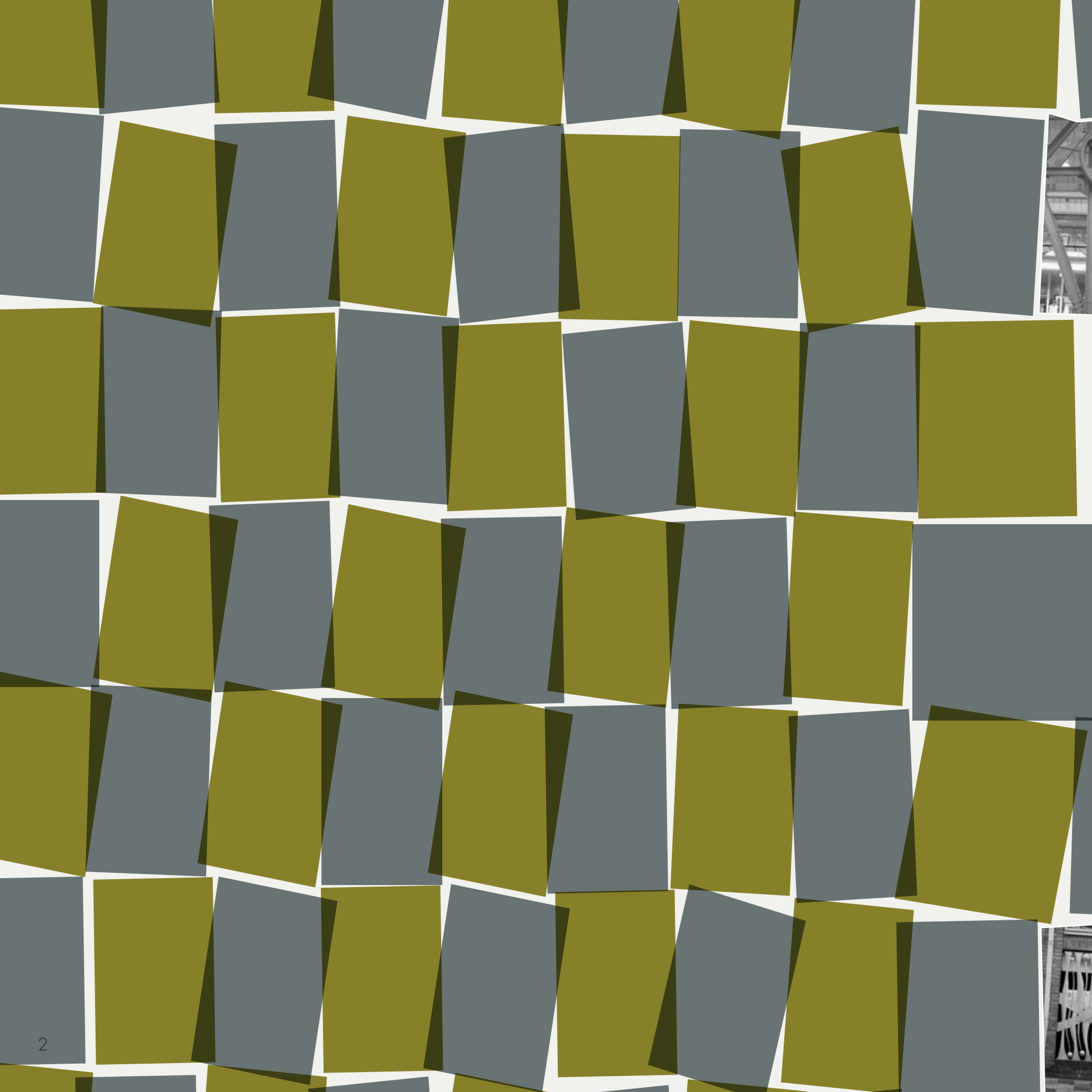


HEART OF SWINDON

Heart of Swindon
Vision Document
March 2025





It is time for change in Swindon. Our new vision, set out in this prospectus for the Heart of Swindon paints an inspiring and confident picture of a town brimming with potential, with a revived local economy. Swindon will be an enjoyable and enriching place to live, to have ones first home and to bring up children with fantastic early years support with caring education and healthcare support. Swindon has the most amazing heritage and a vibrant community. Our parks and historic buildings provide a beautiful backdrop and template for the future. We will promote opportunities for all and will become a net zero town with expanding and new businesses taking advantage of our excellent location and proud past as an innovative, inventive and great town.

We will continue to work in partnership with our local community and local businesses and stakeholders and invite you to join this exciting journey.

Cllr Jim Robbins
Leader of the Council

welcome to SWINDON

This is our town, with its big heart and welcoming people. It's a place of innovation and hard workers, set amongst beautiful countryside. Its historic industries have had a seismic impact on the rest of the nation, and still today it continues to be a hub of scientific, technological and financial advancements. Swindon is a place of ambition and driven people; a place brimming with ideas and potential.

The Council is committed to driving growth in the heart of Swindon, bringing residents, businesses and visitors into the town centre for leisure activities, and to work and live. To help direct this growth, the Council has three missions which form its long-term priorities. They are being fairer, better and greener. All three prioritise a place that is inclusive, resilient and future-looking.

The Council will reduce disadvantage, to make a fairer Swindon for all. It will remove disparities in health, education and social justice by investing in community facilities, new affordable homes for a wide range of people, and learning opportunities in a number of different formats.

Investment in the town's facilities and infrastructure will aid and support Swindon's growth in the coming decades, providing a better and more useful town centre for those who live and work in, and visit the town. Delivery of new homes, including affordable homes and improvements of facilities, services and leisure opportunities in the town centre will support growing communities and create a fantastic place to call home.

The climate crisis and the consequential impacts on our public places, buildings and communities is the biggest challenge of our generation. Embracing Swindon's historic and present-day reputation for technological and engineering innovation and production, the Council is working to combat and adapt to climate change, working directly with communities to achieve this.

This document sets out a forward-looking vision for achieving the three missions in the heart of Swindon, with 8 ambitions and 53 propositions to create a better Swindon, now and for the future.

3
MISSIONS

8
AMBITIONS

53
PROPOSITIONS

SWINDON'S AMBITIONS

a centre for
LIVING

a CREATIVE
CENTRE

a VIBRANT
centre

a CONNECTED
centre

a centre for
LEARNING

a GREEN and
HEALTHY
centre

a KNOWLEDGE
centre

a PROUD
centre



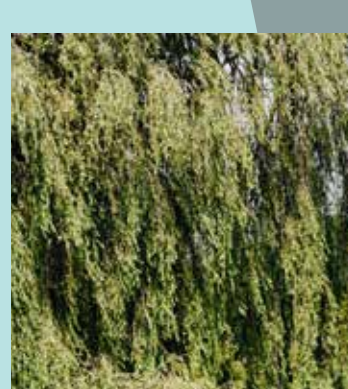
what makes SWINDON...

