



# SWINDON

## ECONOMIC STRATEGY

# TO 2026

(REVISED)

By 2026, Swindon will aim to be the UK's most innovative, productive, fastest-growing city, and will grow sustainably by upskilling our workforce to enable our businesses to compete, whilst enhancing residents' quality of life.

CONSULTATION  
DRAFT





# FOREWORD

**This draft Economic Strategy for Swindon sets out our ambition to grow Swindon's economy, create jobs and attract investment, to create wealth and prosperity for local people and communities, ensure our residents have the skills they need and to promote Swindon as a key location for employment and for people to live. We welcome your thoughts on the draft strategy.**

**By 2026, Swindon will aim to be the UK's most innovative, productive, fastest-growing city, and will grow sustainably by upskilling our workforce to enable our businesses to compete, whilst enhancing residents' quality of life.**

It is an important time to launch the Economic Strategy, as significant employment and housing market development is underway. Swindon is one of the UK's fastest growing and productive cities: witnessing strong growth in population, housing and our economy<sup>1</sup>. The Government's Industrial Strategy and Housing White Paper present us with particular opportunities, while Britain's exit from the European Union will present particular risks. It is important that growth is inclusive, affording opportunities to all our residents who wish to access opportunities and work.

Swindon sits at the meeting point of four Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP): the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP of which the local authority is a member, the Gloucestershire LEP to the north, and the Oxfordshire LEP to the North East, with the Thames Valley-Berkshire LEP at its south east border.

*"Swindon's Economic Strategy to 2026 provides us with a clear strategic approach to economic development, and determines how we allocate resources to improve our economic performance. Swindon is recognised as one of the UK's most productive, fast-growth, high value economies. Over the next ten years, our focus is on continuing to create high value jobs, encouraging innovation and internationalisation whilst ensuring that our residents have the right skills to benefit from accelerated and inclusive growth. Swindon town centre regeneration will play a crucial role in attracting new business to drive the growth of our economy over the next ten years."*

**Cllr Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Economy Regeneration & Skills**

It is important that Swindon remains outward looking, given our geographic location and large number of multinational businesses and we are building strong strategic partnerships with the UK's fast growth cities (Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Norwich) and with the Greater Thames Valley Initiative.

The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) plans for, and identifies priorities to accelerate the growth of our economy, as illustrated in the Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan. To support the Swindon-M4 growth zone, the Plan identifies the need to build upon our known strengths in advanced manufacturing and commerce and making our urban area attractive to investors. The regeneration of Swindon town centre, the delivery of major housing developments and employment sites at Junctions 15 and 16 have been identified as having the greatest potential for growth.

SWLEP have negotiated Growth Deals aimed at growing the economy. Swindon is investing in its' future. There is £0.5 billion of planned investment for the Town Centre over 5-10 years that will create 10,000 jobs and deliver 1,000 homes; and £100 million secured through the Local Growth Fund to deliver significant transport infrastructure improvements to support growth and maintain our position as a competitive business location.

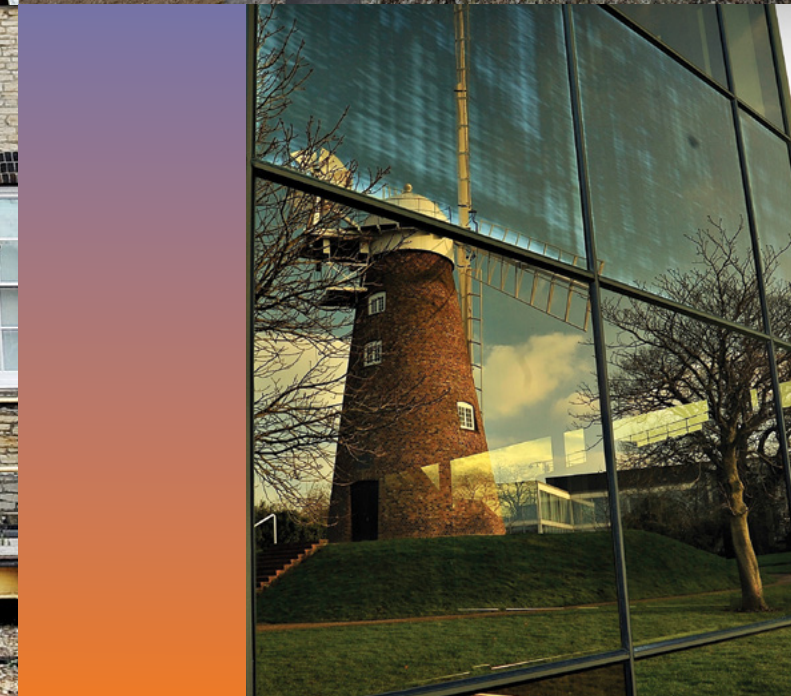
A thriving economy is important, not just for Swindon's businesses but also for our residents who are hard-working and resourceful. The quality of the borough's housing, environment and its connectivity are catalysts for our economic prosperity and to support the future growth and regeneration of the borough as a place to live, work, invest, visit and do business.

*"By 2030, Swindon will have all of the positive characteristics of a British city with one of the UK's most successful economies; a low-carbon environment with compelling cultural, retail and leisure opportunities and excellent infrastructure. It will be a model of well managed housing growth which supports and improves new and existing communities. Swindon will be physically transformed with existing heritage and landmarks complemented by new ones that people who live, work and visit here will recognise and admire. It will remain, at heart, a place of fairness and opportunity where people can aspire to and achieve prosperity, supported by strong civic and community leadership."*

**Cllr David Renard, Leader of Swindon Borough Council**

<sup>1</sup> Source: Centre for Cities report, 2016









# SWINDON: OUR APPROACH TO GROWTH

## OUR VISION FOR SWINDON

By 2026, Swindon will aim to be the UK’s most innovative, productive, fastest-growing city, and will grow sustainably by upskilling our workforce to enable our businesses to compete, whilst enhancing residents’ quality of life.

We intend to use Swindon’s excellent location and connectivity, (SEE FIGURE 1), comparative cost advantages, nationally important business clusters in our priority sectors, and ambitious town centre regeneration programme to drive economic growth and prosperity within the borough. Through the Local Plan, we will ensure that sufficient land and is allocated to ensure we have the capacity to accommodate significant levels of employment and housing growth to 2026.

Swindon’s status as one of the UK’s fastest growing cities, and our position as the UK’s 7th most ‘investable’ city in the UK is driving transformational change.

