

Council

Thursday, 17 January 2013

**BACKGROUND REPORTS RELATING TO MINUTES
RESERVED TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION UNDER
THE COUNCIL'S MANAGEMENT SCHEME**

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Review of Town Twinning

Cabinet

Date: 17th October 2012

Author:	Leader of the Council and Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1 Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 In March 2012, Cabinet requested that a review of town twinning take place.
- 1.2 This report highlights the current position with regards to town twinning activities in and around Swindon and highlights issues raised by members of the Town Twinning Network in response to this review.

2 Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Confirm its commitment to town twinning activities in and around Swindon and to recognise the potential of twinning in promoting international links involving Swindon's citizens, groups and businesses;
- 2.2 Recognise the value of the Town Twinning Network in providing a forum for discussion and exchange of information, in addition to supporting the development of other international links;
- 2.3 Note the importance of the Civic and Mayoral roles in supporting and promoting town twinning activities and that formal recognition by the Mayor's Office would provide support to the development of important international relationships;
- 2.4 Subject to 2.3 above, recommend to Council that the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor be formally appointed as *ex officio* members of the Town Twinning Network; and
- 2.5 Consider what further support could be provided to support town twinning activities such as promotional and marketing activities, through the use of existing Council services.

3 Detail

- 3.1 There are two formal twinning arrangements with Swindon Borough Council, one with Salzgitter (Germany) that was established in 1975 and one with Ocotal (Nicaragua), established in 1990. Each of these organisations receives a grant each year to assist with their administration costs (Salzgitter receives £500 and Ocotal receive £1800).

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Alison Smith, Direct Dial 463612, alsmith@swindon.gov.uk.

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- 3.2 In addition to the formal twinning arrangements, Swindon also has friendship agreements with Torun (Poland) and Chattanooga (USA).
- 3.3 Each of these groups organise their own fundraising, activities, events and exchange visits and usually give an update on their activities at each town twinning network meeting.
- 3.4 The Town Twinning Network was established in 1999 to provide a forum for discussion and the exchange of information as well as encouraging the development of other international links. In addition to those twins and friendship links mentioned in 3.1 and 3.2 above, a number of other organisations involved in twinning activities regularly attend the town twinning network meetings. They are:-
- Wroughton – St Germain les Corbiel Twinning Association
 - Highworth-Pontorson Twinning Association
 - Geminid
 - Potential link with Mauritius
 - Potential link with Somaliland
- 3.5 The economic benefits of twinning can include activities and events that generate interest in the town and bring money into Swindon either in grants or by visitors. Some examples of economic activity and income brought into the town over the last 20 years include:
- Swindon / Ocotol Link organises between 3 and 4 events per year and which raises £5,000 - 6,000 of which 20% goes in funding hall hire, materials, printing, travel and tickets. Similar activities by the many linking groups in and around Swindon would reflect this level of economic activity.
 - One successful EU bid brought to the town £25,000 that paid for a youth work project.
 - Another successful EU bid brought in sufficient funding to redesign two streets in the Manchester Road area as well as attracting several EU partner workshops.
 - There have been two EU twinning conferences over the years bringing 25+ visitors for several days and included conference venue bookings. One of these conferences focussed upon the benefits to tourism and business opportunities arising through twinning and was organised by the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association.
 - Continental street markets held during the above conference.
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- A recent visit by the Saltzgitter football team brought 10-12 visitors for several days to the town, all spending money in Swindon.
 - Adult education partnerships and EU funded projects have brought to Swindon around 5 conferences involving 10 - 20 visitors on each occasion which lasted over 4-5 days.
 - Visitors have returned to Swindon to study English.
 - A number of work experience exchanges involving apprentices, office workers and students have taken place.
 - Links with South America have established an annual event at the Arts Centre attracting large audiences 'South America Comes to Swindon.'
 - Many schools have brought over teachers through EU funded programmes bringing income into the town.
- 3.6 The Town Twinning Network believes that the Council is well placed to access EU funding, either as a lead body or as a partner. There are a number of EU Funded programmes that are available for twinning activities including:
- Youth exchanges
 - Education and Training programmes
 - Language programmes
 - School Teacher and student exchange Programmes
 - Culture
- 3.7 Forms to apply for EU funding are incredibly detailed and complex and a certain level of knowledge and expertise is required in order to submit a successful application. The level of grant available for each programme is different and a detailed knowledge of the amount of grant available for each programme is also necessary as applications have been known to fail in the past as not enough money had been requested. It may be that external specialist help could assist groups in maximising their chances of getting a grant and bringing money into the town.
- 3.8 The Town Twinning Network also felt that the Council could communicate its Civic support for all European and international applications being made by organisations, schools and community groups. In this way, the Mayor's Office is aware of applications from the start and it communicates the message that the Mayor's Office takes seriously Swindon's Civic role in supporting international links. On that basis, it is suggested that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the day be each appointed as members of the Town Twinning Network, *ex officio*.
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- 3.9 There is the potential for twinning activities to complement the economic strategy in that international links have already been established and officers could look to make use of these existing connections in order to generate business within Swindon. The Civic link with Salzgitter also offers further opportunity for links to be made between businesses in Swindon and Salzgitter that could lead to economic investment within Swindon.
- 3.10 Whilst the twinning and link organisations that currently make up the Town Twinning Network could provide some help in providing initial contacts, they do not have the resources or expertise to generate business links. The majority of the groups were set up to develop cultural links between two towns and their main activities include exchange visits with a small amount of fundraising to enable these visits to occur. The members of the Town Twinning Network are, however, willing to support the implementation of the Council's economic strategy where it is possible.
- 3.11 The Town Twinning Network would support the Council using its economic development partner, Forward Swindon, to promote better economic links with our international links, partners, friends and seek support through maximising the opportunity of EU funding to support this and other International link activity.
- 3.12 Over the last five years, the town twinning network has reviewed their purpose and constitution and have actively encouraged attendance at their meetings from the youth forum, schools, police and the Chamber of Commerce. Unfortunately, attempts to encourage young people to participate in the network have been unsuccessful and the Chamber of Commerce have not attended meetings for a number of years.
- 3.13 Officer support is limited and, currently, the Council's commitment to supporting the Network is to provide a clerk to service the meetings. The Chair of the Network has requested additional officer support in the past but these requests were unable to be met within existing resources.
- 3.14 A small town twinning grants budget is available and currently stands at about £5,000. Groups can apply for a grant of up to £1,000 but once the £5,000 has been spent, there will be no additional budget available for grant funding.
- 3.15 Civic visits to Salzgitter occur every other year and the next visit would be held during 2012/2013. Swindon Borough Council only pays for the cost of flights to Salzgitter but pay all costs when visitors from Salzgitter come to Swindon. The total budget for Civic twinning is £2,000 per annum. In the past, any excess from this budget was put towards the town twinning grants budget. However, due to increased travel and accommodation costs, this is no longer the case.
- 3.16 Members of the Town Twinning Network were asked for their views as part of this review. A copy of the responses received is attached as Appendix 1, but, in summary, the main issues raised were:-

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- Better recognition of town twinning activities and benefits by departmental heads and Lead Members.
- Greater promotion of twinning activities within the town.
- More focus upon the economic benefits of twinning to Swindon.
- Better resources available to access EU and other funding.
- Greater involvement from the Mayoral office/Mayoral attendance at events etc.
- The value of the Town Twinning Network in helping to support the work of individual groups and to provide access to and an understanding of the functions of the Council.

3.17 Further discussion took place at the Town Twinning Network meeting held on 13th June 2012. Members of the Network were very clear that, in order to undertake twinning properly and effectively, there needed to be a clear commitment, from both Councillors and officers, to the value of twinning and an understanding of the social and economic benefits that twinning could bring to Swindon.

3.18 Councillor Dart, the late Chair of the Town Twinning Network, fully endorsed those comments made by members of the Network that commitment and support from the Cabinet, Councillors and from officers is essential in order to continue with town twinning activities effectively. Having being involved in Town Twinning for a number of years, she was keen for twinning to be revitalised and for the social and economic benefits to be recognised.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 Cabinet may decide to withdraw any support for town twinning.

5 Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications relating to this report. Any future activity that has financial implications would be subject to a separate report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 This report has no specific Legal or Human Rights implications.

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

5.3 This report has no specific implications relating to staff, sustainability, health, rural, crime and disorder.

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Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 5.4 There are no specific links between Town Twinning and One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed for this report as no changes to staffing, budget or service eligibility criteria are proposed.

Risk Management

- 5.6 A risk assessment has not been undertaken.

6 Consultees

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

7 Background Papers

None.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Feedback from members of the Town Twinning Network regarding the review.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Forward Plan / Work Programme for October 2012.

Feedback received regarding the Town Twinning Review requested by Cabinet.

Roger Gower (Swindon Salzgitter Group):

The Town Twinning Network offers the following important support to an individual twinning association such as ours:

- The existence of the TTN shows the commitment the SDC has for twinning.
- If the TTN didn't exist there would be problems in operating a twinning group simply because there would be the need to identify who one needs to deal with. This would be especially exacerbated with a change of officers in the twinning group.
- There are opportunities to meet with other local twinning groups and exchange ideas on the most effective ways of running a twinning group.
- The TTN offers individual twinning groups an excellent way of understanding the functions of the Council and get advice on whom to talk when Council assistance is needed.
- Although advice can be gained from existing long-standing members of our association, the TTN has corporate knowledge of how individual associations have run in the past. This can improve the efficiency of how these groups are managed now and in the future.
- The modest funds made available to the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association through the TTN have been vital in allowing us to fulfil our commitments to hosting visitors from Germany.

Mike Ide (Wroughton Twinning Association):

- *What benefits your group has gained/hopes to gain from twinning activities (social, economic etc)*
Wroughton is a 'Peoples Twinning' group of people who are interested in the life of people in our partner community. We benefit by participating in our exchange visits to France, from experiencing life in French homes in a community similar to Wroughton and from educational and cultural visits during our visits and 'en route' to St. Germain. We also benefit from enjoying our social events in Swindon and devising a social programme when we entertain a group from France when we are proud to show them our everyday lives in our homes.
- *How you feel Swindon and its residents have benefitted from your twinning activities*
The benefits to the group (as given above) devolve to our members who, while mostly from Wroughton, all live in Swindon including Highworth, Toothill, Lawn and Pinehurst.
- *How do you see twinning developing over the next 10 years*

Interest in Twinning has declined since 1980 and is now in its last stages. Our members are mostly retired and we do not expect to be able to undertake or receive a group visit of twenty plus persons again. We intend to continue our social programme and explore the opportunity for small-scale exchange visits. A parallel situation exists in France.

- *What support/resources do you need from the Council in order to be successful*

We were grateful for the financial support in the last few years when our membership became old and few in number. We were not as energetic in fund-raising as in our younger days and the economics of coach hire when the numbers reduced from 30 to below 20 made money even tighter. However we don't anticipate needing support in future as we will not be running big events any more.

- *What could be done differently*

The Town Twinning Network could be wound up to save council-tax.

- *How do you feel the Town Twinning Network supports the activities of your group*

When a twinning forum was originally set up (around 1997?) on the initiative of David Martin, there was a useful exchange of ideas between several 'Peoples Twinning' groups who were alike in wanting to run exchange visits on a shoestring (after a bit of fundraising) and who enjoyed being guests and hosts with foreigners in private homes. Once the group evolved into this one, run on council lines, another model of twinning took over in which people stay in hotels, travel by taxi, and claim expenses. This is not twinning as we see it and we feel the Network is not relevant to our twinning any more.

Bruce Clarke (Swindon Ocotal Link):

What benefits your group has gained/hopes to gain from twinning activities (social, economic etc)

Firstly, I would hope the review goes beyond the formal Twinning arrangements to include school links, community links and other business links.

Twinning has given our group an opportunity to work together on a project of civic and community value. It has provided a foundation experience of international awareness for the many hundreds young people who have participated in twinning activities.

- How you feel Swindon and its residents have benefitted from your twinning activities

Schools, community lunch clubs, old people's homes, Rotary, Festival of Literature, Swindon Festivals, Swindon Mela, Duke of Edinburgh's awards,

Swindon Library, Torun and Saltzgitter twinning groups and Mayor's office have all benefited. Particular town wide support was gained during the Evening Advertiser appeal that raised £30,000 and 7 tons of aid to the town following the Hurricane Mitch disaster; aid that was transported by an RAF Lynham hercules aircraft.

- How do you see twinning developing over the next 10 years

Without a clear strategic position within council's business plan twinning will continue as it is at the moment; based on the initiative of a few people. If given a larger role the activists are capable of delivering a more inclusive civic service. The adoption of service agreements in return for resources, both in kind and or financial, would bring council officers into the discussion about what the various link organisations can do. The role of twinning will develop into establishing international links probably not twinning in its traditional sense but working links that meet educational, business and community interests.

- What support/resources do you need from the Council in order to be successful

Firstly, we need recognition by Department Heads and Lead Members of the potential resources that twinning can bring to the Council. The council is not buying a service rather it is engaging the support of activists to further the international profile of the town. In-kind networking resources would be very helpful. a) Inclusion in Swindon News about Twinning/Linking activities b) Provision of meeting rooms and minuting / secretarial support c) invitation to twinning groups to work with economic and social projects. d) Invitation by schools to provide input into citizenship, history and geography themes. e) Access to printing and design services f) support with an annual twinning/linking event free room or hall facilities g) access to the Council's website

- What could be done differently

I think the starting point is to recognise that twinning or linking will continue to happen regardless of the Council's position or support. This is because twinning arises from the interests of communities, schools, businesses and clubs to forge meaningful links with international partners. The term Twinning maybe a problem. See the activity as an **International Relations Network** would open up the meeting and acknowledge the Mayor's civic role in receiving and facilitating exchanges.

Given that international links emerge all the time the Council might wish to establish a sustainable policy that included:

A stronger Mayoral input into any international visits.

Formal recognition by the Mayor of linking groups ad higher level backing to important international relationships. This would require those international

linking groups or activities, that wish to be recognised, to meet minimal reporting and structural conditions in return for use of the Civic logo, Mayoral presence at events and so on. Possibly some sort of a 'recognised by the Mayor's office' status.

Help with communication, bringing together linking groups, marketing and raising the profile of twinning/linking, celebrating the diverse mix of links. All of this goes beyond the formal civic 'twinning' to include all the international links.

The Town Twinning Network has the official responsibility of reporting on Swindon Borough's formal twinning links. This can't be changed but what could be done differently would be to run bi-monthly meetings with an agenda geared to hearing about twinning or international activities from across the Borough and beyond with a mind to scheduling events and producing a news update based on the minutes. These updates be circulated to media and news networks using the boroughs communication networks and website. This function of circulating news and notices of events would attract more members and would greatly assist groups to promote their activities and successes.

- How do you feel the Town Twinning Network supports the activities of your group

The network offers its members an important connection to the Mayor's office and the status of being a civic organisation. It places a responsibility on its members to report on activities in a public setting and therefore increases the accountability of the organisation. The small amount of funding is helpful for specific occasions. However, the network offers the minimum level of support and it struggles to gain the attention of Department Heads and Lead Members.

Conclusion

With no real increase in resources the network could take on a bigger role of being an international relations network, the council could identify how the various groups and activities can support the council's work, greater use of existing services providing in-kind support together with an agreed budget.

Ray Fisher (former Councillor on Town Twinning Network):

I think the Network has been useful for those who network through it. It could be really useful if it were used by designated Cabinet member/s to coordinate all the networking that goes on around the town, Trade Missions, Business Members' Clubs, Japanese lessons – the opportunities are limitless.

Councillor Kevin Small

I support Ray's comments and would also add that Town twinning can give a social and economic benefit to the borough. SBC through the TTN need to promote twinning more, senior council members and officers need to support twinning, and we should look to make more of EU funding to support this activity.

A number of Local Authorities were contacted to find out their arrangements with regards to Town Twinning activities. Only one response was received from Reading Borough Council:

'Reading has four twin towns and links with others, it was felt that while useful to have the representatives from each of the town twinning organisations to get together four times a year, it amounted to little more than an information exchange, Councillors who were appointed rarely turned up to the meetings, attendance was negligible, some of the twinning organisations had very small memberships and couldn't send any representation so as part of the budget cuts it was felt that it wasn't worth the while for the Committee team to continue its support.

Most of the twinning activities were arranged by, or certainly advertised through the Council's promotions team who attended the meetings anyway, and that is now the sum of the officer support for the group. I don't think we even appoint any councillors to the body any more. If it still meets the meetings are organised by themselves, although I suspect council rooms can be made available if they so wished.'

Roger Gower (Swindon Salzgitter Group)

First, my apologies but **I'll not be able to attend the meeting on 13 June** because, of course, that will be the first day of the visit by the Swindon/Salzgitter group to Germany.

Secondly, thanks for the notes of the last meeting and the various inputs made to inform the review of the Town Twinning Network. I read with interest the comments made by other members. Bruce Clarke's comments were particularly appropriate. While some of Mike Ides' comments had resonance with the Swindon/Salzgitter Association, I do not subscribe to the view that difficulties in making arrangements for exchange visits mean that such visits have to be curtailed or abandoned. I firmly believe that if what Associations are doing is not working and/or funding becomes increasingly hard to find (from the Council or other sources) we have to seek more innovative ways of maintaining the visit programmes. The Town Twinning Network is pivotal in stimulating the novel approaches we all need. Without exchanges there can be no twinning. I therefore still subscribe to the value of the work that the Town Twinning Network does and believe, as Bruce Clarke suggests, an

important approach must be greater involvement of the Mayor and the Council so as to give high profile to the importance that the Council gives to making twinning successful and to ensuring that contacts between Swindon and the various twinned towns can be better coordinated.

My own comments reflected my experience of the Town Twinning Network and seem to be a restatement of the Terms of Reference. However, this just happened without my having referenced the latter. I hope that, nevertheless, what I said will be of help in the debate.

Economic Strategy Consultation and Adoption

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

Author: Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture
Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The Draft Swindon Economic Strategy was produced as part of the One Swindon framework to outline the commitment of the Council and business to creating the conditions for good economic growth in Swindon and deliver the economic future of the town and its hinterland. It represents a shared commitment through agreed actions to the “Right skills and the right jobs, in the right places”.
- 1.2 The Economic Strategy also forms an important part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan, which is a spatial representation of economic growth aspirations for Swindon and forms the statutory planning framework.
- 1.3 The draft strategy was endorsed for the purposes of wider consultation by Cabinet on the 17th October 2012. The consultation included the Strategy being made available online, presentations at numerous business events and networks outlined in more detail below, and a 3 week period where formal representations could be made in writing to the Council.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to report back on the comments received, advise on Officers responses to those comments and recommend changes where appropriate to the Strategy. These details are contained in Appendix 1.
- 1.5 Finally, the report asks that Cabinet confirm its endorsement of the newly revised strategy and recommend it be adopted by Full Council on the 17th January 2013.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the positive reception the Economic Strategy has had and the constructive comments received in response to the consultation.
- 2.2 Authorise the Head of Commissioning Economy and Economy, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture, to agree officer responses to received comments.
- 2.3 Endorse the revised Strategy and recommend its adoption by Full Council on the 17th January 2013.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Paddy Bradley, Direct Dial 01793 465744, pbradley@swindon.gov.uk.

Economic Strategy Consultation and Adoption

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 Prior to the production of the draft Strategy, several events were held garnering support and input from business community with a view to informing the priorities and actions set out in the Strategy.
- 3.2 These Forums, and the business representatives on the Steering Group set up to guide the process, established that further, broader consultation would aid in a wider cross section of business engagement and support to the strategy.
- 3.3 To that end the Council and forward Swindon have taken the opportunity to consult more widely on the draft Economic Strategy in advance of its proposed adoption at Full Council enabling the Strategy to be tested by the business community and other stakeholders.
- 3.4 Specifically, the Strategy was presented at a range of networks including the Swindon Development Delivery Panel, the Swindon Investment Group, the Swindon Business West, Influence (the Local Economic Partnership), the Swindon Chamber Business breakfast and the SWLEP's working sub-group for Finance and Business Services, during October and early November 2012.
- 3.5 The Strategy was also made available on the Council and Forward Swindon's websites offering an opportunity for the business community to feedback formally, through written consultation. This period was open from the 23rd October to the 14th November.
- 3.6 The presentations were well received, with various expressions of support for the process and the strategy received and minuted. These minutes, where available, can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

4. Formal Written Comments

- 4.1 With regards the written comments received, there was a broad range of respondents largely representing the private sector. Some were made personally, others on behalf of a network or organisation.
- 4.2 The comments were positive in the main, with many recognising the Strategy as a positive signal of intent for the boroughs economic future and further, expressing keen support for the Strategy moving forward. Many comments included offers to work with the Council and Forward Swindon in order to jointly achieve our aims.
- 4.3 On the subject of achieving our aims and specifically around performance management and the ability to measure progress/outputs it was clear that respondents were keen for the governance arrangements around the Action Plan

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and those individuals responsible for workstreams and deliverables to be made clear. While some thought the Action Plan should be more detailed with a quantifiable target for each of the 'impacts on the economy' to help prioritise efforts others promoted a more devolved approach whereby simple high level measurables were contained in the Action plan with 'sub targets' if required as discrete projects moved forward.

- 4.4 Further, in answer to a request for individuals to be names in the Economic Strategy, it was felt that a nominated delivery agency i.e. Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council or private sector was sufficient for this level of strategy. The governance arrangements put in place to progress actions and workstreams will clearly nominate a responsible individual to ensure accountability for progress.
- 4.5 There was some doubt as to how realistic expectations around the Low Carbon Economy were and concern that they reflect an aspiration unconnected to the economic realities that Swindon is contending with. In response, it was advised that the Council has been working with major energy users in Swindon over the past 18 months and key messages emerging are that issues around energy cost, security and CO₂ reduction are increasingly important competitiveness factors.
- 4.6 In response to this, the Council adopted a Swindon Sustainable Energy Framework which a was prepared in close co-operation with key businesses and stakeholders in Swindon including Forward Swindon, BMW Group, Honda UK, Honda Trading, Kilbride, Network Rail and the Great Western Hospital. Whilst the Framework recognises that energy and CO₂ reduction targets are key drivers for business and sets out a supportive and joined up approach to this, it also highlights a whole new area of business opportunity around the low carbon economy, an example being the expertise on hydrogen transport being developed in Swindon. An Energy Partnership has been set up to steer this and leverage local expertise already in Swindon.
- 4.7 The issue identified most often involved the need for effective and accessible Higher Education provision. One described our lack of a university as the main contributor to the bad image of Swindon, a deterrent to many people moving into Swindon, and a drag on the future economic growth of Swindon. There was support for the principle of provision of local HE, especially if tailored to our economic needs / opportunities and in conjunction with Swindon College / New College. In response it was made clear that the Higher Education Strategy is a priority for the Council.
- 4.8 A report is also being considered at the December Cabinet meeting regarding a Higher Education Strategy for Swindon. This report recognises how crucial access to higher education is for skills and economic capacity. The Strategy promotes a short, medium and long term action plan to firstly set up a business

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oriented Swindon higher education partnership, secondly to identify a location and means of funding for a higher education centre in the Borough at which the existing degree awarding providers and any new providers may operate with high quality business oriented courses; and to project manage a parallel long-term plan to establish an independent higher education institution by 2026, subject to government policy framework. As part of this planning, the feasibility of digital based provision as an alternative to a campus based provision will be assessed.

- 4.9 It isn't felt that further detail on the contents of the Higher Education Strategy are necessary within the high level Economic Strategy and that a set of very clear actions to be pursued by the Council and partners are already incorporated in the Action Plan reflecting the primacy the Strategy gives to opportunities for young people.
- 4.10 There were mentions of the importance of a single message about Swindon's priorities and investment where necessary to facilitate economic progress.
- 4.11 In common with the Town Centre Masterplan, two comments were received pertaining to the Canal through central Swindon. The delivery of the canal is not currently felt to be a realistic objective in the time frame that this strategy covers. The Council will continue to engage with the Canal Trust to examine the potential for some, or all, of the canal to be delivered as part of the town centre regeneration in line with the Town Centre masterplan.

Amendments Made

- 4.12 It was felt that the Strategy could usefully make reference to the contribution that a strong economy with high employment and reduced dependency can make to the health and wellbeing in Swindon. This has been incorporated at paragraph 1.5 of the Strategy.
- 4.13 In response to a call for more prominence to be given to start up's we have further underlined the importance of start up support with adding wording at 2.14 of the Strategy.
- 4.14 It is recognised that the Strategy has not majored on transport given the breadth of the actions associated with Transport Strategy in general. Wording to further underline the strategic importance of transport has been added at 2.32 to say that Across the borough, sustained efforts to improve its transport network have encouraged more people to use public transport, providing better access to employment areas and leisure facilities, and helping in the push to reduce carbon emissions from car travel.

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Adoption

- 4.15 Following the amendments made above it is requested that Cabinet endorse the final Economic Strategy, included as amended and in its final form at Appendix 3, and recommend it to Full Council for adoption.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Council could not adopt an Economic Strategy and attempt to establishing the conditions for economic growth without a detailed overarching framework with which to coordinate efforts. It is difficult to see this approach being as successful.

6. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial or procurement implications to this report although one of the recommendations is that the Council uses its considerable spending power and asset base to promote economic growth in Swindon. This has the potential to change how we use our resources and procure services and contracts in the future.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 6.2 Legal and Human Rights implications have been taken into account in the drafting of this report.

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

- 6.3 The Economic Strategy will require all staff to consider the wider implications of their activities with regard to how they impact on local economic performance. Sustainability issues are central to future economic performance as the strategy sets out a role for a low carbon sector within Swindon. Future economic performance will directly impact upon health, rural issues and crime and disorder within Swindon.

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 6.4 The One Swindon theme: 'We can all benefit from a growing economy and a better town centre' is our central priority but successful implementation of the Strategy will make a major contribution to all areas. The Economic Strategy is also a core component of the Corporate Strategy and should act as a driver for future Council activities, asset management and strategic planning.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Paddy Bradley, Direct Dial 01793 465744, pbradley@swindon.gov.uk.

Economic Strategy Consultation and Adoption

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 6.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been completed and does not identify any adverse impacts of adopting this strategy. A copy is available from the report author.

Risk Management

- 6.6 The main risk that the Economic Strategy faces is if it is seen as one of many strategies that the Council is responsible for rather than a principal strategy driving its work both internally and with external partners and stakeholders. This could lead to the allocation of scarce resources not being maximised in terms of the economic activity it generates and confidence being lost in the private sector as to whether Swindon is a place to do business in.

7. Consultees

- 7.1 The Board Director Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 None

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Consultation comments and responses
9.2 Appendix 2 – Meeting minutes
9.3 Appendix 3 – An Economic Strategy for Swindon

10. Key Decision/Decision in Forward Plan

- 10.1 This is not a Key Decision as the Council will adopt the final Strategy and is included in the Cabinet Forward Plan/ Work Programme for October 2012.