Swindon's history is visible today in its buildings, streets, parks and people. Layered over time, Swindon's historic 19th century and modernist buildings sit alongside those finished in 2024. The built fabric reflects the town's industrial past, rooted in its railway heritage.

In the latter half of the 19th century, Swindon transformed from a small, quiet market town to a workers' town, welcoming over 40,000 new residents in just 50 years. By the end of the 19th century, it was home to the largest industrial complex in Europe.

Swindon is a result of its people achieving incredible things. Today, new forms of manufacturing and technological engineering sit side by side with financial businesses, exciting entrepreneurs, incredible performers, makers, designers and growers.

**IN SWINDON WE ARE;
THINKERS, LEARNERS,
MAKERS, DOERS.**



...its hunger for INNOVATION

This is a town of hardworkers and doers. Swindon's dynamic and diverse population reflects its expansive growth beyond railways into a multitude of industries.

Today, Swindon is a thriving hub for a range of businesses, including insurance, banking, engineering, health, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. It is one of the fastest-growing towns in Europe.

Its commitment to driving and investing in technological and scientific industries puts Swindon at the heart of cutting-edge innovation in sectors such as computing, healthcare and sustainability.



copyright: Historic England







Surrounded by some of England's most stunning countryside, including the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, the third biggest National Landscape in England, Swindon's urban energy is nestled in its surrounding natural beauty and productive agricultural land.

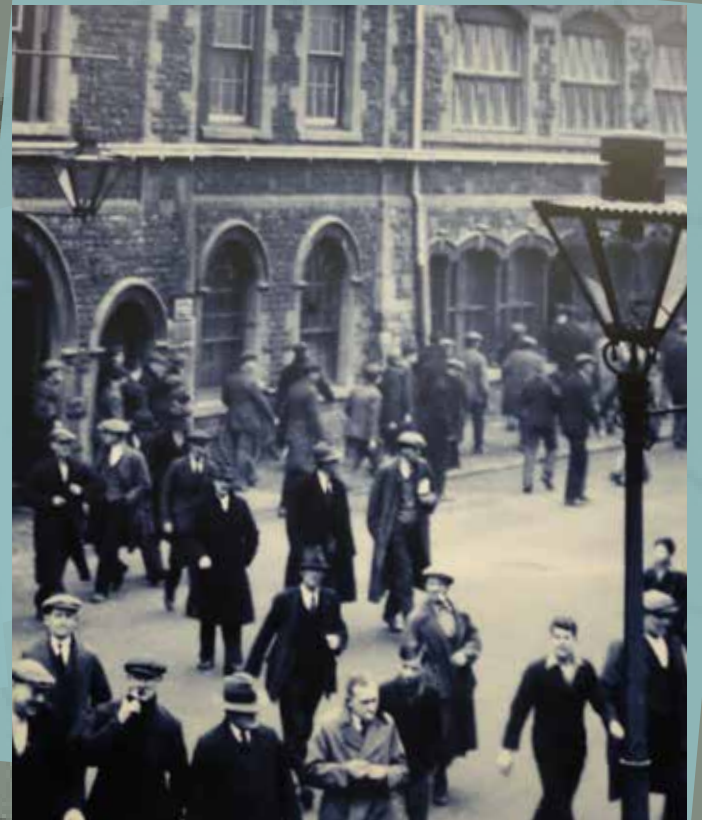
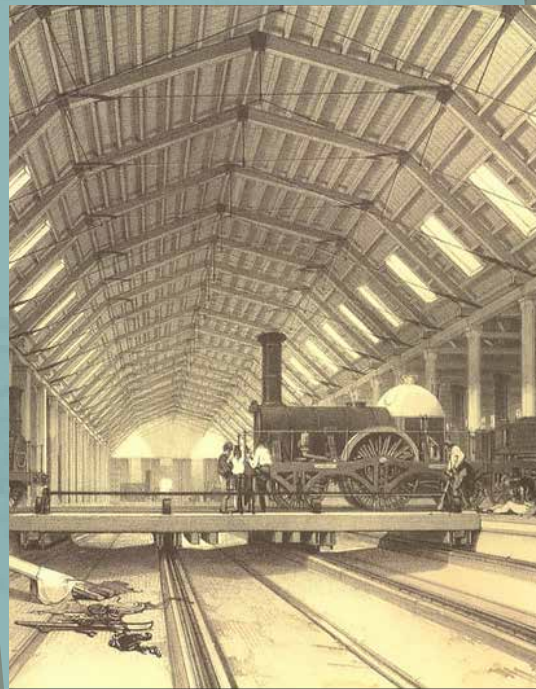
Parks, lakes and mature trees, as well as weekly local food markets bring this natural landscape to the heart of Swindon, providing residents and businesses with places to unwind and relax.

**...it's nestled into a beautiful
LANDSCAPE**

Swindon's rich history as a prominent industrial hub where the south-east meets the south-west has shaped its vibrant townscape for over two centuries. Swindon is characterised by Great Western Railway's iconic warehouses, factories and worker's village, blending with its earlier roots as a quaint agricultural market Old Town.

Today, Swindon stands as a beacon of ongoing innovation and industrious spirit. With a unique combination of historic charm and forward-thinking enterprise, Swindon is a town of a thriving community poised for future growth and opportunity.





...its layered
HISTORY

the history of SWINDON

Mentioned in the Domesday Book as Swine Dun meaning 'on the hill where pigs were bred'

1086

1390

The Wiltshire and Berkshire, and The North Wiltshire Canals are built

1810-1819

Weekly markets are established

1840

Great Western Railway branch reaches Swindon

GWR engine and maintenance works opens and workers cottages are built for the growing population in a new part of town

1843

1900

Old Town and New Town fuse to form One Swindon

Swindon designated an 'overspill town' and 14,000 people arrive from London

1952

1971

The Wyvern Theatre opens its doors

1976

The Brunel Centre, Oasis Leisure Centre and David Murray John Tower are built. The town centre is pedestrianised



Commercial Road 1950s



OS Map of Swindon 1842 1952



1946 Aerial of GWR Works



1846 GWR Engine House



Regent Street Canal 1906



STEAM Railway museum



Zurich's Swindon Office

1985

Honda factory moves to Swindon

Railway Works closes

1986

1997

Designer outlet opens

STEAM opens

2000

2002

The Great Western Hospital opens

Zurich opens new Swindon office

2023

2024

Work begins on Panattoni Park at former Honda factory site

2025

Fleming Way Linear Park and travel hub opens



Designer Outlet at the former GWR Works



Refurbished Health Hydro



The National Trust Offices



Fleming Way improvements illustration

...it is perfectly PLACED

Situated between London and Bristol, with excellent transport links via the M4 motorway and mainline railway services, Swindon's connectivity is unmatched.

This makes it a strong and attractive commuter town, as well as a desirable place for a home or business base with its significant retail and cultural offering and affordable house prices.

