

## Appendix 1 - Draft Swindon Economic Strategy Consultation Responses

Respondent	Comments	<div>Response</div> <div><i>Amendments in Italics</i></div>
1	<p>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>	<p>The Draft Economic Strategy was available on our website at <a href="http://www.swindon.gov.uk/cd/cd-consultations/cd-consultations-current/Pages/cd-Consultations-EconomicStrategy.aspx">http://www.swindon.gov.uk/cd/cd-consultations/cd-consultations-current/Pages/cd-Consultations-EconomicStrategy.aspx</a> . 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 <a href="http://www.swindon.gov.uk/corestrategy">www.swindon.gov.uk/corestrategy</a></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 12<sup>th</sup> December Cabinet promotes a short, medium and long term action plan to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. firstly set up a business oriented Swindon higher education partnership,</li> <li>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</li> <li>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.</li> </ol> <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>
3	<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>	<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>

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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 ...</u><i>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.</i></p> <p><u>Priority Actions – Create a Place of Opportunity for Young People. Added wording</u></p> <p>Objective ...To deliver a coordinated system for connecting young people in schools to further education, apprenticeships, training, employment and <i>new enterprise</i> opportunities.</p> <p><u>Rationale ...</u><i>So too will support to enable some young people to start their own business in the borough.</i></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><b>Ensure High Quality Communications. Transport Infrastructure and Services</b> 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>
5	<p><b>Item 1.2</b> 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><b>Swindon in 2026</b> 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"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Is there a genuine commitment &amp; financial resources to deliver a theatre &amp; 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</li> </ul>	<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 CO<sub>2</sub> reduction are increasingly important competitiveness factors. In response to this, the Council adopted a Swindon Sustainable Energy Framework which was prepared in close co-operation with key businesses</p>

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	<p>Again In my view, of the 6 priorities stated, <b>positioning Swindon as a hub of engineering and manufacturing technology</b> 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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"> <li>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?</li> <li>2. Spatial - the document does not attempt to define the area 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.</li> <li>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?</li> <li>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:-  Business base (explain the role played by small, medium and large companies);  Employment and Unemployment Structure;  Skills, Qualifications and Training;  Self containment and commuting.</li> </ol> <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 CO<sub>2</sub> reduction are increasingly important competitiveness factors. In response to this, the Council adopted a Swindon Sustainable Energy Framework which 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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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		<p>surrounding the emerging Local Plan and the draft Economic Strategy and have registered their support for the ES.</p> <p>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.</p>
7	<p>I would make the following observations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A comprehensive report.</li> <li>2. Swindon in 2026 – I would take what is offered.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol> <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"> <li>• Economic strategy document – contained informative and useful information.</li> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Hub of Advanced Engineering &amp; 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)?</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Action Plan – as well as the descriptions on Impacts on the Economy – it would be helpful to have quantitative goals for performance measurement.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>• <b>Swindon – open for business</b> – should be mantra.</li> </ul>	<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>

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below.

- 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

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	broken down in Appendix 3 into more detailed targets over the period.	
12	<p><b><u>Oasis Leisure Centre</u></b></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><b><u>Improve frequency and reliability of rail services to London and Heathrow</u></b></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><b><u>Western Access to Heathrow and Electrification</u></b></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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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>

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	<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>

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	<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>

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	<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>



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	<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>	<p>range of issues as we progress.</p>
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