

Swindon Borough Council's Corporate Strategy 2013-2015

Foreword

It has never been more important for the Council to have a clear set of priorities that are linked to spending and available resources. Like all local authorities we continue to face huge challenges of increasing demand across for our services and reducing resources. This strategy will guide our decision making and spending over the next three years so that we maintain a focus on what really matters most to the people of Swindon.

The Priorities in this strategy describe what we will do and even more importantly they begin to demonstrate how we will work in new and different ways to achieve them. It is based on our belief that it is better to work with people, businesses and communities rather than simply deliver services to them. It is based on our belief that the Council should increasingly enable, facilitate and support rather than simply provide services.

There is great pride in Swindon and the Council will encourage this and actively help individuals, community groups and businesses who want to do more for themselves, more for others, and more for Swindon.

Introduction

Our Corporate Strategy is critical to our success because it translates One Swindon, Stronger Together and our hugely challenging and radically changing context into the Council's Priorities for the next three years. In doing so our Corporate Strategy clearly states *what* our Priorities are, *why* we've chosen them, *how* we will achieve them, and our *measures* of success. It pays particular attention to the changes we need to make as a Council in order to continue to be successful.

Our Corporate Strategy will help consistently focus the Council's people and resources on addressing the most important challenges and opportunities being faced by the people we serve. It provides us with a clear sense of purpose and direction against which decisions and plans can be made, implemented and reviewed, and spending reprioritised.

Our Corporate Strategy applies to all of the Council's functions and responsibilities and sets the expectation that they will be focused in service of the Council's Priorities. It will direct the Council's resource allocation decisions through commissioning, financial and business planning, and other key strategies such as the Local Plan. Crucially, it will also aim to inspire and support people in the Council and in Swindon to rise to the challenges we face and make our biggest positive contribution possible.

Our Priorities

Our five Priorities are:

- Work with residents to create well cared for neighbourhoods
- Right skills, right jobs, in the right places
- Together, find new ways to reduce vulnerability and improve health for all
- Work with people and families to help them fulfil their potential
- Consistently make the best use of all available resources and focus them on what matters most

Our two supporting priorities are:

- Realise in full the benefits of Stronger Together
- Develop a national profile in order to secure maximum benefit for Swindon

Our Priority is to work with residents to create well cared for neighbourhoods

We have chosen this Priority because:

- Residents consistently cite clean streets as one of the most important factors in creating a good place to live and one of those most in need of improvement.
- Residents who feel they can influence decisions about their local area are far more likely to be satisfied with their local area

We will help achieve this Priority by:

- Working with local communities to understand what matters most about their local environment and to develop their participation in caring for their neighbourhood
- Working with StreetSmart to streamline the delivery of local services such as waste collection and recycling, grass cutting and road maintenance

We will know we have been successful when:

- The majority of residents are satisfied that their neighbourhood is clean & well cared for
- The number of people who are regularly involved in caring for a neighbourhood increases year on year

Our Priority is right skills, right jobs, in the right places

We have chosen this Priority because:

- Swindon is dependent on a small number of large businesses and so must develop and retain existing businesses whilst attracting new. Whilst the rate of business start-ups is high, many do not become sustainable businesses.
- In terms of skills & qualifications, Swindon's performance at GCSE and Levels 2-4 is below average and the gap widens at higher qualification levels. This is reflected in residents' salary levels being lower than commuters in to Swindon.
- Swindon's rate of economic inactivity is above average and yet many do want to work. The number of our young people not in work or learning is higher than average.
- The national reduction in development funding means we must find innovative ways of encouraging development.

We will help achieve this Priority by:

- Seeking to retain and grow Swindon's existing business base
- Actively managing our portfolio of physical assets to promote good economic growth
- Embedding a culture within the Council to support good economic growth

- Improving the skills and qualifications of young people and adults to enable them to engage in learning and compete for jobs
- Creating the conditions to help generate more jobs, particularly in the 18-25 age group, support business start-ups and improve Swindon's productivity
- Bringing forward plans to deliver key infrastructure projects to deliver economic growth in Swindon and a more successful town centre
- Maximising all available revenue from development opportunities and establish new funding streams

We will know we have been successful when we have:

- Worked in partnership with schools, academies, colleges and other learning providers to increase the percentage of young people achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C and 2 A 'Levels at grades A*-E by the age of 19 and in the adult working age population increasing the percentage with higher level qualifications such as Higher National Diplomas and degrees to reach and exceed the national average through year on year improvement
- Worked in partnership with schools and academies to increase the percentage of young people achieving five GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths to reach and exceed the national average through year on year improvement
- Provided a net increase of readily available employment land
- Reduced youth unemployment to below the national average
- Increased the rate of growth in Gross Value Added relative to our comparators
- Increased income year on year from business rates through growth