Why are investment conditions in Swindon so favourable? (FIGURE 1)

Outstanding motorway connections to key locations in the South East and South West via the M4 (via Junctions 15 and 16), with access to five major cities within an hour. Planned investment of £100 million to improve our local and strategic road network to support the delivery of new homes and new jobs.

Strong strategic rail connections which will be further improved, from 2018, with the electrification of the main GWR line, reducing journey time to London to just 45 minutes. The arrival of new faster trains, increased capacity and services and the completion of Crossrail providing will further improve access to the financial heart of London and Heathrow Airport.

One of the most cost competitive locations in the south of England, with amongst the lowest land costs and commercial rates.

Large-scale regeneration of Swindon town centre. The 100 hectare ‘arc of investment opportunity’ surrounding the railway station includes Kimmerfields central business district, Carriageworks, North Star and the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery. These projects will deliver 1,000 new homes, 10,000 new jobs, and a state-of-the-art transport interchange and result in £500 million investment in the town centre.

FIGURE 1: ECONOMIC RANKING OF SHORTLISTED CITIES AND TOWNS:

MILTON KEYNES	1
READING	2
LUTON	3
PETERBOROUGH	4
WARRINGTON	5
NORTHAMPTON	6
SWINDON	7
OXFORD	8
BOURNEMOUTH	9
NOTTINGHAM	10
SOLIHULL	11
BRIGHTON	12
SOUTHAMPTON	13
CARDIFF	14
DERBY	15
SOUTHEND	16
COVENTRY	17
ABERDEEN	18
TELFORD	19
HUDDERSFIELD	20



# 10 YEAR OUTCOMES

20,000  
NEW JOBS CREATED



10,000  
MORE JOBS  
IN OUR  
KEY SECTORS

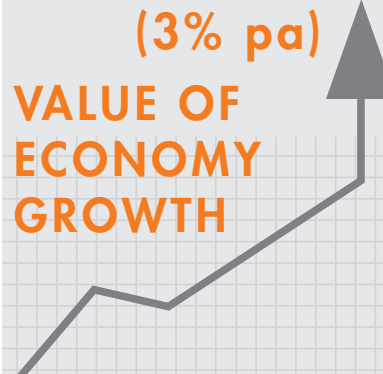
(PHARMACEUTICALS, AUTOMOTIVE,  
AEROSPACE, BANKING,  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES &  
THE DIGITAL ECONOMY)



£8.4  
BILLION

(3% pa)

VALUE OF  
ECONOMY  
GROWTH



22,000  
NEW  
HOMES



7,500

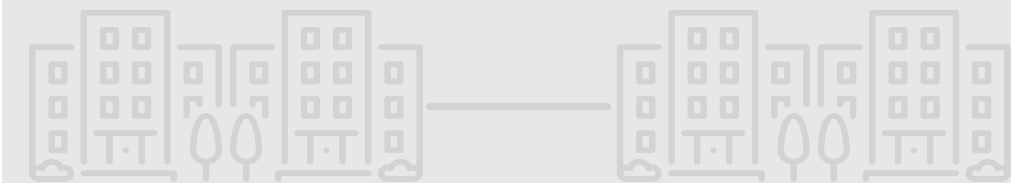
RESIDENTS WITH DEGREE LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS  
(A 40% INCREASE REFLECTING OUR AMBITION TO DEVELOP A UNIVERSITY)



30,000  
NEW APPRENTICES

£0.5billion

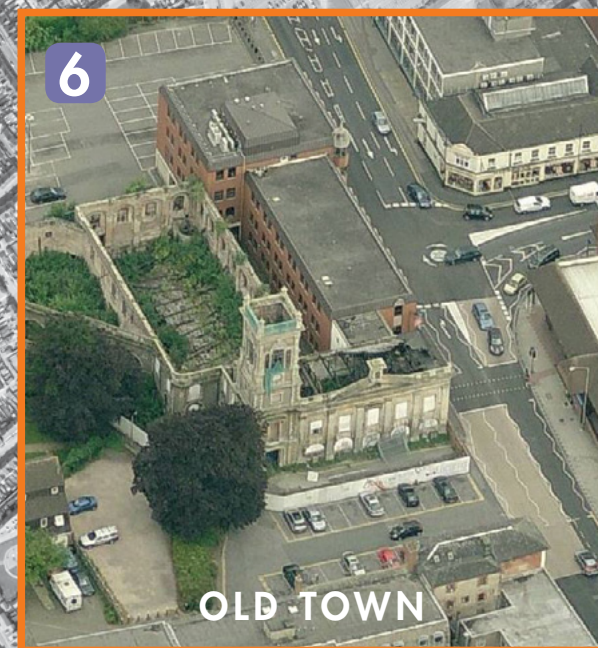
INVESTMENT IN TOWN CENTRE



DELIVERY OF TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN  
CREATING 10,000 NEW JOBS & 1,000 NEW HOMES



# TOWN CENTRE DELIVERY PLAN



## 1 KIMMERFIELDS

New central business district at the heart of the town centre.  
45 minutes from London Paddington.



**£350M INVESTMENT, PARTNER – MUSE DEVELOPMENTS**

-  6,000 jobs created
-  600,000 sq ft Grade A office accommodation
-  450 homes
-  150,000 sq ft retail
-  150 bed hotel
-  New bus interchange

## 2 CARRIAGEWORKS

A new home for the thriving digital and creative sector where first class innovation and world heritage standard history combine to create the perfect high growth business environment for start-ups, scale-ups and education institutions.



**£4M INVESTMENT**

-  1,100 jobs created
-  100,000 sq ft office
-  30,000 sq ft retail, cafes, bars

## 3 SWINDON MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

The anchor for Swindon's new cultural quarter and a home for the finest modern art collection outside London.

**£25MILLION INVESTMENT**

-  Attracting 100,000 visitors per annum
-  37,500 sq ft exhibition and viewing space to showcase Swindon's heritage assets

## 4 NORTH STAR

Regional leisure hub for family days out to complement and enhance the iconic Oasis with 175m ski slope, cinema, and bowling, minutes from the railway station.

**£100M INVESTMENT, PARTNER – TBC**

-  750 jobs created
-  150,000 sq ft retail and leisure (restaurants, bowling, indoor golf, cinema)
-  170 metre ski slope
-  New hotel

## 5 ASPEN HOUSE

**£20M INVESTMENT**

-  70,000 sq ft
-  180 homes

## 6 CORN EXCHANGE (LOCARNO)

High quality mixed use redevelopment to restaurants, shops, bars and apartments in the heart of the Old Town.

