communities and Local Government.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs, Direct Dial Telephone Number: 01793 463940, nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

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- 3.4 Over recent years the Council has benefited from a reduction in fees. This has been the result of a combination of factors including new contracts negotiated nationally with the firms of accountants and savings from closure of the Audit Commission.
 - 3.5 When the current transitional arrangements come to an end on 31st March 2018 the Council will be able to move to a local appointment of the auditor.
 - 3.6 There are a number of routes by which this can be achieved, each with varying risks and opportunities. Current fees are based on discounted rates offered by the firms in return for substantial market share. When the contracts were last negotiated nationally by the Audit Commission they covered NHS and local government bodies and offered maximum economies of scale.
 - 3.7 The scope of the audit will still be specified nationally, the National Audit Office is responsible for writing the Code of Audit Practice which all firms appointed to carry out the Council's audit must follow. Not all accounting firms will be eligible to compete for the work, they will need to demonstrate that they have the required skills and experience and be registered with a Registered Supervising Body approved by the Financial Reporting Council.
 - 3.8 The number of firms is not known but it is reasonable to expect that the list of eligible firms may include the top ten or twelve firms in the country, including our current auditor. It is unlikely that small local independent firms will meet the eligibility criteria.
 - 3.9 Audit Committee has received regular updates regarding the new arrangements for the appointment of an External Auditor. The Government has recently confirmed that Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd has been authorised to make future appointments on behalf of principal local authorities.
 - 3.10 The Council will need to opt in formally to the scheme if this is the option selected (see below).

Options for local appointment of External Auditors

Option 1 - Opt-in to a sector led body (Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd)

- 3.11 In response to the consultation on the new arrangements the Local Government Association successfully lobbied for councils to be able to 'opt-in' to a sector led body appointed by the Secretary of State under the 2014 Act.
- 3.12 A sector led body will have the ability to negotiate contracts with the firms nationally, maximising the opportunities for the most economic and efficient approach to procurement of external audit on behalf of the whole sector.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs, Direct Dial Telephone Number: 01793 463940, nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

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- 3.13 The Government has recently confirmed that Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd has been authorised to make future appointments on behalf of principal local authorities that have opted in to the scheme.
 - 3.14 Securing a high level of acceptances to the opt-in invitation will provide the best opportunity for Public Sector Audit Appointments to achieve the most competitive prices from audit firms. The LGA has previously sought expressions of interest in the sector led body option and received positive expressions of interest from over 270 relevant authorities.
 - 3.15 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd has since issued a letter to the Council regarding the invitation to opt in to the national scheme for auditor appointments. Also included is additional information regarding the national scheme which sets out the proposed timescales for the appointment process. The closing date for opting in to the scheme is 9th March 2017 and the award of contracts is due by the end of June.
 - 3.16 The intention would be for the External Auditor to be appointed for a period of five financial years beginning 1st April 2018.

Advantages/benefits

- 3.17 The costs of setting up the appointment arrangements and negotiating fees would be shared across all opt-in authorities.
- 3.18 By offering large contract values the firms would be able to offer better rates and lower fees than are likely to result from local negotiation.
- 3.19 Any conflicts at individual authorities would be managed by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd who would have a number of contracted firms to call upon.
- 3.20 The appointment process would not be ceded to locally appointed independent members, instead a separate body set up to act in the collective interests of the 'opt-in' authorities would do this. There would be no need to establish an Auditor Panel.
- 3.21 Earlier in the year the Local Government Association wrote to all local authority Chief Executives inviting them to express an interest in using a sector led body. Audit Committee agreed to express a (non-binding) interest in using the sector led body.
- 3.22 Public Sector Audit Appointments would deal with the replacement of an External Auditor if required.

Disadvantages/risks

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs, Direct Dial Telephone Number: 01793 463940, nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

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- 3.23 Individual councillors would have less opportunity for direct involvement in the appointment process other than through the Local Government Association and/or stakeholder representative groups.
- 3.24 In order for Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd to be viable and to be placed in the strongest possible negotiating position the sector led body will need councils to indicate their intention to opt-in before final contract prices are known.

Option 2 – To make a stand-alone appointment

- 3.25 In order to make a stand-alone appointment the Council will need to set up an Auditor Panel. The members of the panel must be made up wholly, or with a majority, of independent members as defined by the 2014 Act.
- 3.26 Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, which excludes current and former councillors (or officers) and their close families and friends. This means that elected members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing which firm of accountants to award a contract for the Council's external audit. A new independent Auditor Panel established by the Council will be responsible for selecting the auditor.

