Technical Note 3

Project:	SBC Local Plan Support	**Prepared by:**	CEH
Project No.:	a100101	**Approved by:**	BM
Client:	Swindon Borough Council	**Status:**	Final
Subject:	Policy and Best Practice Guidance	**Date:**	May 2026

1.0 POLICY & BEST PRACTICE REVIEW

1.1 Swindon Borough Council (SBC) has appointed arcitran to support the preparation of the Local Plan Transport Evidence Base. As part of this commission, arcitran has completed a review of transport policy and best practice guidance, seeking to provide a robust context for the strategic transport framework for Swindon's forthcoming Local Plan 2023-2043.

2.0 NATIONAL POLICY & BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Introduction

2.1 A review of the relevant national planning policy and best practice guidance has been undertaken, providing the overarching policy context for the preparation of SBC's Local Plan 2023-2043. The review identifies key policy themes relevant to the development of a strategic transport framework for Swindon and is intended to inform the Transport Plan Evidence Base and support the preparation of transport-related policies aligned with national requirements and best practice.

Planning Policy & Reform Framework

2.2 A review of key UK planning policy identifies an approach from the government which seeks to expedite infrastructure delivery through reform in the planning system, aiming to make the planning process a more streamlined, directive and consistent approach to development. This approach looks to address shortfalls in the current provision of major housing schemes on brownfield sites as well as nationally significant infrastructure, as set out in the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, which provides enabling legislative reforms to support delivery and reflects the government's wider commitment to:

- 1.5 million safe and decent homes during the current Parliament, with 370,000 homes per year; and,
- 150 major economic / nationally significant infrastructure projects during the current Parliament, relating to electricity networks, clean energy sources, public transport links and water supplies.

2.3 To accommodate the proposed acceleration in infrastructure delivery of the new planning agenda, the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 works alongside the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which provide the overarching policy direction for plan-making and decision-taking, setting out the strategic priorities for planning decisions to guide local authorities and developers. The revised NPPF seeks to guide the preparation of local plans and determination of planning applications, with the objective to achieve sustainable development through economic growth, housing and infrastructure delivery, increased environmental protection when presented with the growing risks associated with climate change, and security of social well-being.

2.4 These reforms place a greater emphasis on the streamlining of transport infrastructure, cementing transport considerations more firmly into planning and infrastructure policy. They acknowledge the impact that accelerated housing growth and infrastructure provision will have on transport demand, which must be carefully balanced with broader policy objectives in achieving sustainable growth. The NPPF sets out the need for:

- A vision-led approach to sustainable and integrated transport solutions, placing emphasis on high-quality design as integral to the components of placemaking, inclusivity, accessibility and providing safe and attractive environments.
- Prioritising transport considerations early in the planning process when engaging with local communities.
- Understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks.
- Identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use, thereby ensuring patterns of movement, streets and parking that contribute to high-quality placemaking; and,
- Identifying and assessing the environmental impact of traffic and transport infrastructure, with appropriate opportunities for mitigating any adverse effects and supporting environmental improvement in line with wider national objectives.

2.5 These objectives underpin the reformed context of the current planning policy, reinforcing the drive over the past several decades for national and local development planning to embed sustainable, active and integrated transport within key policy and emphasise transport's importance towards producing high-quality placemaking and driving economic growth. Framework revisions to core transport policy include the requirement to provide Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Transport Statements, which remain established requirements but are now framed within a stronger emphasis on sustainable and vision-led outcomes, with reformed policy strengthening their principles and delivery.

2.6 At the forefront of this approach, the Department for Transport's 'Local Transport Plans' (LTP) statutory guidance (2026) sets out the reformed expectations for how local transport

authorities should fulfil their statutory duties, with a shift away from 'predict and provide' towards vision-led transport planning. This shift mirrors the progressive approach from revised frameworks and emerging policy, seeking to cement agreed outcomes and objectives, rather than accommodating perceived demand in transport mobilities and infrastructure.

2.7 Within this new guidance, LTPs must set out policies which align with the national priorities established within the DfT's 'Better Connected' strategy for integrated transport (2026).

2.8 Together, the revised LTP guidance and strategy for integrated transport look to combine vision-led planning with clearly defined delivery mechanisms to translate transport vision into local action, ensuring that funding conditions, reporting requirements and delivery submissions are aligned both locally and nationally. It should be noted, however, that the LTP is a separate document to the Local Plan and is not anticipated to be updated until the early 2030s; accordingly, the emerging Local Plan will need to adhere to the relevant policy framework independent of the LTP process.