-  Create 100 jobs
-  30,000 sq ft restaurant and retail

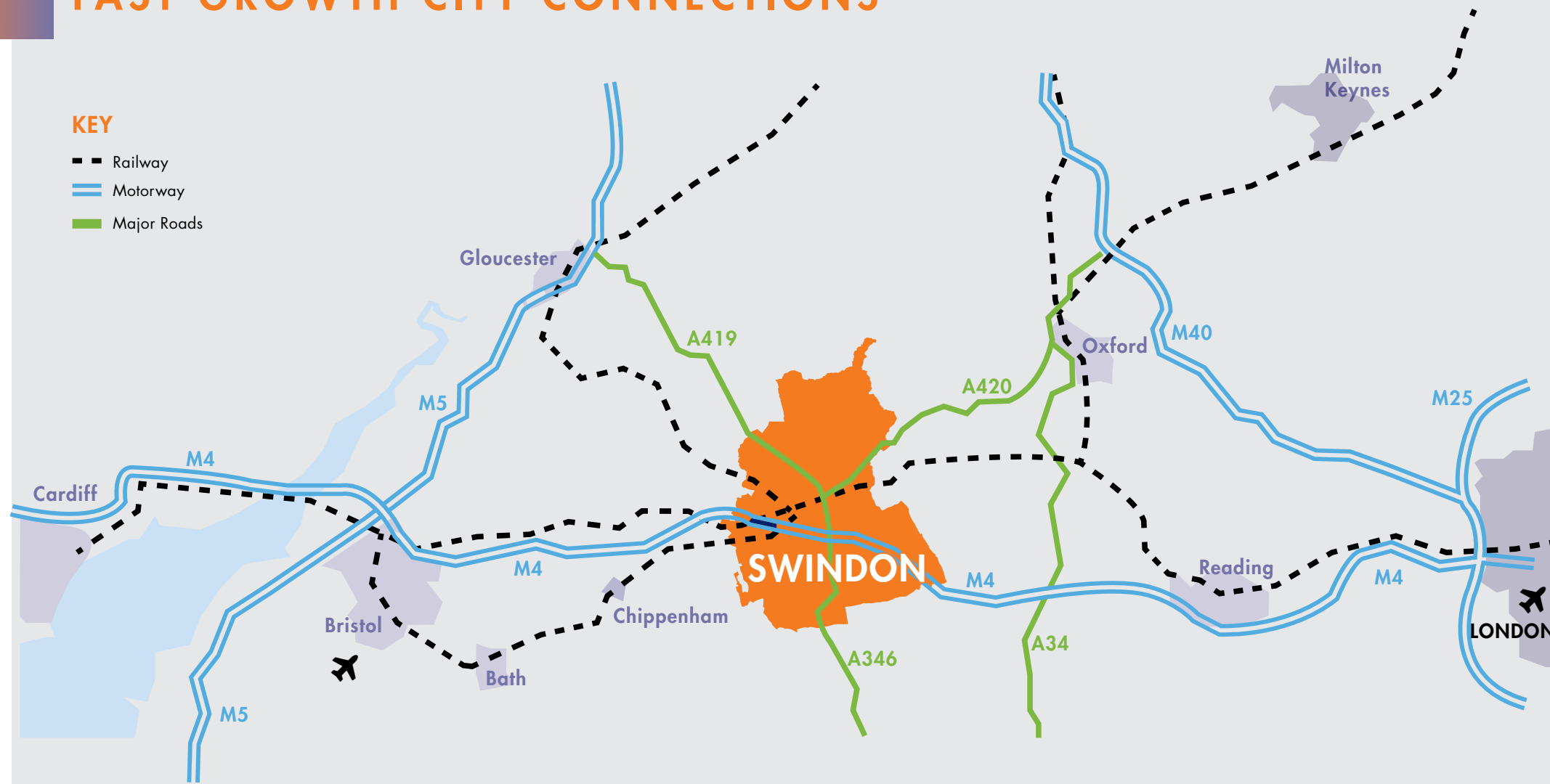
\*For illustration purposes only.



# FAST GROWTH CITY CONNECTIONS

## KEY

- Railway
- Motorway
- Major Roads



# STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT MAP

## EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND

- 01 Blackworth
- 02 Groundwell West
- 03 Groundwell
- 04 South Marston Park
- 05 G Park
- 06 South Marston Airfield (Honda)
- 07 Europa/Britannia
- 08 Keypoint
- 09 Kembrey Park
- 10 Parsonage Farm (BMW)
- 11 Techno
- 12 Elgin
- 13 Bridge End Road
- 14 Gypsy Lane South
- 15 Isis/Stratton Road
- 16 Drakes Way
- 17 Greenbridge
- 18 Hillmead
- 19 Cheney Manor
- 20 Rivermead
- 21 Hawksworth
- 22 Rivermead
- 23 Westmead
- 24 Delta
- 25 Iceland Distribution Centre
- 26 Rushey Platt
- 27 Windmill Hill
- 28 Blagrove/Euroway
- 29 Dorcan
- 30 Central Trading Estate
- 31 Pipers Way (Intel)
- 32 Pipers Way (Nationwide)
- 33 Pipers Way (Nationwide HQ)

## PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL

- 01 Tadpole Garden Village
- 02 Abbey Farm
- 03 Kingsdown
- 04 South Marston Brownfield
- 05 New Eastern Villages (including Rowborough and South Marston Village Expansion)
- 06 Wichelstowe
- 07 Badbury Park (Commonhead)

## PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT LAND

- 01 North of Blackworth
- 02 Catsbrain Farm
- 03 G Park (Remainder)
- 04 The Hub (New Eastern Villages)
- 05 Wichelstowe
- 06 Commonhead

## PROPOSED MIXED USE

- 01 North Star
- 02 Kimmerfields
- 03 Carriageworks
- 04 Aspen House and Granville Street
- 05 Corn Exchange (Locarno)





# ACCELERATING OUR GROWTH AMBITION

Swindon's Economic Strategy (2012-26) identified economic priorities to facilitate growth in Swindon and it is worthwhile reflecting on Swindon's successes since the original strategy was launched.