Appendix 1 - Draft Swindon Economic Strategy Consultation Responses

Respondent	Comments	Response <i>Amendments in Italics</i>
1	I have just seen the draft economic strategy that was included in this month's core brief. I am a Swindon resident and was not aware that this consultation was in place. Can you please advise how this has been communicated to residents – I have probably just missed it but am interested to know where to look for future consultations	<p>The Draft Economic Strategy was available on our website at http://www.swindon.gov.uk/cd/cd-consultations/cd-consultations-current/Pages/cd-Consultations-EconomicStrategy.aspx . In order to publish the Economic Strategy alongside the Local Plan, we had a small window to promote the ES in order to ready it for ratification by Full Council in January. The ES forms part of the Evidence Base for the Local Plan which will be out for public consultation for a period of no less than 8 weeks in the new year. You will be able to find details of this consultation at www.swindon.gov.uk/corestrategy</p> <p><u>Amends</u></p> <p><u>1.5 Added Wording</u></p> <p>The aspiration behind the Strategy is that Swindon becomes a better quality place offering opportunities to all, <i>while acknowledging the contribution a strong economy with high employment and reduced dependency can make to health and wellbeing in Swindon.</i></p>
2	<p>Having browsed through the document, I feel I need to make a comment for a proper university in Swindon.</p> <p>Having lived in Swindon for 12 years and worked for a hi-tech company, it's to my surprise that, given the size of the town and its location, Swindon still does not have a proper university. This is a main contributor to the bad image of Swindon, and a deterrent to many people moving into Swindon, and future economic growth of Swindon.</p> <p>We have EPSRC here, we have a number of hi-profile companies here, we also need a proper HE sector here too. I'd offer my strong support a plan for a proper university (UTC is not enough), either located in the town centre, or else where. This will raise Swindon's profile and provide a much needed</p>	<p>Your observations regarding access to higher education are echoed in our own work. There is strong evidence of the need to increase higher skills levels and qualifications to support the anticipated growth in the local economy. The gaps between Swindon and its competitors outside the South West are widening. Its main weaknesses relate to skills as manifested in slowing productivity growth; rising unemployment and poor workforce qualifications. A lack of workforce skills can deter inward investment in higher skilled knowledge intensive industries with employers investing in areas where such skills are more readily available, leaving a “low skills” equilibrium in the local economy. Skills mismatches manifested through unemployment mean that the potential of the local population is not realised.</p> <p>The low skills base of the workforce represents a key potential weakness in</p>

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	<p>academic environment.</p> <p>Also I'd like to call for a renewed bid for city status. Given the location, size of Swindon, and the ambition of her people, we deserve this. And it surely will help improving Swindon's image.</p>	<p>the Swindon economy, which can impact on the potential of local employers in higher added value sectors to grow and increase productivity. Swindon's graduate population is growing at a lower rate than average, which could make it less able to secure and retain emerging hi-tech sectors.</p> <p>Local employers will need significant numbers of recruits with higher level skills in order to meet their demand for higher skilled staff. Projected growth shows that the demand for managers, directors, professionals and technical staff will far outstrip demand for lower qualified staff, suggesting a considerable demand for a workforce with greater skills.</p> <p>The Higher Education Strategy for Swindon recognises how crucial access to higher education is for skills and economic capacity. The Strategy set out at 12th December Cabinet promotes a short, medium and long term action plan to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. firstly set up a business oriented Swindon higher education partnership, 2. secondly to identify a location and means of funding for a higher education centre in the Borough at which the existing degree awarding providers and any new providers may operate with high quality business oriented courses at level supported by the higher education partnership; and 3. lastly to project manage a parallel long-term plan to establish an independent higher education institution by 2026, subject to government policy framework. As part of this planning, the feasibility of digital based provision as an alternative to a campus based provision will be assessed. <p>Swindon and Wiltshire are currently working together to submit an expression of interest to central government under Round 2 of the City Deal programme. Government has agreed to devolve new powers to England's largest cities in a series of unique deals that will help them invest in growth, improve local workers' skills and create jobs, support local businesses, control budgets and improve critical infrastructure. Under this round, government is</p>
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	<p>interested in bids from economic areas, which may cross existing Council boundaries but, crucially have the potential to help drive economic growth. Our bid is focussing on engagement with government to help overcome barriers to growth, increase the number of jobs and raise the skill levels of residents in the area.</p> <p>It should be noted that the City Deal is not the same as city status. We recognise the ambition for Swindon's profile to be improved and this image and perception was a strong driver for the production of an Economic Strategy which further strengthens the town and promotes its success.</p> <p>As it stands there is not sufficient consensus on the merits and demerits of applying for City Status to support a bid at this time. Furthermore, a recent round of bids for City Status, awarded in 2012, has just closed.</p>	<p>The Cabinet of Swindon Borough Council supports the proposal to enhance higher education provision within the Borough. Whilst acknowledging that the current economic conditions are not ideal in which to establish a University of Swindon, the Cabinet retains the ambition to achieve such a goal. It has commissioned a working group to develop further its higher education strategy and Cabinet will receive a report on the group's proposals. The group has analysed patterns of participation in higher education. The cost of provision is clearly a factor affecting the choice of education and training options beyond the age of 19. The future higher education strategy needs to take into account how to build on cost-effective local provision and also to make use of digital technology to increase opportunities for online learning.</p> <p>The Economic Strategy recognises the importance of having appropriate support in place to encourage and sustain business start-ups, and this together with the strong emphasis on providing opportunities for young people means that we need to ensure the support that is put in place can be tailored specifically to the needs of young people. We will amend the Action Plan to reflect the fact that support needs to be tailored to the requirements of specific groups. The Action Plan makes provision for exploring options for</p>
	<p>There is much talk on HE provision to assist the local economy and young people through the plan.</p> <p>Whilst I support the principle of provision of local HE, especially if tailored to our economic needs / opportunities and in conjunction with Swindon College / New College, I am disappointed that there is no mention of encouraging start-up businesses, in particular for young people.</p> <p>A greater focus should have been on providing opportunities for young entrepreneurs. For examples, short-term, favourable lets in shops / offices / markets. Clustering, financial opportunities, support and championing.</p> <p>Swindon has always attracted graduates (we have more Bath University graduates than Bath), lets know stand apart as a hub for young entrepreneurs.</p> <p>SMEs both provide the lion share of employment and crucially will potentially be the next generation of major employers.</p> <p>Let's do something bold, unique and inspiring.</p>	

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		<p>developing start up support provision which addresses a gap in existing provision and can contribute to job creation and new business formation.</p> <p><u>Amends</u></p> <p><u>2.14 added wording ...Action to assist young people to start new businesses has paid dividends, with a small but growing number of successful small businesses having started life in the borough. The mix is diverse, ranging from on-line gamers to market traders.</u></p> <p><u>Priority Actions – Create a Place of Opportunity for Young People. Added wording</u></p> <p><u>Objective ... To deliver a coordinated system for connecting young people in schools to further education, apprenticeships, training, employment and new enterprise opportunities.</u></p> <p><u>Rationale ...So too will support to enable some young people to start their own business in the borough.</u></p>
4	<p>Re: Skills and Education – outflow of young people to universities. Currently the numbers of students applying for university places have dropped due to the cost of courses, your strategy does not address the issue around our local residents being able to afford the cost of attending university courses. Did the working party making any suggestions as to how some places could be locally funded of costs reduced through businesses/council offering to pay a percentage of the cost? If we want to encourage engineering students perhaps any reductions or funding assistances could be offered on these courses?</p> <p>Re: Ensure High Quality Communications, Transport Infrastructure and Services. If we wish to encourage young people living in the surrounding areas of Swindon to study in our town surely part of our plan should be to improve the public transport to and from these areas. Bus routes and timetables are reviewed continuously resulting in the reduction of services and very few run at times that would fit with the college course times.</p>	<p>The Cabinet of Swindon Borough Council supports the proposal to enhance higher education provision within the Borough. Whilst acknowledging that the current economic conditions are not ideal in which to establish a University of Swindon, the Cabinet retains the ambition to achieve such a goal. It has commissioned a working group to develop further its higher education strategy and Cabinet will receive a report on the group's proposals. The group has analysed patterns of participation in higher education. The cost of provision is clearly a factor affecting the choice of education and training options beyond the age of 19. The future higher education strategy needs to take into account how to build on cost-effective local provision and also to make use of digital technology to increase opportunities for online learning.</p> <p>Ensure High Quality Communications. Transport Infrastructure and Services</p> <p>The importance of ensuring easy access to education, training and employment opportunities is an important factor in improving the skills of the</p>

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	<p>Some local companies have mini bus runs perhaps a college bus could be funded to collect students?</p> <p>If education is high to the Swindon's economic success then maybe our colleges could run lunchtime taster courses from inside businesses or for non-working parents short afternoon sessions from within their children's school halls. An outreach programme to improve the skill base of Swindon's residents?</p> <p>Re: Delivering the Right Housing in the right Location. We have very limited space for new development surely we do not want to lose too much of the richness of the countryside we have around us that would attract people to our area?</p>	<p>work force. Young people in particular rely heavily on public transport to get to school, college and work. This is one reason why the Council and partners have been so keen to locate the proposed new UTC in the town centre, which is the hub of all transport. The need to work with bus operators to ensure there is a comprehensive, reliable and high quality service that connects residential areas and our main centres of education and employment is critical.</p> <p>Swindon recognises that its proximity to the countryside is part of its appeal. The Local Plan determines the spatial allocation of new homes following substantial and ongoing consultation with the public. In order to move forward Swindon must present housing opportunity and choice for new residents who will help bolster our economy while at the same time recognising the value afforded to us by our neighbouring countryside.</p>
<p>Page 5 Page 23</p>	<p>Item 1.2 I believe it is a mistake to make too much of the difficulties Swindon faces. The stats suggest the south of England has achieved relatively modest growth over the last 3 years and we are likely to see similar modest growth for the next few years. In essence this is the new reality in which we all operate, not great, but not that bad either. Swindon's relatively small public sector is likely to mean we are sheltered from the more serious public sector retrenching and should be highlighted as a clear advantage for the town in the introduction to your report rather than a small foot note at the end.</p> <p>Swindon in 2026 In my view, any statement contained within this vision needs to be rigorously sense checked for reality, in particular:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea of low carbon economy needs thinking through, at the moment it feels like a politically correct statement with minimal substance / evidence to back it up • Is there a genuine commitment & financial resources to deliver a theatre & arts complex for Swindon. If not SBC are setting themselves up for another embarrassing fall and in my view should only be in the report if you can test and satisfy yourself on the reality of this aspiration 	<p>Any effective strategy must be based on a sound evidence base. As part of this, the work to develop the strategy examined the relative strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, relative to competitor locations. Through this analysis we sought to establish those areas where we have a competitive advantage, and can exploit for the future, and those elements of weakness that we need to address.</p> <p>Swindon's aspirations concerning the low carbon economy are a recognition of the contribution that this sector can make to future economic growth in the area. Considering the existing location of Johnson Matthey and the UK's first hydrogen refuelling station at Honda, there exists real opportunity to develop an industrial cluster based around the emerging use of the hydrogen fuel cell technology and all its applications. Furthermore, we are starting to explore the potential that local energy generation can play in lowering costs for existing and future users to give Swindon a competitive advantage.</p> <p>The Council has been working with major energy users in Swindon over the past 18 months and key messages emerging are that issues around energy cost, security and CO₂ reduction are increasingly important competitiveness factors. In response to this, the Council adopted a Swindon Sustainable Energy Framework which a was prepared in close co-operation with key businesses</p>

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	<p>Again In my view, of the 6 priorities stated, positioning Swindon as a hub of engineering and manufacturing technology has the greatest credibility, traction and benefit and should be pursued with real vigour. The others feel a little woolly to me.</p> <p>I am pleased to see an action plan to turn the vision into reality. There are a number of items put in the key action column, which feel to me like preparing for action, for instance; <i>carry out a feasibility study, assess feasibility, prepare development brief, develop a strategy</i> etc – all very worthy but do not in themselves bring any real benefit to the people and businesses of Swindon. I would like to see putting these statements put in a pre action column.</p> <p>Similarly, I would like to see within the responsibility column, one organisation highlighted as the lead organisation which is ultimately accountable for seeing through the action to a conclusion. At Forward Swindon, we have agreed three key objectives with our funder and will need to ensure the actions to which we commit are complimentary to our three objectives, I will also be asking for an individuals within Forward Swindon to be named and who will take responsibility for ensuring we deliver on each of our commitments within the plan.</p>	<p>and stakeholders in Swindon including Forward Swindon, BMW Group, Honda UK, Honda Trading, Kilbride, Network Rail and the Great Western Hospital. Whilst the Framework recognises that energy and CO₂ reduction targets are key drivers for business and sets out a supportive and joined up approach to this, it also highlights a whole new area of business opportunity around the low carbon economy, an example being the expertise on hydrogen transport being developed in Swindon. An Energy Partnership has been set up to steer this and leverage local expertise already in Swindon.</p> <p>Building on this, the Council was recently among 30 Local Authorities awarded funding to complete a “Future City” feasibility study, assessing the potential to integrate city systems as a basis for future economic growth. Undertaken with a range of local, national and international companies, the work builds on key low carbon projects in Swindon around energy, ICT and transport.</p> <p>Swindon’s low carbon economy is therefore already taking shape, and the range of local businesses, organisations and initiatives involved in this sector create a firm foundation for future growth.</p> <p>Both the Economic Strategy and the Town Centre Masterplan identified our image and our cultural offer as a barrier to Swindon’s successful growth. The strength of our Town Centre and its role as a destination will directly impact on people’s decision to move to Swindon. This importing of skills and occupational strength and depth will be essential as we put measures in place to grow our own. This will take time, and meanwhile we need to attract skills and talent to Swindon to bolster the labour pool for existing and potential business. The Action Plan clearly states that a feasibility study is necessary to establish the funding opportunities around a new cultural complex.</p> <p>Feasibilities are a crucial and prudent part of identifying a projects chance of success. They are deemed the right way to progress some of the aspirations enshrined within the strategy.</p> <p>The naming of organisations rather than individuals is appropriate for what is an external facing document. Internally, our governance arrangements will</p>
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		ensure responsibilities for workstreams are clear.
6	<p>The basis of my concerns relate to the following matters:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purpose - this needs to be specifically identified and explained. Is the document for internal, rather than external, use only? What I mean by this is will the document be seen by those outside the Borough? 2. Spatial - the document does not attempt to define the are to which it relates. There is reference to Swindon's urban centre and rural areas (Paragraph 2.28) in the document but these are not identified and explained. This is also the case for the Town Centre. 3. Involvement - the document indicates that the main parties involved in its preparation were Swindon BC and Forward Swindon. Who are the other parties in the Steering Group? 4. Economy and current economic conditions - the document makes reference to Swindon in 2026 but does not seem to explain how it got there. It would be helpful if the document set the scene (rather than relying on Appendices) with reference to the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business base (explain the role played by small, medium and large companies); Employment and Unemployment Structure; Skills, Qualifications and Training; Self containment and commuting. <p>It seems to me that the document needs to state the obvious and provide more explanation to certain statements. The document, for example, makes reference to companies having bought into the low carbon vision for Swindon. Who are these companies?</p> <p>I must say that I am a bit surprised about the statement made</p>	<p>The Economic Strategy will be an external facing document which promotes Swindon, makes clear our aspirations and how business can help us achieve them and signals a clear commitment to action.</p> <p>The Economic Strategy refers to the borough of Swindon. We will see if we need to clarify this in the document.</p> <p>The Steering Group comprised both public and private sector representatives including Swindon Influence, Swindon and Wiltshire LEP representation. The strategy has been formulated with the input of a wide range of business and civic leaders.</p> <p>The Economic Strategy shares the same time horizon as the Swindon Local Plan 2026.</p> <p>With regard the format of the document it was felt that a good strategy sets out why one is needed, where one wants to get to and how one gets there. As a result the context was incorporated at the rear of the document.</p> <p>Swindon's aspirations concerning the low carbon economy are a recognition of the contribution that this sector can make to future economic growth in the area. Considering the existing location of Johnson Matthey and the UK's first hydrogen refuelling station at Honda, there exists real opportunity to achieve clustering around the hydrogen sector. Furthermore, we are starting to explore the potential that local energy generation can play in lowering costs for existing and future users to give Swindon a competitive advantage.</p>

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	<p>in paragraph 2.27. It is not my experience that the Swindon's planning system is flexible and responsive. Maybe you need to give examples of where this has been successful.</p> <p>The SWOT analysis is helpful but how does the document seek to address the negative (weaknesses and threats) features of the Borough?</p> <p>Finally, the document, at paragraph 1.2, refers to the emerging Core Strategy (now identified as the Local Plan). The relevant Policies in this emerging document are EC1 to EC5. Given the importance of the emerging Local Plan it seems to me that it needs to be much more of an integral part of the Economic Strategy and Action Plan. The emerging Local Plan is mentioned in passing.</p>	<p>The Council has been working with major energy users in Swindon over the past 18 months and key messages emerging are that issues around energy cost, security and CO₂ reduction are increasingly important competitiveness factors. In response to this, the Council adopted a Swindon Sustainable Energy Framework which a was prepared in close co-operation with key businesses and stakeholders in Swindon including Forward Swindon, BMW Group, Honda UK, Honda Trading, Kilbride, Network Rail and the Great Western Hospital. Whilst the Framework recognises that energy and CO₂ reduction targets are key drivers for business and sets out a supportive and joined up approach to this, it also highlights a whole new area of business opportunity around the low carbon economy, an example being the expertise on hydrogen transport being developed in Swindon. An Energy Partnership has been set up to steer this and leverage local expertise already in Swindon.</p> <p>Building on this, the Council was recently among 30 Local Authorities awarded funding to complete a "Future City" feasibility study, assessing the potential to integrate city systems as a basis for future economic growth. The work builds on key low carbon projects in Swindon around energy, ICT and transport and the bid was formulated in conjunction with several companies including AEE renewables, Bristol and Bath Science Park, BOC, Elementenergy, EON, Honda, Johnson Matthey Fuel Cells, Network Rail and SSOE amongst others.</p> <p>Swindon's low carbon economy is therefore already taking shape, and the range of local businesses, organisations and initiatives involved in this sector create a firm foundation for future growth.</p> <p>Swindon 2026 is the aspiration but Swindon has been making great strides with its planning service. Both the Swindon Investment Group and the Swindon Development Delivery Panel have been positive about the process</p>
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		surrounding the emerging Local Plan and the draft Economic Strategy and have registered their support for the ES. We will ensure that it is very clear that the ES and Local Plan work together to deliver for the future of Swindon and will strengthen this if necessary.
7	<p>I would make the following observations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A comprehensive report. 2. Swindon in 2026 – I would take what is offered. 3. Action Plan has arguably too many priorities. The responsibilities for delivery are too bland, e.g. SBC or Forward Swindon – which departments and/or named individuals that can be held to account. Dates by which activities have to be delivered and how their success or otherwise is measured. <p>Its credibility will be determined by outcomes</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>3.The naming of organisations rather than individuals is appropriate for what is an external facing document. Internally, our governance arrangements will ensure responsibilities for workstreams are clear.</p>
8	<p>The Canal Trust strongly believes that the restoration of the canal through Swindon would bring major economic benefits, both during the construction phase and permanently thereafter.</p> <p>There is independent evidence of the benefits and the added growth provided by a canal. Many cities and towns throughout the country have taken the opportunity of regenerating their centre by the use of existing or new waterways. The effect has in some cases been to transform the town centre, add significantly to the attractiveness to developers and businesses, and attract cultural and social buildings such as museums and exhibition centres.</p> <p>We support the submission made separately by the Wiltshire Swindon and Oxfordshire Canal Partnership.</p> <p>We urge Swindon to recognise and take advantage of the opportunity to add a significant element to the economic growth of the town.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Planning is an integral part of our strategy and plan making process. As such, and with reducing funds infrastructure has to be prioritised.</p> <p>It is not felt that the deliverability of the Canal through central Swindon can be demonstrated at this time such that it can be prioritised ahead of other identified actions in the Economic Strategy.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the Canal Trust to investigate this opportunity further focusing on its actual delivery.</p>

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9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic strategy document – contained informative and useful information. • Innovative Higher Education Provision – as well as indications of courses for advanced engineering and digital technologies etc – will there also be Higher Education for other sectors and flexibility to support changes in the future economy; also what is the proposed offer in terms of Higher Education – will it be through existing establishments or through a new University? • Hub of Advanced Engineering & Technology – there are positive steps here which include new energy sources for transport – hydrogen fuel cells etc. Is there any focus on other alternative energies, leveraging expertise that is already in Swindon, as part of the future for Swindon? Also are there any proposals as to how Swindon may be able to take advantage of connections with the proposed Science Park in Wiltshire (assuming that is going ahead)? • Attraction of retail offer – Swindon deemed too much of an “outlet” town. Could stronger brands be encouraged to the town? So that the diversity of offer is addressed. And the right level of consumption takes place. • Action Plan – as well as the descriptions on Impacts on the Economy – it would be helpful to have quantitative goals for performance measurement. • Matters relating to Business – the Chamber of Commerce – would be interested in discussion regarding a number of these activities and supporting any required input – as this will give the views of businesses in the area. • Retention of existing employers is an important priority – for example, the increasing lack of space for some corporate companies. If Swindon wants to encourage new and dynamic businesses into the town – Swindon must offer something unique and outstanding which is highly attractive to these organisations. To make these visions happen – Swindon needs a lot of new businesses and development cash. What are the incentives to attract these new businesses? There is a lot of uncertainty around such corporate 	<p>The Cabinet of Swindon Borough Council supports the proposal to enhance higher education provision within the Borough. Whilst acknowledging that the current economic conditions are not ideal in which to establish a University of Swindon, the Cabinet retains the ambition to achieve such a goal. It has commissioned a working group to develop further its higher education strategy and Cabinet will receive a report on the group's proposals. The group has analysed patterns of participation in higher education. The cost of provision is clearly a factor affecting the choice of education and training options beyond the age of 19. The future higher education strategy needs to take into account how to build on cost-effective local provision and also to make use of digital technology to increase opportunities for online learning.</p> <p>All options are being considered with regard to alternative technologies especially if there is local expertise and this will remain an area in which we hope to expand our activities and support for the local economy. As well as existing and proposed science parks in Wiltshire, it is hoped that we will forge strong links with ones in other areas such as Oxfordshire and investigate whether it will be possible to develop a science park in Swindon as part of this commitment</p> <p>The strength of the Town Centre is a key priority for the Economic Strategy. Through the Town Centre Masterplan, it is intended that we broaden out the offer in the town centre, including culture in order to make it a place where the higher quality brands are attracted in the future. Planning too, will need to manage consent of additional retail outside the town centre.</p> <p>Action Plan – It is agreed that quantitative measurements will be helpful indicators for success. The governance and performance management around the deliverables and outcomes will be established internally as we set out our plan to progress the Action Plan.</p> <p>It is very much welcomed that the Chamber wish to be involved going forward and we will ensure we call on your experience and expertise as we progress.</p> <p>With regards keeping our existing employers and having a keen business</p>
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	<p>companies and HQs – and “Swindon” needs to keep listening to such employers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swindon – open for business – should be mantra. 	<p>support package the Action Plan is geared to formalise this offer and explore other measures including Local Development Orders to reduce Planning Regulation, the creation of Enterprise Zone Lites and an assessment of the opportunities afforded by business rate retention and locally set business rates.</p> <p>We agree, that is the mantra.</p>
10	<p>Thanks for the opportunity to input into the draft Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-26.</p> <p>The Strategy is focused, clear and ambitious, and congratulations are due for producing an excellent document.</p> <p>VisitWiltshire is pleased to see the visitor economy highlighted as a key sector in the strategy, recognising the opportunity to grow the visitor economy, including developing both leisure and business tourism. We are uniquely positioned to help develop the visitor economy priorities and actions outlined in the strategy and would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can support all elements of Swindon’s visitor economy ambitions. Including taking responsibility for delivering on key elements of the visitor economy agenda – including increasing economic impact, raising profile, generating additional visits and spend, improving quality and business support, and impact measurement.</p>	<p>Thank you for your support. The points raised are noted.</p>
11	<p>Firstly can I say on behalf of GWE Business West and our members what an excellent piece of work this is. It draws together many strands into one document which will act as the Strategy, and above all the Action Plan, for many years to come.</p> <p>Our input to this consultation is limited somewhat as we have of course been heavily involved in the process and steering group. Our members may also be submitting their own responses. However, I would like to make a few observations and inclusions of GWE The Initiative under the 'Responsibility' sections. We are already, or want to be, engaged in the headings detailed</p>	<p>Noted. We fully intend to foster our relationships with the private sector and representative bodies such as the Thames Valley Chamber, Swindon Influence and yourselves, GWE.</p>

	<div data-bbox="226 1899 264 1982" data-label="Text"> <p>below.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="300 1070 1490 1937" data-label="List-Group"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 16 - Create a Place of ... Extend Plan 500 (We already sit on the board of Plan 500 and many of our members act as mentors. Our connection with employers is vital to helping achieve success) • Page 16 - Develop Higher Education ... Engage employers in securing HE Facilities (Through involvement on the HE Strategy Working Group, major employers and close relationship with Swindon College) • Page 17 - Advanced Engineering & Technology ... Assess feasibility & potential locations (Utilise our considerable experience in running a science incubator at Porton Down and benefiting from the future developments on that site) • Page 18 - Revitalise Swindon Town Centre ... section on connectivity across the railway (Our input and connections with PRT/Pods) • Pages 18/19 - Under the Low Carbon Economy section much reference is made to the Energy Partnership but we believe that there will be limited knowledge as to who is involved in this group. As this is a strategy and action plan for the next 14 years this section will become ever more important and thus clear knowledge of who is leading on this is important. Our Hydrogen working group run in conjunction with Forward Swindon could also be included) • Page 19 - Business Support ... As well as establishing the current picture of support there needs to a co-ordinated approach to assist start up and growth businesses. GWE Business West is best placed to lead on this. • The final observation concerns Appendix 3 and the ability to measure progress/outputs. It is acknowledged that it is difficult to set these until formal adoption. However, some recommendations would seem vital even at this stage. Following the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP objective this should be kept to simple high level measurables with 'sub targets' if required. Our recommendation would be jobs created and retained and economic growth, possibly measured via GVA. Reference is made to employment growth, e.g. 19,600 new jobs by 2026 on Page 4, but this could perhaps be </div>
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Appendix 1 - Draft Swindon Economic Strategy Consultation Responses

	broken down in Appendix 3 into more detailed targets over the period.	
12	<p><u>Oasis Leisure Centre</u></p> <p>Network Rail would be happy to discuss the plans for connections to the Oasis Leisure area, although this would be subject to Network Rail's agreement.</p> <p><u>Improve frequency and reliability of rail services to London and Heathrow</u></p> <p>The invitation to tender for the Great Western Franchise included a slight increase in frequency on the Swindon to London corridor. The successful bidder for the franchise will decide the frequency of service.</p> <p><u>Western Access to Heathrow and Electrification</u></p> <p>The following was included in the HLOS statement by the Government in July:</p> <p>"The Secretary of State wishes the industry to develop plans to build a new rail link from the Great Western main line to London Heathrow Airport to enhance rail access from the Thames Valley and the West and, subject to a satisfactory business case and the agreement of acceptable terms with the Heathrow aviation industry.</p>	Noted.
13	<p>Following the recent communications to Forward Swindon raising concerns that the Wilts & Berks Canal restoration has been excluded from the proposed Masterplan for Swindon Town Centre, please find attached the response on behalf of the Wiltshire Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership to the current consultation on the Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-2026.</p> <p>I am asked by the Partners to bring to your attention that the exclusion of the Wilts & Berks Canal in this period (2012-2026) would conflict with the policy for the waterway in the emerging Core Strategy and Infrastructure</p>	<p>Infrastructure Planning is an integral part of our strategy and plan making process. As such, and with reducing funds infrastructure has to be prioritised.</p> <p>It is not felt that the deliverability of the Canal through central Swindon can be demonstrated at this time such that it can be prioritised ahead of other identified actions in the Economic Strategy.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the Canal Trust to investigate this opportunity further focusing on its actual delivery.</p>

Appendix 1 - Draft Swindon Economic Strategy Consultation Responses

	<p>Delivery Programme for Swindon Borough Council where the canal restoration is included .</p>  <p>Economic Response Final.docx</p>	
14	<p>I have read with great interest the paper outlining the Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-26 and as Chairman of VisitWiltshire and an LEP Board Member would like to make some observations as part of the consultation process.</p> <p>First of all it is very encouraging to see that you have identified Tourism and Leisure as a key sector for Swindon. As identified in the VisitWiltshire Business Plan 2012-15 in 2010 Wiltshire welcomed over 12.7 million visitors and Wiltshire's visitor economy generates some £1billion per annum to an industry that supports over 21.000 jobs in the county.</p> <p>There are buoyant forecasts for industry growth over the next few years and the visitor economy has the potential, through a well managed approach, to grow the Swindon economy, generating significant additional tourism spend and creating jobs.</p> <p>VisitWiltshire Ltd is the official Tourist Board for Wiltshire, established in 2011 and funded by Wiltshire Council and private sector partners. It is the recognized Destination Marketing and management Organization for Wiltshire and is responsible for growing the county's visitor economy by raising awareness of Wiltshire as a tourist destination and generating additional tourism visits and spend.</p> <p>You have, in the report, correctly identified the potential for Swindon to become a regional leisure destination. It is not however easy to achieve this ambition as there is fierce competition for the leisure customer. Specific Tourism marketing expertise and an intimate knowledge of the industry are</p>	<p>Thank you for your support. The points set out are noted.</p>

Appendix 1 - Draft Swindon Economic Strategy Consultation Responses

	<p>therefore required to achieve the Swindon ambition and VisitWiltshire has that expertise and knowledge.</p> <p>I note that your intention is to designate a lead officer from the Borough Council to work with public and private sector partners. The industry is predominantly private sector based and as Visit Wiltshire Ltd is an independent business staffed by experts from the private sector we are well placed to be able to support Swindon in achieving its plans.</p> <p>Can I also stress that to be successful with your ambition there must be a reasonable marketing budget put behind it. In the past Swindon has spent very little promoting this industry sector and VisitWiltshire has been recommending that the you make this investment, I hope that this will be the case. For comparison Wiltshire Council provide £500,000 of funds per year to support the industry and to have an effect Swindon Borough Council must make a sensible budget available.</p> <p>Thank you for reading my comments, I wish you every success with your ambitious strategy and look forward to the opportunity of VisitWiltshire being involved in the implementation.</p>	
15	<p>I have an overriding sense of disappointment with the document which reads more like a vision if not pipe dream than a strategy and does not provide enough concrete steps of how the town can arrive at this dream.</p> <p>Whilst depressingly little is said about transport or public transport's key role in regenerating and revitalising the town, unsubstantiated statements like those in 2.23 are made that there ought to be "a commitment of public service providers and transport operators to use hydrogen fuel," presumably just because of local work done by Honda.</p> <p>I have discussed the various methods of propulsion of buses with engineering colleagues in our Group and I have been advised that this is currently the most expensive means of producing/operating a bus and</p>	<p>Noted. We will be in touch to discuss those issues which are slightly more detailed than the high level intentions of the Strategy.</p> <p><u>Amends</u></p> <p><u>2.32 added wording</u> <i>Across the borough, sustained efforts to improve its transport network have encouraged more people to use public transport, providing better access to employment areas and leisure facilities, and helping in the push to reduce carbon emissions from car travel.</i></p>

Appendix 1 - Draft Swindon Economic Strategy Consultation Responses

	<p>therefore it is unlikely to feature in our plans for the foreseeable future and certainly not in 1-2 years implied on page 19. Even the second generation of hybrid buses which are rather cheaper to manufacture have very poor availability for use compared with conventional diesel powered buses.</p> <p>If the town wishes to reduce the carbon footprint, it is a shame that increased use of an expanding public transport system is not mentioned in paragraphs 2.29 and 2.30.</p> <p>Section 4 contains a loose prioritisation of fairly general priorities but contains scant idea on how this optimistic vision will be delivered financially. For example, using the rare mention of transport with the “Improve frequency and reliability of rail services to London and Heathrow” statement, have the authors actually considered how well off Swindon already is having a 15 minute frequency service to London (with coach connections to Heathrow), leaving aside the reliability issues which have improved somewhat of late and just what the logistical factors and costs of increasing the service are?</p> <p>There is, however, no mention of seeking to help improve the bus services to support the increased economic activity and population growth aspired to and provision once more of better frequency Sunday bus services which are easier to influence but still require pump priming cash.</p> <p>As an Appendix conclusion, certain methods are described as to how progress might be measured, but it is against the background of a vision rather than a strategy, and suggestions as to how all the improvements can be financed or brought about still seemingly remain absent.</p> <p>Overall, I would have to say the document seems to be of fairly limited value and is disappointing.</p>	
16	<p>This is the best report I have seen from SBC. They have obviously taken on board comments from private sector and created a more focused plan. This will pay dividends rather than spreading their resource too thinly.</p>	<p>Thank you for your support. The recommendations about progress and deliverables are noted and we will continue to liaise with you on a broad</p>

Appendix 1 - Draft Swindon Economic Strategy Consultation Responses

	<p>I would like to see a more quantifiable target for each of the 'impacts on the economy' as this would help to prioritise efforts. However, I appreciate some investigation will be required before this can be finalised and the benchmarking study was certainly a good place to start.</p> <p>The key actions have associated timescales that appear realistic, if a little generous. SBC should always keep in mind that creating a strategy or plan is considered a low level deliverable in the private sector. Plans or strategies can easily be filed / forgotten about. The introduction of new assets or services is more tangible to rate as success or failure - they should strive for a balance.</p> <p>The work in Appendix 3 is critical but I would stress to them that purely measuring the results is not managing. There needs to be monthly targets set and if the activity or results are not to plan someone has to do something different to correct the situation.</p> <p>Overall I would say that the aspirations are admirable and the key actions are well thought out. I am sure Honda and others from private sector will be more than happy to lend support to this.</p>	range of issues as we progress.
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Appendix 2 – Economic Strategy Consultation and Adoption

SWLEP Financial Services Sub-Group Wednesday 3rd October 2012

Verbal support registered for Economic Strategy

Swindon Investment Group - Minutes of Meeting Held on Monday 5th November 2012

5. Economic Strategy

IP gave an update to the progress of the economic strategy which is now out for consultation, with a short consultation period. The meeting expressed their support for this piece of work and most felt that it was targeted correctly for Swindon's future and was a strong accompaniment to the Local Plan, giving the economic context for structuring Swindon's future growth. All outlined strong support for the document.