RAIL



55 minutes to
Paddington

58 minutes to
Cardiff

38 minutes to
Bristol

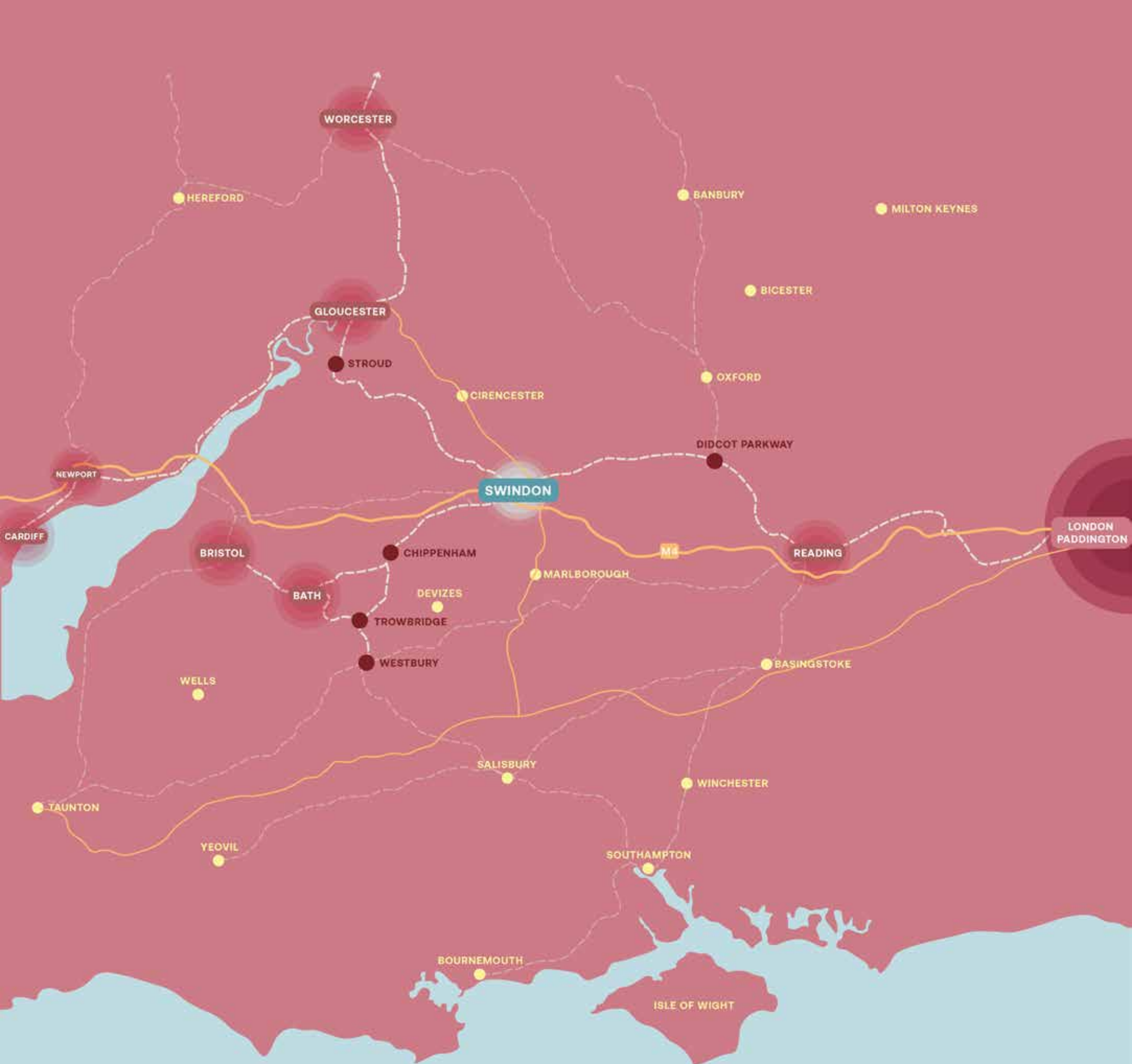
24 minutes to
Bath

ROAD



1 hour 30
minutes to
Heathrow

1 hour 45
minutes to
London Victoria



...its creative ENERGY

Swindon is home to an important collection of modern and contemporary art, which it continues to invest in and showcase at the collection's new home, Museum and Art Swindon.

Thousands of artists, performers, designers and makers are a part of Swindon's vibrant creative scene today, whilst Wilkes Academy, New College and Swindon Academy of Dance train the performers of the future.

Swindon boasts a collection of performance venues including the Wyvern Theatre, MECA and the Arts Centre hosting thousands of exciting events each year for theatre, comedy, music and more.



Economic data for Swindon shows...

Swindon is a place full of potential, with a strong position to really invest in and grow. The town centre is seeing a burgeoning of independent retailers, whilst the Designer Outlet is home to high-end retail at affordable prices. The town has numerous headquarter offices, an enviable location and a broad education offering. Economic data within the 2024 Cities Outlook, produced by think tank Centre for Cities, also highlights the town's significant potential. It has amongst the highest productivity levels across the UK, with £34.8-62.9 GVA/hour, decent weekly wages, good levels of affordable housing and related good levels of disposable income.

As well as these quantifiable statistics, which make Swindon an excellent base for business growth, it also provides workers and residents with outstanding facilities and family opportunities. Providing a rich and interesting place to call home, with fantastic parks, Ofsted rated outstanding schools and nurseries, a centre of football sporting excellence, advanced dance training and plenty more. These all provide a solid base from which to invest, providing opportunity for all our residents.

HIGH
PRODUCTIVITY
LEVELS

DECENT
WEEKLY
WAGES

GOOD
LEVELS OF
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING

HIGH
LEVELS OF
DISPOSABLE
INCOME

...it is full of POTENTIAL



8 AMBITIONS

Four new, mixed neighbourhoods in the heart of Swindon – for younger people, older people and families to live with shops, services, transport and green space on their doorsteps.

A CENTRE FOR LIVING

1

A VIBRANT CENTRE

Evolving our centre so it meets all our needs with a broad mix of shops, homes, work space, places to eat and drink, community space, and events and activities.

2

A GREEN AND HEALTHY CENTRE

Swindon will be a green and healthy town, with a strong and innovative response to the impacts of climate change. It will be attractive, comfortable in extreme weathers, and be a leader in environmentally sustainable design.

5

A CREATIVE CENTRE

A national centre for 20th Century British Art, a new cultural venue, and support for Swindon's growing creative community.

6

A CENTRE FOR LEARNING

Giving Swindon's higher education institutions a place in the centre, creating a hub for students and establishing a social enterprise centre for young people.

3

Bringing Swindon's leading enterprises into the heart of Swindon; and providing a mix of spaces to support small businesses and encourage collaboration.

A KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

4

Stronger connections between Swindon's central areas, across the rail tracks and better walking and cycling links into the heart of Swindon and the train station.

A CONNECTED CENTRE

7

A PROUD CENTRE

A commitment to creatively reuse Swindon's historic buildings and insist on thoughtful design that responds to our rich history of innovation.