- > Swindon is on target to achieve 11,000 apprenticeship starts between 2013/14 and 2018/19.
- > A new University Technical College opened in 2014, specialising in engineering to meet the needs of employers.
- > There is significant and wide engagement between the Council, schools, colleges and businesses and a Higher Education strategy is being developed.
- > Between 2012 and 2014, 5,000 jobs were created mainly in business and professional services, education, health, scientific and technical.
- > Employment in automotive manufacturing increased by 1,000 jobs in 2016 and Honda invested £267 million in Swindon which is the centre for Honda Civic production for export to global markets.
- > The Regent Circus development completed in 2015, giving impetus to town centre regeneration with investment of £50 million by Standard Life Investments.
- > The leisure offer is improving, with the creation of Swindon's Museum and Art Gallery Trust, the recruitment of a Director and pending Heritage Lottery Fund application. There is also much greater more co-ordinated promotion of arts and culture, and a developer is secured for the North Star leisure development.

The Economic Strategy sets out our proactive approach to creating wealth, jobs, housing and new business opportunities over the next ten years and how we will ensure that the people who live in the borough are able to take advantage of these opportunities.

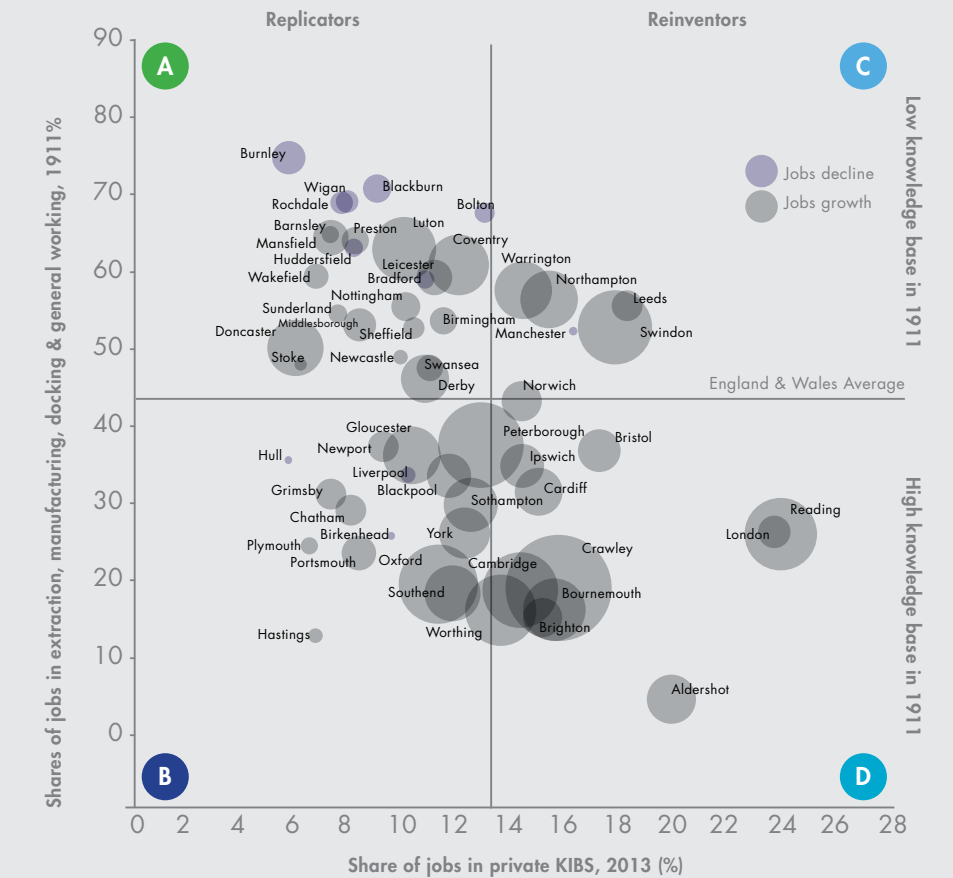
We will focus on our existing strengths and our base of established business sectors to build an outstanding, sustainable business environment to accelerate our economic growth. We will keep our approach under review, updating the action plan every few years, so we are responsive to economic circumstances, and work with our partners and the private sector to make it a reality.

Swindon's economic success is thanks to significant investment in both rail and road infrastructure that occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries. The first event – the building of the railway line between London and Bristol – occurred in the mid 1800s. This not only improved Swindon's strategic connectivity, but the siting of the Locomotive works (which employed 14,000 people at its peak), transformed Swindon from a small market town into a railway town, boosted the population considerably and also provided the town with a skilled workforce with a reputation for engineering excellence. This reputation was further compounded by the subsequent growth in the automotive sector – with Pressed Steel Fisher factory producing sheet metal pressings and bodywork for the railway, before its' eventual takeover from Rover (now BMW). The opening of the M4 in the early

1970s, provided Swindon with two junctions (J15 and J16) which further improved Swindon's strategic accessibility, and therefore its appeal as a location for corporate headquarters: WHSmith, Intel, Nationwide, National Trust and Honda UK Manufacturing are amongst the global business brands who have chosen to locate their headquarters in the town.

Swindon's economy is growing strongly, well diversified and dominated by innovative knowledge-based companies. We have a reputation for reinventing ourselves, based on our adaptable and skilled labour force. As figure 5 shows, Swindon has successfully replaced jobs in declining industries with new, more knowledge-focussed areas of activity and are one of only six urban areas in the country to make this change.

JOBS GROWTH, REINVENTION AND REPLICATION





# A SNAP SHOT OF SWINDON'S ECONOMY

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Swindon borough is one of the UK's fastest growing cities, with full employment and a population of c. 220,000.

The population has grown by 25% over the last 25 years: that's TWICE the national average and is destined to grow by a further 22% by 2036.

However, we have pockets of worklessness in our most deprived wards that we need to address.

**TOTAL POPULATION:** 217,200

Population increase: 25% ('91 – '15)

Working age population: 140,200 (65%)

Economically active: 82%

Residents in employment: 79%

Employment: 69.6%

Self employment: 9.1%

Population of by 2026: 250,000  
(+ 30,000 or 15%)

## AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS

Swindon is centrally located on the M4 between Bristol and Reading; and has a catchment of 1.9 million people within an hour.

This makes it an ideal location for business and residential development. It is also on the Great Western Railway and is under an hour to London (45 minutes post electrification).

Swindon salaries are lower than Oxford, Reading, Milton Keynes and Bath.