Swindon Development Delivery Panel - Minutes of Meeting Held on Tuesday 13th November 2012

5.7 LD requested that a view from the DDP was expressed in relation to the Economic Strategy consultation via the minutes. The panel believe the Economic Strategy is a step forward as it is the first document of its kind which has been produced for the town and they are fully supportive of it.

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An Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012 - 26

January 2013

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3. Priorities for Swindon	11
4. An Action Plan for Swindon's Economy	12

Appendices

A1 - What the evidence tells us

A2 - Employment Growth Scenarios

A3 - Measuring Success

Draft v2 – new text on low carbon from Regeneris

Draft v3 – incorporates AW amends 200912 and text on rural economy (GP)

Draft v3a – amendments to 2.12 and 2.27 as per E Gee email 270912

1. Why Swindon Needs an Economic Strategy

- 1.1 This document presents a draft Economic Strategy and Action Plan for the Borough of Swindon. It captures the commitment of private and public sector stakeholders in Swindon to creating the conditions for a return to economic growth and to delivering changes in Swindon's economy that will benefit businesses, residents, the workforce and visitors over the next 15 years.
- 1.2 The need for an Economic Strategy and Action Plan is clear. At a time when private and public sector partners in Swindon face the twin challenges of recession and constraints on public sector funding, agreeing shared objectives and priority actions is the best way of ensuring that the Borough secures the maximum benefit from their investments. By setting out the Borough's economic priorities, the Strategy is also expected to shape the emerging Swindon Core Strategy: A Local Plan for Swindon, the long term spatial plan for the Borough that will guide the scale, type and location of future development.
- 1.3 Creating new jobs and businesses, developing the skills of its residents and ensuring many more young people are working in Swindon must be key priorities for the Borough. Its population has expanded significantly over the past decade. However, over the same period, employment has fallen. This means that Swindon needs to create many more new jobs simply to return to the employment levels it saw in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The implication of failing to generate new jobs is more residents who are without work, under-employed or commuting to other employment centres.
- 1.4 The main purpose of this document is to set out the practical measures that stakeholders will need to take to encourage recovery and a return to growth. In some cases, this means completing or building on activity that is already taking place. In other cases, it requires new ideas and new action. Some actions are identified as immediate priorities (1-2 years), while others are for the medium (3-5 years) or long term (5 years +). The emphasis is on actions that will deliver economic benefit, but that are also realistic and deliverable given the resources available to partners.
- 1.5 An emphasis on action that is practical, realistic and deliverable is important in challenging economic times. The aspiration behind the Strategy is that Swindon becomes a better quality place offering opportunities to all, while acknowledging the contribution a strong economy with high employment and reduced dependency can make to health and wellbeing in Swindon. It is underpinned by a vision of Swindon's economy in 2026, setting out how the Borough might earn its living, what will be driving economic growth and what it will be like to live, work and do business in the Borough.
- 1.6 The development of the Strategy and Action Plan has been overseen by a Steering Group comprising Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council and private sector representatives. A group of private and public sector stakeholders have helped to shape the priorities it identifies during workshops in March and it will be further refined as a result of a consultation process during the autumn of 2012.
- 1.7 It is important that the Strategy and Action Plan is informed by evidence about Swindon's economic performance and prospects. Stakeholders have sought to understand where

Swindon's strengths and weaknesses lie, the growth opportunities for the Borough and the barriers to growth that must be tackled. The key evidence is set out in Appendices.

- 1.8 A good strategy starts with a clear idea of where it is intended to end up. In economic terms this means establishing what the collective agreed level of ambition for economic growth for Swindon ought to be. This in turn will determine the action plan required to achieve the outcome sought. It is a difficult economic climate in which to establish a level of ambition for Swindon's economy over the next 15 years. It would be easy to be overly cautious and set a low growth target, but there is a risk that this becomes self-fulfilling. To have real traction a strategy must have strong backing and support from a wide range of stakeholders - they therefore must believe it can be achieved.
- 1.9 Even in stable and benign economic conditions, it is difficult to predict the scale or nature of future employment growth. However, Swindon clearly needs to stimulate and support an early return to employment creation. The priorities identified in the Economic Strategy and Action Plan are driven by the need to focus activities and investment where there is greatest potential to secure new jobs for the Borough. The evidence base (see Appendix 2) suggests a range of employment growth scenarios. This strategy and action plan proposes that Swindon aims for the higher growth scenario - to create 19,600 new jobs by 2026.
- 1.10 We are producing this strategy at a point in time. Investment, action, regeneration is happening now, established through previous strategies and policy direction, and more is planned. These existing plans are good starting points for the future so this strategy must ensure we deliver and build on them.
- 1.11 The following section sets out a view of what Swindon's economy could be like in 2026, in that sense it is the very heart of the strategy - it sets the desired level of ambition for economic growth and from it clear priorities for action actions can be drawn that will create the desired outcomes.

2. Swindon in 2026

- 2.12 The Swindon of 2026 has been transformed. It is regarded both inside and outside the Borough as a place of economic opportunity, having been amongst the UK's pacesetters in creating new jobs and growing businesses as the economy stabilised after the recession. Its reputation is as a place that designs, manufactures and innovates, giving Swindon a distinctive role on the M4 corridor and ensuring that the town is now much more widely recognised. At the same time, it is widely seen as a good place to do business, one in which large manufacturing and service sector companies rub shoulders with a thriving small business base.
- 2.13 The Borough has seen nearly 20,000 new jobs created at an accelerating rate over the past few years, putting it on track to recover much of the ground it lost during the 2000s. More of its residents are now in work, and fewer are having to commute out of the Borough to work elsewhere. Further investment in new housing has helped Swindon's see sustained growth in its population, with many working age people attracted to the town by new jobs and by high quality housing developments which have proved particularly attractive to younger buyers with families.

A Place of Opportunity for Young People

- 2.14 An economy which is creating an impressive range of new jobs and a much improved vocational education and training system with high levels of attainment in local schools and a responsive vocational offer has helped Swindon to make real progress in tackling youth unemployment, widely seen as its biggest challenge a decade ago. The youth unemployment rate has fallen well below the UK average, and surveys of young people are now more optimistic about their future prospects if they choose to live and work in the town. Action to assist young people to start new businesses has paid dividends, with a small but growing number of successful small businesses having started life in the borough. The mix is diverse, ranging from on-line gamers to market traders.
- 2.15 Backed by the successful Plan 500 initiative, which has consistently over achieved, employers report high levels of satisfaction with recruitment in the town, particularly of younger employees who are arriving with a combination of strong educational backgrounds and practical skills for work. Using Plan 500 as a platform, employer engagement in schools and colleges has steadily increased, building strong connections between young people and the world of work in 2026.
- 2.16 The link between Swindon's University Technical College and its higher education provision is working well, with young people offered clear pathways from school through the UTC and apprenticeships to higher level qualifications in a broad range of engineering and ICT disciplines. Vocational choices now have high status in Swindon, and have contributed to marked improvements in educational attainment amongst young people. Johnson Matthey's commitment to the University Technical College helped ensure that a significant proportion of its growing workforce lives in the Borough, a good indication of the progress that Swindon has made.

Innovative Higher Education Provision

- 2.17 The Swindon of 2026 is noted for the quality and flexibility of its higher education provision which is seen by employers as highly responsive to the changing needs of the economy and which are turning out graduates with practical and highly marketable skills for work. By working with a range of higher education institutions, Swindon College and New College, through an innovative partnership approach, the town offers aspiring graduates in the town a good range of practical course options tailored to the borough's established and emerging industries. Advanced engineering and digital technology courses have grown in popularity, as have the programme of courses in hardware and software development.
- 2.18 The development of higher education provision has helped to bring many more people into the town centre. Service businesses including retailers, bars, cafes and restaurants have seen big increases in trade, while the arena, theatre and new and improved arts venues in and around the town centre are widely used by students, other residents and visitors. The redeveloped Oasis and Regent Circus are also heavily used by students, helping to increase flow of people shopping and spending leisure time around the town. Daytime trading has improved, and the evening economy has also been given a real boost, with more residents of Swindon now choosing to spend time in the town centre.
- 2.19 With higher education fees and living costs continuing to rise, living at home and studying for a degree has become a popular and viable option. Swindon has benefited from this as fewer young people choose to leave the Borough to study elsewhere. The Borough has also seen a rising number of young people living in the surrounding areas of Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, and Gloucestershire choosing to study in Swindon.

A Higher Skilled, Higher Earning Population

- 2.20 Committed employers combined with flexible further and higher education have also helped to improve skill levels amongst Swindon's residents. The drive to promote the value of higher skills, retraining and education has paid dividends with high levels of demand across the town's further and higher education facilities from within the Borough. For adults looking to take higher level qualifications, Swindon is now well geared up to meeting the needs of mature students, and Swindon has moved up the skill rankings as a growing number of its residents enter higher managerial and professional jobs.
- 2.21 The bigger picture is that prosperity levels for the Borough's residents and its workforce have seen impressive rates of increase over the past decade. Swindon has seen the biggest percentage increase in average workplace earnings of any of the major employment centres on the M4 corridor, bringing the borough closer to the income levels of workers in places such as Reading and Newbury. For residents, the opportunity to secure higher paid jobs in Swindon and rising skill levels have also seen increases in average earnings. Fewer residents now have to work elsewhere, helping to reduce car travel and congestion across the area.

A Hub of Advanced Engineering & Technology...

- 2.22 Across the UK, Swindon is now seen as a cutting edge location for advanced engineering and manufacturing technology. Its automotive manufacturers continue to perform strongly, with Honda at the forefront of low carbon vehicle production and the BMW plant setting

new benchmarks for the use of technology in body manufacturing. The town has secured a steady inflow of businesses operating in the automotive supply chain, chiefly by offering the land and infrastructure which has proved to be an attractive location for companies looking to locate close to some of the town's main manufacturers. With a small higher education R&D facility on site, the town's Advanced Technology Park has helped Swindon capture new investment and expanding companies that might in the past have located elsewhere, including investment which has moved eastwards along the A420 and M4 corridor.

- 2.23 Swindon's success in automotive engineering is complemented by the strong performance of its ICT and electronics sectors. The town has gained a share of the lucrative mobile technology market as well as the applications industry, helped by the gradual emergence of the Advanced Technology Park and the Wichelstowe employment area as attractive locations for the ICT and business services sectors. Roll out of the UK's first 4G network a decade ago helped Swindon to build a small base of digital tech businesses from within town, with decisions to provide subsidised small office space in the town centre having proved a success story. The Borough has seen its infrastructure and services regularly upgraded with private investment, ensuring it remains at the vanguard of communications technology.
- 2.24 The town has secured an internationally recognised role as an important location for research, development and the production of hydrogen fuel cell technology, an integral part of low carbon automotive technology. With Johnson Matthey and Honda leading the way, Swindon now ranks alongside larger centres in the Midlands as a centre for excellence in commercial innovation and production in this sphere. The Borough's position in this sector has been helped by the commitment of public service providers and transport operators to use hydrogen fuel, testament to the success of the BOC-Honda-Forward Swindon initiative to establish the UK's first hydrogen fuel station. Potential investors in the Borough are able to see practical evidence of the use of hydrogen technology all around them, which in turn has helped to further raise Swindon's profile.

...but still a diverse, private sector led economy

- 2.25 Despite having further developed its reputation for advanced manufacturing technology, diversity remains a feature of Swindon's economy in 2026. The town's major service sector employers have chosen to maintain their headquarters operations in the town, fending off fierce competition for investment from overseas and continuing cost pressures. Financial and professional services remain an important pillar of Swindon's employment base, reflected in a recovering town centre office market and in the decision by an international engineering consultancy to set up a European HQ operation in new offices in Swindon. Employer surveys show that good progress has been made in enabling more recruitment of higher skilled and higher qualified employees locally, helping to reduce skills shortages.
- 2.26 Swindon's growing population has created new opportunities for businesses in the retail, leisure, ICT and private services sectors. New housing in the town centre and on the Borough's fringes has expanded the customer base across the town and helped both established and new businesses to generate increased trade. As the economy recovers, more residents are choosing to spend their leisure time in a regenerated Swindon centre which has also helped to create new jobs and businesses.

- 2.27 The Borough has good reputation as a place to start and develop a business. Working with enterprise companies in the Borough, Forward Swindon's 'One Team' approach has helped to bring much needed clarity to business support in the town, while Swindon Borough Council and other public sector partners are recognised in the business press for a 'can do' attitude to meeting the needs of employers. In part, this reflects the strong partnership between the private and public sector, with Swindon's business networking and enterprise support companies having worked constructively and collaboratively with public sector organisations in the Borough over a long period.
- 2.28 The town's planning system is highly flexible and responsive with businesses welcoming the speed and clarity with which decisions planning decisions are taken and communicated. An excellent range of commercial premises, including affordable facilities for new start businesses, coupled with an easily understood package of business support services, underpin the borough's success in this area. This business friendly approach means a growing numbers of residents have started their own enterprises. Initiatives to promote entrepreneurship help many residents previously unemployed to establish themselves in self-employed professions.
- 2.29 Swindon's rural areas are better connected to the urban centre both economically through exploitation of supply chain opportunities and local transport connections. The economy of the rural areas is more competitive with land based businesses being highly resource efficient and diversified.

Low Carbon Swindon

- 2.30 A decade of investment in local energy generating facilities means Swindon is now positioned as one of the UK's top low carbon economies as well as a town which can shout loud about the energy supply advantages it offers to business. Companies have bought into the low carbon vision for Swindon, and in doing so have benefited from stable energy costs and confidence about supply over a period when volatile energy markets have increased costs for many companies elsewhere. Its success in local energy generation coupled with the town's strengths in low carbon technology development and manufacturing have helped to create new jobs in a wide range of disciplines, and sustain many others.
- 2.31 The benefits of low carbon Swindon have extended to residents who have an extensive choice of energy sources within the town, while Swindon's district heating system is now regarded as an exemplar in the UK. The initiative has also provided the springboard for Swindon to lead the way in upgrading its housing stock to reduce domestic carbon emissions. The Borough is seeing a steady stream of visitors from other parts of the UK looking to learn from Swindon's innovative public-private partnership in this area.

A Revitalised Town Centre

- 2.32 Swindon's town centre has seen sustained investment in major projects that are making a real difference to the way it looks and works. Completion of the Regent Circus development breathed new life into the southern part of the town centre, including Victoria Road, the High Street and Wood Street, bringing much needed new trade and sparking new investment elsewhere in the area. Residents and visitors now have much better range of options for the evening, including places to eat and drink and new venues for arts and

cultural activities. The theatre has brought a greatly extended arts programme to the town, meaning the area around Regent Circus is often bustling at night with theatre and cinema goers. Improvements to Swindon station, better pedestrian connections across the railway to the Oasis area and a sustained programme of improvements in the town's public spaces have all helped to create a town centre that is easier to use and more welcoming. Across the borough, sustained efforts to improve its transport network have encouraged more people to use public transport, providing better access to employment areas and leisure facilities, and helping in the push to reduce carbon emissions from car travel.

- 2.33 Completion of the Union Square development has brought a good mix of offices, flexible workspace and a small amount of new retail provision to the town centre. As the economy stabilised, businesses have seen the benefits of the growing number of office workers based in the town centre as well as a growing population living in central Swindon. The good standard of design implemented in Union Square has been extended to other parts of the town centre, and retail businesses now see Swindon as a better investment proposition than was the case 10 years ago.

An Important Regional Leisure Destination

- 2.34 Swindon has carved out a role as regional leisure destination, providing both its own residents and those of the wider area around it with an interesting choice of facilities. The snow dome and the town's arena have proved popular additions, drawing substantial numbers of people – residents, students and other visitors into the town at weekends and in holiday periods. As the number of visitors increased, the Outlet Village benefited from new investment and has seen its market share expand. The arena has managed to mix shows appealing to a very broad audience with a selection of events with a niche audience. This has enabled it to steadily extend its programme over the year.
- 2.35 In turn, the influx of new visitors to Swindon has given well established attractions a boost. The Oasis leisure centre has secured further new investment as more people visit this area of town, with a steady flow of visitors crossing the railway to the town centre and back each day. STEAM has cemented its position as a museum which tells a good story about the area's rail history and provides a stimulating place to visit. The theatre and Arts Centre complex have helped to increase the range of cultural activities Swindon offers, and in turn have helped to expand its visitor base. For hoteliers in the Borough, there has been a welcome increase in the number of people choosing to stay overnight in Swindon and making return trips.

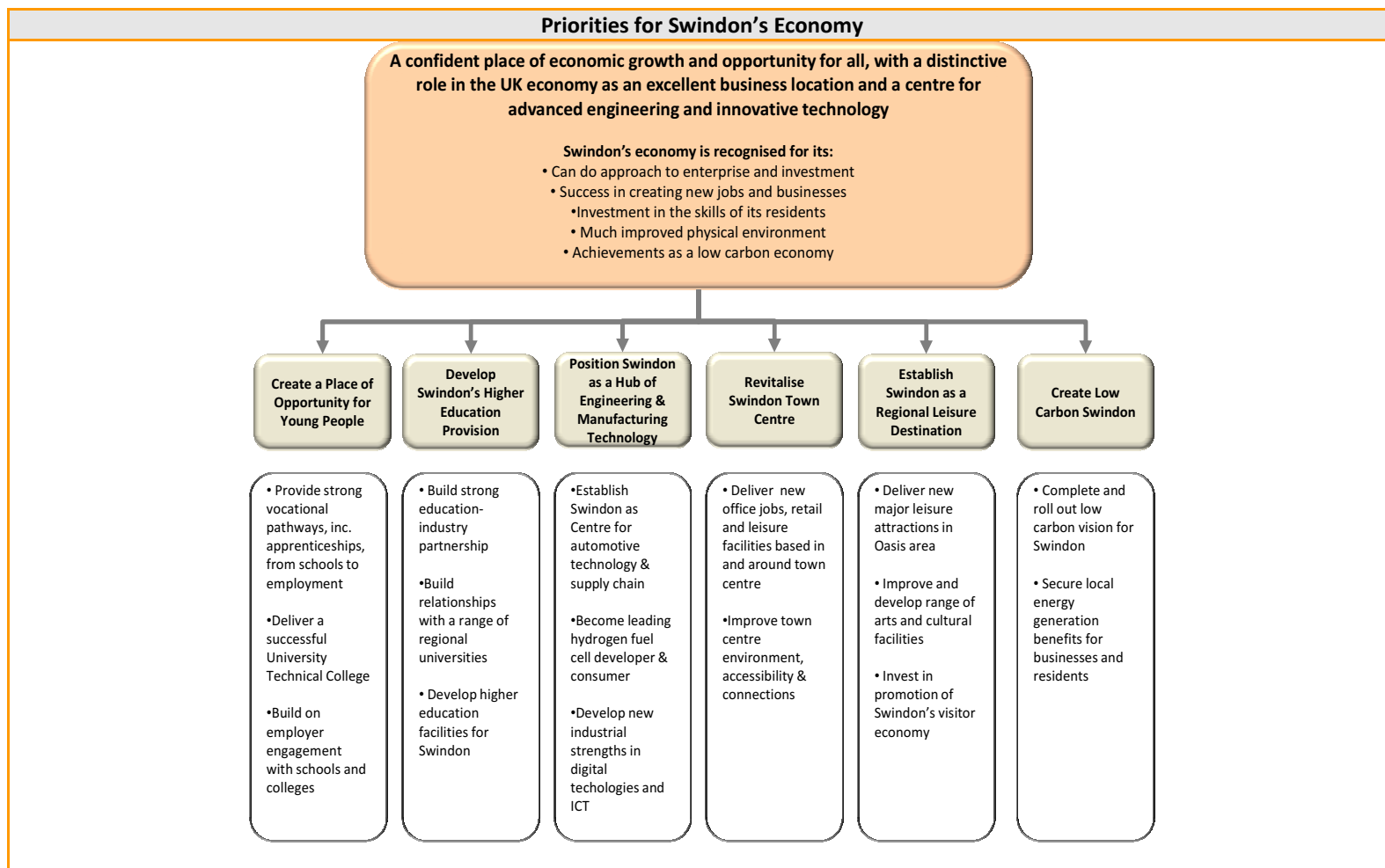
A Strong and Positive External Profile

The result of these changes is that the Swindon of 2026 is a place that is much more widely recognised and respected for its economic achievements. Inward investment promotion activity has once again become a success story as partners capitalise on its distinctive propositions to investors. The Borough's lead generation work has brought major new investments, with Swindon's competitive skills base, its open approach to businesses and its excellent location all cited as decisive factors in the final decisions of investors. For employers in the Borough, it has become easier to sell the advantages of Swindon to business partners and prospective employees alike. The range of good employment opportunities, its competitively priced housing and its strong travel to work connections

with the surrounding area are all playing a part in attracting new working residents.

3. Priorities for Swindon

3.36 To achieve our vision for Swindon, we have identified a series of priorities which provide a framework for action.



4. An Action Plan for Swindon's Economy

Principles of the Action Plan

- 4.37 To deliver change in Swindon's economy, public and private sector stakeholders have recognised the need to commit themselves to practical and deliverable actions in the short, medium and long term. In difficult economic conditions, and with constraints on the public and private sector resources available for investment, focusing Swindon's collective effort on a small number of key priorities is both critical and sensible.
- 4.38 For some actions, particularly those related to physical development, the end result must be visible changes in Swindon over the next decade. For others, especially those linked to the need to raise the aspirations of young people, drive down youth unemployment, raise residents' skill levels and create new economic opportunity, action is as much about cultural change in the Borough as it is about measurable results. The impacts of such actions could take a generation or more to become embedded in Swindon's economy, but they have to be seen as a vital part of Swindon's economic future.

Action Planning Process

- 4.39 In a difficult economic and funding climate tough choices are needed about where to invest to maximum effect, and will require strong leadership on the part of partners in the public, private and third sectors partner. To do this, we need to be clear about why the actions identified below are priorities.
- 4.40 The process started with a list of possible actions identified with stakeholders through workshops during 2012. An effective action plan draws together action that is already taking place, actions in the pipeline and good ideas for future action. This process identified a list of more than 70 actions, and provided a long list for the action plan.
- 4.41 The next step was to move from a long list to a short list of actions. Stakeholders recognise that the Borough cannot expect to deliver all the actions identified as important or desirable for Swindon's economy. This short listing process was based on an assessment of each action against these criteria:
- **Economic impact** – How would the action contribute to job creation and prosperity in Swindon? Would the economic impact of the action be direct or indirect? How substantial would its economic impact be?
 - **Funding** – Is the funding for the action in place? How realistic is the prospect of securing funding given the amount of resources required? Would the action represent good value for public or private sector investment?
 - **Deliverability** – How realistic are the prospects of delivering the action? Is it straightforward to implement, or will it be complex and difficult? How much progress has already been made?
 - **Enabling function** – If an action is about enabling change to take place, how critical

might be its contribution to this change?

Priority Actions

- 4.42 The result is a set of priority actions that stakeholders see as vital to achieving their aspirations for the Swindon economy of 2026. These actions relate both to the general needs of Swindon's economy and to the specific priorities identified with stakeholders. The short listing process has pointed to five specific actions which emerge as key priorities.

Create a Place of Opportunity for Young People

Objective: To maximise the effectiveness of the existing educational system in Swindon and improve and then maintain the attainment levels of young people within the system. To deliver a coordinated system for connecting young people in schools to further education, apprenticeships, training, employment and new enterprise opportunities. A key aim should be to create a high quality vocational track for young people which helps them to develop the skills required by employers and secure jobs. The aspiration might be to offer vocational pathways akin to those available in Germany.

Rationale: Public and private sector stakeholders regard this as a key socio-economic challenge for the Borough. Data point to Swindon's young people having experienced particularly sharp increases in unemployment during the recession. Sustained action to tackle this problem will have direct economic impacts (on the depth of the skills base and the labour force available to employers) and important indirect effects (on the incomes of young people and spending in town, on social cohesion). A strong vocational track from school-further education-employment will strengthen employability and aspirations amongst young people, and better enable employers to recruit in the town. Alongside these specific action areas, job creation in general will be critical to providing opportunities for young people in the long term. So too will support to enable some young people to start their own business in the borough.

Develop Higher Education Facilities for Swindon

Objective: To ensure that Swindon offers young people and its adult population a good range of options to study to degree level in Swindon, strongly linked to the Borough's current employment base and emerging industrial sectors. The aim is both to secure a higher skilled workforce living and working in Swindon, and to generate the benefits associated with students and graduates living and spending leisure time in and around the town centre.

Rationale: Stakeholders have consistently identified this as a top priority for Swindon's economy, for the benefits it could deliver to employers in terms of recruiting a graduate qualified workforce, its impacts on economic opportunities for residents of the Borough and the catalytic benefits of a student population for the wider economy of the town. Although it is clearly challenging to deliver, a dedicated town centre facility could be an important part of the solution to the problem of drawing much higher numbers of people to the town centre. Specialist HE facilities could be a pull factor in the development of an edge of town Advanced Technology Park, with a number of examples around the UK of HE institutions having established collaborative research centres in developments of this type.

Position Swindon as a Hub of Advanced Engineering and Technology

Objective: To establish the Borough as a hub of technology led advanced engineering on the M4 corridor. It should build on its established position as a location for automotive engineering and seek to develop an automotive supply chain in the Borough. It should also aim to capitalise on its strengths in advanced electronics and communications technologies, as well as the presence of research and development strengths in hydrogen fuel cell technology. Swindon should be looking to create and sustain jobs in the town as a result of action under this priority, and also to the role of these industries as productive wealth generators

Rationale: This priority reflects the twin need for Swindon to capitalise on its industrial strengths and ensure that it further develops its presence in knowledge intensive commercial activity. Productive industries (manufacturing and engineering) are seen as essential to the rebalancing of the UK economy towards the private sector, and to reduced dependence on service industries. With an established platform of automotive and ICT businesses, including large employers, based in the Borough, these two broad sectors provide the key building blocks for action in this area. Securing investment in the mobile communications and software development industries will be particularly critical, since these are expected to drive UK growth and Swindon should be aiming to capture a share of investment that will be generated around the greater South East and M4 corridor. However, the Borough also has strengths in emerging technologies (eg. hydrogen fuel cells), the potential to see spin out activity in other sectors (eg. pharmaceuticals, advanced electronics) and a comparatively high level of patent generating activity. These too provide important building blocks for the Borough's future role.

Revitalise Swindon Town Centre

Objective: To secure the delivery of the major town regeneration schemes that will deliver the maximum economic benefit to Swindon. The aim is to secure both direct economic benefits in the form of new jobs and business opportunities in Swindon, and to ensure that the town becomes a better quality place to live in and visit extending from the day to the evening and night time economy.

Rationale: The redevelopment of key town centre sites is a well established priority for Swindon and stakeholders have emphasised this strongly in preparing the Economic Strategy. Completion of the Regent Circus scheme, with the direct and catalytic effects this will deliver, Union Square developments which needs to bring new jobs and spending to the town centre and investment in Improved arts and cultural facilities are widely regarded as desirable by residents of Swindon, and could play a central role in transforming the evening and night time economy. The presence of students and graduates in the town would also help to underpin new business activity in this sector. In turn, major investments in the physical improvement of Swindon's central area would be expected to help unlock further private investment.