8



1 a centre for LIVING

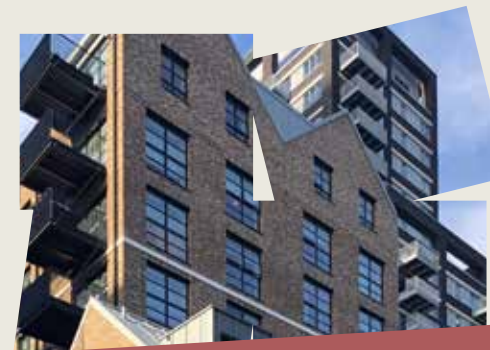
Creating safe new neighbourhoods in the heart of Swindon will bring many more people right into the centre, making the centre full of life and people. Whilst providing much needed homes for a range of different people, it will also lead to opportunities for more green landscaping and new public spaces. Bringing more people into the town centre to live will also provide increased support for Swindon's valued shops, and bring more community services and facilities, as well as increased leisure offerings to the centre.

KEY PROPOSITIONS:

1. Create communities with a mix of house types, scales, tenures and densities, including: apartments for young people; homes for students and key workers; starter homes for young families; high quality townhouses and intergenerational cohousing. This will provide up to 8,000 new homes, many of which will be affordable.
2. Prioritise the Kimmerfields area, for a range of houses and creative

work spaces, local shops and restaurants and pocket parks and play spaces.

3. Transform the station gateway area, with new workspaces and different types of homes which are close to both the train station and green spaces.
4. Explore redevelopment of the Brunel Centre, which could include shops, community space, workspaces, homes and public space providing apartment living for students, young people and downsizers.
5. Look to create new infill residential development close to Commercial Road, to support the existing local shops and services there.
6. Turn the heart of Swindon into happy and safe neighbourhoods with door stop play, pocket parks, local shops, trees and seating, catering to all ages so we create communities rather than simply homes.
7. Provide a new school in the heart of Swindon, either close to the train station or in the Kimmerfields area.



GOODLUCK HOPE

A new high-density neighbourhood, with a mixture of housing typologies and low, mid and high rise blocks, offering 841 new homes. The neighbourhood also offers new educational floorspace, commercial space and the restoration of a Grade II listed dry dock.



OWCH, BARNET

A small development of 25 flats with shared communal facilities and gardens, managed on co-housing principles, and with a mixture of privately owned and social rent tenures. The flats are arranged overlooking a communal courtyard and are three storeys high.



HAMMERBY SJOSTAD, STOCKHOLM

A central new development in the city centre of Stockholm, reaching 145dph within 4-5 storey apartment blocks with exceptional sustainable design features and city-planning.

...food for thought



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. Establish a Swindon Taskforce to coordinate opportunities across public and private sectors.
2. Collaborate with Homes England on key funding opportunities.
3. Encourage landlords to invest in their properties in Fleet Street and Bridge Street, with the fall-back of the Council deploying its S215 or CPO powers.
4. We will seek to secure S106 contributions from developments coming forward outside the centre to help fund community facilities and green spaces in the centre.
5. Engage with GW Hospital on delivering a key worker housing scheme in the centre.
6. To support viability we will 'switch off' Community Infrastructure Levy payment requirements in the town centre, and adopt a pragmatic approach to S106 requirements secured in the town centre for the town centre.

a VIBRANT centre

Like all town centres across the UK, Swindon must adapt to a new role. No longer merely a retail centre, it will also have places to live, to work, to meet friends and family and enjoy free time - a place for us to come together and feel part of a community. It will be a centre for positive experiences, whether these are culture, leisure, education, eating and drinking, or simply spending time in our green spaces.

KEY PROPOSITIONS:

1. Make creative use of vacant buildings or sites within the heart of Swindon, to test out new ideas through meanwhile uses or pop-ups. These could be local retail businesses or food markets, cultural venues or a mix of these together.
2. Specifically consider the meanwhile use and long term future of the vacated Brunel shopping centre, for affordable work space or artist studios, a soft play centre and community space or new retail.
3. Explore new experiential retail models and related activities for the town centre that will respond to our needs, including Ikea's Livat model which moves beyond retail, to provide community uses.
4. Establish a safe and vibrant early evening economy for residents and workers.
5. Take a proactive approach to bringing activity to areas with high vacancy levels, such as Fleet Street, working with businesses and landlords and using legal and financial levers where needed.
6. Invest in our neighbourhood spines, such as Commercial Road, with support for businesses, greening, seating, shop front improvements and pocket spaces. This street can play an important role in establishing the early evening economy.
7. Make sure central Swindon caters to all our communities - children, students, those setting up home and older people - with activities and facilities for each and that can bring all ages together, such as softplay, gyms, bike workshops, co-working spaces and more.
8. Specifically, provide spaces and activities that appeal to our growing student population so that Swindon feels like the university town it has become.
9. Create a drinks and dining cluster at the Old Town Hall, with outdoor seating onto a new public square with artistic lighting to illuminate the space and buildings.



MERCATO METROPOLITANO

Mercato Metropolitano has set up street food markets and bars across London in a disused bus station (Elephant and Castle), a renovated church (Mayfair) and in a new structure on a car park (Ilford). The spaces provide affordable rents for start-ups and include community outreach with schools and cookery classes. They can also include small, community cinema spaces and produce markets.



IKEA LIVAT CENTRE

Ikea took over an underused shopping mall in Hammersmith, west London and has transformed the space and added a new IKEA store, a Library of Things and a bookable by-the-hour retail space. The concept is to create a place that brings people together for unique experiences that go beyond shopping. Another Livat centre is being established in Brighton.

...food for thought



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. Engage with land owners and street food market operators such as Mercato Metropolitano to explore opportunities for bringing a street food market and potential pop-up cinema to Swindon.
2. Work with the owner of the Brunel Centre on a new offer that marries retail and other uses.
3. Establish a database of vacant buildings. Identify and contact landlords of these and use legal levers where necessary to purchase or auction these sites to bring them back into use.
4. Launch an ideas competition for small businesses to take on space with rent and/or rates reductions and refurbishment funding, to test out business ideas.
5. Direct funds for greening towards Commercial Road and other key streets with independent businesses.
6. Coordinate efforts with Business West and Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and form a delivery working group.
7. Renovate Oasis Leisure Centre to bring a leisure and sports facility to North Star, supporting new development here.
8. Provide a health on the high street cluster around the Health Hydro with complementary health facilities being clustered here, and public realm improvements..

a centre for LEARNING

Swindon is a student town. In Swindon, you can learn how to perform on stage with confidence and craft at Wilkes Academy; develop skills in the precision of engineering at New College; become a nurse at the Oxford Brookes Swindon campus; or become qualified through an apprenticeship programme.

To build on and grow the educational offer in Swindon and attract more students both from Swindon and further afield, more space is needed to expand and create learning and study facilities as well as accommodation, student community spaces, and leisure opportunities.