2.9 The National Design Guide (NDG) sits alongside these policies and guidance, supporting the NPPF in translating sustainable, integrated transport requirements into high quality design expectations and criteria. The NDG looks to design environments based on ten core characteristics, with these being guided by the themes for good design set out within the NPPF, and includes integrated, accessible, safe and sustainable development planning.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Requires Swindon's transport evidence to demonstrate that planned housing and employment growth can be supported by timely, deliverable infrastructure.
- Embeds a vision-led approach, linking transport strategy directly to the spatial strategy and site selection.
- Prioritises walking, cycling and public transport, requiring clear evidence of mode shift and reduced car dependency.
- Strengthens expectations for robust impact assessment, cumulative testing and proportionate mitigation.
- Places greater weight on high quality design, safety and inclusive placemaking in transport planning.
- Increases focus on environmental performance, including carbon reduction and air quality.

Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport (DfT, 2026)

2.10 The DfT's Better Connected strategy (April 2026) sets out the government's overarching vision for an integrated transport system in England. It establishes a vision for transport that is safe, reliable, affordable and accessible, organised around three guiding principles of People (putting people at the heart of transport decisions), Place (using transport to

create better-connected places) and Partnership (working with local leaders and experts). These principles frame eight national transport priorities which local authorities must have regard to in preparing Local Transport Plans and which inform transport evidence plan-making:

- Simplifying payments and information.
- Providing safe and dependable journeys.
- Making travel accessible and affordable.
- Creating healthier communities.
- Aligning transport and development.
- Championing data and technology.
- Empowering local leaders.
- Optimising decision-making and appraisal.

2.11 The strategy is underpinned by significant investment commitments, including over £1 billion per year in bus services (2026/27 to 2028/29), £616 million in dedicated walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure funding, and over £7.5 billion to support the transition to electric vehicles. It commits to publishing an updated Manual for Streets to guide inclusive street design, updated Network Management Duty Guidance, and updated Planning Practice Guidance for Transport to embed a vision-led approach to development. The strategy also introduces a Connectivity Tool for use in national planning policy and guidance, and an Accessible Travel Charter to establish shared principles for inclusive travel across the transport system.

2.12 Importantly for plan-making, Better Connected establishes a clear expectation that transport and development decisions should be integrated, with higher-density development focused around public transport and vision-led planning principles adopted at every tier of government. The strategy also confirms the role of Great British Railways in improving integration between rail and other modes, and the establishment of Platform4 to unlock housing delivery on surplus railway land.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Establishes the national transport vision and priorities against which SBC's transport evidence and Local Plan policies will be assessed.
- Requires alignment between the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the strategy's emphasis on integrating transport and development decisions.
- Reinforces the case for sustainable transport investment in walking, cycling and public transport as core components of the growth strategy.
- Supports the delivery of accessible, inclusive and affordable transport networks serving planned development.
- Provides the strategic basis for embedding vision-led transport planning within site allocation and development management policies.

- Strengthens the expectation that local transport evidence will demonstrate how growth contributes to healthier communities and reduced car dependency.

National Transport Strategy & Governance

2.13 The current government has set out a strategic approach seeking to provide greater certainty, coordination and efficiency in the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure. This governance seeks to align long-term transport investment with wider economic, housing and environmental objectives, addressing prior underinvestment, fragmented decision-making and regulatory barriers to delivery, with policy such as the Integrated National Transport Strategy, National Infrastructure Strategy and Spending Review setting out the strategic and financial framework for future transport investment.

2.14 The Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS), alongside the UK National Infrastructure Strategy, is intended to provide an integrated, long-term vision for transport, bringing together current and emerging mobility modes within a single policy framework. The INTS seeks to support a more collaborative, outcomes-led approach to transport planning and investment, strengthening the coordination between national priorities, and devolved / local delivery. Its main objectives, towards the integration of transport modes, include:

- Improving connectivity between regions.
- Improving accessibility across transport modes.
- Supporting productivity and labour market access; and,
- Ensuring transport investment contributes to sustainable economic growth over the long term, whilst also enhancing environmental sustainability.

2.15 These objectives are reinforced in the Spending Review (2025), which provides the financial mechanism for translating strategic ambitions into funded transport infrastructure and programmes over the review period delivering on the milestones established in the government's Plan for Change. As a critical component of the growth mission, the Spending Review details the funding for transport, with investment into the Local Transport Grant (£2.3 billion), of which £12.189m is allocated to SBC between 2026-2030.