RESIDENT BASED



WORKPLACE BASED

## TRANSPORT – COMMUTING PATTERNS

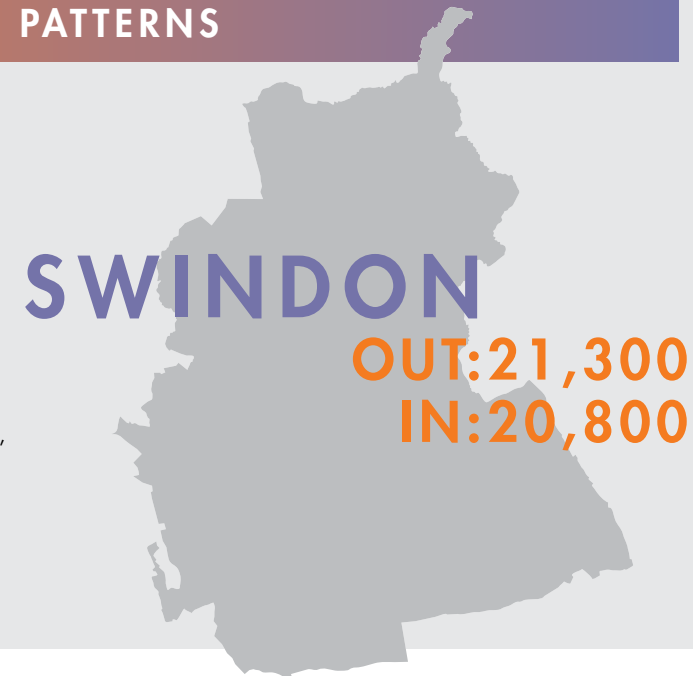
Swindon plays an important role as a location for living and employment; however whilst population has grown strongly over the last few decades, employment has not.

10,000 more people commute **out** of the borough for employment in 2011 compared to 2001. Healthy, vibrant communities are encouraged by sustainable economic development.

68% commute by private vehicle (ave city – 63%)

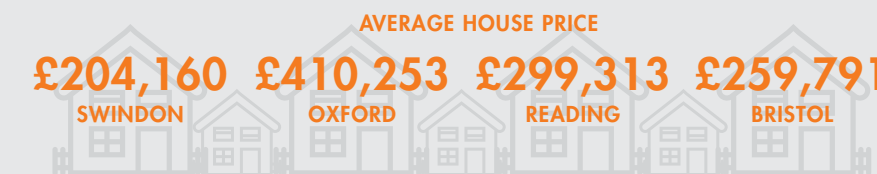
More people commute into work in Swindon from Wiltshire, Gloucester, West of England; slightly less from Oxfordshire and Thames Valley.

Workforce wages are slightly higher than resident wages in Swindon.



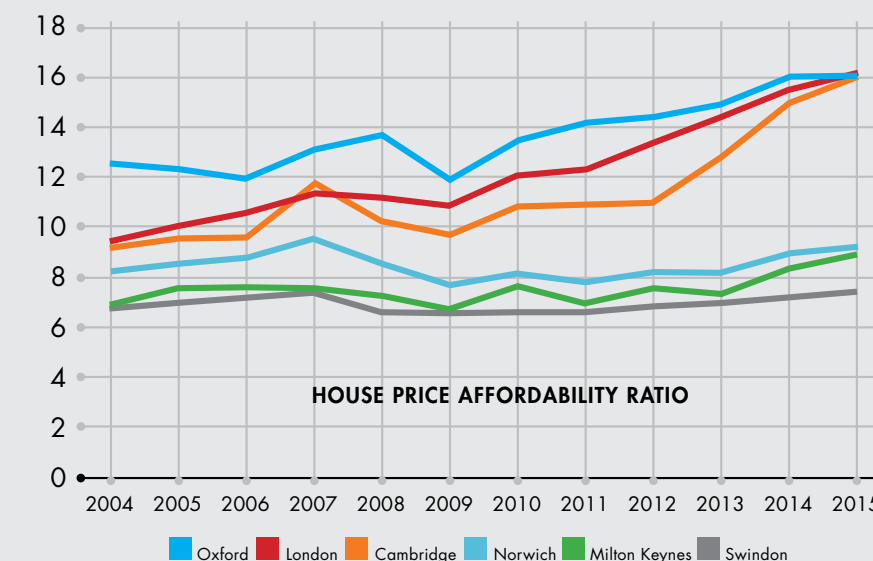
## HOUSING

Swindon is one of the most affordable housing market areas in the south of the country.



AN AREA OF RAPID HOUSING GROWTH: +22,000 homes to 2026

HOUSE PRICE TO EARNINGS RATIO:  
Bristol 8.2 Oxford 11.7 Reading 8.5 Swindon 6.4



## SCHOOLS

Swindon performs at close to the national average for sustained learning destinations, post 2016.

Swindon has seen strong growth in apprenticeships.

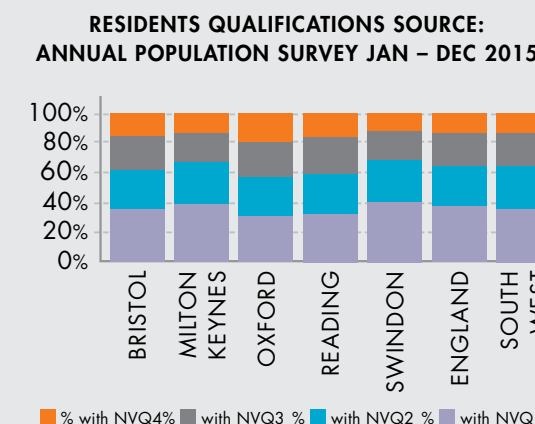
Swindon imports 4,000 graduates from neighbouring authorities to meet the needs of its businesses.

17 schools and colleges are matched with Enterprise Advisers.  
91% of schools rated as good / outstanding in 2016.  
67% of pupils achieved expected level in Reading.  
60% in Writing 70% in Maths 2016.  
54% of children achieve 5+ GCSE's A\* – C in 2016.  
82% of graduates are employed in high skilled occupations.  
5 of the Top 10 UK universities are within an hour of Swindon.

## SKILLS

Swindon has had decades of very low participation in Higher Education (HE) with the 10th lowest participation rate in the country amongst young people.

Residents are more likely to have NVQ levels 1 and 2 qualifications than nationally and less likely to have university level 4 qualifications.





BUSINESS SIZE

Swindon's economy is dominated by small businesses, however our economy is more than twice as dependent on large businesses who employ more than 250 people, as England as a whole.

Our largest businesses include: Nationwide, Honda, RWENpower, Research Councils UK, Zurich, BMW, National Trust, Intel, WHSmith HQ, Catalent (pharmaceuticals), and English Heritage. The borough's strong advanced manufacturing base will continue to drive economic growth, together with financial services and professional services and the digital economy. In 2016, 1.4 million sq ft industrial floorspace was sold/let.