Establish Swindon as a Regional Leisure Destination

Objective: The delivery of major regeneration projects in the town centre should form part of action to establish Swindon as a regional leisure destination. This requires the delivery of new attractions on the Oasis site including a snowdome and arena facility, improvements to the town's arts and cultural facilities (including its museums and theatre) and new investment in visitor marketing. The aim should be both to attract more visitors (day and overnight stays) to the town and to generate higher levels of visitor expenditure in the town itself. Capturing the economic benefit of the Oasis development for the Town Centre to the south, will require the severance caused by the railway to be addressed.

Rationale: Business and public sector stakeholders recognise that Swindon is punching below its weight in capturing the leisure expenditure of its residents and those of the wider area in which it is located. New investment and proposed development in the Oasis area, together with improvements

to town centre arts and cultural facilities has to be seen as a springboard for the development of the town's visitor economy. This is about both making the most of exciting new leisure facilities and better connecting and marketing the range of attractions for visitors. Providing visitors with more options for spending time both within and outside the town has the potential to encourage more overnight stays and longer dwell time, both of which should benefit the town's hotels, retailers, restaurants, bars etc.. There is the potential for a substantial student market to use facilities of this type, and this further strengthens the rationale for investment in this area.

Create a Low Carbon Economy

Objective: To secure the benefits of a low carbon economy in Swindon by capitalising on the sectoral strengths in this area locally, meet a growing proportion of energy requirements from local low carbon sources, and secure a reputation as a place with an innovative and practical approach to energy provision and low carbon growth. To ensure that the benefits of low carbon energy investments extend both to businesses and residents of the Borough.

Rationale: Rising energy costs, energy security and CO₂ reduction are both challenges and opportunities for business growth and future investment, and will become increasingly important as fossil fuel costs rise. In this respect, the creation and safeguarding of employment could be a key outcome of action. There is appetite within the private sector in Swindon to invest in energy generation for business operations within the Borough, and recognition of the potential value of extending this to other businesses and residents. Stakeholders see low carbon energy as an important priority in its own right in meeting the challenges of global warming. It is also seen as a potentially significant competitive edge for its potential to help attract new investment to Swindon if lower cost energy becomes part of the Borough's proposition to businesses. Investment in green technology may in turn create the potential for Swindon to create engineering or and manufacturing employment.

- 4.43 The detailed action plan set out below brings together the priority actions for Swindon. It shows both the immediate/short term actions needed to make headway in delivering the key actions we have identified, and the medium/longer term actions that should follow.
- 4.44 In addition, the Action Plan identifies a series of cross-cutting actions, recognised by stakeholders during the Economic Strategy workshop, are critical to the delivery of these actions and to the future development of Swindon's economy more generally.

Priority	Key Actions	Impacts on the Economy	Responsibility	Timescale
Create a Place of Opportunity for Young People	Extend Plan 500 for Swindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved skills and work readiness among young people (16-24) Significant reductions in youth unemployment, and higher employment Widened employer engagement in creating opportunities for young people 	Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council , Influence	Roll out from 1-2 years onwards
	Deliver a successful UTC for Swindon, embedding it into local education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen Swindon's skills base in engineering disciplines Strong vocational path to employment for young people 	Oxford Brookes University, Johnson Matthey, Swindon Borough Council , Colleges	1-2 years onwards
	Develop and extend coordinated approach to employer engagement, with particular focus on schools and colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further contribution to raising aspiration levels Identify skills requirements Reinforces employability of school and college leavers Strengthens skills base and enables employers to recruit more easily 	Colleges, GWE, Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council , Job Centre Plus, FSB, Chamber of Commerce	Immediate, ongoing
Develop Higher Education Facilities for Swindon	Build partnership with regional universities, Swindon College and New College to attract HE investment to Swindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds on current activity to develop working relationship leading to university investment in the town 	HE Strategy Project Group, Swindon Council, Forward Swindon	Immediate, ongoing
	Engage employers in securing HE facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares ground for HE facility, ensuring courses respond to needs of local employers 	HE Strategy Project Group, Swindon Council, Forward Swindon	Immediate, ongoing
	Develop a central HE facility close to town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant boost to Swindon's graduate labour supply Wider benefits to town through students living in town 	Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council , universities, colleges	5 years +
Position Swindon as a Hub of	Inward investment and promotional activity to position Swindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases potential to bring new investment and jobs to Swindon 	Forward Swindon, LEP	1-2 years
	Carry out feasibility assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare ground for possible investment to 	Swindon Borough Council, Key	1 year

Priority	Key Actions	Impacts on the Economy	Responsibility	Timescale
Advanced Engineering and Technology	of potential locations for automotive supply chain	co-locate supply chain with primes	Employers	
	Assess feasibility and potential locations of an Advanced Technology Park for Swindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key to identifying viability, potential locations, scale, type of development 	Swindon Borough Council , Forward Swindon	1-2 years
	Prepare development brief for an Advanced Technology Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling action to secure a site 	Swindon Borough Council , Forward Swindon	2+ years
	Deliver Advanced Technology Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides location for inward investment and relocation Create conditions to increase employment 	Swindon Borough Council, Developer, Key Employers	5 years +
Revitalise Swindon Town Centre	Swindon Borough Council to review resources and assets to support delivery of key town centre regeneration projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling action to support prioritising of actions in Town Centre Masterplan 	Swindon Borough Council	Immediate
	Complete town centre masterplan process to provide adopted masterplan setting vision and priority actions for town centre. Commission next stage of more detailed development briefs for priority areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling action to identify investment priorities for town centre 	Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council ,	1 year
	Complete delivery of Regent Circus development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure enhanced retail and leisure provision Creates new jobs and business opportunities Provide catalyst for further development 	Ashfield Land (Developer)	Ongoing, with delivery complete in 1-2 years
	Develop public and civic space investment strategy for Swindon Town Centre, including connections to Oasis leisure area across the railway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integral to town centre regeneration Catalytic effects on investment Capitalise on Oasis developments 	Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council	Immediate
	Develop and deliver arts and culture investment strategy for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased visitor numbers and spending, supporting new jobs 	Swindon Borough Council	Immediate start 2 years + to begin

Priority	Key Actions	Impacts on the Economy	Responsibility	Timescale
	Swindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced quality of living environment for residents and visitor experience Raise profile of Swindon and increase confidence in town centre investment 		implementation
Establish Swindon as a Regional Leisure Destination	Develop a visitor economy strategy for Swindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables resources to be prioritised and investment needs identified Ensures best use is made of new and improved facilities in terms of marketing to visitors 	Swindon Borough Council , Hoteliers, Leisure Facility Operators	1-2 years linked to development of new facilities
	Designate a visitor economy lead officer for Swindon to work with private and public sector partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides dedicated resource to coordinate visitor economy related activity Helps to raise profile of visitor economy as key sector of Swindon economy 	Swindon Borough Council	1-2 years, linked to development of new visitor facilities
	Develop new leisure facilities in Oasis leisure area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased visitor numbers and expenditure in Swindon Supports new employment Raises profile & encourages further investment 	Moirai Capital, Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council	3-5 years for completion
Create a Low Carbon Economy	Complete & communicate low carbon economic vision & plan for Swindon, underpinned by public/private governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables vision to start to serve as framework for future planning and investment Links key areas which contribute to the low carbon vision such as higher education, transport, and planning, under common objective. 	Energy Partnership	Immediate
	Gear up planning system to support local energy generation projects and seek to secure quick win energy projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sends positive signals about private sector investment Facilitates developments that will help to support employment in Swindon Generates new business opportunities (planning, construction etc.) 	Swindon Borough Council, Energy Partnership	1-2 years (driven by low carbon vision)
	Benefits local businesses and residents connected to the network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts progress towards a potentially significant source of competitive advantage for Swindon 	Energy Partnership, Swindon Borough Council	1-2 years

Priority	Key Actions	Impacts on the Economy	Responsibility	Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits local businesses and residents connected to the network. 		
	Encourage Investment in low carbon technologies and research , particularly hydrogen applications tr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates commercial activity in hydrogen fuel supply, with potential to support new employment Demonstrator effect for further investment, raising profile of Swindon's R&D and manufacturing assets 	Swindon Commercial Services, Transport Operators	1-2 years
Cross Cutting Actions				
Developing Residents' Skills	Extend and strengthen engagement between education institutions, training providers employers in order to raise attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures skills & training provision responsive to employer needs and changes in economy (as far as possible) Reduces skills gaps and shortages Raises skill levels in Borough 	Colleges, Forward Swindon, employers, Influence , Voluntary and Community Sector	Immediate
	Sustain promotion of value of developing skills across the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising aspirations of Swindon labour force Puts down marker about Swindon's commitment to skills development 	Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council, Voluntary and Community Sector	Immediate
Deliver Well Coordinated Package of Business Support	Establish current picture of business support provision in Swindon and identify key gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basis for action to support new enterprise formation and existing businesses Assist in identifying possible funding sources and targeting resources 	Influence, Forward Swindon, GWE, Swindon Borough Council	1 year
	Review support for commercial innovation in Swindon, building on Local Development Orders and exploring potential for discounted business rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalise on strong record of generating patents Underpin shift towards more knowledge based commercial activity 	TBC	1 year
	Explore options for developing start up support provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses existing gap in provision Contribute to job creation and business formation 	Influence, Forward Swindon, GWE, Swindon Borough Council	1 year
Ensure High Quality	Secure investment to deliver infrastructure to support growth and tackle problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce costs to business of congestion Unlock new development sites Help attract investment 	Swindon Borough Council , Highways Agency	Ongoing
	Improve frequency and reliability of rail services to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps with inward investment pitch for Swindon 	Forward Swindon, rail operators	Ongoing

Priority	Key Actions	Impacts on the Economy	Responsibility	Timescale
Communications. Transport Infrastructure and Services	London and Heathrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces time (and cost) to business of travel 		
	Deliver high quality telecoms provision, including superfast broadband, 4G infrastructure and next generation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists in attracting business to invest in the town Enables businesses to reach new markets Productivity benefits 	Swindon Borough Council , telecoms providers	Ongoing
Provide Right Mix of Land and Premises to Support Growth & Investment	Link site allocations and development priorities to economic strategy and key sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages match between future development and priority sectors Tackles gaps in provision of sites and premises 	Swindon Borough Council ,	Ongoing
Identify New Investment to Support Swindon's Economy	Explore potential public and private funding sources and mechanisms to support priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to provide financial backing to economic priorities Tackle gaps in funding provision 	Influence, Forward Swindon, Swindon Borough Council	Ongoing
Raise Swindon's External Profile and Promote Inward Investment	Develop a sector strategy focusing on key employment and growth sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures best use of resources by targeting activity 	Forward Swindon	Immediate
	Build on new initiatives to develop inward investment strategy, propositions and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to capturing new investment Address negative perceptions of Borough as place to live and work 	Forward Swindon	Ongoing
	Resourced and joined up branding and marketing strategy for Swindon, covering all target markets (employers, employees, investors, visitors etc.) and both public and private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced reputation, generation of new visitors 	Swindon Council/Forward Swindon	
Deliver the Right	Provide the infrastructure to support housing growth for the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that population and labour force growth meet needs of economy 	Swindon Council	Ongoing

Priority	Key Actions	Impacts on the Economy	Responsibility	Timescale
Housing in the Right Locations	Encourage development of more family housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports growth and retention of working age population 	Swindon Council	Ongoing
	Continue to improve overall quality of housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to Swindon becoming a more attractive place to live and work Responds to needs of current residents 	Swindon Council	Ongoing

Appendix 1 - What the Evidence Tells Us

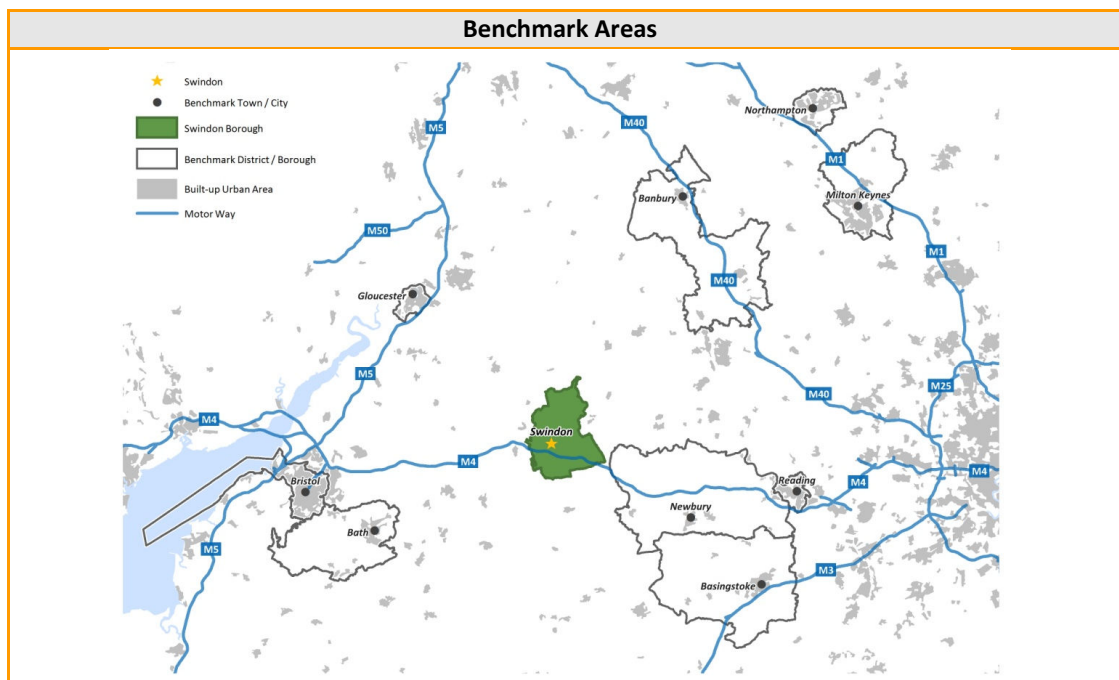
A1.1 This section summarises three key aspects of the evidence base for Swindon

- **Benchmarking** – Swindon’s performance has been compared to 10 locations around the M4 corridor and greater South East which might be regarded as competitors for future investment and growth in the UK and which provide useful benchmarks.
- **Barriers to Growth** – Private and public sector stakeholders have identified the barriers to employment and business growth that Swindon needs to address.
- **SWOT Analysis** – This draws together the evidence about Swindon’s performance and prospects, and has helped stakeholders to identify priorities and the actions that need to be taken.

Benchmarking Swindon

A1.2 Swindon’s future economic prospects will be partly determined by the share it captures of any future UK economic growth. In effect, it will be competing against other locations to secure new business investment and enable its existing businesses to expand.

A1.3 It is therefore useful to understand how Swindon’s economy compares on a series of indicators of competitiveness ranging from the skills of its workforce and the depth of its business base to the strengths of its infrastructure for business. Swindon’s performance on these indicators is ranked against that of 9 locations shown in the map below.



A1.5 The headline messages about Swindon's comparative performance are:

- Swindon continues to be a **productive economy** with one of the highest gross value added per capita figures amongst locations outside London. However, it has fallen behind Milton Keynes, Newbury and Reading and has seen growth slow significantly in the last decade compared to others.
- The borough has also seen **employment losses over the past decade**, a period when many comparator locations saw growth. Youth unemployment has become a particularly acute problem as recession took hold.
- The borough's resident **skills base is well matched to its current economy** in which manufacturing, logistics/distribution and consumer services play a large part.
- However, it is a **relatively lower skilled location**. Residents tend to have higher proportions of lower level skills and work in lower skilled occupations than other locations.
- The Borough is **well located**, with excellent access via road and rail to London, Heathrow, the Greater South East, the West Country and Wales.
- Swindon's excellent location also enables it to draw on an **extensive labour market** along the M4 corridor and Great Western rail route. In this respect, it should be well placed to capture a share of future economic growth in south east/south west England.
- It is a **cost competitive location** in which house prices are lower than many areas and which compares favourably to other locations in terms of commercial property prices.

A1.6 A summary of Swindon's performance on the key indicators is provided below.

Benchmarking Swindon – Positives and Negatives				
	Positives	Rank	Negatives	Rank
How competitive is Swindon's economy?	Strong productivity – GVA per capita £27,600	4 th	Low rate of GVA growth – 45% between 1998 and 2009	10 th
	Growing labour market – 13% population growth 1998-2009	2 nd	Loss of employment 1998-2010 of 9,000	10 th
	Innovation active – 14.9 patents per 100,000 population in 2010	1 st		
What is distinctive about Swindon's economy?	High ratio of private:public sector jobs which account for c.80% of employment	1 st	Low proportion (30%) of jobs in knowledge intensive sectors	8 th
	Strong manufacturing base (11% of employment) at a time when it is seen as key to rebalancing UK economy	2 nd	Low density of jobs (0.8) to working age residents	6 th
How dynamic is Swindon's business base?	High 1 year business start up survival rate (94.2%)	1 st	Low 5 year business survival rate (44.5%)	9 th
	High proportion of businesses with more than 50 employees (ie success in expanding)	2 nd	Low business start up rate – 34 per 10,000 population in 2010	9 th
How well is Swindon weathering the recession?	Reasonable performance in limiting business closures – 1.5% fall 2008-11	2 nd	Substantial loss of employment – 7,300 from 2007-10	9 th
			Significant youth unemployment – 6.9% claimant count in 2012	10 th
How strong is Swindon's skills base?	Middle ranking for residents in low skilled occupations	5 th	Low proportion of resident population in higher managerial and professional occupations – 26% in 2011	9 th
	Size of working age population in travel to work area compares favourably to Reading and West Berkshire (302,000)	NA	Low % of students obtaining 5+ GCE A*-C grades – 53% in 2011	7 th
How competitive is Swindon's infrastructure for business?	Competitive house prices – average £154,000 in 2011	3 rd	Significant contraction in industrial floorspace between 2000 and 2012 – fall of 13%	8 th
			Weakest performance in terms of commercial office floorspace developed between 2000 and 2012 – loss of 3%, implying an ageing stock	10 th

Barriers to Growth

A1.7 Private and public sector stakeholders have identified a series of barriers to growth, reflecting the challenges of running and business, living and working in Swindon, and their expectations about future challenges the Borough needs to tackle.

Issue area	Barriers to growth	How growth is impeded
Skills & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outflow of young people to universities • High proportion of lower skilled people in resident labour force • Skills shortages for specific industries • High rate of unemployment among younger people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers forced to draw from wide area for graduates/higher skilled • Reduces attraction to investors seeking higher skilled labour • Hampers expansion of businesses if they are unable to recruit • Economic and social costs of youth unemployment & under-employment
Innovation, R&D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of significant higher education presence in Swindon • Private sector R&D activity concentrated in relatively small number of firms • Tough business climate for SMEs to invest in innovation • Reduced public sector resources available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited potential for local businesses to interact with university sector • Constraints on pool of innovation active companies, in turn reducing potential to for high value commercial innovation • Competition for scarce resources is now stiffer
Land & Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recession & credit crunch have reduced potential for new commercial development • Availability of sites and premises to attract investment and enable the growth of existing businesses • Weak town centre office market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed opportunities to secure new investment and enable expansion of businesses • Knock on effects on town centre regeneration resulting from weaknesses of office market
Other infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport infrastructure pinch points and enabling infrastructure • Limited public sector investment available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays or restrictions on ability to expand business sites and premises • Difficult to assemble resources for infrastructure projects
Image & Positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative image or lack of awareness of Swindon • Low profile as a place to visit, only partly related to its leisure offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties for employers to attract recruits to Swindon • Town is failing to capture the full potential of leisure and business visitor markets
Quality of Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail and leisure facilities in need of redevelopment and new development • Ensuring Swindon continues to provide right mix and volume of housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town does not capture full potential of resident and visitor expenditure • Hampers efforts to strengthen image and profile of Swindon, deterring investors, workers and visitors • Town might fail to attract and retain labour force with the right mix of skills if housing and lifestyle offer does not match requirements
Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation of business support post 2010 and limited resources available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particularly difficult for new start ups to access the support they require, leaving untapped potential for new enterprise

SWOT Assessment

A1.8 The combination of evidence about Swindon's comparative performance and the views of stakeholders about its economy are drawn together in this SWOT assessment. It highlights where stakeholders see the key opportunities for Swindon's economy, and where action needs to be taken.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining strong productivity performance (GVA per capita) • Location of Swindon - M4 corridor, A417/M5, proximity to London • Diversity of business base and sectors represented in economy • High proportion of private sector employment • Low proportion of public sector employment means more resilience to public sector austerity measures • Strong manufacturing base • Presence of HQ functions in a broad range of sectors including ICT, financial services, insurance, business services and manufacturing • Relatively cost competitive, offering lower than average house prices and mid range commercial property prices • Proximity of scientific research assets (eg. Oxford University, Porton Down) and presence in town (Research Councils, TSB) 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GVA growth has slowed over last decade relative to competitor locations • Higher than average proportion of residents with low qualification levels • High level of youth unemployment • Town centre in need of significant regeneration • Limited range of good quality cultural and leisure assets drawing visitors to town and providing facilities for residents • Rising outcommuting may reflect lack of suitable employment in town • Lack of awareness or negative image of Swindon externally • Absence of a significant HEI presence • Weak commercial office market, particularly in town centre • Unreliable journey times and price of rail services • Slow and infrequent rail link to Heathrow • Distance from neighbouring cities and towns means Swindon isolated
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding population, with forecasts for a growing working age population • Delivery of major regeneration projects – Regent Circus, Oasis, Union Square • Potential to draw additional visitors and generate additional visitor spend • UK initiatives to develop indigenous supply chain for automotive industry • Rising labour costs in China, India etc. has potential to make Swindon a more competitive manufacturing location • High level of patent activity in Swindon points to potential to generate more commercial innovation, building on base in automotive, ICT, electronics, pharmaceuticals • Investment in green energy infrastructure, low carbon transport and local energy generation • Western access to Heathrow and electrification 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major employers in globally competitive sectors makes Swindon vulnerable to recession impacts including closures • Double dip recession and weakness of recovery is broader threat to Swindon's business base and ability to create and sustain jobs • Progress of competitor locations on M4 corridor and home counties, capturing limited pool of major commercial investment • Failure to develop more knowledge intensive business activity • Failure to deliver major regeneration projects • Lack of suitable sites and premises to underpin expansion of economy including offices, logistics and distribution • Lack of public sector resources available to support infrastructure development, business support, regeneration

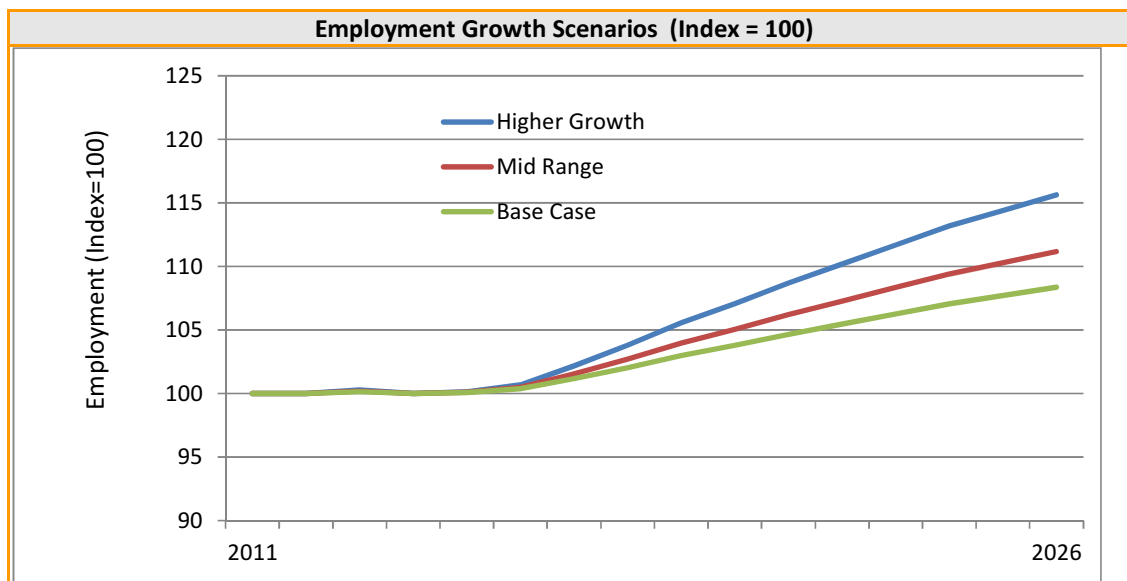
Appendix 2 - Employment Growth Scenarios

The Need for Employment Growth

A2. Work on the Economic Strategy evidence base has pointed to three growth scenarios:

- A **Base Case** scenario in which Swindon achieves a level of employment growth that is consistent with national and regional forecasts, and which reflects expectations about a recovery of the economy that is likely to be slow to arrive and modest in scale. This suggested employment growth of around 10,500 net new jobs to 2026.
- A **Higher Growth** scenario in which the pace and extent of Swindon's recovery outstrips that of other locations and the UK as a whole. In this scenario, nearly 20,000 net new jobs would be created in Swindon by 2026.
- It is also sensible to consider a **Mid Range** scenario, which would represent net employment growth of around 14,000 jobs.

A2.1 Given the depth of the current recession, a return to employment growth is likely to be slow to emerge and the trajectory of growth in the three scenarios is shown below.



A2.2 While a range of 10-20,000 net new jobs in Swindon by 2026 may appear ambitious in the current economic climate, there are a number of issues for partners to consider in setting their aspirations for growth:

- The **Base Case** scenario would see employment in Swindon return to a level not much in excess of total employment in 2001.
- Even the **Higher Growth** scenario would see net employment growth of only 12,000 jobs over the 2001 level.

A2.3 Swindon saw its working age population grow by 15,000 during the 2000s, in a period when employment in the Borough fell. New jobs are therefore needed to enable Swindon to provide opportunities for residents who may currently have to work outside the Borough, or who are under-employed or unemployed. Although the amount of new housing the Borough will aim for from 2012-2026 is yet to be determined, new residents will create demand for services such as schools, health care, retail and leisure. In turn, this will lead to the creation of new jobs, meaning that some employment growth will occur regardless of what happens in the UK or international economy.

A2.4 The key point is that Swindon needs to set its sights on employment growth. Modest growth would enable it to regain ground lost during the 2000s. A higher growth target would mean offering a wider range of employment opportunities to people living and working in the Borough, helping to re-establish its reputation as a dynamic and expanding economic centre.

Drivers of Growth

A2.5 Future employment growth in Swindon will be driven by a number of sectors of the economy. For some sectors, growth will be determined by the ability of Swindon to capture a share of future growth in the UK, particularly in industries that would be expected to invest in the greater South East and M4 corridor. This is about outward facing sectors whose prospects are tied to trading in the UK and internationally. In other sectors, growth will be driven by the demand from residents of Swindon as the population of the town expands, or by additional visitors creating higher demand for services.

Key Sectors for Swindon	
Sector	Drivers of Growth
Business, Professional and Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swindon's location on M4 corridor • Availability of good quality land & premises • Strong expansion of sector expected in UK • Established business and employment base
Tourism & Leisure (Hotels & Catering)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of town to become regional leisure destination • Well established as a location for business trade • Strong population growth generating more expenditure
Logistics & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent location on M4/A417 intersection with excellent market reach • Well established centre for the industry with wide range of premises available and right skills base
Information & Communications Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for Swindon to capture bigger share of UK growth in sectors such as mobile communications, software development • Competitive land and property offer and scope to accommodate new investment and expansion (eg. Advanced Technology Park) • Established presence in some sub-sectors (eg. mobile telecoms) and major employers (eg. Intel)
Manufacturing & Advanced Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in low carbon technologies and engineering • Strong commercial engineering and manufacturing base (automotive, electronics)
Retail & Private Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth will generate new demand for services • Potential to be important source of new business formation
Health & Education Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population will generate additional demand for services • Potential for enhanced higher education provision in the town

Low Carbon Economy

A2.6 The increase in fossil fuel costs and a raft of legislation, regulation and taxation measures have driven up the cost of carbon based forms of energy. This will lead to a shift towards a “low carbon economy” across the UK and elsewhere, impacting on all sectors of the economy and forms of economic activity to some degree. The pressure to reduce carbon based energy consumption globally, the rising cost of energy and the development of new low carbon technologies will be reflected in the way businesses operate. These carbon reduction effects will impact Swindon’s economy in three main ways:

- The rapid pace of change in low carbon technologies, goods and services will create some **opportunities for entirely new economic activity and employment**. In some instances, Swindon-based firms will have the potential to capture a share of growth where there is an established base in Swindon or the potential for a competitive edge. The development of hydrogen fuel cells is a good example of a technology in which Swindon has the potential to see employment growth linked to its more widespread use as a power source in motor vehicles. The extent of these opportunities is largely a product of the business and technology base of Swindon’s businesses and their success in investing in the new opportunities. These opportunities are often seen as the key elements of the low carbon economy, but in truth they are but one part.
- Other parts of Swindon’s economy will be significantly affected by the welter of change in the move to low carbon economy. Businesses which are particularly energy hungry relative to output (eg. manufacturing) will face rising costs and the imperative will be to become more energy efficient and diversify into alternative energy sources (which may be generated locally). The automotive sector and the logistics and distribution sectors are good examples of industries whose core products and services are already increasingly integrating low carbon technologies. Other industries (such as construction) will see similar shifts in terms of the goods and services they produce and skills needed. This effect of the low carbon economy is not necessarily to produce new business opportunities and employment, rather it represents the need to adjust and adapt to change.
- Finally, many parts of Swindon’s economy will only be modestly affected - as energy and fuel costs are a relatively low proportion of total GVA. This is true for many service sector activities. For example, we would expect the effects of the low carbon economy to be comparatively limited in the hotel and catering sector, although rising travel costs are likely to affect inbound business and consumer preferences may shift increasingly to “green tourism”.