Advantages/benefit

- 3.27 Setting up an Auditor Panel would allow the Council to take maximum advantage of the new local appointment regime and have local input to the decision.

Disadvantages/risks

- 3.28 Recruitment and servicing of the Panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract is estimated by the Local Government Association to cost in the order of £15,000 plus on-going expenses and allowances.
- 3.29 The Council would not be able to take advantage of reduced fees that may be available through joint or national procurement contracts.
- 3.30 The assessment of bids and decision on awarding contracts would be taken by independent appointees and not solely by elected Members.

Option 3 – Set up a Joint Auditor Panel / Local procurement arrangements

- 3.31 The 2014 Act enables the Council to join with other authorities to establish a joint Auditor Panel. Again this will need to be constituted of wholly, or a majority, of independent appointees. Further legal advice will be required on the exact constitution of such a panel having regard to the obligations of each Council under the Act. Council would need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs, Direct Dial Telephone Number: 01793 463940, nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Advantages/benefits

- 3.32 The costs of setting up the panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract would be shared across a number of authorities.
- 3.33 There is greater opportunity for negotiating some economies of scale by being able to offer a larger combined contract value to the firms than if option 2 was selected.

Disadvantages/risks

- 3.34 The decision making body would be further removed from local input, with potentially no input from councillors where a wholly independent Auditor Panel is used or possibly only one elected member representing each Council, depending on the constitution agreed with the other bodies involved.
- 3.35 The choice of auditor could be complicated where individual Councils have independence issues. An independence issue could occur where the auditor has recently or is currently carrying out work such as consultancy or advisory work for the Council. Where this occurs some auditors may be prevented from being appointed by the terms of their professional standards. There is a risk that if the joint auditor panel choose a firm that is conflicted for this Council then the Council may still need to make a separate appointment with all the attendant costs and loss of economies possible through joint procurement.

Conclusion and next steps

- 3.36 The Council has until December 2017 to make an appointment. In practical terms this means one of the options outlined in this report will need to be in place by spring 2017 in order that the contract negotiation process can be carried out during 2017.
- 3.37 Audit Committee recommends that the Council pursue Option 1 on the basis that it should provide a more cost effective option in both the contracting process and for on-going external audit fees (Audit Committee Minute number 33 2016/17 refers). It is therefore recommended to Cabinet that it recommends to Council that Option 1 is approved.
- 3.38 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd will be communicating with all Local Government bodies shortly to outline the next steps in the process of letting external audit contracts, and to provide more information on their own offer.
- 3.39 If opting in to the option to the procurement of the external audit contract by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd, this will need to go through a full Council meeting before February 2017 so that their timescales can be met (deadline is 9th March 2017). The next scheduled meeting is 16th January 2017.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs, Direct Dial Telephone Number: 01793 463940, nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

3.40 If option 1 is selected the expected timescale is as follows:

Invitation to opt in issued	27 th October 2016
Closing date for receipt of notices to opt in	9 th March 2017
Contract notice published	20 th February 2017
Award audit contracts	By end of June 2017
Consult on and make auditor appointments	By end of December 2017
Consult on and publish scale fees	By end of March 2018

4. Alternative Options

4.1 Not Applicable, the Council is required by law to appoint external auditors.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 Should the Council decide to establish a local or joint Auditor Panel as outlined in options 2 and 3 above, the cost will need to be estimated and a suitable funding source be identified. This will include the cost of recruiting independent appointees (members), servicing the Panel, running a bidding and tender evaluation process, letting a contract and paying members fees and allowances.
- 5.2 Opting-in to a national Sector Led Body provides maximum opportunity to benefit from economies of scale by entering in to a large scale collective procurement arrangement and would remove the costs of establishing an auditor panel.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) requires a relevant authority to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31st December in the preceding year. Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the authority must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor. Section 8 provides that where a relevant authority is a local authority operating executive arrangements, the function of appointing a local auditor to audit its accounts is not the responsibility of an executive of the authority under those arrangements;
- 5.4 Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor: the authority must immediately inform the Secretary of State, who may direct the authority to

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs, Direct Dial Telephone Number: 01793 463940, nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

appoint the auditor named in the direction or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the authority.