THERE ARE OVER  
**7,500**  
BUSINESSES IN THE  
BOROUGH SUPPORTING  
**113,000**  
JOBS

DISTRIBUTION OF ENTERPRISES BY SIZE OF EMPLOYMENT

ENTERPRISE SIZE	0-9	10-49	50-249	250+
MILTON KEYNES	89.2%	8.3%	1.8%	0.7%
READING	88.5%	9%	1.9%	0.6%
OXFORD	84.6%	11.7%	2.8%	0.9%
SWINDON & WILTSHIRE LEP	89.4%	8.7%	1.6%	0.3%
CITY OF BRISTOL	87.5%	10.3%	1.8%	0.4%
SWINDON	88%	9.1%	2.1%	0.8%
ENGLAND	88.8%	9.2%	1.6%	0.4%
SOUTH WEST	88.7%	9.5%	1.4%	0.3%

Source: UK Business Counts – Enterprises

EMPLOYMENT  
BY SECTOR IN  
SWINDON  
(TO THE NEAREST 100)



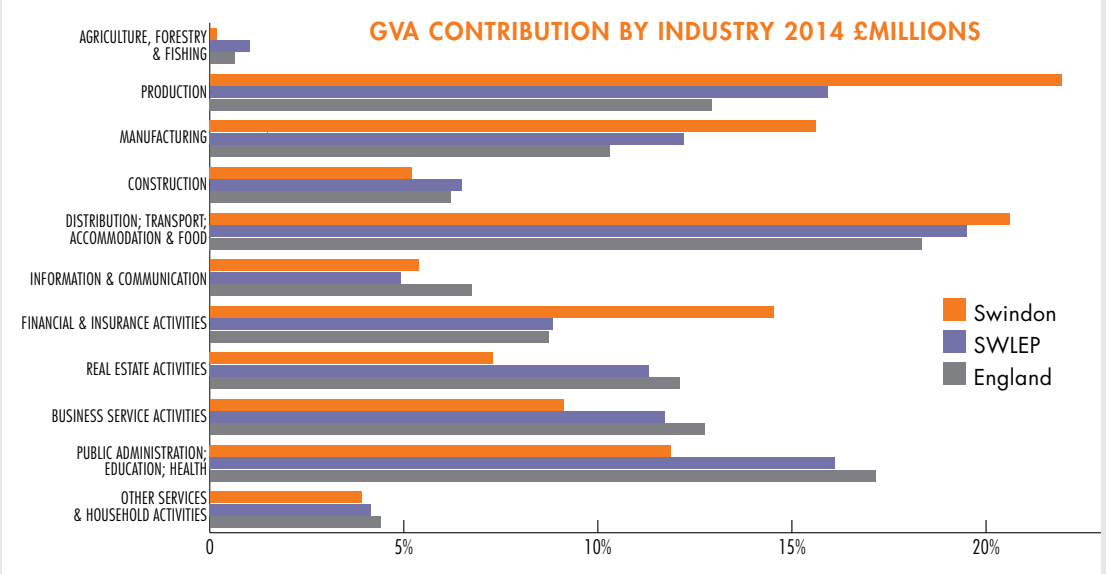
Source: ONS BRES 2014

SWINDON'S ECONOMY IS WORTH £6.6 BILLION

SWINDON'S PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY PLACES US 10TH IN THE UK LEAGUE TABLES IN TERMS OF OUTPUT (GVA) PER WORKER.

This is projected to grow by 3% to 2026 but we believe this could be more by adopting the proactive approach to growth and economic development set out in this strategy. Swindon plays an important role in the SWLEP economy: 41% of the SWLEP economy is produced by one-third of the population and 28% of the businesses.

Recently, Swindon's competitiveness has been in decline relative to the fastest growing comparators. To improve the productive capacity of our economy, we need increased investment in infrastructure, skills and to enhance the conditions which encourage business investment and growth.



Source: Gross Value Added (Income Approach) by SIC07 industry at current basic prices, ONS

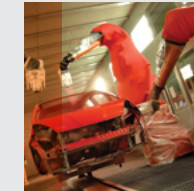




# PRIORITY SECTORS

The following sectors and industries either have strong representation in Swindon or have good prospects for growth. These are consistent with the priority sectors in the SWLEP's Strategic Economic Plan and include:

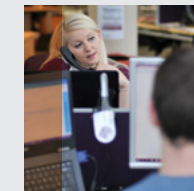
- > Automotive & Aerospace
- > Pharmaceuticals
- > The Digital Economy
- > Banking and Professional services
- > Low carbon



## > Automotive & Aerospace

This sector creates value worth £450 million every year (Gross Value Added) to Swindon's economy and is growing at 4% year-on-year growth in value terms. Although employment in this sector nationally is in decline, we anticipate modest growth in Swindon over the next twenty years as our key companies continue with their growth and expansion plans and we market Swindon as an advanced manufacturing hub for the South of England.

Swindon has the 7th largest employment cluster of automotive manufacturing in the UK, with over 7,000 people employed in this sector. With companies such as Honda, BMW, TS Tech and Dynamatic Technologies Ltd, Swindon is at the fore-front of advanced engineering. These companies are attracted to Swindon because of our industrial heritage, our accessible location on the M4 and the skills of our workforce.



## > Digital economy

This sector creates value worth £274 million every year (Gross Value Added) to Swindon's economy and is growing at 4% year-on-year growth in value terms. If this sector grows in the way predicted, then it will mean growth of over 3,000 employees in Swindon between 2016 and 2026; taking total employment in the sector to 10,000 employees. Swindon is geographically close to the Bristol and Bath digital tech cluster which is recognised to be a globally significant cluster (and 2nd largest in the UK), and the businesses here report few barriers to growth.

Swindon is in the top third nationally in terms of employment in the digital economy, with companies such as: Excalibur IT, Cisco, INTEL, Swindon Silicon Systems, Siemens, Dialog Semiconductor, Allied Telesis and Appsbroker (affiliated with Google). "Fintech" (or financial technology) is a specific growth area which spans the digital and financial service sectors which are both strong in Swindon. We have the 8th highest concentration of Knowledge Intensive Businesses (KIB) in the UK with companies such as Rendermedia pioneering Virtual Reality applications for major clients such as Airbus.