2.16 These investments are intended to provide improvements in the provision of public transport services, bolstering accessibility for travellers, providing zero emission transport modes, and improving connectivity between regions, as well as support growth in urban areas through mitigating the impact of congestion and emissions, and providing people with greater access to jobs, education, training and public services.

2.17 In parallel to these schemes, the Future of Transport Regulatory Review (2019) sets out a framework for modernising transport governance in response to technological change and emerging mobility models. This approach promotes a flexible, innovation-friendly

regulatory environment capable of accommodating emerging technologies, whilst supporting the wider government commitment to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030. This review seeks to reduce regulatory uncertainty, support investment, and ensure that governance arrangements remain fit for purpose as the transport system evolves.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Requires alignment with a long term, integrated national transport strategy linking growth, infrastructure and environmental objectives.
- Reinforces coordination between national funding frameworks and local delivery, supporting a realistic and phased infrastructure programme.
- Prioritises regional connectivity and accessibility, including improved access to jobs and services.
- Supports productivity and sustainable economic growth through targeted transport investment.
- Strengthens the focus on decarbonisation and zero emission mobility.
- Encourages flexibility to accommodate emerging technologies and new mobility models.

Decarbonisation, Climate & Net Zero

2.18 The UK government remains firm in its commitments set out within the Climate Change Act 2008 and subsequent supplementary strategies to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, to create economic growth, enhance energy security and protect the environment.

2.19 The route towards full decarbonisation, as reinforced within the Net Zero Strategy (2021), The Spending Review and the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021) includes commitments to:

- A 2030 commitment to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars, alongside a 2035 commitment for all new cars and vans to be zero emissions capable.
- £2 billion investment into walking and cycling from 2021-2026, with the aim for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be active travel trips.
- £616 million investment in active travel funding from 2026/27 to 2029/30.
- Pathway to a zero-emission bus fleet by 2030, with 4,000 zero emission buses to be provided, including £3 billion investments into upgraded services and integrated networks.
- Delivery of a net-zero emission railway network by 2050.

2.20 These strategies set out the post pandemic vision for decarbonisation across all modes of transport, promoting a modal shift through demand management, investment and diversification of sustainable travel modes.

2.21 These schemes are reinforced through the Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan, which act as 5-year caps on emissions, set twelve years prior to implementation, with the most recent of six budgets set in 2025. The Carbon Budget outlines the importance of decarbonising transport for maximising the opportunities that clean technology offers, and the related benefits to economy, communities, public health and climate, whilst also highlighting the key risk to this zero-emissions pathway as a failure to displace emission related vehicles. Therefore, this budget outlines the importance of the government's approach to reforming and funding public transport services, alongside additional investment in active travel, to effectively mitigate the key risks transport demand poses to reaching a net-zero emission industry by 2050.

2.22 Better Connected reinforces this decarbonisation pathway, committing over £7.5 billion to support the transition to electric vehicles, £600 million for charging infrastructure rollout between 2026 and 2030, and nearly £74 million to deliver 319 new zero-emission buses. The strategy also confirms the publication of Local Transport Quantifiable Carbon Guidance to support local authorities in assessing the carbon impacts of their transport strategies and schemes and sets an expectation that local authorities will consider how to reduce emissions when developing their Local Transport Plans.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Requires Swindon's transport evidence to align with the national net zero by 2050 commitment and associated carbon budgets.
- Supports accelerated transition to zero emission vehicles, including the phase out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans.
- Prioritises significant investment in walking, cycling and public transport to drive mode shift.
- Reinforces the need for demand management and reduced reliance on high emission travel.
- Highlights the importance of decarbonising bus and rail networks as part of a long-term pathway to a zero-emission transport system.
- Emphasises the risk of failing to reduce vehicle emissions, strengthening the case for robust, low carbon transport strategy within the Local Plan.

Roads, Strategic Networks & Freight

2.23 In delivery of the recent and emerging policy context, including the National Highways Initial Report (2024), the planning requirements for Transport across the UK are increasingly shaped by the need to balance growth impacts, manage uncertainty and enhance strategic connectivity.

2.24 Policy such as the Strategic Road Network Initial Report (2025) looks ahead from 2025-2030, assessing the current conditions of the strategic road network and its key corridors. The report considers stakeholder, community and customer priorities alongside national

through to local insights, setting out proposals for targeted improvements in the network. These targeted improvements then look to align network investment with anticipated socio-demographic behavioural changes, economic volatility and decarbonisation policies, to improve the robustness of forecasts relating to congestion and capacity constraints. This approach ensures that the strategic network operates as efficiency and resiliently as possible when responding to evolving patterns of demand, and that the opportunities for local, regional and national productivity are maximised as a result.