- 5.5 Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an 'appointing person' specified by the Secretary of State. This power has been exercised in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (SI 192) and this gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a Sector Led Body to become the appointing person.
- 5.6 The Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 require that a principal authority may only make the decision to opt into the sector led body arrangement by the members of the authority meeting as a whole.
- 5.7 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights.
- 5.8 The Council is required to comply with the statutory provisions referred to in the report. All other legal and human rights implications have been considered in the preparation of this report.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.9 None.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.10 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed for this report. This is because the external audit provision will continue to be provided but the responsibility for doing this will potentially transfer to a different external supplier. There will be no change to staffing or service eligibility.

Risk Management

- 5.11 There is no immediate risk to the Council. However, early consideration by the Council of its preferred approach will enable detailed planning to take place so as to achieve successful transition to the new arrangement in a timely and efficient manner.
- 5.12 Providing the Local Government Association with a realistic assessment of our likely way forward will enable the Local Government Association to invest in developing appropriate arrangements to support the Council.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Chief Executive.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs, Direct Dial Telephone Number: 01793 463940, nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk.

Changes to arrangements for appointment of an External Auditor

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

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- 6.2 The Corporate Director: Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Invitation letter from Chief Officer, Public Sector Audit Appointments.
- 7.2 Information on the national scheme and Form of notice of acceptance of the invitation to opt in.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a key decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for October 2016.

Insurance for Community Groups

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Author: Cabinet Member for Communities
Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report responds to the Council motion passed in April 2016 (Minute 90) that resolved that a report be brought to Cabinet to outline the extent to which the Council can use its Public Liability Insurance to cover community groups and charities who are providing a voluntary service to the local community.
- 1.2 The Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering has worked with the Council's Insurance Officer and with Voluntary Action Swindon to examine this issue, and Cabinet are asked to approve a recommendation for continued joint working between these agencies to support community activity in Swindon.
- 1.3 The proposals contribute towards the Council's Vision for Swindon, and particularly: Priority Three: ensure clean and safe streets and improve public spaces and local culture; and Priority Four: Help people to help themselves while always protecting the most vulnerable children and adults.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Authorise the Council's Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering to work with Voluntary Action Swindon to encourage and support the activities of residents who wish to positively contribute to their local communities and provide appropriate advice in relation to insurance cover.

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 At the Council meeting of 14 April 2016, Councillor Jim Grant moved and Councillor Toby Elliott seconded "This Council notes the problems community groups and charities are having obtaining Public Liability Insurance in order to provide a voluntary service on behalf of Swindon's communities. This Council requests the Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning to bring a report to Cabinet outlining the extent to which the Council can use its Public

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Patrick Weir
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Insurance for Community Groups

Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

Liability Insurance to cover community groups and charities who are providing a voluntary service to the local community.”

- 3.2 Residents and groups positively contribute to their local communities in countless ways across Swindon. Most of this is informal and is to be celebrated as part of everyday neighbourliness and community life in the Borough.
- 3.3 As activities become more formal and organised, groups will need to consider risks that can arise from their activities and events, which may involve larger numbers of people or equipment. Voluntary Action Swindon and the Council's Localities team routinely provide advice and support to groups about the possible impact of their activities, and their possible risks and liabilities, and how to insure against these. This includes advice on when activities are of sufficient scale that groups should consider cover, and how to go about securing it.
- 3.4 The question of whether the Council's insurance could be extended to cover community activities has been investigated with the Council's insurers, with other local authorities and with the charity sector. Insurance arrangements are dependent on the circumstances of the event or activity:
- 3.4.1 where the Council organises or supports community activities, then community volunteers can be covered by the Council's insurance, as long as a register is kept of participants, and an appropriate safety briefing is given. The Council's guidance is set out at Appendix 1.
 - 3.4.2 where organised activities or events are run by larger community or voluntary groups, they will typically be constituted, and have insurance cover in place, and an income stream to cover those costs. As a comparison in the charity sector, fundraising events undertaken on behalf of a charity are often liable for their own costs – including insurance and safety – and will cover these through the money that is raised.
 - 3.4.3 this can be more of a challenge for smaller, more informal groups and activities. The Council's insurers have advised against insuring third party groups, as this would lead to a scenario where the Council would hold the insurance risk for activities over which it would have no oversight or control. Whilst the Council's insurance cannot be extended in these circumstances, to ensure groups are supported, the Council will:
 - i. work with Voluntary Action Swindon to further publicise advice and support about when groups should consider insuring their activities
 - ii. provide direct support to groups through its Insurance Team about how to take out cover, and obtain the most cost effective cover
 - iii. provide community grants to help community groups get established, which can include meeting the costs of their insurance.