A2.7 At this point in time it is difficult to estimate the scale of the impacts the move to a low carbon economy is likely to have on Swindon’s key business sectors. The table below gives an indicative picture of how different business sectors might be affected. The number of stars gives an indication of the likely scale of the opportunity or effects.

Potential Impacts of the Low Carbon Economy on Swindon's Key Sectors			
	Impacts on existing business activity	Potential for additional employment opportunities	Nature of Impacts
Business Services	★	★	Some impacts on existing business as energy costs rise. Potential for Swindon to capture investment in services to low carbon economy (eg. technical consultancy).
Banking & Insurance	★	★	Limited impacts on current businesses, chiefly through cost pressures as energy prices rise. New employment opportunities limited.
ICT	★★	★★	ICT will have important roles to play in energy management, and low carbon energy generation, creating opportunities for existing and new business in Swindon.
Hotels and Catering	★	★	Impacts from rising energy prices on business costs. New job opportunities probably minimal.
Logistics & Distribution	★★★	★★	Significant impacts already evident as warehousing operations and vehicles adapt to need to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs. Some new employment opportunities likely from investment in more efficient distribution operations.
Automotive	★★★★	★★★★	Industry already substantially affected as low carbon technology integrated into vehicle production. Potential for significant new employment linked to production of new low carbon vehicles, components and fuel.
Electronics	★★	★	Sector will see some impacts from rising energy costs. Possibly some potential for new employment linked to use of electronics in new forms of energy management and production.
Pharmaceuticals	★	★	Some impacts on costs of doing business, but probably little direct employment opportunity from low carbon economy.
Retail	★★★	★	Industry is feeling impacts of rising energy costs on existing operations, including movement of goods. Shift to on line retail in part driven by need to reduce costs. Little scope for new employment opportunities.
Construction	★★★	★★	Sector already substantially affected by low carbon economy, both in terms of need to integrate technology into buildings and impacts of rising energy costs. Some job opportunities will also be linked to drive for lower carbon construction in Swindon and surrounding areas.
Source: Regeneris Consulting			

APPENDIX 3 - Measuring Swindon's Progress

A3.1 It is important to capture the impacts of delivering the Economic Strategy and Action Plan for Swindon. It should be expected to help create the conditions for a range of positive impacts including new employment, new business creation, increased value added and new commercial development. Capturing and communicating progress highlight where Swindon has been successful and where further action may be required.

A3.2 To measure progress, Forward Swindon and Swindon Borough Council will agree a mechanism by which progress will be reported against a range of indicators. Which indicators are to be used and how progress is to be reported will be determined once the Economic Strategy has been formally adopted by Swindon Borough Council and its partners. However, the range of indicators could include:

- New jobs created
- New business formation – New start ups, business survival rates
- Gross Value Added (GVA) – Absolute and percentage change
- Quantity of employment land developed
- Quantity of new office floorspace developed – Sq m
- Quantity of new industrial and warehousing floorspace developed – Sq m
- Quantity of retail and leisure floorspace developed
- New national or international inward investments – Absolute number
- Youth unemployment rate – Percentage fall
- Economic activity – Employment rate, unemployment rate
- Commercial innovation – New patents registered
- Visitor numbers – Increase in day and overnight visitors (percentage and absolute)
- Visitor expenditure – Estimated increases in visitor expenditure
- Salaries – Change in median salary levels
- Performance against competitor locations – GVA increases, job creation, business formation

Acknowledgement:

This document is based significantly on a report prepared for the steering group by Regeneris Consulting Ltd. Regeneris have produced all the baseline analysis underpinning the strategy, have facilitated and lead stakeholder workshops and drawn the resultant issues and themes together into a cohesive strategy and action plan.

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Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances - Recommendations 2012/13

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

Author:	Leader of the Council and Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To consider recommendations arising from a meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances.
- 1.2 The Cabinet is required to consider recommendations arising from a meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances and to make appropriate recommendations to the Council.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note, approve, and recommend to the Council the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances held on 25th September 2012, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Note that the proposal of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances is that there should be no change in the level of Councillors' Basic Allowances for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Council is required by the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to consider the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel when making decisions relating to its Scheme of Councillors' Allowances. The Panel is recommending that there is no change in the level of Councillors Basic Allowances for the next Municipal Year.
- 3.2 The Council is not required to adopt all or any of the Panel's recommendations.
- 3.3 Decisions on the Scheme of Councillors' Allowances require the approval of the full Council.
- 3.4 The Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances was established in late 2001. Since that time the independent panel members have met regularly to consider various issues relating to Councillors' Allowances. The Panel is made up of six members independent of the Council. One each

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Willcox, Direct Dial Telephone Number (01793) 463601, Email: iwillcox@swindon.gov.uk.

Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances - Recommendations 2012/13

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

-
- nominated by the Education, Business and Voluntary / Community sectors and three members appointed following public advertisement.
- 3.5 The current membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances is Revd. John Railton (Chair), Mr John Dernie, Ms Wendy Hall, Mr Stuart Macpherson, Ms Jenny Newlyn and Mr David Wilkie.
- 3.6 The Independent Remuneration Panel at its meeting on 25th September 2012 considered and made recommendations to the Cabinet and Council on a number of issues relating to Councillors' Allowances. These recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.7 The Independent Remuneration Panel received a report providing an update on recent developments impacting on Council decision-making and on Councillors' and co-opted members roles and responsibilities. It in particular highlighted –
- 3.7.1 Changes to the Standards Committee and to the roles and responsibilities of the Councillors and independent member serving on it and supporting its work.
- 3.7.2 The establishment of the Joint Wiltshire and Swindon Police and Crime Panel as required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Panel was asked to consider whether it wished to support recommendations of the Wiltshire Independent Remuneration Panel and Council or to make its own recommendations for the application of Special Responsibility Allowances for Swindon Councillors serving on the Police and Crime Panel and for co-opted members from the Borough's area.
- 3.7.3 The requirement for the Council under the provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to establish, as a standing committee of the Council, a Health and Wellbeing Board by 1st April 2013 and whether Special Responsibility Allowances was appropriate for Councillors serving on this Board/Committee.
- 3.7.4 Whether at this time the Panel wished to establish a programme to undertake a review of all Councillors' Allowances for 2013/14, or whether to recommend that there be no change in the level of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for the time being.
- 3.8 A copy of the report considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel is attached as Appendix 2. The minutes of the Panel's meeting and its recommendations are set out in Appendix 1. Appendix 3 provides a comparison of the Budget impact of the Panel's recommendations.
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Willcox, Direct Dial Telephone Number (01793) 463601, Email: iwillcox@swindon.gov.uk.

Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances - Recommendations 2012/13

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 No alternative options are proposed. The Cabinet could decide not to support the Panel's recommendations or to put forward revised recommendations to the Council.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report at this stage.
- 5.2 The total allocation for Councillors Allowances and support for 2012/13 is £693,000. From this, £439,480 is currently set aside for the payment of Councillors' Basic Allowances (£7,710.17x 57) with £253,520 made available for Mayoral Allowances, Special Responsibility Allowances, other Allowances (e.g. Travelling and Subsistence) as specified in the Scheme.
- 5.3 Should the Cabinet and Council support the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, it is believed that there would be no significant impact on the budget made available to fund Councillor Allowances for 2012/13 or projected for 2013/14. Appendix 3 provides a comparison of the Budget impact of the Panel's recommendations.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.4 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)

- 5.5 There are no specific other implications arising from this report at this stage.

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 5.6 There are no specific links.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.7 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has not been undertaken as the report does not make any recommendations or have implications that affect services.

Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances - Recommendations 2012/13

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

Risk Management

- 5.8 There are no specific risk implications. Decisions on Councillors' Allowances are often controversial in media terms and thus decisions may have a reputational risk for the Council.

6. Consultees

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

7. Background Papers

8. Report considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillor Allowances at its meeting on 25th September 2012. This is available to all Councillors on the Council's Intranet and is available on request from the Report Author.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 –Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillor Allowances held on 25th September 2012.

- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Budget Impact Comparison.

10. Key Decision/Decision in Forward Plan

- 10.1 This is not a Key Decision (as the Council is required to determine the Scheme of Councillors' Allowances) and is included in the Cabinet Forward Plan / work programme for December 2012.

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**TUESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2012****10. Review of Members Allowances 2013/2014**

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report which invited the Panel to review the Scheme of Councillors' Allowance for 2013/2014 and future years and in particular the level of allowance for the

- Chair and members of the new Standards Committee
- Independent Persons supporting Standards Committee
- Swindon Borough Council representatives on the Police and Crime Panel (including appointments to the posts of Chair and Vice Chair)
- Members of the new Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Standards Committee

The Panel noted the changes that had been made to Swindon's Standards Committee and to the Standards "regime" as a result of the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and its associated Regulations, and by way of decisions by the Borough Council. In particular that (a) the new committee was now chaired by a Councillor rather than an independent member, (b) fewer independent (co-opted) members would serve on the Committee and be without voting powers, (c) Standards Committee no longer had powers to suspend Councillors for misconduct, (d) it was anticipated that the number of meetings per year would remain the same, (e) the current level of allowances for this Committee and comparisons with other Special Responsibility Allowances.

The attention of the Panel was drawn to a written submission circulated at the meeting that had been provided by the Chair of the new Standards Committee, Councillor David Wood. In his submission, Councillor Wood concluded that he considered that the workload and responsibilities of the role remained broadly the same as under the previous structure.

The Panel noted that the responsibilities of the Standards Committee had changed under the new Standards regime. The Panel in recognising this change also noted the continuing importance of the role played by the Standards Committee and its members. It believed that the level of Special Responsibility Allowance to be applied to the new Standards Committee had to be reviewed in the context of the level of allowance applied to similar roles within the Council. It concluded that the allowance for both the Chair and for the non-voting co-opted members of the New Standards Committee should be slightly reduced to more accurately reflect the responsibilities of the Committee and the similarities of responsibility with that of other Council bodies.

Independent Persons

The Panel noted the appointment, role and responsibilities of the new Independent Persons appointed by the Council under the Localism Act 2011.

It was noted that the Council in making these appointments had approved an allowance of £1,062.71 per year for each Independent Person, the same level as that of the independent members of the Standards Committee. The Panel concluded that at this early stage in the development of the role it could see no evidence to award a

different level of allowance from that of other independent members although it recognised the difference in role. It indicated a wish to further review this Allowance after twelve months of operation.

Police and Crime Panel

The Panel noted the arrangements between Wiltshire and Swindon Councils for the establishment and operation of Joint Police and Crime Panels from autumn 2012 as required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

It was further noted that Wiltshire Council through recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel had already considered the level of Special Responsibility Allowance to be paid to its Police and Crime Panel members and had determined that the Chair of the Panel would receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of £7,550, but that no other Special Responsibility Allowance should apply to Councillor members. Independent co-opted members would receive £1,926.

The Panel noted that Swindon's Independent Remuneration Panel had not been consulted with regard to the payment of allowances to members of the Police and Crime Panel.

The Panel considered the content of the report and written submissions circulated at the meeting that had been provided by Councillor Brian Ford. Councillor Ford was a Swindon Council representative on the Joint Police and Crime Panel and also had been appointed its vice-chair. He was also Vice-Chair of the current Wiltshire Police Authority. In his submission Councillor Ford highlighted the likely workload and responsibilities of the new Police and Crime Panel and of its members.

The Panel considered that the role of a Police and Crime Panel was comparable to that of the Scrutiny Committee, and that the level of allowance for the Chair, should that person be a Swindon Councillor, should be based on that payable in Swindon to the Scrutiny Committee Chair. The Panel considered the responsibilities of those serving on the Police and Crime Panel and concluded that an allowance should be payable to the Vice Chair of the Panel and that this should be based on fifty per cent of the proposed Chair's allowance. This it believed reflected the responsibility, time commitment and knowledge required to perform the role, particularly during the transition period and development of the new Panel. It was agreed that a further review should be undertaken after twelve months of the Panel's operation once formally established.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Panel received a report on the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards as required by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The Panel noted the deliberations and findings of Wiltshire Council's Independent Remuneration Panel on the payment of allowances to Board members.

The Panel considered that it was too premature at this time to consider establishing a level of Special Responsibility Allowance for the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Review of Councillors Allowances for 2013/2014

The Panel considered information on changes to the Council's structure and operating model since it had last met. It noted extracts from a report of the Council's Board Director, Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property to the Cabinet on the Council's Budget Strategy for 2013/14. The Panel concluded that in view of the continuing economic climate it could identify no grounds for recommending any further changes to the level of Councillors' Allowances for 2013/2014, and did not feel there was merit in undertaking a detailed Allowances' Review at this time.

Resolved - That the Cabinet and Council be recommended that -

Standards Committee

- (1) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of the new Standards Committee be set at £4,253 (was £7,444).**
- (2) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the independent members and parish council representatives on the Standards Committee and for the Independent Persons supporting the Standards Committee be reduced from £1,062 to £1,000 to both reflect the reduction in Committee responsibilities and the importance of this role in supporting the Committee and its work.**
- (3) Other than the Chair of the Standards Committee, no further Special Responsibility Allowance be payable to Councillors serving on the Standards Committee.**
- (4) These allowances as set out in (1) to (3) above be again reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel in 12 months' time.**

Police and Crime Panel

- (5) The decisions of Wiltshire Council and its Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Joint Police and Crime Panel be noted.**
- (6) A Special Responsibility Allowance for a Swindon Borough Council (SBC) appointed Councillor serving as Chair of the Joint Police and Crime Panel be set at £4,929, and for an SBC appointed Councillor serving as Vice Chair of the Panel be set at £2,500.**
- (7) Further to the recommendation in (6) above, to note the decision of Wiltshire Council that no Special Responsibility Allowance be payable to Councillors serving on the Joint Police Committee and the an annual allowance of £1,926 be payable to the independent non-Councillor members serving on the Joint Police and Crime Panel.**
"..... operation of a Joint Police and Crime Panel from autumn
- (8) A joint meeting of Wiltshire Independent Remuneration Panel and Swindon Independent Remuneration Panel or its representatives be arranged after 12 months' operation of the Joint Police and Crime Panel. The purpose of the meeting to review the level of allowances for representatives serving on the Joint Police and Crime Panel.**

Health and Wellbeing Board

- (9) No Special Responsibility Allowance be payable to Councillors serving on the Health and Wellbeing Boards and this be reviewed**

after 12 months of the Board's operation once established as a formal committee of the Council.

Councillors Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances 2013/14

- (10) In view of the continuing economic climate and that the Independent Remuneration Panel can identify no grounds at this time for recommending any changes to the existing level of Councillors' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances other than those highlighted in the recommendations in (1) to (9) above and therefore there be no change to the existing levels of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2013/14.

Appendix 2

Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors Allowances – 2012 – Budget Impact Comparison

Current Existing Budget Impact			Proposed Budget Impact	
Post	Special Responsibility Allowance	Total	Special Responsibility Allowance	Total
Chair of Standards Committee	£7,444	£7,444	£4,253	£4, 253
Independent Members of Standards Committee	£1,062 x 7	£7,434	£1,000 x 4	£4,000
Independent Persons – Standards Committee	N/A	N/A	£1,000 x 2	£2,000
Joint Police and Crime Panel - Vice Chair (Chair if from SBC*)	N/A	N/A	£ 2,500 (£4,929*)	£2, 500 (£4,929*)
	Budget Impact	£14,878	Recommendations Budget Impact	£12,753 (£15,182*)

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Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan – Inspectors Report and Adoption

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

Author:	Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Strategic Planning and Head of Planning
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's approval that the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan, as amended by the changes identified in the Inspector's Report, be recommended to Full Council for formal adoption.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Commend the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan, as amended by the changes identified in the Inspector's Report to Full Council for adoption; and
- 2.2 Authorise the Head of Planning and the Director of Law and Democratic Services to make minor changes to the content of the document (if required) prior to publication, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Strategic Planning, and appropriate representatives of Wiltshire Council where necessary.

3. Detail

- 3.1 Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council jointly prepare all waste development planning documents covering the Wiltshire and Swindon area. Wiltshire and Swindon currently have an adopted joint Waste Core Strategy and an adopted joint Waste Development Control Policies Development Plan Document. The third and final document in this suite is the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan. Upon adoption, the Waste Site Allocations Local Plan will form part of the Council's statutory Development Plan and provide the planning framework against which decisions can be made in respect of waste development proposals in Swindon for the plan period to 2026. The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan amplifies the parent Wiltshire and Swindon Core Strategy and supports the Waste Development Control Policies DPD, together these three documents form the Waste Development Plan for Wiltshire and Swindon.
- 3.2 The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan provides detailed support to the adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy in terms of

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Phil Smith, Direct Dial x6443, psmith@swindon.gov.uk.

Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan – Inspectors Report and Adoption

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

formally identifying land for future waste management facilities. For Swindon this will also assist in the implementation of Swindon's Municipal Waste Strategy.

- 3.3 A Public Examination was held in May 2012 into the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan, in front of an independent Inspector. The Inspectors' Report has been published, which finds the document to be 'sound' thereby meeting the statutory planning requirements, and supporting Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Councils' approach of waste management conducted in a sustainable manner, with due regard to the protection of the environment and to local communities.

The Inspectors Report

- 3.4 Whilst the Inspector's Report concluded that the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan to be "sound", the Report identified changes to ensure that the Plan satisfies the requirements of recently published Government planning regulations. These changes are not major and, whilst not binding on the Councils, have been made by the Inspector where he has identified a clear need to amend the documents in the light of the legal requirements or the tests of soundness. None of these changes materially alter the substance of the overall plan or the policies, or undermine the sustainability appraisal and participatory processes already undertaken. These Proposed Changes are detailed in the Inspectors Reports (Appendix 1).
- 3.5 The key proposed changes of relevance to Swindon are:
- 3.5.1 An additional overarching policy outlining that waste management development proposals on sites not identified within the Plan, will be considered on their own merits, if they demonstrate they are in keeping with national policy and the policies within the Waste Development Plan. This incorporates the requirement of presumption in favour of sustainable development within the National Planning Policy Framework;
 - 3.5.2 An amendment to the Chapel Farm site profile to provide clarification that the size of the site will include the development proposal and all necessary mitigation measures;
 - 3.5.3 Amendments to Land at Kendrick Industrial Estate, Brindley Close/Darby Close and Land within Dorcan Industrial Estate profiles clarifying these sites cannot accommodate strategic scale operations and also to add details regarding site specific constraints; and
 - 3.5.4 An amendment to Rodbourne Sewage Treatment Works site profile regarding future provision limited solely to the extension of the Treatment Works.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Phil Smith, Direct Dial x6443, psmith@swindon.gov.uk.

Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan – Inspectors Report and Adoption

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

- 3.6 The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan as amended by the Inspectors Report will carry significant weight in the determination of planning applications for waste management provision. It will play a key role in co-ordinating the provision of waste management facilities.

Next Steps

- 3.7 If endorsed by Cabinet and Full Council (as well as Wiltshire Council) the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan will be formally adopted by the Councils and be used in the decision making process for planning applications. Once adopted, copies of the Local Plan will be distributed to statutory consultees, including Parish and Community Councils. The Local Plan will be made available to view at the offices of Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council (Wat Tyler House) and at all libraries throughout Wiltshire and Swindon. The document will also be made available to view on the Councils' websites.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Although there is no legal obligation on the Council to adopt the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan, the implication of not adopting the Local Plan would be to create a gap in the planning decision making process, which may lead to reliance on either out-dated or absent policies at the expense of current policies which an Inspector has found to be sound.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The financial pressures arising from publishing the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan are to be met from existing Planning budgets, specific to this purpose. Provision is made for this document to be published in the 2012/2013 budget.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 The content of this report will not have a direct implication upon human rights issues. The document has been produced in accord with all statutory requirements and the Borough Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan – Inspectors Report and Adoption

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

- 5.3 The sustainability of the proposed sites is a critical element of the planning considerations, which are explained within the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan.

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 5.4 The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan will form part of the development plan for Swindon which is a statutory requirement. It is a delivery mechanism for the Community Strategy and One Swindon priorities 'We can all benefit from a growing economy and a better town centre' and 'Living independently, protected from harm, leading healthy lives and making a positive contribution'.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been prepared; the DIA shows that there are no adverse impacts on the basis of age, disability, race, gender, sex, religion, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership status or pregnancy maternity.

Risk Management

- 5.6 The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for Swindon and is crucial to the success of the delivery of adequate waste management provision within Wiltshire and Swindon Borough. Without an adopted plan in place, there is a significant risk of waste management facilities being located without due consideration to local communities and the local environment.

6. Consultees

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

7. Background Papers

Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations DPD Submission Draft (June 2011).

Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations DPD Submission Draft (February 2012)

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Phil Smith, Direct Dial x6443, psmith@swindon.gov.uk.

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Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan: Schedule of Modifications (June 2012)

Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan: Additional Proposed Modification (August 2012)

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: The Inspectors Report into the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan (November 2012).

9. Key Decision/Decision in Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Forward Plan for December 2012.

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Report to Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council

by Mrs K.A. Ellison BA, MPhil, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Date: 6th November 2012

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004 (AS AMENDED)

SECTION 20

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE
WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON
WASTE SITE ALLOCATIONS
LOCAL PLAN**

Document submitted for examination on 14 February 2012

Examination hearings held between 24 and 26 April 2012

File Ref: PINS/K3930/429/11

Abbreviations Used in this Report

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
CS	Core Strategy
HRA	Habitats Regulation Assessment
LDS	Local Development Scheme
LP	Local Plan
MM	Main Modification
PRoW	public right of way
RTAB	Regional Technical Advisory Body
RS	Regional Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy
WCS	Waste Core Strategy
WDC	Waste Development Control policies

Non-Technical Summary

This report concludes that the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the Area up to 2026 providing a number of modifications are made to the Plan. The Councils have specifically requested that I recommend any modifications necessary to enable them to adopt the Plan.

All of the modifications were proposed by the Councils and I have recommended their inclusion after full consideration of the representations from other parties on these issues.

The modifications can be summarised as follows:

- the inclusion of a policy which sets out how the presumption in favour of sustainable development will be applied
- clarification of the term 'area of search' as it applies to sites where mitigation measures will be required, with consequent additions to the relevant site tables
- setting out the reasons why sites within 16km of a principal settlement have been allocated for local scale waste uses, along with related additions to the relevant site tables
- changes to site tables where necessary to ensure that the requirements they contain are adequately justified
- removal of one site which cannot be shown to be deliverable

Introduction

1. This report contains my assessment of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan in terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). It considers first whether the Plan's preparation has complied with the duty to co-operate, in recognition that there is no scope to remedy any failure in this regard. It then considers whether the Plan is sound and whether it is compliant with the legal requirements. The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 182) makes clear that to be sound, a Local Plan should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
2. The starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local authorities have submitted what they consider to be a sound plan. The basis for my examination is the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations DPD Submission Draft February 2012. This differed from the Proposed Submission Draft June 2011 [WAS/01] and, in order to assist the examination, a list of the changes which had been made was published [the Bridging Schedule of Changes]. Arrangements were made within the examination process to consider any further matters which might arise as a result of those changes.
3. During the examination period, The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites were published and the opportunity was given for respondents to make representations on any relevant matters raised in those documents.
4. My report deals with the main modifications that are needed to make the Plan sound and legally compliant and they are identified in bold in the report (**MM**). In accordance with section 20(7C) of the 2004 Act, the Council requested that I should make any modifications needed to rectify matters that make the Plan unsound and thus incapable of being adopted. These main modifications are set out in the Appendix.
5. The main modifications that go to soundness, along with the Bridging Schedule of Changes and an additional main modification proposed in August 2012, have been subject to public consultation and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and I have taken the responses into account in writing this report.

Assessment of Duty to Co-operate

6. Section s20(5)(c) of the 2004 Act, as amended, requires that I consider whether the Councils complied with any duty imposed on them by section 33A of the 2004 Act in relation to the Plan's preparation.
7. In essence, the Plan is intended to deliver the strategic planning policy framework of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy and will complete the Waste Development Framework for the area. The Plan is, therefore, primarily directed towards addressing local waste management needs but the Councils emphasise that they have been working within the spirit of co-operation throughout the preparation period. This is particularly evidenced in the collaboration between the two Authorities but can also be seen in the way the Plan has been prepared in line with the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West, as well as in the light of engagement with

other Waste Planning Authorities through the Regional Technical Advisory Body on Waste (RTAB). The Councils also confirm they have maintained a process of dialogue and engagement with all neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees and those with an interest in waste development matters in the area, including the waste industry. The changes made in the wake of the consultation on the Proposed Submission Draft are a further example of the way the Councils have sought to engage positively with those involved in the preparation of the Plan. Details of this process are given in the Statement of Consultation [WAS/07]. Whilst some issues remain unresolved, particularly in relation to the cases made by some Parish Councils, these can mainly be put down to differences in judgement and should not be seen as indicative of a failure to work collaboratively.

8. The Councils have, therefore, fulfilled the duty to co-operate with regard to the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan.

Assessment of Soundness

Preamble

9. Consultations on the Proposed Submission Draft, June 2011 raised questions as to the deliverability of certain sites and indicated a need for further requirements to be set out within the Plan on a range of technical matters. A subsequent landowner consent exercise then revealed that 8 sites would be undeliverable. The revisions which were made between Proposed Submission Draft and Submission Draft were primarily aimed at addressing these points. There was scope within the examination process to allow consideration of any matters which respondents might identify that arose from the changes which the Councils had made. Consultation on the main modifications and the Bridging Schedule of Changes took place during June-July 2012, at which stage further information was provided to indicate that another site would not be deliverable. As a result, the Councils proposed an additional main modification, on which a further round of focussed consultations took place, ending in September 2012.

Main Issues

10. Taking account of all the representations, written evidence and the discussions that took place at the examination hearings, I have identified two main issues upon which the soundness of the Plan depends.

Issue 1 –whether, taken as a whole, the preparatory processes that underpin the plan have a sound basis, having regard to national policy, the relationship with other plans and strategies and the evidence base.

Strategic context

11. The Plan is the third document in the waste planning policy framework for Wiltshire and Swindon which, together, cover the period to 2026. It comprises a short, introductory section and then identifies a series of sites, arranged by area, each accompanied by a site table setting out those matters identified as relevant to any development which may come forward. The Plan takes forward the principles set out in the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy (adopted July 2009) [CPP/60] and applies the approach to

development contained in the Waste Development Control Policies (adopted September 2009) [CPP/61].

12. The Evidence Base [WAS/27, WAS/28] reviews the implications for the Plan of other plans and strategies, including Planning Policy Statement 10: *Planning for Sustainable Waste Management* (PPS 10) and the emerging Core Strategies for Wiltshire and Swindon. This has ensured that the Plan shows general consistency with those plans and strategies. The Plan area borders the New Forest National Park and includes land within three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), all of which are identified on the Policies Map. The Evidence Base reviews the National Park strategy as well as the management plans for the AONBs and their influence can be seen in the site appraisal and selection process [WAS/17] as well as in the various references contained in the site tables within the Plan itself. Whilst representations were made in relation to recent development management decisions and the potential impact on tranquillity, the Plan itself is sound in that it gives proper consideration to these nationally designated areas.
13. The Councils have viewed the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as an iterative process, as set out in the Waste Site Selection and Site Appraisal Methodology [WAS/20] and the SA Reports [WAS/02-04]. In this way, reasonable alternatives have been considered and appraised, with clear reasons being published for the inclusion of some sites and the rejection of others. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report [WAS/08] concludes that two of the proposed sites are within a distance at which a waste management facility may adversely affect the River Avon SAC and this has informed the relevant parts of the Plan.
14. The Plan is consistent with the core planning principles set out in the Framework except in relation to the requirement that it should reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development. A new policy to address this is set out at **MM2**. The wording reflects the Councils' wishes that the policy should be appropriate to this Plan and its local context, whilst at the same time embodying the presumption contained in the Framework.

The evidence base and identified need

15. The Waste Capacity Gap report, October 2011, [WAS/13] updated the relevant information from the Waste Core Strategy so as to take account of permissions granted since 2006. For the municipal stream, the gap is identified as 1 HRC and 1 MRF; for Industrial and Commercial, it stands at some 360,000m³ of void space, 168,000tpa treatment and 58,000tpa recycling. The 35 sites in the Plan clearly offer significantly more capacity than could be justified on the basis of need. This high level of allocation avoids the limitations of aiming primarily to address shortages in capacity. Instead, it takes forward the flexible vision laid down in the Waste Core Strategy and allows for innovation through the range of potential uses it identifies. In this way, the Plan takes a positive approach and offers scope to be responsive to change and to support movement towards the use of waste as a resource, in accordance with the waste hierarchy.
16. One of the strengths of this flexibility can be seen in the way that, even though sites were removed at a late stage in the plan-making process, this

Plan continues to make more than adequate provision for expected waste management development so that, in this respect, its soundness has been unaffected. By the same token, whilst additional sites were suggested which might have led to increased flexibility, it was not necessary for them to be included in order to make the Plan sound. As to their individual merits, there is provision within the wider Waste Development Framework (eg policy WCS3) for consideration of proposals on sites not identified here.