## > Financial and Professional Services

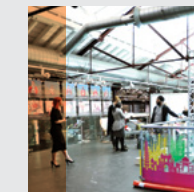
This sector creates value worth £1 billion every year (Gross Value Added) to Swindon's economy and is growing at over 10% year-on-year growth in value terms. If this sector grows in the way predicted, then it will mean 4,000 more employees in Swindon between 2016 and 2026; taking total employment in the sector to nearly 20,000 employees by 2026. Swindon's location on the London-Bristol railway line is a significant advantage and we are working with

the Department for International Trade to realise Swindon's potential as a Financial Services centre of excellence. Companies such as Nationwide choose to locate their UK headquarters here, and we have significant representation from other corporates such as: Zurich, Handelsbanken, Arval and RSM as well as regional accountancy and legal practices such as Royds Withy King, Thrings, and Morris Owen.



## > Pharmaceuticals

Swindon has particular strength in the manufacture of pharmaceuticals, with over 1,000 high value jobs. Swindon's location in the centre of southern England, and our comparative cost advantages (amongst the lowest commercial property and residential prices in the south) make us an ideal choice for knowledge-intensive businesses. We have the 8th largest employment cluster in the UK with companies such as Patheon, Catalent, Becton Dickinson and Biomet Pharma, to name a few.



## > Low carbon economy

Swindon is at an extremely exciting stage of development in its progress towards a low carbon economy and securing its benefits. The Council target of 200MW of renewable energy by 2020 has driven the creation of three publicly backed solar farms, incorporating innovative finance models into Council and community investments.

Swindon has a growing reputation for innovation in low carbon technologies. The town is a focus for Hydrogen technologies demonstrated by the business-led Swindon Hydrogen Hub which seeks to promote commercial use of the technology in automotive and stationary applications. Swindon is currently the only town outside London with two hydrogen refuelling stations and Toyota and Hyundai have developed fuel cell vehicles.

Recycling Technologies, in partnership with Warwick University is looking to deliver a sustainable solution to the world's plastics problem by decomposing plastics at high temperatures, to turn waste into oil at lower cost than discarding the waste product. Johnson Matthey Fuel Cells is a global business dedicated to the supply of high quality fuel cell components for automotive and stationary applications, and is developing battery technologies that will enable the mass adoption of all-electric cars in the long term.

Public Power Solutions, the Council's wholly owned energy company, in addition to their solar work are examining other routes to market for innovative energy applications such as battery storage and smart microgrids, to demonstrate the potential for smart and low carbon energy systems.





# OUR VISION FOR SWINDON

By 2026, Swindon will aim to be the UK's most innovative, productive, fastest-growing city, and will grow sustainably by upskilling our workforce to enable our businesses to compete, whilst enhancing residents' quality of life.

We are bold and ambitious in our plans, and will capitalise on our existing economic assets and address the underlying weaknesses in our economy. To achieve our vision, we aim to:



1  
2  
3  
4

1 Grow the economy, strengthen and diversify the business base and create jobs that deliver enhanced opportunities for innovation and exporting.

2 Enhance Swindon's competitive position as one of the UK's most productive economies by providing the conditions to attract investment, accelerate housing delivery and create high value employment.

3 Create a fast growth high value economy by improving our education outcomes and upskilling our residents to enable our businesses to grow and compete.

4 Enhance the attractiveness of Swindon as a place to live, visit and do business by delivering transformational change in the town centre through significant improvements to the leisure, cultural and evening economy.

Allied to these aims is the overarching objective for Swindon to be a more inclusive place, with reduced worklessness and improved health and well-being outcomes.



# SWINDON: INVESTING IN



## OUR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:

- > A high value, knowledge-intensive economy with innovative companies and high number of national HQs.
- > Nationally recognised clusters in financial and professional services, advanced manufacturing and the digital economy.
- > Strong and improving strategic road and rail connections.
- > Rapid population growth over last four decades makes Swindon one of the UK's 'fastest growing cities'.
- > High employment rates, strong technical skill-set and growth in apprenticeships enhance employability.
- > Competitively priced commercial rents, relatively low land values and house prices.
- > Ambitious £0.5 billion programme of investment for Town Centre, delivering over 10,000 new jobs, 100 new homes and 4 million additional visitors each year.
- > Successful delivery of renewable energy schemes.

## OUR ECONOMIC CHALLENGES:

- > Slower productivity gains (relative to fast growth neighbours) over the last five years could undermine our very productive, competitive economy.
- > Educational attainment and schools performance.
- > Low rates of higher education participation.
- > Lower rates of business start-up and survival.
- > Weaknesses in the transport infrastructure.
- > Lack of available, high quality employment land.
- > Poor image and reputation of Swindon.
- > Need for town centre regeneration and to address shortage of town centre office stock.
- > Competitively priced commercial rents produce low yields so deter investment.
- > Pockets of worklessness in our most deprived wards.





# THEME 1: BUSINESS GROWTH

## AIM:

TO GROW THE ECONOMY, STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY THE BUSINESS BASE AND  
CREATE JOBS THAT DELIVER ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION AND EXPORTING.

### AMBITIOUS OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase the number of business start-ups and improve survival rates.
2. Support innovation and knowledge based growth.
3. Raise the number of businesses exporting.
4. Work in partnership with our Top 100 employers.
5. Create and maintain a positive identity for Swindon.

### HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES?

- Deliver an integrated and accessible Business Growth and Inward Investment Service.
- Identify root causes of business failure and barriers to growth and establish interventions.
- Work with partners to deliver tailored business support through referrals to Swindon Wiltshire Growth Hub DIT trade advisers and European funded programmes including SME Growth, Innovate to Succeed I2S.
- Create incubator and shared workspaces to support business start-ups and micro-enterprises and deliver grow on space for high growth businesses.
- Improve supply chain opportunities for locally based companies.
- Carry out proactive and responsive account management with our Top 100 businesses.
- Proactively market Swindon and key development sites at a national and international level through Switch on to Swindon place marketing campaign.
- Work with Department for International Trade and commercial agents to convert foreign direct investment and domestic enquiries into new investment and jobs.
- Build on our nationally significant clusters in digital and creative technologies, financial and professional services and advanced manufacturing (automotive and pharmaceuticals) to create centres of excellence.
- Play an active role in the development and implementation of the SWLEP Strategic Economic Plan.





# THEME 2: LAND INFRASTRUCTURE

## AIM:

TO ENHANCE SWINDON'S COMPETITIVE POSITION AS ONE OF THE UK'S MOST PRODUCTIVE ECONOMIES BY ATTRACTING INVESTMENT, ACCELERATING HOUSING DELIVERY AND CREATING HIGH VALUE EMPLOYMENT.