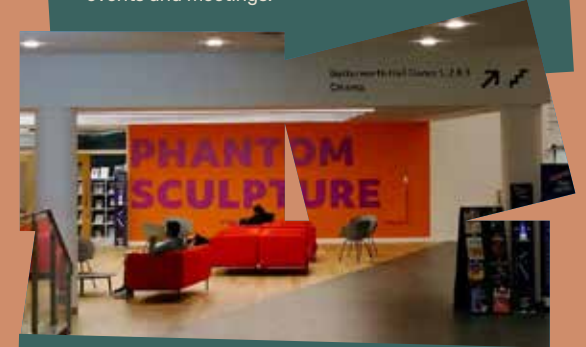
Key propositions:

1. Deliver central housing for young learners in the town centre that brings students together from across the town's higher education establishments including Wilkes Academy, the UTC Swindon, New College and Oxford Brookes' Swindon Campus.
2. Create a student union style social space with cafe/bar, relaxation and study spaces. This could be nestled amongst the independent businesses on Fleet Street.
3. Continue to collaborate with strategic educational institutions such as Oxford Brookes and University of Bath to increase their presence in the heart of Swindon and develop further opportunities such as the Innovation Centre for Applied Sustainable Technologies (iCAST) project.
4. Develop a new space for Wilkes Academy to bring them into the town centre, utilising and refurbishing the Wyvern Theatre to create a rejuvenated and professional performance space to rehearse and showcase students' work.
5. Deliver an innovation hub within Swindon Knowledge Central at Station Gateway to create space for design and technology entrepreneurs and start ups. This could be in partnership with UTC Swindon.



LAUNCH IT

Launch It is an initiative that helps young people kick-start professional businesses. With sites across the country, one example of the entrepreneurs hub is in Enfield. The site utilises unused garages on an estate. Alongside the subsidised rental space, there is a support network and a multi-purpose community hall on site to hold events and meetings.



WARWICK ARTS CENTRE

A multi-venue arts complex at the heart of the University of Warwick campus in Coventry. The arts centre includes a concert hall which doubles as a lecture theatre, a cinema, as well as an art gallery, studio theatre, conference room, learning/study spaces, and cafés and bars.

Rehearsal spaces for students, including smaller practice rooms provide a hub for students to get involved in performance arts, and professional venues in which to perform to fellow students and the public. A relaxed foyer space provides places for collaborative and independent study in a vibrant and buzzing environment.



WEST HUB, CAMBRIDGE

A co-working space open to all located in West Cambridge Innovation District. It offers a new meeting place for people to connect and socialise from the university and general public too. It also features a shop, cafeteria and a bar.



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. Continue to collaborate with New College, Oxford Brookes and University of Bath on how to expand and enhance learning the offer and opportunities for learners in Swindon, in terms of facilities, space and courses.
2. Establish relationships with university housing providers to identify opportunities in Swindon.
3. Continue to foster partnership working between learning institutions and Swindon businesses to create new student working opportunities and apprenticeships.
4. Work with Wilkes Academy to land a suitable site in the centre where they can flourish and grow into the best performing arts school in the country.
5. Engage with Launch It and small businesses in Swindon to identify the appetite and strategy for a start up incubation hub and seek out locations and partners.
6. Connect with young people and students in Swindon to develop ideas for what they would like to see in the town to make it more student friendly.

a centre for KNOWLEDGE

Swindon is home to a sizeable number of national and regional headquarters including Zurich, Thermo Fisher, Nationwide, NPower, UK Space Agency and BMW. It also houses national agencies including UK Research and Innovation, Historic England and National Trust. We want to support all these organisations as their needs evolve and encourage collaboration with them. We also want to foster new and related businesses to help grow our economy and provide good working opportunities across our communities.

Key propositions:

1. Invest in high quality, carbon-neutral employment space in the heart of Swindon, building on the success of Zurich's central office space. This will respond to demand from our major employers; address significant shifts in working patterns; and help to meet ours and our local employers' net zero commitments. Key areas for these could be Swindon Knowledge Central and Kimmerfields.
2. Establish a range of flexible workspace, including lab space and business support for micro and small-enterprises in Swindon. This should draw on the recent success of the Carriageworks co-working space, which utilised existing buildings.
3. Should large employers relocate to central Swindon, careful consideration should be given to the adaptation and reuse or redevelopment of their existing peripheral spaces, to respond to broader business demand.
4. Use this space strategy and cross-organisation and industry collaboration to strengthen Swindon as a centre for R&D, focussing on sectors, such as pioneering manufacturing and precision engineering.
5. Cluster new workspace with cafés, bars and shops. This will maximise collaboration opportunities across businesses; provide an attractive place to work with places for workers to go at lunchtime and after work; and support our local traders.
6. Forge links and support ongoing conversations between our major employers and higher education institutions to give graduates internships and employment opportunities, and businesses access to research resources.



SISTER, MANCHESTER

A new innovation district collaboration between the University of Manchester and Bruntwood SciTech. Bringing together businesses, education and communities. Offices, labs and creative studios sit side by side with homes, shops, public spaces and restaurants.



HEATH PARK, RUNCORN

Former ICI headquarters transformed into a business and technical park housing 120 scientific research and development businesses with cafe, conference centre and leisure facilities open to local residents. A further masterplan proposes expanding the facilities.

...food for thought



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. Establish a knowledge economy task force, bringing together key public and private sector partners who have contributed to developing this vision, along with key education providers.
2. Actively engage with our key employers regarding their needs and ambitions for their space, their employees and their role in Swindon, and feed this into development plans.
3. Engage with existing Swindon-based and national flexible workspace providers and match these with potential spaces in the centre of Swindon.

a GREEN and HEALTHY centre

Swindon has a commitment to responding to and mitigating against the climate emergency. We are committed to being greener, as outlined in our long-term missions. We will work with our communities to navigate and take action on reducing our carbon footprint, ensuring that our buildings and spaces are resilient to the changes in the climate we are experiencing, and Swindon continues to achieve the highest standards in air quality.

KEY PROPOSITIONS:

1. Welcome to your town-wide community park. Swindon will become greener, with investment in our public spaces and parks. Corridors for nature and increased greenery, including street trees will bring greater biodiversity, improve comfort and provide a more attractive town centre to spend time in. It will draw in the beautiful countryside, and truly make Swindon a town that is connected with its green surroundings.
2. Plant new street trees to maintain and improve air quality, sequester carbon and support biodiversity.

3. Integrate sustainable drainage across the centre with permeable surfaces, pocket parks and rain gardens to improve the streetscape, whilst also reducing flooding by minimising the level surface water run-off from hard surfaces.
4. Support active travel through connected safe routes and infrastructure, and create low traffic zones around schools.
5. Create new incidental green spaces and urban growing initiatives to support health, wellbeing and community cohesion.
6. Commit to a retrofit first approach to preserve the varied and layered architecture in Swindon and reduce the town's carbon footprint on construction projects.
7. Utilise low carbon design and modern methods of construction in new development as a commitment to excellent and innovative design.
8. Make use of spaces for PV panels on roofs to transition to and de-carbonise electrical energy generation and fast track the energy transition.



