

## Briefing Note No. 26-03 Town and Parish

### Service Devolution & Asset Transfer Policy – revision

**Service :** Assets  
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Wiltshire Council introduced the Service Devolution & Asset Transfer (SDAT) Policy in November 2018, with a revision approved by Cabinet in September 2022.

In October 2025, the council adopted Our Wiltshire Plan 2025-2035 and the Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035, with it being prudent to ensure the SDAT Policy aligns with these. A revised policy has been drafted and included for reference.

The changes made in the policy reflect the experience of councils in previous SDAT packages and comments made to Wiltshire Council regarding flexibility of the existing policy. The revisions are intended to provide controlled degrees of flexibility and encourage further town councils to engage in the process.

The approach to service devolution has not changed with the desire from Wiltshire Council to devolve the whole suite of services within the town boundary, but flexibility has been introduced. In addition, the opportunity for asset conversations have been widened.

#### **The ask of town and parish councils**

Wiltshire Council is seeking informal views on the draft policy to gain an understanding of how the new policy, if adopted, would be received.

On the basis this is seeking informal views, we are not seeking town or parish councils to obtain formal resolutions from their respective committees.

The intention is for the new policy to be presented to Cabinet on 28 April 2026, allowing time for feedback from town and parish councils to be reflected. The feedback will be summarised in the report, with councils not individually identified.

To meet Wiltshire Council's democratic timescales, feedback is being sought via the survey link below which will close at 5pm on Friday 10 April. Due to the relatively

short turnaround time, there will not be an opportunity to hold formal meetings with town or parish council between the close of survey and the Cabinet meeting.

## [Service Devolution & Asset Transfer policy engagement](#)

### **Changes proposed**

A summary of the policy changes and reasons behind these are detailed below:

**Services change:** Specific services may be delegated, such as cleansing activities in line with the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse, soft grounds-maintenance functions, or other amenity-service provisions such as weed treatment

#### **Reason:**

- Recognition that it may not be viable for town and parish council to operate all services.

**Services change:** The defined geographical areas for services can be defined, provided clearly delineated.

#### **Reason:**

- Recognition that it may not be viable for town and parish council to operate services within the whole town or parish boundary.

**Assets change:** The policy retains the opportunity for a single conversation **and** introduces a timescale for repeat negotiations; creating with a further opportunity six years after transfer.

#### **Reasons:**

- To encourage an initial single conversation whilst retaining the option of further discussions.
- Allows for towns that have been through the process to discuss any assets that did not originally transfer.
- Wiltshire Council resources to be used efficiently and not get involved in piecemeal transfers.

**Assets change:** Single or group asset transfer requests are permitted in this policy, allowing for a case-by-case business decision to be made.

#### **Reasons:**

- Opportunity to consider alternate operational models for service-based assets, involving town councils.
- Allows for towns to discuss assets that would be better delivered locally, including where they were not including in any historic package/transfer.

**Assets change:** In respect of SDAT packages, the opportunity for income producing assets has been included, subject to a (shorter) exemption list. The need to consider strategic reasons for retaining land remains.

**Reason:**

- Opportunity to offset the costs to be incurred by town or parish councils associated with service-based assets.

**Assets change:** A reducing financial contribution over a period of three years will be offered in certain circumstances.

**Reason:**

- Opportunity to offset the costs to be incurred by town or parish councils associated with service-based assets.

**Note:** Parish Council asset transfers not affected by the revisions, with the Cabinet approval in November 2018 remaining in effect. This resolution allows for up to 10 assets to be transferred provided they are of nominal value.