Our Priority is to together, find new ways to reduce vulnerability and improve health for all

We have chosen this Priority because:

- Our spend is skewed to the provision of high cost specialist services rather than preventing future problems arising
- Demand for all care services continues to rise, with large and unsustainable rises expected in the long term
- We must identify and take opportunities to reduce spend through early intervention, commissioning from all sectors, and working with other public sector organisations
- We must promote independence as people want to be in control of their own lives and our way of working needs to support people to help themselves

We will help achieve this Priority by:

- Investing in working models which are evidence based, cost effective, improve outcomes and protect children and vulnerable adults
- Working with partners to support individuals/communities to improve their own well-being

- Reviewing and redesigning services working with vulnerable adults, families, children & young people so that they all provide help early and prevent crises occurring
- Focusing our sports, leisure and cultural provision on building community capacity and reducing demand on other services
- Using commissioning to improve value for money and increase choice for users of services
- Working with communities and partners to agree the priorities to improve the health of the population and reduce inequalities

We will know we have been successful when we have:

- As part of our wider work with children and families, improved the lives of 370 'Troubled Families' by improving attendance and reducing exclusions for school age children, reducing anti-social behaviour across the family, reducing youth offending and by supporting adults and young people within the family to progress into work
- Reduced the number of children on new child protection plans, which are second or subsequent plans, to no more than 12.5% in any year
- Supported vulnerable children to stay in Swindon and deliver better value for money, through increasing the proportion spent on independently funded placements for children in care within Swindon to 92.8% as a proportion of the total spend
- Supported people to live healthier lives by:
 - Reducing obesity at age 11 years to the same level or less than the average for England
 - Reducing smoking prevalence to 20% or less by 2015
 - Halting the rise in alcohol related admissions to acute care
 - Increasing the number of people physically active to 25% by 2015
 - Offering all eligible people an NHS cardio vascular health check once every five years
- Increased the number of people living at home for longer through:
 - Supporting people to remain in their own homes or in community based care and reducing the number of new entrants into residential care
 - Increasing the number of adults with learning disabilities in supported living accommodation rather than residential care

Resulting in an overall 5% reduction in the numbers of adults in residential care by 2015

Our Priority is to work with people and families to help them fulfil their potential

We have chosen this Priority because:

- Engagement in public life is low, as is the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions in their local area
- We must fully understand what residents most value and expect from the Council and raise their awareness of the Council's current services and the impact of reducing budgets

We will help achieve this Priority by:

- Developing public participation in local decision-making
- Developing the capacity and confidence of our workforce, so that it seeks at the outset to build on individual resilience and skills by working with people to find solutions

We will know we have been successful when, as the Listening Council, we have increased the number of:

- Engagement meetings held
- People who have benefitted from community grants
- People coming to locality activities
- Case studies showing evidence of the positive impact of localities' work across all areas of Swindon

Our Priority is to consistently make the best use of all available resources and focus them on what matters most

We have chosen this Priority because:

- We will only meet our forecast £15m budget gaps by transforming the way we work with communities and partners
- We must identify and take further savings opportunities, including further reductions in back office functions, best use of our assets, ensuring our contracts delivery value for money, and focusing our strategic partnerships on achieving shard priorities

We will help achieve this Priority by:

- Growing community capacity through local projects, including sports, leisure and cultural projects and by encouraging community led solutions and action
- Increase the number of and maximise the impact of volunteers
- Changing our services so that they focus on helping individuals and communities to develop their own local solutions more efficiently
- Improving levels of customer engagement, making services we provide more effective and efficient, and making other solutions more accessible
- Working with Communities to make sure that the Council funds activities that add real value to the Community and that other agencies or communities cannot deliver themselves
- Ensuring our buildings, ICT and staffing support structures are fit for purpose for our current and future needs
- Joining up public services internally, and with local partners, so that we achieve more, with less money, through effective collaboration, which reduces duplication
- Using commissioning to ensure that there can be real choice about how agreed outcomes will be secured in the most efficient and effective way
- Renegotiating the purpose and medium term focus of our key strategic partners (Capita, SEQOL, Forward Swindon Limited, Swindon Commercial Services) to ensure their priorities/strategies are clear and aligned with those of the Council and with each other

We will know we have been successful when:

- We have delivered, with our partners, a balanced Council budget each year that aligns resources to achieve the Council's Priorities
- We are in the upper quartile when measured against other local authorities for performance in efficiency and value for money
- More people understand and contribute to the budget process in the Council