COPENHAGEN

A linear park and grassy strip set in the central section between the carriageway. As well as a path and benches along the 1km strip, there are also ball courts, ping-pong tables, lawns to relax and gather on, and playgrounds for children. The strip passes residential blocks, but has also encouraged more cafés and restaurants with outdoor seating to take root.



ALFRED PLACE, LONDON

A public realm scheme which transformed a vehicle dominated back street into a new park for the borough. This addressed the issue of a lack of green open space to relax and dwell in. It rebalances the street to better accommodate people, rather than just vehicles. There are places to sit, play and enjoy the landscape.



GREY TO GREEN, SHEFFIELD

An environmental and economic development strategy devised by Sheffield City Council to reconnect parts of the city, re-balance large amounts of highway space, and respond to increased flooding risk and the impacts this has had in the city. The scheme has supported new office and residential development, increased biodiversity, and improved surface water management.

...food for thought



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. Utilise the Great Western Community Forest 'Trees for Climate' funding for street trees along key streets, including Bridge Street, Commercial Street, Manchester Road, Regent Circus and Wellington Street.
2. Use biodiversity offsetting monies to create linked pocket habitats for wildlife.
3. Prioritise Central Swindon schemes identified in the Swindon Local Cycling and Walking Plan to connect and improve links between neighbourhoods.

a CREATIVE centre

Swindon has an active and growing creative community. This is visible in the prestigious Wilkes Performing Arts Academy; the annual Swindon Arts Fringe (SWAF) festival; Signal Festival and affordable studio space provider, Artsite. The town is also home to the country's largest collection of 20th Century British Art - a fantastic asset for the town and country. The Steam Museum, Wyvern Theatre, Regents Circus and Swindon Football Club all contribute to a broad and diverse leisure offer in the town. We intend to expand this offer, celebrate it, and encourage it to flourish.

Key propositions:

1. Expand and continue to support a free to visit national gallery of 20th century British art, set in a beautiful 1930s Art Deco building at Swindon Civic Centre. This will celebrate both the collection of art and artefacts, and the handsome built heritage of the civic buildings. It will also make better use of the green space surrounding the civic buildings.
2. A national centre for excellence for the performing arts, with space for Wilkes Academy in the heart of Swindon.
3. A rejuvenated Wyvern Theatre as a studio space for smaller touring shows, and a professional venue for performing arts schools in the town.
4. A central new performance and cultural venue, with capacity for national touring shows, as well as other large scale events.
5. Expanding affordable studios and spaces for creative businesses, and collaboration opportunities between these, making good use of existing buildings within Swindon and thinking of innovative ways to use them, such as shallow retail units.
6. A central presence for Science Museum Group, making use of an existing building or space in Swindon's heart, such as in the former Carriage Works.
7. Exploring the potential of the Mechanics Institute refurbishment, retaining visibility of the structure and details of the building.
8. A network of creative production and enjoyment, with a creative trail and cultural passport scheme to increase access to the arts.
9. A 'Magic Swindon' creative partnership to identify projects and coordinate delivery in the heart of Swindon.



CHARLESTON, LEWES

A new exhibition space in the centre of Lewes (previously the district council offices), featuring exhibition space alongside a shop, cafe and a free programme of community projects, artist-led workshops and learning programmes. It is the first step in achieving the longer term goal of opening a permanent Bloomsbury gallery.



DOCK X, LONDON

A multi-use event space, Dock X is a blank canvas and adaptable warehouse, set in central Canada Water. It has played host to theatre shows, film and TV studios, conferences, exhibitions, fashion shows and more.



THE EXCHANGE, ERITH

A community-owned arts & crafts organisation that uses the heritage of Erith's Old Library - as a space designed and built by local people for the benefit of local people - to inspire new programmes and activities. This includes projects and activities that invite community participation including craft production workshops and a community-driven events programme.

...food for thought



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. Identify specific projects to be funded through Swindon's position as an Arts Council priority place.
2. Work with the Magic Swindon Network to support and coordinate grassroots projects, drawing on Swindon's Arts and Culture Strategy.
3. Enhance the offer at Museum and Art Swindon, to showcase the collection of 20th century art.
4. Work with landowners to progress a scheme for a new large theatre and cultural venue in an accessible and deliverable location, such as Kimmerfields or Regents Circus.
5. Identify additional affordable studio space with Artsite, and funding options for this.
6. Coordinate with the National Trust, Historic England and STEAM to develop more visitor attractions in the town.
7. Explore how the Mechanics Institute can be brought back into use, exploring options for temporary light touch or phased refurbishment.

a CONNECTED centre

As Swindon expanded and grew, it became a town of many parts. The Old Town and New Town were connected and reunited as one in 1900. Although much growth and innovation evolved out of the railway in Swindon, today it can serve as a barrier for the new residential and working communities which have developed in the area since the closure of the railway works. Reconnecting both sides of the railway tracks is a key ambition in creating a cohesive town that is walkable, easy to navigate and which can reach its full potential.

KEY PROPOSITIONS:

1. Invest in new safe, pleasant, and easy pedestrian and cycling connections across the railway tracks to support further development in North Star, and make the Designer Outlet more accessible from the centre of town.
2. Utilise the Swindon Knowledge Central development to create a safe and attractive walking and cycling route from the Station to the Heritage Railway Quarter and

utilise Kimmerfields to create a safe and attractive route from the Station into the town centre.

3. Create areas with defined uses and memorable identities. This includes residential-led development at Kimmerfields, office and workshop-led development in Swindon Knowledge Central by the station, and family living in North Star.
4. Improve back streets by establishing active frontages, planting, artwork, play opportunities, as well as improving waste and parking management.
5. Install creative wayfinding and intuitive wayfaring to make navigation around the town centre easy for visitors and enjoyable for residents.
6. Develop and enhance the Cycle Flyer routes into, through and out of the town centre, using these as an opportunity to increase greening, leisure facilities and usage, through a number of interventions including directional signage, play opportunities, and increased planting.



BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE

Birmingham City Council have set out ambitions for its distinct neighbourhoods to become fully interconnected, enabling residents and visitors to easily traverse the area via walking and cycling routes, without their cars. Revitalising streets and public squares by championing pedestrian mobility over vehicular. Routes from neighbourhoods such as Digbeth and Jewellery Quarter will be further drawn into the centre through a network of attractive routes, with activity and leisure opportunities on the way.



THAMESMEAD, LONDON

With an extensive network of walking and cycling routes which are car free, Thamesmead has recently undergone a public realm improvement scheme. This has seen a series of art murals painted on to underpasses, alongside the canal, and new play equipment, chairs and benches added to small green strips along the car-free walking and cycling paths. These interventions bring more life to existing infrastructure, giving other reasons to use them, other than just passing through. Murals help to brighten otherwise unattractive routes, and painted elements on the street create fun and informal play opportunities on the way to school.