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Cabinet

Date: 7th December 2016

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 From research with other local authorities, no authority was identified that extended its own insurance cover to community groups. In addition, insurance advice was that for risk exposure reasons, this would not be an appropriate way for the Council to manage this issue.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no other implications arising from this report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken and no adverse impact has been identified.

Risk Management

- 5.5 There are no risk implications arising from this report.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Litter Picking, Guidance for Volunteers.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for August 2016.

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Litter Picking

Guidance for Volunteers

Individuals and groups acting as volunteer litter pickers can be exposed to a number of easily avoidable hazards. This guidance has been produced to help volunteers identify these hazards, making their involvement safe and enjoyable.

If working alone, you should inform a friend or family member of where you are going and what time you intend to return. Take a mobile phone with you.

Insurance

Community Groups who undertake litter picking or other such community activities are advised to have their own public liability insurance in place although this is not a statutory requirement. Public liability insurance covers injury to third parties or property. The Borough Council can assist Community Groups to obtain such insurance - usually by putting them in touch with the Council's insurer as they run a specific scheme to provide this cover. Parish Councils may also already have insurance cover in place.

Volunteers are covered by the Borough Council's public liability insurance if the activity is under the direction of the Council and recorded by the Council as taking place. In such cases the Volunteer Signing-In Sheet must be completed and the necessary safety briefing given as well the appropriate equipment provided.

Risk Assessment of Site

The level of risk will vary at each location, so prior to commencing a litter pick, a visual site inspection and risk assessment should be carried out. Volunteers have a duty to work safely. If there is any doubt about the safety of a site or material, then it should be avoided.

Protective Clothing and Equipment

The following items should be used:

- Reflective hi-visibility waistcoats to clearly highlight volunteers to traffic and pedestrians.
- Litter pickers to avoid direct contact with litter and repetitive bending.
- Gloves to minimise contact with any noxious or dangerous materials.
- Suitable footwear and clothing

The Council, subject to availability, can provide reflective hi-visibility waistcoats and litter pickers. A Disclaimer may need to be completed

Dangerous Materials

The following materials may be encountered during litter picks and should be treated with caution:

- Broken glass should not be removed. Note the location and report to the Council.
- Drug related litter/hypodermics should not be moved. Note the location and report to the Council.
- Suspect materials and fly tipping could contain dangerous items such as liquids in containers, building materials, asbestos. This should not be moved by volunteers. Note the location and report to the Council. If there is any doubt about an item, leave it, and let the Council know.

General Site Safety

Areas beside roads should be carried out with extreme caution. Litter picking should be restricted to wide verges or pavements, suitable for pedestrians and should be carried out facing oncoming traffic. Volunteers must be visible to road users so hi-visibility waistcoats must be worn and litter picks should only take place in daylight. Volunteers should not attempt to clear litter from the highway.

Avoid reaching into hedges or undergrowth in a way that exposes the face, eyes and skin to injury from thorns or branches. If an item cannot be safely reached with a litter picker, leave it.

Avoid working close to rivers or on steep slopes, as there is an increased risk of slips and falls. When working close to ditches, avoid reaching into the ditch to remove litter, unless it can be safely reached with a litter picker.

Be mindful of wildlife. In the spring time avoid disturbing animals and birds that may be nesting and in the summer wary of wasp and bee nests. Do not enter an area, or attempt to litter pick an area, where works are restricted, are already taking place (for example road works) or where the public do not have a right to entry.

Lifting and Handling Materials

To avoid injury when lifting and carrying heavy materials, follow the basic principles of manual handling:

- Use litter pickers to prevent constant bending and stretching.
- Make sure an item is safe to handle with no sharp edges.
- Decide if an item can be safely moved either by one or two people.
- Only try to move an item if this can be done so without straining.
- When lifting an item, bend the legs and keep the back straight.

Extremes of weather

Volunteers need to be appropriately dressed for the weather. If it is hot and sunny, apply sunscreen, wear a hat and long sleeved tops and take a drink. If the weather is cold, wet or windy suitable clothing should be worn.