### AMBITIOUS OBJECTIVES:

1. Plan for long-term infrastructure needs.
2. Support accelerated delivery of strategic housing schemes.
3. Unlock accessible, high quality employment land.
4. Strengthen digital connectivity.
5. Develop Swindon as a nationally significant player in the UK's energy sector.

### HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES?

- Prepare the new Swindon Transport Strategy 2036, to complement SWLEP proposals and set out future transport projects which support a growing economy.
- Identify resources and lobby government agencies including Highways England and Network Rail to deliver investment in Swindon's strategic road and rail networks connecting Swindon to national and international markets.
- Deliver transport packages that enable sustainable development of 8,000 new homes and 40 hectares of employment land at New Eastern Villages (the UK's largest urban extension) and 3,500 new homes and 12.5 hectares of strategic employment land at Wichelstowe.
- Deliver capacity improvements at M4 Junctions 15 and 16 to safeguard our unrivalled connectivity.
- Allocate 60 hectares of additional employment land over the Local Plan period to 2036 and accelerate delivery of existing undeveloped employment land.
- Encourage delivery of Superfast and Fibre Broadband to cover 95% of commercial and domestic premises by 2017.
- Investigate the potential for early adoption of 5G.
- Work with partners to identify innovative energy and power solutions to provide energy security.
- Launch financial instruments (Bonds, ISAs) to finance local energy supply schemes.
- Develop low carbon transport solutions, including hydrogen, which provide a viable alternative to fossil fuel vehicles.
- Support and encourage the growth and development of business innovation in recycling technologies and low carbon through our Business Growth Service.





# THEME 3: EDUCATION & SKILLS

## AIM:

TO CREATE A FAST GROWTH, HIGH VALUE ECONOMY BY IMPROVING EDUCATION OUTCOMES AND UPSKILLING OUR RESIDENTS TO ENABLE OUR BUSINESSES TO GROW AND COMPETE.

### AMBITIOUS OBJECTIVES:

1. Raise the aspirations of young people and their families.
2. Grow the number of businesses who utilise apprenticeships.
3. Increase number of Swindon residents with degree-level qualifications.
4. Establish accessible technical routes that meet the needs of employers.
5. Reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET).
6. Provide all adults who want to work access to adult learning opportunities.

### HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES?

- Deliver Swindon Challenge to raise achievement in schools.
- Create strategic partnerships with outstanding providers to improve school performance.
- Deliver the Apprenticeship Growth Plan to increase Apprenticeships at all levels including Higher and Degree Apprenticeships as a route to a higher skilled, sustainable workforce.
- Improve access to higher education through development of a Higher Education Strategy for Swindon that is consistent with the approach taken by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Work with Higher Education providers to increase supply of higher education options available to Swindon residents and beyond.
- Raise aspiration of residents to improve progression to Higher Education by working with schools and businesses.
- Develop post 16 technical routes with providers to increase the percentage of young people progressing into Apprenticeships, and achieving L2 English and Maths.
- Improve the percentage of 16 and 17 year olds who are in education, employment and training at 16 and 17 and reduce the number 'not in education employment or training' (NEET) and unknown destinations by ensuring appropriate referrals to relevant provision including European Social Fund projects.
- Work with learning providers, partners and employers to develop skills training that meets the needs of businesses, focussed on bringing SMEs together where they do not have the scale to devise their own in-house training.
- Work with training providers through our Adult Education Budget.
- Plan to ensure that all adults who want to work have access to opportunities to enable them to get into work with a focus on our most deprived communities and areas of persistent worklessness.





# THEME 4: TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

## AIM:

TO ENHANCE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF SWINDON AS A PLACE TO LIVE, VISIT AND DO BUSINESS BY DELIVERING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE IN THE TOWN CENTRE THROUGH SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT TO THE LEISURE, CULTURAL AND EVENING ECONOMY.

### AMBITIOUS OBJECTIVES:

1. Reconnect the town centre to its Railway Heritage.
2. Increase the supply of town centre office stock.
3. Offer more housing opportunity and choice.
4. Improve the retail, leisure and cultural offer.
5. Aid people in getting to and around the town centre.

### HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES?

- Transformation of Swindon Station to provide a high quality gateway to Swindon and provide a catalyst for regeneration of the surrounding area, including the Carriage Works, North Star and Kimmerfields sites.
- Redevelop the “Carriageworks” to deliver over 100,000 sq ft high quality office space for start-up and high growth knowledge based, digital and creative businesses in a heritage environment.
- Promote the “Carriageworks” offer to business, research and university sector.
- Deliver a new central business district with Grade A office accommodation that addresses current shortages and attract new occupiers, 45 minutes from London.
- Attract further central Government back office functions and employment to Swindon to build on the success of the UK Research and Innovation at North Star.
- Deliver new homes at Aspen House and Kimmerfields.
- Work with partners, including InSwindon, to reduce vacancies and improve dwell times, footfall and spending in the town centre.
- Enable the redevelopment of the Corn Exchange “Locarno” into 35,000 sq ft mixed use development with restaurants, retail and new homes.
- In partnership with the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Trust, build a new home for our nationally recognised modern art collection.
- Work in partnership to deliver a regional leisure hub at North Star, anchored by a 175m ski slope with dramatically improved linkages to the Town Centre.
- Deliver the Town Centre Movement Strategy, including the new Bus Exchange and Fleming Way improvement scheme.







## Equality and Opportunity

This underpinning imperative, to reduce dependency and improve resilience through a strong and growing economy which benefits everyone, will have the following high level outcomes.

Improving life chances by providing with the skills and tools which enable them to be productive thus improving mental health outcomes, reducing dependency on welfare and raising aspirations. A strong economy offers more opportunity for employment which brings in a wage and reduces pressure on families and the welfare system.

Enabling people to move around the borough by means other than the car, offering cheaper alternatives including walking and cycling will also deliver improved health outcomes.

Greater housing opportunity and choice can support an ageing population through lifetime homes, keep them out of care for longer and create strong, resilient communities who look out for each other. Accelerating housing delivery will help keep house prices stable, improving accessibility and affordability for local people. That and ready access to other tenures can ultimately help reduce the demand on social housing.

**By 2026, Swindon will be the UK's most innovative, productive, fastest-growing city, and will grow sustainably by upskilling our workforce to enable our businesses to compete, whilst enhancing residents' quality of life.**

In partnership with



TO SWINDON

An associated delivery plan will set out the detail on the actions underpinning the strategy, with associated timescales.

If you have any comments or suggestions on this consultation draft, then please contact:

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