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. Make the Swindon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan a central consideration for all future developments, to better integrate Swindon's central neighbourhoods and connect to the rail station.
2. Swindon Borough Council has recently been successful in securing feasibility funding from Active Travel England. The Council will make submissions for additional funding to deliver the schemes identified.
3. Undertake an audit of Swindon's back lanes and an assessment of how these can be comprehensively improved.
4. Prepare a creative wayfaring strategy that goes beyond signage and taps into Swindon's cultural and industrial strengths.

a PROUD centre

Swindon has a rich, layered character that reflects the town's evolution and its Victorian and mid-century growth spurts. We must respond carefully to our built fabric, understanding what is to be retained and nurtured, what can be improved or refreshed, and how a 21st century lens may give us new perspectives on our shared heritage.

KEY PROPOSITIONS:

1. Swindon has distinctive neighbourhoods, such as the Railway Village, but these disparate areas do not combine to create a successful whole. We will establish integrated quarters with clear identities but fuzzy boundaries and better connections between them, to create a coherent heart to Swindon.
2. Whilst homes and work spaces will feature in most areas, the concentration of uses, building types and scale, streetscape and public spaces will respond appropriately to the identity and character of each quarter. This will include building materials and palettes.
3. We will respond to and respect our existing historic buildings, both in terms of our grand Victorian architecture, but also our optimistic mid-century buildings. The successful Heritage Action Zone project at the Railway Village is a great inspiration for further work.
4. We will continue to actively pursue refurbishment and renovation opportunities and related funding for the Mechanic's Institute, keeping an open mind to the best approach for this historic social landmark.
5. For new development, we will insist on confident, high quality and responsive designs that are rooted in Swindon's heritage, but look confidently forward and address our pressing environmental emergency.
6. Our urban structure currently results in a number of 'back routes' which do not feel safe or comfortable, or part of the pedestrian street network. Examples exist where these have been transformed to create new, characterful lanes and we intend to do the same in central Swindon.



THE OBSERVER BUILDING, HASTINGS

4000sqm industrial floor space over seven floors, the building has sat empty, in a state of dereliction for 34 years. It is now being converted into a new mixed-use community facility with three floors of leisure businesses, low-cost co-working studios and offices for local businesses, 16 living rent flats and a public roof terrace and bar.



PAVILION ROAD, LONDON

A new independent shopping street near Sloane Square in London. The redevelopment followed consultation with residents who showed the desire for independent traders in the area, with new buildings which respond directly to the existing historic front gabled low-rise buildings. Previously the street was mainly used for servicing.

...food for thought



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. Expand the successful Heritage Action Zone work in the Railway Village area, tapping into further funding through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and working in collaboration with Historic England, the National Trust and Swindon Heritage Preservation.
2. Develop an options assessment and preferred approach for the Mechanic's Institute, including stabilising and preserving the building in its damaged state, with a view to submitting a funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and/or Historic England.
3. Develop a character study and design guidance/code to identity what gives central Swindon its character and how to respond to and enhance this with new development.
4. Encourage a drinks and dining cluster around the Old Town Hall as a focal point at the top of Regent Street.

SPRING GARDENS





SWINDON'S STREET FOOD MARKET



DON FOOD MARKET



SWINDON'S FLEET STREET





Swindon's Student Hub

Swindon's
Food Hall



SWINDON'S NEW ENTERTAINMENT VENUE



Visualisation by:

STUFISH
ENTERTAINMENT ARCHITECTS



Bringing it ALL TOGETHER

This framework plan presents a spatial plan for growth in Swindon. It maps out emerging development at Kimmerfields and at Swindon Knowledge Central by the station, as well as highlighting distinct districts of heritage, businesses, education, retail and culture. It shows a greener Swindon, where landscaping, biodiversity and attractive green spaces are an important thread running through the town. A green walking and cycling route demonstrates this priority. The numbers 1-10 represent the 10 deliverable projects which are detailed overleaf.



A Swindon Museum and Art



B Street food market at Kimmerfields

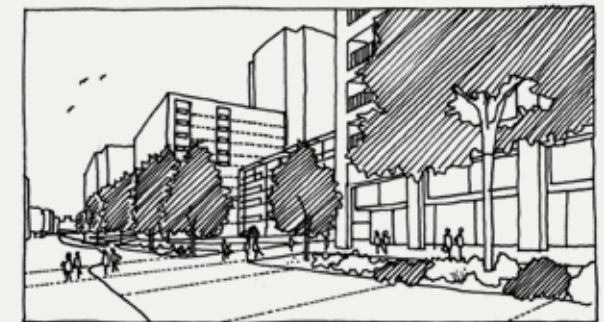




C Granville Street



D Commercial Road, looking east



E Farnsby Road, looking west



F Farnsby Street, looking east



**making
IT HAPPEN**



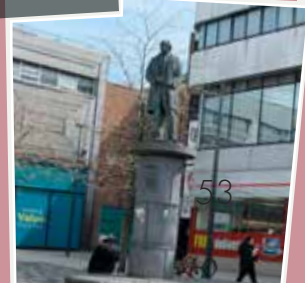
10 Deliverable PROJECTS

- 1** Swindon Knowledge Central at the Station Gateway will provide Grade A office, workshop and lab space for HQs and businesses, including young entrepreneurs, as well as student accommodation at Signal Point, and a new home for Wilkes Academy.
- 2** A hub of independent shops, cafés, bars and restaurants focused around Fleet Street and Faringdon Road, with a Student Hub for study, collaboration and relaxation, whilst retaining and enhancing the existing variety of architecture.
- 3** A new linear park along Fleming Way, increasing biodiversity and integrating Kimmerfields into the heart of Swindon's retail centre.
- 4** A variety of homes at Kimmerfields, North Star, Brunel Centre and by Spring Gardens will provide housing for a range of people and household compositions. Homes will be built to high energy efficiency standards, committed to Swindon's mission of becoming Net Zero Carbon.
- 5** A new street food market at Kimmerfields will celebrate food, community and gathering, showcasing local produce and chefs.
- 6** Jumping on the back of the success of Museum and Art Swindon's opening, look for ways to maximise the showcasing of Swindon's extensive and exquisite art collection, to make Swindon a must visit location.
- 7** Improved shop frontages and public realm along Commercial Road will create a new attractive area in the town centre for restaurants and independent businesses.
- 8** A new school in the Town Centre will provide modern and friendly education facilities for our children.
- 9** Pocket parks, new green spaces and improved public spaces with street trees and urban greening will create a continuous corridor for wildlife, and provide lots of opportunity for relaxation, play and gathering in attractive environments.
- 10** Delivering a walkable and cyclable Swindon, through improving connections over the railway tracks, improving signposting, regenerating back streets into inviting pedestrian links and consolidating town centre car parking.