The site selection process

17. The locations within the plan are made up of industrial estates, sites associated with existing waste management activity and new locations for development, all of which are divided according to whether or not they are suitable for strategic scale facilities. At paragraph 1.2, the Plan explains that although some the allocations are site specific, others are areas of search. The Councils have already provided some clarification of this approach for industrial areas but the implications for other areas also needs to be made clear (**MM5**). Also, many allocations concern undeveloped land or sites where remediation following a previous use is expected to take place. Further explanation is necessary in order to justify the use of areas of search in these cases, to ensure that proposals take into account that mitigation measures must be contained within the area designated and should not encroach into the surrounding countryside (**MM1, MM4 and the associated changes to site tables in MM6-A to MM6-J**).
18. The site tables begin with descriptive matters and then move on to identify, in a systematic way, the key issues and mitigation measures which any proposal would be expected to address. This is done under a series of headings which cover potential impacts on human health and the built and natural environment, an approach which sets out with reasonable clarity the basis for a decision maker to react to a proposal.
19. The Councils point out that the Plan results from the consideration of over 100 potential sites which were assessed against a range of economic, social and environmental criteria, as recorded in the Report on Site Selection Process [WAS/11]. Even though the starting point for this sieving process was the capacity for a site to accept waste development rather than a spatial analysis of existing facilities, the distribution of sites correlates well with planned growth over the period to 2026. Had the Plan taken a more restrictive approach, the removal of nine sites might well have proved fatal to its ability to cater for predicted demand. However, the capacity of the remaining sites continues to exceed that identified in the Waste Capacity Gap Report by a considerable margin. Moreover, although the sites which have been removed were predominantly in the south and east of the Plan area, I am satisfied that a suitable level of flexibility has been maintained. As a result, the Plan is still capable of supporting an appropriate pattern of provision based on the 'geography of growth' and the pattern of waste arisings likely to occur.
20. The allocations in the northern and western parts of the Plan area gave rise to concerns as to whether there would be a disproportionate effect in these areas, particularly around Purton and Westbury. However, the context is one which places particular emphasis on flexibility, both in terms of the number of sites allocated and the use of the 'preferred areas' approach as opposed to

more narrowly defined plots of land. As such, the allocations should not be evaluated on the basis that proposals would come forward on all sites or that development would involve the whole of the area identified. It should also be noted that the evidence base does not support development on such a scale. Moreover, the site tables also require account to be taken of cumulative impacts, where relevant. There is sufficient provision within the Plan therefore, to ensure that even though there are more sites in some areas than others, the overall approach would not be likely to lead to unacceptable concentrations in particular localities.

21. The site assessment process was a comprehensive one, with sites being considered against a range of criteria, both qualitative and quantitative. The methodology allowed for a site to be excluded on the basis of significant adverse impact in relation to all of the identified criteria. In the round therefore, a reasonable balance has been ensured between objectively measurable features such as distance from an AONB and criteria requiring a more subjective level of judgement such as impact on amenity or visual intrusion. The findings of the assessment process have then created a clear evidence base to support the various mitigation measures identified within the site profile tables.
22. In line with policy WCS2, the sites are identified for strategic or local scale development. I appreciate that there may be some difference in how these terms are understood, according to the point of view of the local planning authority as compared to, say, that of a waste operator but the spatial and land use characteristics of such operations are set out with reasonable clarity within the Plan. The possibility of local scale development on a site identified for strategic uses should not raise significant issues, since any impact should be within the range which the site assessment process has already established would be manageable. However, the site assessment process has also resulted in several sites within 16km of a principal settlement being identified as unsuitable for strategic scale development. The link between the assessment process and each designation needs to be made more explicit, with the relevant information being carried across into the Plan, so that the designation is properly justified. **(MM3 and the associated changes to site tables in MM7.1-7.18).**

The changes between the Proposed Submission Draft and Submission Draft

23. The Submission Draft was presented for approval to the respective Cabinet and Full Council meetings of the two Authorities. Apart from the removal of eight of the sites, the changes were predominantly concerned with incorporating further technical information provided by the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency as well as the Councils' own officers on detailed matters of heritage, landscape, ecology and sustainability.
24. There is a potential that fewer sites might have reduced the scope for new waste management development. However, bearing in mind the high degree of flexibility which the Plan continues to afford, I consider that the provision remains sufficient to ensure an appropriate degree of choice has been maintained. Paragraph 1.4 now promotes a link between waste development and the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy but the connection is phrased in positive terms so that it is not overly prescriptive.

25. The impact of vehicle movements on communities in the surrounding localities was a recurring theme in many of the representations, especially for towns and villages already affected by congestion or whose historic character made it particularly difficult to safely accommodate modern HGVs, such as in terms of limited road widths or an absence of footways. In many cases, the site tables refer to particular difficulties, which reflect the findings of the site appraisals. As part of the Bridging Changes, each site table now also includes a requirement for a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan. In the circumstances, these measures would assist in managing the overall impact of a development and so would not undermine soundness by imposing an unacceptable burden on developers.

Conclusion

26. The preparatory processes underpinning the plan have, on the whole, been shown to be soundly based, with the modifications in **MM1-MM5** being necessary to bring it into line with current national policy and to provide adequate justification for the use of areas of search and the distinction between strategic and local scale development. Whilst other amendments were proposed which were intended to improve the understanding of the Plan, these have not been shown to be necessary in order to make it sound.

Issue 2 – whether the allocated sites are justified and deliverable

27. In order to achieve flexibility, the approach to site selection was that a proposed site should be included in the Plan unless there was evidence that it would not be capable of accommodating a waste use. Given this particular approach, questions of soundness with regard to individual sites might arise either from a shortcoming in the way a site had been assessed or a lack of adequate justification within the relevant site table.

North Wiltshire

28. The Parkgate Farm and Purton Brickworks sites (Tables 2.1 and 2.2) lie either side of the railway line, a short distance to the north of Purton village and are already associated with various large scale facilities. The problematic nature of the links to the primary route network are noted in the site appraisals, a factor which is then addressed in the site tables, particularly in relation to Cricklade. The sites are not ideally located for strategic scale development but, if further development was to be restricted to local scale only, this would run counter to national policy due to the risk of stifling the scope for further innovation in relation to the existing facilities. Whilst the links to Swindon may be affected by the planned expansion in the area of Ridgeway Farm, the information at this stage suggests that it would not adversely affect vehicle movements for these sites. Although some villages would be particularly vulnerable to impacts associated with higher levels of traffic movement, this would fall within the scope of a Transport Assessment, which now forms one of the requirements contained in the site table. As such, it has not been demonstrated that the sites should be designated as suitable only for local scale development.
29. The Parkgate Farm allocation would allow waste-related activities to extend beyond the existing PRow so that there is some basis for the concerns over

the potential visual impact within this area of open countryside. The change outlined in **MM6-A** would make it clear that all mitigation measures should be included within the area allocated. Although the whole of the Purton Brickworks site is allocated, the Plan is sound in that it allows for a waste proposal to be assessed on the basis of its impact on other uses on the industrial estate.

30. The Hills Resource Recovery Centre, Compton Bassett (Table 2.3) contains a substantial waste operation based around the original landfill but now including several other activities. In terms of potential uses, only waste treatment is identified, with energy from waste being specifically excluded on the basis of the site's planning history. The requirements for a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan mean that the Plan provides a clear basis for consideration of any further impacts on nearby communities and the surrounding road network.
31. The two sites at Stanton St Quintin (tables 2.4 and 2.5) are areas of search comprising undeveloped land where mitigation measures would be required (**MM6-B and 6-C**). Both site tables set out a requirement for a Transport Assessment and this would be an adequate mechanism to allow the traffic impact of any development to be addressed.
32. A Transport Assessment would also be required for any development on the Thingley Junction site (table 2.10) and this could be expected to consider any implications for the cycle route. Further text is needed to make clear that the allocation allows for mitigation measures (**MM6-E**). The potential impact on the adjacent Traveller site is identified as an issue in the site table, as well as being one of the constraints which justifies the designation for local scale development (**MM7-D**). Any consultations with nearby residents would fall to be dealt with under the relevant provisions of the SCI, should a proposal come forward on the site.
33. Leaffield Industrial Estate (table 2.11) is designated for local scale development on the basis of traffic impacts, including at Potley Bridge. This constraint should be included in the site profile (**MM7-E**).
34. Further text should be inserted into table 2.7, Barnground, South Cerney to clarify that the allocation should accommodate mitigation measures (**MM6-D**) and to justify the designation for local scale development (**MM7-A**). Justification should also be given for the local status of Whitehills Industrial Estate, Royal Wootton Bassett (table 2.8) and Bumpers Farm Industrial Estate, Chippenham (table 2.9) (**MM7-B and MM7-C**).
35. I understand that the present waste processing operation on the Porte Marsh Industrial Estate (table 2.12) was granted permission on a temporary basis due to particular local circumstances. It does not therefore represent a good reason to set aside the designation for local scale uses, which reflects the findings of the site appraisal (**MM7-F**).

West Wiltshire

36. Hampton Business Park (table 3.1) and Bowerhill Industrial Estate (table 3.5) are substantial employment areas located along the southern edge of Melksham which offer good access to the A350. Although waste related

development would be likely to generate additional traffic movements, these would not necessarily be at a significantly greater level than other uses which might equally well come forward on this type of site. In addition, the requisite Transport Assessments would be an appropriate method by which to address the potential impact on the surrounding area. Although the Hampton Business Park site is visible from the A350, the site table notes that design would be a key consideration. The site assessment process identified particular constraints which led to the allocation of Bowerhill for local scale development and these should be set out in the site table (**MM7-G**). Whilst development may take place at some point on land to the north of Bowerhill, that on its own is not sufficient reason for the Plan to impose a restriction on development on part of the site.

37. The West Wiltshire and Northacre Trading Estates at Westbury (tables 3.2 and 3.3) are both substantial areas of industrial development where there is considerable variation in the quality and age of buildings and the types of sites available. Whilst some waste management operations make use of quite basic facilities, it is also the case that others require enclosed, modern buildings which can sit quite comfortably alongside other industrial uses. The recently built facility at Westbury is a case in point. Where changes within the industrial estates fall within the scope of development management, there would be scope to address any impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area. However, the continuing availability of older buildings such as those in the area around Engineer Road is likely to be due to a number of factors, including their ability to meet the needs of a range of business users rather than being specific to the presence of waste operators. I am not persuaded, therefore, that the allocations in the Plan would lead to a deterioration in the quality of the current environment on these industrial estates. Where waste-related development comes forward, the Plan requires the submission of a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, thus allowing transport issues to be addressed, even in the absence of a bypass for the town. Given the timeframe of the Plan, it is reasonable for it to recognise the potential for the rail interchange, even if its prospects, at present, appear quite limited.
38. The Lafarge Cement Works (table 3.4) has been defined to include a clay pit to the north east of the existing works. The site itself is in a sensitive location, being outside the built up area of Westbury and within the setting of the White Horse. The table should be amended to make clear that mitigation measures will need to be incorporated within the area allocated (**MM6-F**). The site will undergo change as consideration is given to alternative uses and these would be likely to entail some importation of fill materials. Thus, even though there is local support for the site to be given over to agricultural use, this needs to be balanced against the opportunities to address the current, negative elements through redevelopment. At present therefore, the designation is justified as it stands.
39. The appraisal process appears to have been unclear as to the relationship of the site at Valley Farm, Chitterne (table 3.8) to the nearby landfill operation. Even so, this does not discredit the main finding, that the site has capacity to accommodate some waste management uses, within the limits defined by its allocation for local scale development. It is not necessary therefore, that the site should be removed from the Plan in the interests of soundness. Although

the allocation covers a sizeable area, this takes account of the requirement that it is expected to accommodate mitigation measures within the allocated area (**MM6-G**). The site is in a very sensitive location, being easily visible within the surrounding undeveloped countryside. Given this sensitivity, further requirements should be inserted into the site table to address the form and scale of development. Moreover, while mitigation measures within the site itself may improve its capacity to accept development, it is also prudent for the Plan to draw attention to the scope for off-site planting, in order to encourage measures to address any wider impact (**MM8**). The potential impact on the wider locality as regards traffic, amenity and impact on the historic and natural environment have been identified in the site table so that they would need to be taken into account should a proposal come forward.

40. Modifications should be made to the site tables for Canal Rd (table 3.6) and Warminster (table 3.7) as set out at **MM 7-H and 7-I** to provide adequate justification for their designations for local scale development.

East Wiltshire

41. Although the Hopton Industrial Estate (table 4.1), has good, immediate access to the A361, the impact of traffic movements on Devizes has been identified as a constraint which restricts its suitability to local scale development only (**MM7-J**). In a similar vein, the scale of uses appropriate for the site at Wiltshire Waste (Recycling) Ltd (table 4.2) has also been restricted to local scale uses (**MM7-K**). The scale of development envisaged in the Plan would tend to limit the likelihood that it would impact on the AONB, especially in the context of the scale of uses presently on site so that the Plan is not unsound in this regard. Justification should be given for the scale of the designation of Salisbury Road Business Park, Marlborough (table 4.3) (**MM7-L**).
42. The site at Pickpit Hill (table 4.5) is some way outside of both Tidworth and Ludgershall but lies relatively close to the Wellington Academy, a school which also includes a residential element and a crèche. The site table recognises the need for sensitive site planning, which would include the orientation of any building. However, text should be added to make clear that the site is expected to accommodate the necessary mitigation measures, including screening (**MM6-H**). Local topography, such as the difference in height between this site and the Academy, would need to be taken into account as part of the required investigation into impact on human health and amenity, a matter which is already addressed within the site table. There would also appear to be reasonable grounds to expect that impacts of odours, dust or noise could be addressed through the design and regulation of any facility located on site. The site survey notes the significant risk of a legacy of contaminated ground. Whilst this point was strongly reinforced within the representations, the need to address contamination risks is also already set out within the site table.
43. The site table identifies a number of measures which would be required to enable development to take place, including access arrangements as well as the matters covered above. Whilst there are reasonable grounds to expect that each area of concern could be addressed individually, these could, in combination, represent a substantial burden on a site which has been designated as suitable only for a local scale facility. However, this would be

largely dependent on the details of any proposal which was made and the extent of mitigation or remediation which then became necessary. It seems to me that the balance is a fine one. Nevertheless, on the information available, I consider that the likely costs of development are not so substantial as to make the allocation unsound on the basis of its viability.

South Wiltshire

44. As with other parts of the plan area, traffic and congestion also represent an issue for South Wiltshire. The requirement for a Transport Assessment would address the question of vehicle routes in relation to any further development at the CB Skip Hire site at Salisbury (table 5.1). The site table also identifies potential issues relating to noise or dust and the case for measures to mitigate potential impacts in these respects would be given added force by the need to address the relationship of the site to the River Avon SAC.
45. The site at Brickworth Quarry and Landfill, Whiteparish (table 5.2) is in open countryside, close to the New Forest National Park and immediately adjacent to ancient woodland, a UK BAP priority habitat. The justification for this site as a location for waste treatment is entirely reliant on the restoration of the quarry. This, together with the sensitivity of the location, makes it reasonable that it should have been assessed only for inert waste recycling and treatment. There is concern that a waste treatment operation could take on a life of its own and either delay restoration or lead to waste activities continuing afterwards. I agree that the Plan should maintain the existing position, that the life of any waste processing should not extend beyond that which is necessary for restoration purposes. The site table requires potential uses to be ancillary to landfill reinstatement so that it provides an adequate framework for more detailed controls to be placed on any proposals which may come forward.
46. Given the clear link between a possible waste operation and the restoration programme, the Transport Assessment would represent an appropriate means of managing any traffic issues arising from such development, including access routes. Although it is likely that the site would accept waste from outside the county, this would not be unreasonable given its geographical location and the waste stream concerned so that this does not undermine overall aim of the Plan for net self-sufficiency. However, the basis for the designation for local scale development needs to be specified in the table (**MM7-M**). Given the proximity to the National Park, the wording should also be amended to clarify that any scheme would need to demonstrate acceptability in terms of landscape impact (**MM6-I and MM9**).
47. The Employment Allocation, Mere (table 5.3) no longer has the clear support of the landowner so that it can not be shown to be deliverable. As a result, it should be removed from the Plan (**MM10**). The site was designated for local scale uses and, as the Councils point out, its removal does not prevent the Plan from meeting projected capacity requirements. Moreover, Mere lies to the south of the West Wiltshire Downs AONB, on the boundary with the adjoining Authority, Dorset. As a local site therefore, a facility in this location would be likely to have made a limited contribution to meeting demand from within Wiltshire itself. Thus, even though this represents a further reduction in the number and range of sites identified in the South Wiltshire area, I consider

that this modification would be of local significance geographically and would not lead to undue pressure being placed on other sites within the Plan area.

48. The Former Imerys Quarry, Quidhampton (table 5.4) is an area of potential change, as new uses are sought for the site. Whilst it has been suggested that the allocation should be enlarged, activities on that part of the site would be mainly directed towards restoration and it would not necessarily be made available subsequently for waste-related development. No modification would therefore be necessary to ensure soundness. However, additional text should be inserted to justify the designation for local scale development (**MM7-N**).

Swindon

49. Swindon is a location where significant growth is planned, including a substantial area of residential development in the area of Tadpole Farm which may involve the provision of an access road across the centre of the Chapel Farm site (table 6.1). Clearly, if the residential scheme was to proceed in that particular form, it would affect the capacity of the site to accept waste-related development. Even so, there is sufficient scope within the 5.5ha allocated to allow for the suggested energy from waste scheme to come forward, as well as the mitigation measures the site is also expected to accommodate (**MM6-J**). Whilst the A419 now bypasses Blunsdon village, the main route to the site continues to be through part of the village so that it would be necessary to address this as part of the required Transport Assessment.
50. The sites at Brindley Close/Darby Close (table 6.3), Kendrick Industrial Estate (table 6.4), Rodbourne Sewage Treatment Works (table 6.5) and the Dorcan Industrial Estate (table 6.6) have all been designated for local scale development. The justifications for those designations should be added to the relevant site tables (**MM 7-O, 7-P, 7-Q and 7-R**).
51. With these modifications, I am satisfied that the allocated sites would be justified and deliverable.

Assessment of Legal Compliance

52. My examination of the compliance of the Plan with the legal requirements is summarised in the table below. I conclude that the Plan meets them all.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS	
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	The Waste Site Allocations Local Plan is identified within the approved LDS of both Authorities. The Wiltshire LDS, November 2011, sets out an expected adoption date of November 2012, with the Swindon LDS giving an expected date of July 2012. The Waste Site Allocations Local Plan's content and timing are compliant with the LDS.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and relevant regulations	The SCI for Wiltshire was adopted in February 2010 and that for Swindon in January 2007. Consultation has been compliant with the requirements therein,

	including the consultation on the changes between the Proposed Submission Draft and Submission Draft as well as on the post-submission proposed 'main modification' changes (MM)
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	SA has been carried out and is adequate.
Appropriate Assessment (AA)	The Habitats Regulations AA Screening Report, December 2011 sets out why AA is not necessary.
National Policy	The Waste Site Allocations Local Plan complies with national policy except where indicated and modifications are recommended.
Regional Strategy (RS)	The Waste Site Allocations Local Plan is in general conformity with the RS.
Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)	Satisfactory regard has been paid to the SCS.
2004 Act (as amended) and 2012 Regulations.	The Waste Site Allocations Local Plan complies with the Act and the Regulations.

Overall Conclusion and Recommendation

- 53. The Plan has a number of deficiencies in relation to soundness, for the reasons set out above, which mean that I recommend non-adoption of it as submitted, in accordance with Section 20(7A) of the Act. These deficiencies have been explored in the main issues set out above.**
- 54. The Council has requested that I recommend main modifications to make the Plan sound and/or legally compliant and capable of adoption. I conclude that, with the recommended main modifications set out in the Appendix, the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations local plan satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework.**

KA Ellison

Inspector

This report is accompanied by the Appendix containing the Main Modifications

Appendix – Main Modifications

The modifications below are expressed either in the conventional form of ~~striketrough~~ for deletions and underlining for additions of text, or by specifying the modification in words in *italics*.

The page numbers and paragraph numbering below refer to the submission local plan and do not take account of the deletion or addition of text.

Ref	Page	Policy/ Paragraph	Main Modification
MM1	1	1.2	<p>Amend bullet point (ii) to read:</p> <p>ii) Areas of search comprising land allocated for employment uses, or including existing industrial areas within which waste uses could be accommodated, as and when natural churn provides opportunities to utilise vacant plots; <u>or areas of land capable of accommodating new, or additional waste management development and all required mitigation measures within the designated site boundary</u></p>
MM2	1	1.4	<p>Amend third sentence to read:</p> <p>Proposals for waste management development on sites not included within this document will still be considered on their own merits, if they demonstrate that they are in keeping with national policy and the policies of the development plan (<u>see policy WSA 1</u>).</p> <p><u>Policy WSA 1:</u></p> <p><u>When considering waste development proposals the councils will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Each council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.</u></p> <p><u>Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (or policies in other adopted Local Plans of the Councils) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</u></p> <p><u>Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then planning permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Any adverse impacts of granting permission would</u>

Ref	Page	Policy/ Paragraph	Main Modification
			<p><u>significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole;</u> <u>or</u> •<u>Specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.</u></p>
MM3	5	1.19	<p>At the end of the paragraph, add the following:-</p> <p><u>Factors which have led to a local scale allocation when a site is within 16km of a principal settlement are provided in the site profiles.</u></p>
MM4	9	1.33	<p>At the end of the paragraph, add the following:-</p> <p><u>For each site, the inset map defines the area of land within which any subsequent planning application and all required mitigation measures will be sited.</u></p>
MM5	9	1.34	<p>At the end of the paragraph, add the following:-</p> <p><u>For all other site allocations set out within this plan, only the footprint of new, or expanded waste development will be safeguarded following the grant of planning permission. In all cases, the unnecessary sterilisation of land will be avoided through a rigorous process of monitoring and review</u></p>
MM6 and MM6-A to MM6-J		Tables: 2.1 2.4 2.5 2.7 2.10 3.4 3.8 4.5 5.2 6.1	<p>In the site profile, at 'Size of site' add the following text:</p> <p><u>(within which any development proposals and all necessary mitigation measures will need to be incorporated)</u></p>
MM7-A		Table 2.7 Barnground, South Cerney	<p>In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text:</p> <p><u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: limited footprint of developable land; and limited capacity for vehicles to turn within the site and/or queue at peak times)</u></p>

Ref	Page	Policy/ Paragraph	Main Modification
MM7-B		Table 2.8: Whitehills Industrial Estate, Royal Wootton Bassett	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: potential access and congestion issues; limited opportunity potential of the site; and associated potential impacts on existing users of the estate)</u>
MM7-C		Table 2.9: Bumpers Farm Industrial Estate, Chippenham	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: limited opportunity potential of the site; and associated potential impacts on existing users of the estate)</u>
MM7-D		Table 2.10: Thingley Junction, Chippenham	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: highway connectivity; and proximity to the existing Gypsy and Traveller camp)</u>
MM7-E		Table 2.11: Leafield Industrial Estate, Corsham	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: potential traffic/transport impacts associated with the layout of the estate roads e.g. constraints at Potley Bridge)</u>
MM7-F		Table 2.12: Porte Marsh Industrial Estate, Calne	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: potential impact of traffic on the local highway network; and proximity of large-scale existing quarries and waste management facilities at Lower Compton and Sands Farm)</u>
MM7-G		Table 3.5: Bowerhill Industrial Estate, Melksham	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: potential impact on estate roads and connecting highway; and proximity to adjacent strategic scale operation)</u>

Ref	Page	Policy/ Paragraph	Main Modification
MM7-H		Table3.6: Canal Road Industrial Estate, Trowbridge	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: potential traffic and transport impacts on Trowbridge town centre and/or the village of Hilperton)</u>
MM7-I		Table3.7: Warminster Business Park, Warminster	In the site profile, at 'Size of site' add the following text: <u>Local (based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: limited scope for accommodating significant development; potential highway impacts)</u>
MM7-J		Table4.1: Hopton Industrial Estate	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: potential transport impacts on Devizes; and potential for impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB)</u>
MM7-K		Table4.2: Wiltshire Waste (Recycling) Ltd, Devizes	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: potential transport impacts on Devizes; and potential for impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB)</u>
MM7-L		Table 4.3: Salisbury Road Business Park, Marlborough	In the site profile, at 'Size of site' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: potential highway impacts; limitation in terms of potential developable land; and the potential for impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB)</u>
MM7-M		Table 5.2: Brickworth Quarry and Landfill, Whiteparish	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: the need to ensure that any new waste development does not prejudice the overall restoration of the quarry; and proximity to the New Forest National Park)</u>
MM7-N		Table 5.4: Former Imerys Quarry,	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints</u>

Ref	Page	Policy/ Paragraph	Main Modification
		Quidhampton	<u>include: competing interests on the area of developable land; and constrained vehicular access/egress over the railway)</u>
MM7-O		Table6.3: Brindley Close/Darby Close, Swindon	In the site profile, at 'Size of site' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: limitation in terms of potential developable land; potential for traffic impacts on the local highway network due to intensification of development at Waterside; potential impact on residential communities to the north and east of the estate)</u>
MM7-P		Table 6.4: Land at Kendrick Industrial Estate, Swindon	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: the undulating nature of the site; limited opportunity potential of the site; and associated potential impacts on existing users of the estate)</u>
MM7-Q		Table 6.5: Rodbourne Sewage Treatment Works, Swindon	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(limited solely to the extension of the existing Sewage Treatment Works to provide increased capacity to meet future planned demand)</u>
MM7-R		Table6.6: Land within Dorcan Industrial Estate, Swindon	In the site profile, at 'Scale' add the following text: <u>(based upon the appraisals and assessments undertaken to date, the councils do not consider this site can accommodate a strategic scale operation. Site constraints include: proximity to sensitive receptors e.g. Great Western Hospital, local shops and adjacent housing to the south of the estate)</u>
MM8		Table 3.8: Land at Valley Farm, Chitterne	Amend the 'landscape, townscape and visual' section of the site profile to read: Potential for landscape and visual impacts on the surrounding area due to the highly visible site location. Mitigation will be required and could <u>should</u> include the planting of a 15m woodland buffer around site boundaries to screen views into the site, integrating it with the surrounding rural character. The woodland should connect with existing trees and planting within the area. In addition <u>Opportunities for</u> strategic off-site hedgerow planting, along the B390 to reduce perceptions of the erosion of the rural landscape character of the area will <u>should</u> be required <u>explored</u> .

Ref	Page	Policy/ Paragraph	Main Modification
			<p><u>The form and scale of any built development should respect the agricultural character of the area.</u></p> <p>Any development will need to safeguard PRow</p>
MM9		Table5.2	<p>Amend the 'landscape, townscape and visual' section of the site profile to read:</p> <p>Although in close proximity to of the New Forest National Park, the semi-enclosed wooded setting and existing quarried character of the site means that it is able to accommodate change will need to be fully considered through any subsequent planning application process.</p> <p><u>Proposals for new waste development will need to demonstrate that the interests of the New Forest National Park and its setting are not eroded</u></p>
MM10		Table 5.3: Employment Allocation, Mere	Delete Table 5.3 and remove the site from the Plan

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Financial Update 2012-13 and 2013-14

Cabinet

Date: 17th October 2012

Authors: Cabinet Member for Finance, and Board Director Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1. This report presents the 2012/13 Revenue forecast out-turn at the end of August 2012 and updates Members on work progressing on the 2013-14 Budget, together with a range of other financial issues. These include the conversion of three Public Finance Initiative (PFI) schools to academy status.
- 1.2. The report also sets out some options around providing financial support to first time buyers in Swindon, in response to a Council motion from July 2011. Linked to this, the report sets out the current position around how Empty Homes are managed by the Council.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1. Note the projected out-turn position for 2012-13 set out in Table 1 and Appendices 1 and 2;
- 2.2. Approve capital funding of up to £165k to SEQOL to support the move of the Integrated Community Equipment Store from Waterside to Enterprise Works in order to help SEQOL secure a more sustainable on-going financial position, to be funded from available capital grants for social care;
- 2.3. Approve the virements set out in Appendix 3;
- 2.4. Note the position in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG);
- 2.5. Approve that the balance of PFI school Academy conversion costs will be met from within the PFI Equalisation Reserve after contributions from the schools, existing budgets and the White Horse Federation;
- 2.6. In respect of recommendation 2.5 above, note Appendix 4 and authorise the Board Director, Commissioning (DASS/DCS) to negotiate and conclude agreement with the appropriate parties in respect of all necessary and ancillary documentation to be completed for a Swindon PFI School to convert to an academy, on such terms as may be approved by the Director of Law and Democratic Services in order to protect the Council's interests;

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- 2.7. Authorise the Chief Executive, and relevant Board Directors and Directors, to progress in-year savings in connection with the 2013-14 Budget, that do not impact front-line services, and to implement them as soon as possible to create cash flow capacity, including incurring severance expenditure for staff leaving the Council's employment;
- 2.8. Approve the proposed changes to Recreation fees and charges from 1st January 2013, noting that a further change in pricing will also be effected part-way through 2013 following a review of the overall pricing strategy;
- 2.9. Note the update provided on the options available to support first time buyers entering the housing market and endorse the Government's NewBuy Guarantee Scheme as the most appropriate response to the Council motion of July 2011;
- 2.10. Ask Council to note the contents of sections 9 and 10 of this report in response to the Motion to Council passed on 21st July 2011 regarding Financial Support to First Time Buyers (Council Minute 25, 2011/12 refers).