7 short term PRIORITIES

- 1** Using available funding from the Great Western Community Forest 'Trees for Climate', plant new trees along Bridge Street, Commercial Road and Wellington Road.
- 2** Improvements to Spring Gardens to introduce more trees, landscaping and diverse planting, making a more attractive space in the heart of the town centre, with improvements to biodiversity.
- 3** Establish a street food market at Kimmerfields using fast modern methods of construction.
- 4** Understand how the vacant Morrison's building at Regent Circus could be used for meanwhile uses, and explore what uses would be suitable.
- 5** Introduce visitor facilities at the Museum and Art Swindon at the Civic Centre, including cycle parking and a cafe, as well as improvements to landscaping.
- 6** Renovate the Wyvern Theatre area to provide an improved venue, as well as new rehearsal and performance space for Wilkes Academy.
- 7** Develop a robust and ambitious plan for showcasing more of Swindon's extensive and impressive art collection, looking to other Councils and organisations with similar collections for inspiration.





collaborations & PARTNERSHIPS

- 1** Focus on developing and strengthening partnerships across sectors and industries in Swindon. Regular meetings, catch ups and forums will help to establish links and open up opportunities for investments and partnership working on projects including housing, young people, education and greening.
- 2** Draw on the positive energy already in Swindon. Seek out and celebrate cultural, retail and entrepreneurial protagonists in Swindon, and support them through investments such as low rents for shops and pop-ups, working with them to develop new platforms and spaces to grow and showcase their work.
- 3** Work with existing industries in Swindon to find out their short and long term goals, and understand how the town can best support and help realise these goals.
- 4** Identify opportunities for inward investment to Swindon's Centre, actively promoting the heart of Swindon as an attractive place open to and for business. Engage with land agents, partners and specific businesses to generate an interest in current and future opportunities.
- 5** Establish shared apprenticeship schemes, as well as working with partners at Swindon's educational institutions to ensure that the skills offer meets local need now and in the future.
- 6** Work with land and building owners to regenerate vacant buildings to curate a flourishing independent retail offer in Swindon at Fleet Street and Commercial Road. Make use of new Local Authority auction powers through the Levelling Up Act to purchase key buildings.
- 7** Establish a Town Centre Business Group to replace InSwindon to ensure that businesses are kept up to date with activities in the town, and to develop a resilient and sharing forum for all investors.

a tactical & ITERATIVE APPROACH

1

Activate vacant sites and support micro businesses through a low-impact pop-up food market model like Mercato Metropolitano at a central location such as Kimmerfields. Bring micro F&B businesses together and establish community outreach with local schools, community spaces, and local food growers and suppliers.

2

Collaborate with and encourage landlords of vacant shops to offer affordable rents and rates based on turnover or phased from peppercorn rents.

3

Pilot independent retail, F&B, leisure and pop-up projects on Commercial Road to test new ideas.

4

Make strides with smaller, quick-win projects to begin investment and use as a catalyst for bigger change projects and schemes. This could include placing trees in containers before planting in the ground.

5

Proactive, cross-departmental working at Swindon Borough Council to enable effective delivery.



IN THE HEART OF SWINDON

**UP TO
8,000
NEW
HOMES**

**3 NEW
POCKET
PARKS**

**POP-UP
STREET
FOOD
MARKET**

**A NEW
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

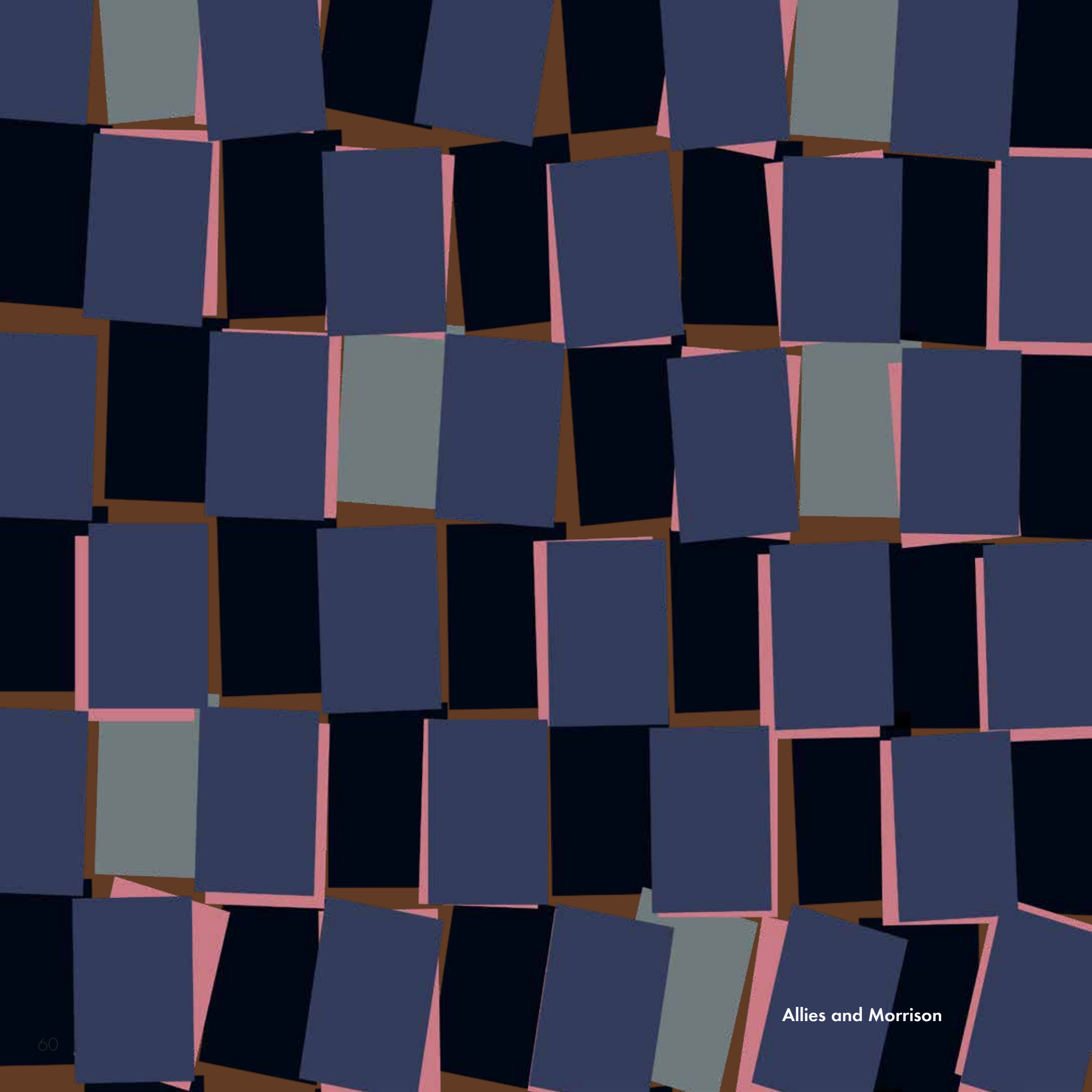
**1,000
NEW
STREET
TREES**

**A NEW
MULTI-USE
VENUE**

**NEW
WALKING
AND
CYCLING
ROUTES**

**NEW
STUDENT
HOUSING**





Allies and Morrison