3. 2012-13 Projected Out-turn

- 3.1. The expected out-turn position as at the end of August 2012 is a projected overspend of £238k, an improvement in the position of £127k since the last report. This improvement is due to the receipt of one-off property income and a reduction in operational budgets. These issues, totalling £1m, are masking further demand pressures on children's placements, a projected shortfall in the rebate from Swindon Commercial Services Limited and reduced recreation income. The budget and projected out-turn by each Department is set out in Table 1 below and a more detailed analysis is set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

Table 1 – Projected Out-turn By Department

Department	Budget 2012/13 £'000	Full-Year Projected Out-turn £'000	Projected Variance £'000	Movement since last report £'000
Chief Executive	520	520	0	0
Finance, Revs, Bens & Property	(451)	(1,108)	(657)	(657)
Corporate	(11,267)	(11,877)	(610)	(185)
Transformation & Strategic Projects	4,714	4,714	0	0
Localities	1,499	1,499	0	0
Commissioning	109,704	110,764	1,060	489
Service Delivery	32,672	33,117	445	226
Total General Fund	137,391	137,629	238	(127)

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- 3.2. Departments are continuing to identify opportunities to help deliver services within the cash limits available for each area. This is particularly important in areas where overspends are of a recurring nature and would therefore impact on future years' Budget plans.
- 3.3. The above projections assume that the current underspend of £682k on the Council's Contingency Fund is fully committed by the end of the year, although some of this could be used to offset service area overspends. In addition, the projections assume that £590k of base budget Cashflowing funding is transferred to one-off reserves which Members could agree not to do at the year end. Therefore, in overall terms, there is a high-level of confidence that the Budget can be delivered on target.

4. Department Summaries

- 4.1. Explanations of the key issues reflected in the different service areas are provided below.

Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property

The service is currently projecting an underspend due mainly to the receipt of one-off property income related to some lease and covenant surrenders. This is masking a pressure within the base commercial rental income budget due to a major tenant vacating one of the Council's lease sites but work is progressing to try to re-let this as soon as possible. The net position shows an underspend of £657k.

Corporate

- 4.2. The main reason for the increase in the projected underspend in this area is due to officers identifying £0.5m of savings from non-staffing service budgets that underspent in 2011-12. This is offsetting a projected shortfall of £290k in the rebate from Swindon Commercial Services Limited (SCS). This is partly due to cost pressures related to a later than budgeted commencement of the new refuse derived fuel (RDF) project (£171k) and partly due to a down-turn in waste recycles income (£119k). There is a continued risk that the shortfall in recycles income could continue further into the year, which would result in a further variance as the £119k only reflects the position to the end of month four.

Commissioning

- 4.3. The projected overspend has increased to £1,060k, a worsening of £489k since the last report.
- 4.4. The main cause of this projected overspend is the continuing increase in the demand for placements across Fostering, Residential Care, Mother and Baby, Supported Living and Short Breaks Respite. The total number of active placements reported as at August has risen to 88 compared with a budgeted number of 60. If no further changes occur within current placement

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commitments, and assumptions around placement length are accurate, the projected cost pressure for 2012-13 is £989k. Commissioners are reviewing the contracts and placement strategy as part of an enquiry into demand on children's services. This enquiry will also seek to target the pressures experienced on children's services within Service Delivery. The pressures currently being experienced within Swindon are mirroring a national picture of increased demand within this service.

- 4.5. In addition, cost pressures have been identified on Special Education Needs (SEN) transport of £131k, although this forecast will need to be revisited to reflect the impact of September pupil starters and leavers. This has been partially offset by savings on mainstream transport but the position could be adversely affected if transport appeals are successful.
- 4.6. Due mainly to the adverse weather conditions on the day, the delivery of the Big Arts Day event in August has created an overspend of £31k within the Culture service within Commissioning. The total cost of the event, excluding staff costs was £60k but around half of this can be offset by underspends on other culture budgets.

Service Delivery

- 4.7. The projected overspend has increased to £445k, a worsening of £226k since the last report.
- 4.8. The main cause of this projected overspend is a higher number of children in care. The total number of family placements budgeted for in 2012-13 is 151 and adoption cases 75. The total number of active cases reported within adoption services in August 2012 has risen to 86 creating a total projected cost pressure of £291k. Within this area, there is also pressure from non-delivery of the staff vacancy factor savings.
- 4.9. In addition, shortfalls in income have been identified affecting all three Golf courses due to bad weather (£138k) and the Link Centre due to the closure of the swimming pool until February 2013 (£112K). Income has been particularly affected at Broome Manor Golf Course due to the building work being undertaken at the site affecting shop sales. This has been partly mitigated by reduced costs in libraries (£64K).
- 4.10. A cost pressure of £95k is currently being experienced within the Community Facilities service where the budget was built on the assumption that the Council would only be operating two facilities at Broad Green and Park South, with other centres being run by the community. The reality is that the Council is still having to incur staffing and operational costs to support an increased number of sites.

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5. Move of Integrated Community Equipment Store (ICES)

- 5.1. The current location of ICES is on the Waterside site which is also occupied by Swindon Commercial Services Ltd. SEQOL has established a project to evaluate the financial and non-financial benefits arising from moving ICES from the current location on Waterside to Enterprise Works.
- 5.2. The current position of ICES, adjacent to the Borough's household waste disposal site, is less than ideal for staff and public visiting the facility. Its poor access leads to additional costs through onerous delivery and collection requirements. Additionally, there are problems with dust leading to contamination and lack of a sterile environment.
- 5.3. A feasibility study has been carried out which has identified a capital cost of £190k (excluding VAT) to transfer the store successfully. SEQOL have successfully obtained external funding of £25k to invest in Enterprise Works. The remaining capital requirement is therefore £165k (exc. VAT), which the Council, as commissioner of the service, is being asked to support. Funding is available to the Council through capital grants received for social care, the unallocated element being greater than the £165k required.
- 5.4. While the move will greatly improve service quality and accessibility, a number of financial benefits / savings will be made to repay the investment. Members will recall that non-recurring support was provided to SEQOL of £707k in 2012/13 to help with the transformation of supported employment and day services. The move of ICES to Enterprise Works will provide the benefits of an integrated workforce on one site and enable SEQOL to realise £60k of recurring saving to meet part of the £707k. An ICES premises saving to Adult Social Care of £100k will be achieved, which reduces income to the Property estate but frees up space at the Waterside site that can potentially be rented commercially.
- 5.5. The move would take 27 weeks to complete which includes the tender process. Timelines are tight to ensure a completion by 31st March 2013. However, a minor overrun into April 2013 will not materially affect the delivery of the financial benefits in 2013/13.
- 5.6. The total cost of £190k (exc. VAT) includes a sum for construction contingency at £8k but cost overruns will be picked up by SEQOL.

6. Virements

- 6.1. Since the last report there have been some virements to reflect changes to the allocation of costs across business units. Members are asked to agree these virements as set out in Appendix 3.

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7. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 7.1. As highlighted in the previous report, debt charges are forecast to be around £1.2m lower for 2012/13. The options for the use of this underspend are being reviewed and will be set out in future reports for Members' consideration and, therefore, this is not reflected within the current projection.
- 7.2. Savings of £235k have been identified on staffing since the last report. The Housing Maintenance Team has been holding a number of vacant posts pending the restructuring within the Department, which has resulted in a projected saving of £129k. Additional savings have been identified within the general administration budget (£60k) and various smaller savings from across a number of service budgets (£46k).

8. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- 8.1. The Schools Budget is ring-fenced and entirely funded by Government through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The total DSG for 2012/13 is £140m of which £122m has been delegated to Schools and Academies. The remaining £18m funds the centrally retained DSG services.
- 8.2. At the end of August a net underspend of £1.008m has been forecast which is made up as follows.
 - 8.2.1. Slippage on the Academy conversion programme has reduced the in-year loss of grant that is recouped from the Local Authority (LA) and paid over to the Education Funding Agency to fund Academy LACSEG (Local Authority Central Services Equivalent Grant) payments. In addition to general delays there are legal issues to resolve relating to three PFI schools, which were expecting to convert earlier than will now be possible. The values per pupil have also been recalculated following successful representations to the Department for Education (DfE) which has allowed certain elements of retained spending relating to pupil growth to be removed. A net underspend of £0.384m is currently projected.
 - 8.2.2. General underspends on early years nursery placements for 3 and 4 year olds are projected as take up is marginally lower than the funding allocated. Projected spend is currently estimated at 95% which would result in an underspend of £0.397m although the LA is taking steps to increase provision before the year-end.
 - 8.2.3. Most other areas of the retained budget are broadly in line with the funding agreed by Schools Forum in March and, although latest projections indicate that underspends are possible on Out of Borough Placements, this could change before the year end. Pupil Growth funding will be determined following the October census.
- 8.3. The DSG is a ring fenced grant and local authorities are allowed to overspend their DSG allocation, with that amount being the first call on the DSG received

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Kirsty Cole on Direct Dial No. 464610 or Email kcole@swindon.gov.uk

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in the following financial year. Underspends on the DSG must be carried forward for distribution subject to annual discussions with the Schools Forum.

9. Motion to Council – Financial Support to First Time Buyers

- 9.1. A motion was passed on 21st July 2011 (Council Minute 25, 2011/12 refers) requesting that the Council look into available support to assist first time buyers in Swindon to access the housing market.

“This Council requests that the Director of Housing and Leisure and the Director of Finance bring a report to a future meeting of full Council to expand on the options available to help assist first time buyers enter the Housing Market.”

- 9.2. At the time the motion was passed, a number of different schemes were starting to be developed by different parties across the country to facilitate first time buyers entering the market. Officers have been tracking the progress of these initiatives since that date and the relative uptake of the different options available. Although uptake has generally been very slow, some schemes are starting to see a degree of success. The key issues which Members will wish to consider in determining which, if any, scheme is appropriate for Swindon is whether the initiative strikes the right balance of risk for both the Council and the individuals involved.
- 9.3. The main purpose of all of these schemes described below is to help address the issue that since the credit crunch, most banks have required buyers to save at least 10% of the purchase price, and the more competitively priced mortgages have been available only to those with a 20% deposit. This has made it difficult for many first-time buyers to access finance, and the consequent lack of demand has created problems for those further up the housing ladder.
- 9.4. There are various schemes offered throughout the country, some of which are available nationwide, others being local schemes only available in specific areas.

NewBuy Guarantee scheme

- 9.5. This scheme is part of the Government's Housing policy and is intended to help buyers, who have at least a 5% deposit, buy a new build property in England.
- 9.6. Under the scheme, lenders are able to offer low-deposit mortgages without bearing all of the risk. If the property drops into negative equity and the property is repossessed, the government and the developer who built the property will bear some of the risk. The scheme, which doesn't require Local Authority involvement, has been available from March 2012. The key aspects of the scheme are:

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- The scheme is only available to purchasers of new build houses or flats, priced up to £500,000 and is only open to those purchasing their principal home. (Purchasers who acquire a property as a second home or buy-to-let investment will not be able to take part in the scheme.)
- The scheme is not available for shared ownership or shared equity purchases
- According to the Home Builders Federation, take-up of the scheme is expected to hit 1,500 reservations in the six months to September after its launch. It quoted that 3.5% of each home sold under the scheme is put towards a fund to protect lenders in the event of a fault.

Local Authority Mortgage Scheme ("LAMS")

- 9.7. LAMS is a scheme designed by Sector, the Council's Treasury Management advisors. This scheme is similar to the NewBuy scheme, in that its purpose is to help first time buyers with the issue of having to provide larger deposits than they can raise, even though they may fit all other criteria in terms of affordability to repay and overall deemed credit risk.
- 9.8. The scheme is designed so that the Local Authority provides a guarantee around the deposit, which enables the bank or building society to provide the funding through sharing the impact of the risk of default. The guarantee is provided through a cash deposit, or a legal agreement to provide funds in the event of default - dependent on the lender.
- 9.9. It is important to note that the mortgages are provided based on the same credit rating criteria to those individuals who provide their own 5% deposit, and the scheme is therefore not aimed at giving mortgages to those with higher credit risk that would not normally be accepted. Its purpose is to deal with the issue of being able to provide an acceptable deposit. The Council is able to decide which post codes the scheme applies to, so that it can target areas that require the most support.
- 9.10. At the time this innovation was brought to Cabinet Members' attention, there were insufficient data about the nature and the scope of the risk the Council would have to accept. In the worst case, the Council might be asked to support only the highest risk mortgage applicants. Members therefore concluded that the Government's NewBuy scheme offered the best support to the housing market. Nevertheless, Cabinet have asked Officers to keep a watching brief on the Local Authority Mortgage schemes and bring back new recommendations if the data were then available to support different options.
- 9.11. As at the end of August 2012, 30 Local Authorities have taken up the scheme enabling over 700 mortgages between them over 5 lenders with a combined value of £700m. It needs to be remembered that each mortgage will in many cases release several moves as it may unlock a chain.

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- 9.12. There are a further 30-35 planned launches in September and October. To date, there are no mortgages in arrears and therefore no defaults. Bristol, Stroud and Gloucester are the closest Local Authorities to Swindon to have currently launched the scheme. Bristol and Gloucester have fully spent the allocated budgets and are considering a further investment in the scheme.
- 9.13. The scheme is generally expected to be cost neutral at least, as the Council will receive interest on any cash deposit guarantees it provides, which is designed to outweigh any cost of default based on national mortgage data.
- 9.14. On the basis of information at this time, the "LAMS" scheme appears to be emerging as an addition to the Government's NewBuy Guarantee Scheme. It is therefore recommended that officers continue to track its progress and bring a recommendation to Cabinet on whether the Council should participate in it and, if so, at what level as part of the final budget proposals for 2013/14, recognising that in accounting terms it is treated as capital investment.
- 9.15. Examples of other schemes run by Local Authorities with a view to supporting the housing market include:

"My Homebuy"

- 9.16. An Equity Share scheme where the Council buys the property and the tenant purchases between 50% and 75% of the property value from the Council, with their own funds, whether backed by their own mortgage or from elsewhere. The Council then charges rent based on a rising scale from 1% to 5% over 5 years of the "unpurchased" share, adjusted to compensate for any change in value of the property.
- 9.17. The tenant can purchase further shares in blocks of 5%, and the rent will be adjusted accordingly. The Council is responsible for insuring the property, although it is the tenant's responsibility to pay the costs.

"Council Mortgage" Scheme

- 9.18. The Council could consider offering mortgages of its own in full, although this would require considerable resourcing, expertise and could carry significant financial exposure.
- 9.19. Any schemes similar to the above would need working up in detail and would need to consider a number of factors such as risk, available funding, willingness of banks to support and level of resource needed to manage the scheme.

10. Empty Properties, private ownership

- 10.1. Officers have also explored arrangements for bringing empty properties into use, as a possible alternative to a housing support scheme or to sit alongside one.

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- 10.2. There are approximately 600 empty homes in the private sector at any one time in Swindon, which equates to around 2.5% of the total, against a national average of 3.2%. A house is deemed “empty” if it is vacant for 6 months or more and it is estimated that around 50% of this total are empty for “genuine” reasons, such as the occupant having died and the property lying empty whilst probate is arranged, or the property is in the process of being sold.
- 10.3. For those empty properties that are not empty for “genuine” reasons, the Council endeavours to bring these back into use through direct intervention with the owners. Only after all other avenues have been exhausted, is the Council able to issue Empty Dwellings Management Orders (EDMO’s) which enforce work to be done to tidy up the property, or in extreme cases Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO’s). In the case of EDMO’s the Council is able to retain any rent in order to fund the necessary works. EDMOs are however, very resource intensive and can take up to 2 years to carry out, and are therefore only used as a last resort because encouraging owners to take action themselves is a more cost effective approach
- 10.4. About 50 properties per annum are brought back into use via direct intervention from the Council’s dedicated Empty Homes Officer by speaking directly to the owners. Only 9 EDMO’s were issued over the last 12 months, and this low number is reflected nationally due to the time and legal cost of following this route over the direct intervention route. None of the 9 issued, however, were formally completed as the properties were brought back into use beforehand.
- 10.5. The Council also offers Empty Homes Grants of up to £20k, which are available for the improvement, repair, or conversion of an empty property to return into residential use, and is funded through the Council’s Capital Programme from borrowing.
- 10.6. The Council’s policy on Private Sector Renewal Assistance fully documents the conditions applicable to this grant, but one of the key conditions is that the landlord must then agree to make the property available for letting for a period of 10 years, including a minimum of 5 years to Council nominated tenants. In a great number of cases, the landlord is not willing to agree to this condition for a various number of reasons, and therefore the grant would not be available. A further condition is that a charge on the property is required, which enables the Council to reclaim any grant paid if the condition is breached.
- 10.7. The sum available in the Capital Programme is £475k for 12/13 and a further £175k for 13/14, although at this stage the budget is likely to be underspent for the reasons set out in the previous paragraph.
- 10.8. In terms of empty properties within the Council’s own estate, the Council has a stock of approximately 10,500 homes of which around 900 properties become vacant each financial year. During the last financial year 2011/12 the average time these properties were empty between lettings was 24.7 days. Swindon Borough Council benchmarks its performance through the ‘Housemark’

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from
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organisation. This organisation reported a top quartile of 19.7 days and a lower quartile of 33 days as the average time between re-lets.

- 10.9. On the 1st April 2012 there were four Housing Revenue Account properties which had been empty for more than eight weeks and one property that had been empty for over six months. Currently there are three long term empty properties of which one has been empty for more than six months awaiting structural repairs.

11. Transfer of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Schools to Academy Status

- 11.1. Appendix 4 sets out details of work that is progressing to transfer three of the Council's PFI schools to academy status. Due to the PFI status of the schools, specific approvals are required from Members and current funding levels do not cover the expected conversion costs. Members are therefore asked to approve that funding can be redirected to meet these costs and that approval is given to the Board Director, Commissioning (DCS/DASS) to complete the work required to allow the conversions to take place.

12. Budget 2013-14

- 12.1. Work is continuing to balance the 2013-14 Budget and proposals have now been identified that could considerably close the initial funding gap of £17m identified at the start of the process. The proposals contain a mix of strategic and tactical savings structured around the Council's Strategic Priorities, Stronger Together principles and the over-arching ambition to make services within Swindon more sustainable. Further work is continuing and the Draft Budget proposals will be brought to Cabinet in December 2012.
- 12.2. Members will be aware that the Council implemented its new Stronger Together structure with effect from 1st April 2012 but that this change was just the initial phase of the reshaping of services. Many teams within the Council were realigned to the new structure without being reshaped and it was always recognised that further changes to join-up services would be required. Work on this has been progressing well during the last three months and there is now a much stronger understanding across the organisation around the direction agreed by Members as part of its Corporate Strategy and Stronger Together intent. Staff restructuring proposals are now being drawn up to help join-up similar activities and also to ensure we have posts focused on driving and supporting a more customer-focused and sustainable way of working.
- 12.3. In addition, the process for creating proposals to shape the 2013-14 Budget has been much more Commissioning-focused. One-third of the Council's net Budget is spent with Partners and therefore a focus of the process has been around reshaping services provided by external organisations to the Council.
- 12.4. Officers are keen to commence implementation of some proposals that support the Council on its Stronger Together journey that do not directly impact on front-line services users. The proposals that fall into this category

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include making changes to staffing structures and working with partners to reduce the operating costs of services. An early implementation of some proposals will help us move quickly to putting structures in place that support the change under Stronger Together and will also generate an in-year underspend that can be used to cash flow work on balancing future year's Budgets. Members are asked to agree that officers can press ahead with the implementation of 2013-14 Budget proposals that do not directly impact on front-line service users. This will include incurring severance expenditure for staff leaving the Council's employment.

13. Fees and Charges

- 13.1. Members will be asked to consider changes to the pricing of its services as part of the December Budget report. In line with previous years, it is proposed that changes are made to Recreation prices with effect from 1st January 2013, rather than the 1st April implementation for other services. The service area is currently undertaking a fundamental review of its pricing to create more of a marketing edge to the pricing structure and that work will be completed during the next few months with a view to proposing changes to Members during 2013. In the meantime, officers are working on launching a new stand-alone web site for Leisure in Swindon with effect from 1st January 2013 together with some targeted pricing changes. It is proposed that core activity prices are uplifted by 5% generally but some variations are proposed where market forces are a factor. The proposed uplift for non-card customers has been reduced to 25% above SwindonCard prices to encourage more people to switch to the monthly direct debit option. The changes are proposed to help sites deliver their 2012-13 income targets and the full-year impact of this and the proposed in-year changes will be reflected in the proposed 2013-14 income levels to be considered by Members as part of the December Draft Budget report.
- 13.2. In most cases, it is proposed that the concession prices for January are unchanged because of the review being undertaken in this area. The customers who see the 5% rise in January will not have a second rise in-year.
- 13.3. In order that literature can be published ready for the 1st January, Members are asked to approve the changes to Recreation pricing set out in Appendix 5.

14. Alternative Options

- 14.1. The full range of options is set out in the body of the report.

15. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 15.1 Where there are financial implications these have been reflected in the body of the report and in Appendix four.

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Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 15.2 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)

- 15.3 There are no such direct implications.

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 15.4 The effective management of financial resources through robust financial management processes underpins the Council's ability to achieve its plans and priorities.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 15.5 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. Considerations around Empty Homes and first time buyers set out in the report will provide benefits to vulnerable groups.

16. Consultees

- 16.1 The Board Director Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted on all reports.

17. Background Papers and Appendices

Appendix 1 – Forecast Out-turn by Directorate 2012-13

Appendix 2 – Forecast Out-turn by Service 2012-13

Appendix 3 – Proposed Budget Virements 2012-13

Appendix 4 - PFI academy conversions

Appendix 5 – Proposed Fees and Charges for Leisure Services with effect from 1st January 2013

18. Key Decision/Decision in Forward Plan

- 18.1 This is a key decision and is included in the Cabinet Forward Plan for October 2012.

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August 2012 Projected Out-turn - Analysis By Departmental Accountabilities

Appendix 1

Fund	Tier 2 Function	Budget 2012/13 £'000	Full-Year Projected Out-turn £'000	Projected Variance £'000	Projected Variance - last report £'000	Movement since last report £'000	Commentary on Reasons for Variance
General Fund	Stronger Together	100	100	0	0	0	
	Internal Audit	420	420	0	0	0	
	Finance	520	520	0	0	0	
	Revenues & Benefits	2,457	2,457	0	0	0	
	Property Assets	(1,677)	(1,677)	0	0	0	
		(3,336)	(3,993)	(657)	0	(657)	One off income from early property lease surrender and covenant release
	Design & Architecture	2,105	2,105	0	0	0	
	Corporate	(11,267)	(11,877)	(610)	(425)	(185)	Shortfall in rebate from SCS Ltd as a result of falling income from recyclates (£119k) and cost pressures due to progress on timing of RDF project being later than assumed in SCS business plan. £500k clawback of Departmental operational budgets in 2012-13 based on 2011-12 underspend areas.
	Strategy & People	(11,718)	(12,985)	(1,267)	(425)	(842)	
	Law & Democratic Services	1,848	1,848	0	0	0	
		2,866	2,866	0	0	0	
	Locality & Partnerships	4,714	4,714	0	0	0	
	Communication & Insight	1,019	1,019	0	0	0	
		480	480	0	0	0	
	Management	1,499	1,499	0	0	0	
	Children and Adults	444	455	11	0	11	
		58,128	59,112	984	624	360	The number of placements budgeted for in 2012-13 is 59 placements across Fostering, Residential, Mother and Baby, Supported Living and Short Breaks Respite. The total number of active placements reported as at August 2012 has risen to 88. If no further changes occur within current placement commitments the projected cost pressure for 2012-13 is £988.6k. Officers are reviewing contracts and placement strategy as part of an enquiry into demand on children's services.
	Economy / Attainment	7,311	7,360	49	(53)	102	Main cause of this variance is cost pressure on SEN transport (£131k) however the forecast will need to be revisited to reflect the impact of September pupil starters and leavers. Offset by savings on Mainstream transport however this could be adversely affected if the transport appeals are successful.
	Commercial Services	43,821	43,837	16	0	16	Overspend on Big Arts Day mitigated by other departmental savings
		109,704	110,764	1,060	571	489	

Fund	Tier 2 Function	Budget 2012/13 £'000	Full-Year Projected Out-turn £'000	Projected Variance £'000	Projected Variance - last report £'000	Movement since last report £'000	Commentary on Reasons for Variance
	Children and Families	13,462	13,882	420	267	153	Budget pressures are being experienced in Family Placement & Adoption Services due to higher number of children in care. The total number of family placements budgeted for in 2012-13 is 151 and adoption cases 75. The total number of active cases reported within adoption services in Aug 12 has risen to 86 creating a total projected cost pressure of £291k. Within this area there is also pressure from non-delivery of the vacancy factor savings.
	Public Protection & Streetsmart	5,598	5,536	(62)	(11)	(51)	Staff vacancy savings
	Leisure, Libraries, Culture and Traded Services	6,517	6,728	211	68	143	Increased community centre running costs due to delay in transfer to third sector. £98K. Reduced services costs in libraries (£64K). Income shortfall due to bad weather affecting Broome Manor £138K. Link swimming pool will be closed until Feb 2013 £112K
	Housing Services	691	672	(19)	0	(19)	
	Highways & Transport	1,837	1,787	(50)	(25)	(25)	Car park Pay & display income pressure of £100K due to fewer cars parking in the town centre offset by NNDR saving on car parks due to reduced rateable value. (£96K)
	Planning	713	728	15	(10)	25	Shortfall in land charges fee income
	Business Services & Support	3,854	3,784	(70)	(70)	0	
		32,672	33,117	445	219	226	
	General Fund Total	137,391	137,629	238	365	(127)	
PCT	PCT Children and Adults	0	9	9	0	9	
	PCT Children and Families	(247)	(248)	(1)	(90)	89	Staff savings previously reported contributing to existing savings target
	PCT Business Services & Support	247	247	0	0	0	
	Primary Care Trust Total	0	8	8	(90)	98	
DSG	DSG Economy / Attainment	0	(1,008)	(1,008)	0	(1,008)	Delays in the academy conversion programme has reduced the in year loss of grant and underspends on nursery placements due to lower than budgeted provision.
	Dedicated Schools Grant Total	0	(1,008)	(1,008)	0	(1,008)	
HRA	Supervision & Management	(34,027)	(34,262)	(235)	0	(235)	Staffing savings
	Special Services	(5)	3	8	8	0	
	Repairs	8,176	8,176	0	0	0	
	HRA Capital Financing	25,856	25,856	0	0	0	
	Housing Revenue Account Total	0	(227)	(227)	8	(235)	
	Grand Total	137,391	136,402	(989)	283	(1,272)	

Budget Management 2012-13 - August 2012 Projected Out-turn - Analysis By Services

Service Area Summary 2012-13	Budget 2012/13 £'000	Full-Year Projected Out- turn £'000	Projected Variance £'000	Projected Variance - last report £'000	Movement since last report £'000
Education and Other Children Services	28,220	28,159	(61)	(99)	38
Culture, Leisure & Libraries	6,804	7,084	279	81	198
Environmental & Regulatory	18,128	18,107	(21)	0	(21)
Highways & Transport	2,010	1,960	(50)	(25)	(25)
Housing GF	5,837	5,810	(28)	(11)	(17)
Planning & Development	2,511	2,339	(173)	(61)	(112)
Social Care - Adults	45,765	45,771	5	(111)	116
Social Care - Children	17,354	18,808	1,454	1,016	438
Corporate & Support:					0
Central Services	1,300	1,130	(669)	(425)	(244)
Contingency Split out	682	682	(500)	0	(500)
Debt Management (Debt Charges & Investments)	8,779	8,779	0	0	0
Total General Fund	137,391	138,629	238	365	(127)
Total DSG	0	(1,008)	(1,008)	0	(1,008)
Total PCT	0	8	8	(90)	98
Total HRA	0	(227)	(227)	8	(235)
Grand Total	137,391	137,402	(989)	283	(1,272)

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Virements 2012/13 - Movements since the last report										Appendix 3		
	Chief Executive	Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property and Corporate	Transformation & Strategic Projects	Localities	Commissioning	Service Delivery	Contingency Fund	Total General Fund				
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000				
Position reported to Cabinet 05/09/12	520	-12,273	4,745	1,499	109,543	32,675	682	137,391				
Virement to reflect movement of funding for a post to Commissioning												
Virement to reflect Early Intervention Grant (EIG) Payment by Results funding where the income was held corporately and the costs need to be reflected within the service area		-19			19					0		
Virement to reflect movement of funding for posts to Business Support										0		
Transfer operational budget to Business Support			-31			31				0		
Virement to reflect movement of funding for posts to Business Support										0		
Virement of additional landfill tax funding to budget for contract payment										0		
Position reported to Cabinet 17/10/12	520	-12,400	4,714	1,499	109,704	32,672	682	137,391				

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Transfer of PFI Schools to Academy Status

Author:	Board Director Commissioning (DCS/DASS)
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	North & North Central Localities
Parishes Affected:	Blunsdon and Haydon Wick Parish Areas

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This appendix provides an overview of the arrangements needed, and documentation to be entered into, in order to progress the conversion of schools within the Swindon Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Project Agreement to academy status and agree to a variation to the standard wording in the Deed of Variation.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 The Board Director Commission (DCS/DASS) be authorised, in accordance with the delegated powers contained in paragraph 82 of the Council's Scheme of Delegations, to negotiate and reach agreement with the appropriate parties in respect of all necessary and ancillary documentation to be completed for a Swindon PFI School to convert to an academy, including but not limited to those documents referred to in paragraph 3.3 below on terms approved by the Director of Law and Democratic Services in order to protect the Council's interests;
- 2.2 That Members note that the balance of costs after contributions from the schools, existing budgets and the White Horse Federation will be met from within the PFI Equalisation Reserve.

3. Detail

- 3.1 An academy is a publicly funded independent school free from Local Authority (LA) support and control. It receives funding directly from the Education Funding Agency (EFA), although the level of funding is determined by the locally agreed fair funding formula used to allocate Swindon's Dedicated Schools Grant. The Academies Act 2010 includes provisions to:
- 3.1.1 Allow maintained schools to apply to become academies and permit the Secretary of State to issue an Academy Order requiring the LA to cease to maintain.
- 3.1.2 Ensure that a converting school will as an academy continue to be able to occupy the land/buildings it has as a maintained school, and that the school's other assets may also transfer to the new academy for the benefit and use of the pupils at the school.
- 3.2 Several of the LA's PFI schools are aiming to convert to academy status (Isambard and Nova Hreod Secondary Schools and Moredon Primary School

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Helen Haines, 01793 463269, hhaines@swindon.gov.uk.

Transfer of PFI Schools to Academy Status

during 2013). It is anticipated that others may follow in future years. The conversion process is more complex than a standard academy conversion as these schools operate under the terms of a 25 year PFI Project Agreement entered into by the Council in April 2005.

- 3.3 To allow these conversions to take place the LA, the Governing Bodies of the existing schools, the Academy Trust Companies, and where appropriate the DfE and the PFI Contractor, must enter into a suite of contracts to reflect the schools' change in status and transfer the assets required for the relevant Academy Trust Company to operate the school, including but not limited to the following:
 - 3.3.1 Commercial Transfer Agreements to transfer the staff, assets and contracts held by the Governing Bodies and the LA in respect of the converting school to the Academy Trust.
 - 3.3.2 Leases to grant 125 year leasehold interests in the sites to the Academy Trusts.
 - 3.3.3 Schools Agreements which replace the existing Governing Body Agreements (GBA) so that the Academy Trust is obliged to continue to make any financial contributions which were required to be made under the GBA in relation to the running of the Schools.
 - 3.3.4 Deeds of Variation to the Swindon PFI Project Agreement to recognise the schools' change in status and to comply with the requirements of the PFI Funders.
 - 3.3.5 Principal Agreements providing an indemnity for SBC from the DfE in respect of some of the payment liabilities of the Academy Trust in the event of non-payment by the Academy Trusts
- 3.4 There has been much debate nationally in the PFI funding markets as to whether LA's have the necessary powers to continue to make payments to the PFI Contractor once the school has converted. This was due to the wording in Section 6(2) of the Academies Act 2010 which stated that an LA must cease to "maintain" a School after it has converted to an Academy. As a result, funders refused to enter into the necessary conversion contracts which led to a large backlog of PFI schools across the country that were unable to convert.
- 3.5 The DfE obtained a QC's Opinion on this issue. The Opinion provides that LA's do have the necessary powers to convert PFI schools and can continue to make payments in respect of the Academies maintenance post-conversion. However this was not fully accepted by the Funders,
- 3.6 To address the funders' concerns, amendments were made to the Academies Act 2010 to clarify that LA's have the necessary powers to continue making payments on behalf of Academies post-conversion and thus have the power to

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Helen Haines, 01793 463269, hhaines@swindon.gov.uk.

Transfer of PFI Schools to Academy Status

enter into the necessary contracts to complete PFI Academy conversions. This amendment received royal assent in November 2011.

- 3.7 However, the funders collectively obtained their own Counsel's opinion, which confirmed the previous opinion and also recommends that funders request that LA's provide a Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 (LGCA) Certificate in respect of the Deed of Variation they enter into for any PFI school Academy conversion. This is on the basis that if an LGCA Certificate is provided in respect of a contract, the contract is held to be 'certified'. A certified contract is treated as though the LA has the necessary powers to enter into it and has exercised such powers properly. Therefore, it prevents a party to the contract seeking to argue it is ultra vires.
 - 3.8 This has not wholly satisfied the concerns of the Funders in the Swindon PFI scheme and as an alternative the funders' solicitors, Cameron McKenna have put forward additional wording to be included in the Deed of Variation to the Project Agreement, that they believe will give their client some comfort. This is set out below:
 - 3.8.1 The Authority shall not at any time pay or agree to pay all of the expenses of maintaining the Academy so as to be in breach of Section 6(2) of the Academies Act 2010.
 - 3.8.2 The parties intend that the Contractor's entitlement on breach of this Deed by the Authority shall include entitlement to compensation for any payments, which are not made under the Project Agreement by the Authority, which would have been made but for the breach.
 - 3.8.3 The contractor hereby consents to the issue by the Authority of a certificate under Section 3 of the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 with respect to this Deed.
 - 3.9 Nabarro's, the LAs external legal advisors on this matter, have given advice that the amendment to the Academy Act permits the LA to continue to make some (but not all) of the expenses of maintaining an Academy and the DfE PFI note issued on the 24th February 2012 supports this point. They also advise that the risk of the LA being in breach of the undertaking in paragraph 3.8.1 above is low unless the LA's payments were to substantially increase in the future so that it was paying all or a high proportion of the academy's expenses. Given that PFI costs make up a relatively small proportion of any settings annual operating costs it is difficult to envisage how this breach could ever arise.
 - 3.10 The LA pays the full cost of the PFI Unitary Charge which covers not only the service costs, but the build, maintenance and financing of the schools. The LA funds this through the PFI grant, substantial annual contributions from its own revenue budgets (known as the affordability gap) and passes on the cost of the services and a share of the affordability costs to the schools through the
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Helen Haines, 01793 463269, hhaines@swindon.gov.uk.

Transfer of PFI Schools to Academy Status

Governors Agreements. Funding towards the schools contributions is provided from the Dedicated Schools Grant and will be unaffected by Academy transfers.

- 3.11 Nabarro's have advised that on the basis of the DfE Counsel's Opinion and the provision of LGCA Certificates becoming market standard, the process and the certified contract is lawful and in the round it is acceptable for the LA to provide LGCA Certificates in respect of the conversion of PFI schools to academy status. A full copy of their advice has been provided under Background Papers.
- 3.12 The DfE's solicitors are currently working on a new standard Deed of Variation and once this has been issued, it will need to be reviewed by Nabarro before they commence negotiations with Cameron McKenna.
- 3.13 A draft Authority Notice of Variation for the conversions was sent to the PFI providers and returned with provisional indications of the likely legal and associated costs. The costs are estimated to be in the region of £35k to £40k per school for themselves and the banks involved in the Swindon contract, that will be incurred in the completion of both the necessary documentation and to ensure that the Provider has an outcome that is no better and no worse than that prevailing prior to the variation. It has not been possible to obtain definitive costings as the level of work involved for the various parties will not be clear until further into the conversion process, it may be that the costs reduce. In addition to these the LA's legal costs are anticipated to be £11k per school, bringing the total (without officer resource) to somewhere in the region of £50k per school.
- 3.14 To offset the legal costs (£11k) the LA has asked for a contribution from each of the schools converting of 20% (£5k) of the funding that they receive from the DfE towards the costs associated with their conversion. A sum of £50k was agreed by cabinet in June 2011 for the conversion of schools to academy status; it may be possible to use this to offset some of the costs.
- 3.15 Officers have spoken to an adjoining LA who has had PFI schools convert to Academy status and the estimated figures above are in line with the costs incurred by the adjoining LA for those conversions. Officers will continue to seek to negotiate a reduction in the indicative costs from the PFI providers of £35k to £40k per school and explore the option of approaching the schools for additional contributions to offset the cost to the LA.
- 3.16 The LA wrote to the DfE asking that they cover the costs for all bar the LA legal costs of £11k and the officer resource involved, unfortunately the DfE are unwilling to assist. The advice from the DfE is that they do not believe that the issue of costs should in itself delay work on the conversion of these schools. In order to progress the conversion a budget of £150k is required, should it be anticipated that the costs will exceed this; officers will seek further authority before incurring additional costs over the budget figure of £150k.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Helen Haines, 01793 463269, hhaines@swindon.gov.uk.

Transfer of PFI Schools to Academy Status

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The recommendation in 2.1 flows from a QC's opinion (which is DfE part funded) and as this is what is required by the funders to enable the Swindon PFI schools to convert we have no other options available to us but to agree to conversion.
- 4.2 The LA has the option to reject the suggested wording included in paragraph 3.8 from Cameron McKenna and either suggest an alternative or wait for a standard to be produced by the DfE.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial consequences to the PFI financial position in respect of schools transferring to Academies as the terms of the contract are unchanged. The LA will continue to make Unitary Charge payments to the PFI contractor and will recover contributions from the Schools towards service costs in accordance with Schools Agreements (renamed Principal Agreements after conversion and indemnified by the DfE). Future contributions will need to be revised in accordance with the terms of the PFI contract and to reflect appropriate cost sharing where school expansion or other changes are required.
- 5.2 As explained in 3.13 to 3.15 there are considerable costs involved in the actual conversion of the schools, anticipated to be in the region of £50k per school. There is £63k available within existing budgets, £20k due from the White Horse Federation for previous conversions, and £15k in total from the 3 schools. This leaves an estimated shortfall of around £52k against the anticipated total cost of £150k. Officers will endeavour to reduce the overall costs during the conversion process but it is proposed that the balance is met from the PFI Equalisation Reserve. In accordance with previous decisions, this reserve has been topped up in recent years from underspends on the Councils Debt Charges Budget and therefore the cost will be managed within the Debt Charges Budget in 2012-13.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 Legal and human rights implications have been fully taken into account in compiling this Decision Note and it is considered its recommendations are compatible with Convention rights.

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

- 5.4 Staff will be transferred pursuant to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended (TUPE) to the new Academy trust as part of the conversion process. There are no issues regarding sustainability, health, rural crime and disorder to be considered as part of this paper.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Helen Haines, 01793 463269, hhaines@swindon.gov.uk.

Transfer of PFI Schools to Academy Status

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 5.5 The purpose of the conversion of a LA maintained school to academy status is to enable greater autonomy to raise educational standards further. The conversion process therefore links to Priority 1 “We can all benefit from a growing economy” of the One Swindon Plan.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.6 The decision recommended in this paper concerns implementing national legislation described in The Academies Act 2010 and subsequent amendments. The DfE has evaluated the Act’s impact on equality and the assessment is available from the DfE’s website.

Risk Management

- 5.7 Delays in the conversion process create reputational risk for the Council.

6. Consultees

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

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Nabarro Opinion

Proposed Fees and Charges for Leisure Services with effect from 1st January 2013

N.B. Prices are worked from the standard SwindonCard price.

Proposals:

- *SwindonCard activity prices increase by approximately 5% (rounded).*
- *Non-card price is set to 25% premium above the Swindon Card price, instead of the current 30% premium.*
- *Most concession prices are held pending wider review of the SwindonCard product.*

	Actual 2012	January 2013	Increase	Comments
Purchase of SwindonCard				
SwindonCard Adult Resident	£15.50	£15.50	0%	No change to SwindonCard purchase prices at January 2013
SwindonCard Adult Non Resident	£31.00	£31.00	0%	
Concession 1 Adult Resident	£5.50	£5.50	0%	
Concession 1 Adult Non Resident	£10.50	£10.50	0%	
Concession 1 Junior Resident	£5.50	£5.50	0%	
Concession 1 Junior Non Resident	£5.50	£5.50	0%	
Concession 2 Adult Residents only	£5.50	£5.50	0%	
Replacement SwindonCard	£2.00	£2.00	0%	
Fitness Classes – 60 minutes (non BTS)				
Non Card	£6.90	£7.00	1.4%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£5.30	£5.60	5.7%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£2.80	£2.80	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£2.00	£2.00	0%	
Fitness Classes – 60 minutes (BTS classes)				
Non Card	£7.65	£7.75	1.3%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£5.90	£6.20	5.1%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£3.00	£3.00	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£2.00	£2.10	0%	
Gym				
Non Card	£7.65	£7.75	1.3%	

Proposed Fees and Charges for Leisure Services with effect from 1st January 2013

	Actual 2012	January 2013	Increase	Comments
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£5.90	£6.20	5.1%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£3.00	£3.00	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£2.00	£2.10	0%	
Leisure Passport				
Adult Individual	£455.00	£455.00	0%	£35 initial and 12x £35 monthly payments
All other derivatives			0%	No change
Ice Skating - 90 minutes (Peak)				
Adult Non Card	£6.10	£6.25	2.5%	
Junior Non Card	£4.65	£5.00	7.5%	
SwindonCard	£4.65	£5.00	7.5%	Higher increase to reflect market
Concession 1	£3.90	£4.00	2.6%	Better family value to balance
Concession 2	£3.90	£4.00	2.6%	higher adult price increase
Skate Hire	£1.60	£1.60	0%	
Squash – 40 minutes				
Non Card	£8.95	£9.20	2.8%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£6.90	£7.30	5.8%	
SwindonCard (Off Peak)	£6.20	£6.50	4.8%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£3.45	£3.45	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£2.20	£2.20	0%	
Swimming				
Adult Non Card	£5.25	£5.30	1.0%	
Junior Non Card	£3.40	£3.50	2.9%	
SwindonCard	£4.05	£4.25	4.9%	
Concession 1	£2.20	£2.20	0%	
Concession 2	£1.50	£1.50	0%	

Proposed Fees and Charges for Leisure Services with effect from 1st January 2013

	Actual 2012	January 2013	Increase	Comments
Climbing Wall				
Non Card	£7.80	£7.90	1.3%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£6.00	£6.30	5.0%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£3.00	£3.00	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£1.90	£1.90	0%	
Snooker				
Non Card	£8.60	£8.75	1.7%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£6.60	£7.00	6.1%	Most use is Concession 1 & 2
SwindonCard (Off Peak)	£5.95	£6.00	0.8%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£3.30	£3.30	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£2.20	£2.20	0%	
Athletics				
Non Card	£4.45	£4.50	1.1%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£3.40	£3.50	2.9%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£1.90	£1.90	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£1.30	£1.30	0%	
Badminton				
Non Card	£12.25	£12.50	2.0%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£9.40	£10.00	6.4%	Higher increase to reflect market
SwindonCard (Off Peak)	£8.45	£9.00	6.5%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£4.75	£4.75	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£3.05	£3.05	0%	
Tennis – Indoors (October – April)				
Non Card	£20.70	£22.50	8.7%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£17.50	£18.00	2.9%	Lower increase to reflect market
SwindonCard (Off Peak)	£14.00	£15.00	7.1%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£10.40	£10.40	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£7.80	£7.80	0%	

Proposed Fees and Charges for Leisure Services with effect from 1st January 2013

	Actual 2012	January 2013	Increase	Comments
Golf 18-hole (Broome Manor)				
Adult Non Card	£25.70	£25.00	-2.7%	Price to reflect local competition
Junior Non Card	£11.55	£12.00	3.9%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£19.75	£20.00	1.3%	Lower increase to reflect market
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£9.90	£9.90	0%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£6.00	£6.00	0%	
5-a-side Football / Basketball / Volleyball				
Non Card	£61.10	£62.50	2.3%	
SwindonCard/Concession 1/Concession 2 (Peak)	£47.00	£50.00	6.4%	Higher increase to reflect market
SwindonCard (Off Peak)	£42.30	£45.00	6.4%	
Concession 1 (Off Peak)	£42.30	£45.00	6.4%	
Concession 2 (Off Peak)	£42.30	£45.00	6.4%	
Family Swim (4 people, max 2 adults)				
Non Card	£14.50	£15.00	3.4%	Lower increase to reflect market
SwindonCard		£10.00		New price not previously offered
Swimming / Skating Course (30 minutes x 10 weeks)				
Non Card	£99.50	£99.50	0%	No change at January 2013 due to current disruption to swimming provision.
SwindonCard	£69.50	£69.50	0%	
Concession 1	£50.00	£50.00	0%	
Concession 2	£25.00	£25.00	0%	

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

Author: Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability
Head of Planning

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on 22nd November 2011, the following motion in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) was moved by Councillor Wood (Eastcott).

Motion - Houses in Multiple Occupation

Councillor Dave Wood moved and Councillor Stan Pajak seconded:

"This Council notes:

- That in September 2010 the coalition government laid down new regulations that allowed local authorities to choose to whether to require Small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to require planning permission.*
- That this replaced a planning-heavy system, which only stood for 5 months, that allowed HMOs to be controlled regardless of need for that control and thereby created the potential of permanently damaging communities by encouraging permanent splitting of family homes into flats.*
- That where a local authority has evidence of problems caused by density of HMO populations they can apply to the Secretary of State to require Small HMO planning permission to be required within specific neighbourhoods.*

This Council further notes: -

- That Eastcott ward has the highest proportion of known HMOs of any ward in Swindon by a large margin.*
- That the Town Centre Cluster has been, and continues to, gather data on the damage caused by over-concentration of HMOs within Eastcott ward as one of its priorities.*
- That in the most extreme cases of HMO over-concentration, specifically the Crombey Street area, that the character of the neighbourhood has changed beyond all recognition and that the evidence suggests that this neighbourhood does not 'Like Where It Lives' for this reason.*

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Andy Brown, Direct Dial Telephone Number 466286, andybrown@swindon.gov.uk.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

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Date: 12th December 2012

- That the creeping over-concentration in the remainder of Eastcott ward led to the Cluster Plan developed with residents to highlight controlling of HMOs as one of its top four priorities for positive change in the area.

This Council believes:-

That HMOs are useful to the local economy and are important for young people and that many HMOs are well-managed, well-maintained and well-behaved.

- That a wide spread of HMOs within 2 miles of the centre of Swindon, across at least six municipal wards, is desirable and causes very few problems.

- That over-concentration of HMOs leads to intense parking problems, common inappropriate presentation of waste, a neighbourhood culture where noise nuisance and poor maintenance of houses is tolerated and to a change of character of a neighbourhood.

- That where this change of neighbourhood falls directly next to key Town Centre Regeneration sites like Regent Circus that this has a negative impact on the long term success of those scheme as fewer people would wish to visit that area.

This Council resolves:

-To use evidence collated by the Central Cluster to apply to the Secretary of State under Section 4 of the regulations - and before the Council Budget 2012/3 is set – to require planning permission for Small HMOs within Eastcott ward.

- To accept the Cluster Plan calling for the present number of HMOs in Eastcott Ward to be maintained at its present level or less.”

1.2 The Motion stood deferred to the Planning Committee and Cabinet for consideration without discussion.

1.3 The motion under consideration was that the Local Planning Authority should prepare a Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to remove the permitted development rights which were introduced in October 2010, that permit the change of use of a dwelling into a HMO without the need to obtain planning permission.

1.4 This report provides comment upon the motion in the light of Government advice and local evidence.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Andy Brown, Direct Dial Telephone Number 466286, andybrown@swindon.gov.uk.

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-
- 2.1 Agree that the Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability write to the Secretary of State highlighting the evidence in respect of the HMO situation in Swindon, and the problems attributed to them,
 - 2.2 Authorise the Head of Planning to make a submission under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to the Secretary of State once local evidence indicates that 10% of dwellings in the Ward are classed as HMOs. This submission would request the removal of permitted development rights in Eastcott Ward that allow a dwelling house to be used as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for occupation by up to six people,
 - 2.3 Notes the proposed planning policy HA4 in the Draft Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 endorsed by Cabinet on 17th October 2012 (Cabinet Minute 51, 2012/13 refers) and by Council on 8th November 2012 is to resist inappropriate levels of HMOs within the Borough,
 - 2.4 Authorise the Board Director Delivery to collate any data / evidence as it becomes available that may provide new or additional support for the preparation of an Article 4 Direction, and
 - 2.5 Agree to investigate the feasibility of establishing a public HMO Register to assist in the regulation, control and supervision of small Houses in Multiple Occupation.

3. Detail

- 3.1 On October 1st 2010, the Government introduced changes to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (Use Classes Order) that provided for a new category for development comprising Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- 3.2 When the Use Classes Order was originally enacted in 1987, HMOs were not recognised as a unique type of development. If a property did not fall with the definition of a dwelling, then the subdivision of the property or a change to a HMO required planning permission. This enabled the Council as Local Planning Authority to regulate HMOs through the statutory planning process.
- 3.3 The change that came into force in October 2010 means that planning permission is no longer required to change a dwelling into a HMO, where it accommodates no more than six people.
- 3.4 It is acknowledged that there can be adverse impacts arising from a use of a property as a HMO and this may be exacerbated where there are concentrations of such uses. In areas with proliferations of HMOs there is likely to be a reduction in the number of properties to serve the family market. There may also be other impacts including; a transient population; increased tipping and littering, and a higher demand for parking spaces, although evidence is required to be able attribute the source of such problems to HMOs. In towns or cities with large

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concentrations of students, such as University towns, large swathes of the dwelling stock have been converted to HMOs, making it difficult for existing residents to move to a larger property in their local area.

The Number of HMOs

- 3.5 Officers have investigated the extent to which HMOs exist in Swindon and in Eastcott Ward in particular. Residential Services have provided the following data in respect of the numbers of known HMOs:

Table 1

HMO Numbers (on 'old' Ward boundaries on which the motion was based)

	Number	% of Swindon HMOs	% of ward Dwellings
Privately rented dwellings in Swindon			6.5%
Privately rented dwellings in Eastcott ward			20.9%
Privately rented dwellings in Central ward			18.1%
Total known HMOs in Swindon:	389		
Known HMOs in Eastcott ward:	107	28%	2.44%
Known HMOs in Central ward	116	30%	3.07%
<i>Known HMOs in Dixon Street – Commercial Road sector</i>	39	10%	<1%

NB *The figures within the table for HMOs are all those known to SBC based on the current Housing Act definition, which excludes properties built or converted into self-contained flats. A number of the licensed HMOS in the Eastcott area are in the older, larger properties situated in areas such as Victoria Road, Rolleston Street, Clifton Street etc.*

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- 3.6 Table 1 shows that whilst the 'old' Eastcott Ward has 28% of the known HMOs within the Borough, being 107 in total. The 'old' Central Ward has both the highest number and the largest concentration as a proportion of the overall dwelling stock. No ward has any more than 3.07% of its dwelling stock as HMOs.
- 3.7 It has been suggested that there is a particular concentration of HMOs in the Crombey Street area and the smallest area for which data is available is in the last row in Table 1. This amounts to 39 properties or less than 1% of the total number of dwellings within Eastcott Ward.
- 3.8 Purely in terms of numbers of registered HMOs, current evidence is unlikely to support an Article 4 Direction. This view has regard to the circumstances that prevail in those towns / cities that have introduced a Direction. For example, in Headingley Ward, Leeds, of a total of 6815 properties, 2771 (40%) are occupied by Students and are HMOs. However, it is recognised that the impact of a problem is relative to the area concerned but the figures at Leeds indicate a much more significant scale of such properties than in Swindon.

Evidence

- 3.9 The Council motion of 22nd November 2011 refers to data collected by the Town Centre Locality supporting the case for regulation of HMOs. These data have not been made available, so officers have assessed other available sources of possible evidence of problems specific to the wards with the highest concentration of HMOs.

Environmental Health

- 3.10 Additional data have been provided by Environmental Health Officers that quantifies the number of complaints received arising from waste accumulations / fly tipping etc. These are set out below in Table 2:

Table 2

Neighbourhood /Environmental Indicators (*Complaints received 2008-2011*)

	Swindon Borough	Eastcott		Central	
		No.	%	No.	%
Mis-presented waste (Domestic)	667	127	19%	119	18%

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Waste Accumulations (Private land)	1287	185	14%	269	21%
Fly tipping (Public land)	1450	97	7%	116	8%

- 3.11 These figures clearly show that problems exist with regard to waste accumulations and tipping in these wards. However, they do not identify the source of the problem reported. This cannot therefore be attributed to HMOs. As such the data is of limited value in provided a establishing the link between HMOs and some of their reported concerns.

Parking

- 3.12 Much of Eastcott Ward is covered by residents' parking zones. Residents are able to apply for up to two permits per household in the relevant zone. A change of use to a HMO will not entitle the residents to more than two permits regardless of the number of occupants. This means that whether the property is a dwelling or a HMO, no more than two permits will be issued.
- 3.13 The Council recognises that, in some cases, conversions of existing properties into premises that create multiple occupation are likely to result in increased demand for on street parking. In order to keep the ratio of spaces and permits to its current level, all applications for parking permits are considered against the original circumstances of the parking zone at the time it was created. Accordingly, no additional permits will be granted for as a result of a property becoming a HMO. 'Non-permit' parking will only be available within the zones outside of the controlled hours. This approach by parking services is in accord with the adopted Car Parking Standards 2007 and reinforced by conditions attached to planning permissions.
- 3.14 There is currently no available evidence or survey data that demonstrate that the parking problems experienced arise from HMOs, and from no other category of housing.

Planning Policy

- 3.15 The present planning policy in respect of the subdivision of dwellings in the Adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 (2006) is now to some extent out-dated as following the change in legislation, the change of use of dwellings into small HMOs is now permitted without the need to obtain planning permission.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Andy Brown, Direct Dial Telephone Number 466286, andybrown@swindon.gov.uk.

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- 3.16 This is recognised and addressed in the Swindon Borough Local Plan, 2026 Pre-Submission Draft, (policy HA4) which also acknowledges the need to review / consider the number and impact of HMOs on an area to prevent harm to local communities. The policy states:

“Policy HA4:

Subdivision of Housing and Houses in Multiple Occupation

- a. Proposals for sub-division of dwellings into flats and for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), where planning permission is required shall only be permitted where:
- the internal floorspace of the original dwelling is at least 100m²;
 - they will not harm the character of the area, streetscene or amenity of neighbouring residents including through the provision of parking, refuse and cycle storage;
 - the application of car parking standards does not result in the loss of the majority of existing front and rear garden space and landscaping;
 - they will not harm traffic or pedestrian safety due to increased parking pressures or exacerbate existing parking problems; and
 - room sizes and internal arrangements meet the current standards defined by Swindon Borough Council
- b. In order to support mixed and balanced communities, and to ensure that a range of household needs continue to be accommodated throughout the Borough, applications for changes of use to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) shall only be permitted where the proposal would not adversely affect the character of the surrounding area or lead to an unacceptable concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation within a given area.”

- 3.17 This policy provides further protection in line with current legislation, and more robust protection to communities by making conversion to HMOs acceptable only where more stringent criteria are met.

Procedural Matters

- 3.18 The procedure for an Article 4 Direction is set out in legislation. This includes a requirement to provide a justification for the Direction and that it be the subject of a formal public consultation exercise. If this stage is reached and the Council agrees the direction, it has to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Approval,

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together with a robust evidence base underpinning it and the results of the consultation exercise.

- 3.19 The legislation also introduced the possibility of compensation, whereby anyone refused permission within 12 months of the direction being adopted could seek compensation against the Local Authority. No fixed fee is set for any such compensation. To guard against this possibility there is the ability to implement a Non-immediate Direction, to come into force on a specified date.
- 3.20 A number of Local Authorities have made Article 4 directions. These tend to be the university towns where there are known problems and high concentrations of HMOs. Durham, Leeds, Nottingham, and Manchester have all had Article 4 Directions approved by the Secretary of State, principally in areas of high concentrations of students.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Should Members resolve to agree the preparation of an Article 4 Direction, the evidence required must be collected by the local community, with guidance from the Locality Lead and Ward Members. If Cabinet agrees not to proceed with an Article 4 Direction at this point in time, then Localities should continue to work with Ward Members and local communities to monitor problems and report to Cabinet where issues arising that can be attributed to HMOs intensifying in number or impact.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 If an Article 4 Direction is to be pursued, the costs of preparation, publicity, consultation and submission would create a one-off pressure on staff resources, which would require a reprioritisation of other work to accommodate. The preparation of a Direction would be expected to be a 'one off' exercise, unless this is widened to other areas at a later time. If accepted by the Secretary of State, the Directive could result in compensation claims if its provisions were introduced within 12 months of the Article being confirmed. This could be avoided by delaying the date the direction comes into force, once confirmed, by 12 months.
- 5.2 In addition, there will be resource implications of introducing an Article 4 Direction in that as permitted development rights are being removed, no fee (currently £385) would be required for an application to change a dwelling into a large HMO. The impact on income budgets is expected to be minimal because since the change in legislation in 2010 there have been few applications to establish the lawfulness of HMOs Borough wide, via a certificate of Lawfulness There is no obligation on an applicant to apply for or seek a certificate of lawfulness, where a use is permitted development..

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Andy Brown, Direct Dial Telephone Number 466286, andybrown@swindon.gov.uk.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Cabinet

Date: 12th December 2012

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 Any Article 4 Direction would be subject to formal publicity and consultation, which provides the opportunity for comments to be made on the proposals. It is not envisaged that the content of this report will have any direct implications for human rights.

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

- 5.4 There are no direct staff implications arising from this report. However, the preparation of an Article 4 Direction would require a staff resource input that is not quantified or included in mid-term resource planning.

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 5.5 This report supports the achievement of One Swindon outcomes: with respect to improving local areas "I like where I live". As such, the proposal is fully aligned to our Corporate Objective around locality involvement and communities.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.6 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) will be completed for each Article 4 Direction undertaken.

Risk Management

- 5.7 The preparation of an Article 4 Direction will be subject to statutory procedures. Potential impacts of these directives are covered in the body of this report.

6. Consultees

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

- 6.2 Town Centre Swindon Locality Lead

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 Pre-Submission Draft

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None

9. Key Decision/Decision in Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme / Forward Plan for December 2012.

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