2.25 The Department for Transport's (DfT) Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) Uncertainty Toolkit provides a structured framework for identifying, assessing and reporting uncertainty within transport forecasting and appraisal. Rather than validating specific reports, it sets out common uncertainty drivers and scenario-based approaches, including the use of core growth scenarios and sensitivity testing, to test how schemes perform under different demand and policy futures. This approach supports more robust and resilient investment and planning decisions, recognising that uncertainty may affect locations and networks in different ways depending on local circumstances and wider economic, behavioural and policy change.

2.26 Beyond the Strategic Road Network itself, the Economic Role of National Highways – Role 3: Planning and Placemaking (2024) looks to work towards a more integrated, placemaking led approach to highway planning. The report recognises that the strategic road network has a wider impact on the influence of placemaking, shaping land-use patterns, accessibility and the quality of the built environment. It sets out that investment should focus on the functionality and liveability of communities, with early engagement of stakeholders' needs and requirements, identification of the pathway towards sustainable development and the provision of severance mitigation. This vision-led approach is achieved through early engagement with the planning system, working with local planning authorities, combined authorities and government bodies to better align road infrastructure with spatial strategies and sustainable growth initiatives.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Requires Swindon's transport evidence to reflect the role and performance of the Strategic Road Network and its influence on planned growth.
- Supports targeted, evidence-based investment to manage congestion, capacity constraints and network resilience.
- Emphasises alignment between strategic road improvements and wider economic, behavioural and decarbonisation trends.
- Promotes the use of uncertainty testing and scenario modelling to provide a robust and resilient evidence base.
- Encourages early engagement with National Highways and integration of strategic roads with spatial planning and placemaking objectives.

- Reinforces the need to balance connectivity and productivity benefits with community impact and severance mitigation.

Public Transport & Bus Policy

2.27 In conjunction with the drive to transition to zero-emission fleets for other modes, recent bus policy within the UK presents a coordinated approach to strengthening service provision through legislative reform, operational subsidy, and affordability, whilst also ensuring public transport aligns with wider decarbonisation and net zero objectives in the shift towards a net-zero UK by 2050.

2.28 The Bus Services Act 2025 is a central component of this reform, which provides local authorities with greater control over their bus networks, with expanded powers over service franchising and delivery models. The Bill seeks to expand the powers available to local transport authorities, including enhanced franchising and partnership arrangements, enabling a stronger role in shaping local bus networks. It is intended to support the design of coherent and reliable networks which operate more closely within an integrated transport system, better serving local community needs and priorities, alongside measures to improve service standards and passenger experience.

2.29 To achieve this widespread bus reform, the Bus Services Act 2025 is supported by the provisions set out within the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs), the Bus Service Operator Grant, Electric Bus Allocations, National Bus Fare Cap and The Spending Review. The key funding provisions for these schemes are detailed as follows:

- £670 million in BSIP delivery, comprising service frequency improvements, route extensions and priority measures which are distributed down to the local transport authorities.
- £285 million for the Bus Services Operators Grant to protect existing services and support service delivery through revenue subsidies for bus operators.
- £151 million of revenue funding per year towards the continuation of the national bus fare cap, through to March 2027.
- £750 million annually (rising towards £900 million) set out within The Spending Review and provided through the DfT, towards maintaining and improving public transport services, with this funding distributed through a combination of funding programmes, including those listed above.

2.30 The public transport initiatives contained within these schemes look to address long-term service decline, through governance reform, fleet transition and enhanced funding, to better align public transport provision with local needs and priorities, and coordinate bus services with decarbonisation goals and wider sustainability objectives.

2.31 These measures are reinforced by Better Connected, which commits to investing over £1 billion per year in bus services from 2026/27 to 2028/29, empowering local leaders to

deliver better bus services through franchising and partnership arrangements under the Bus Services Act and legislating to ultimately end the use of new diesel buses on local bus services in England. The strategy also commits to setting improved statutory standards for accessibility, safety and inclusion at bus stops and on board, and to improving real-time passenger information.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Strengthens local authority control over bus networks through franchising and service reform.
- Aligns bus provision more closely with local transport and spatial strategies.
- Commits sustained funding to protect services, improve frequencies and extend routes.
- Maintains affordability through the national fare cap.
- Accelerates transition to zero emission fleets in support of net zero.
- Supports mode shift and reduced car dependency across the Local Plan area.

Active Travel, Healthy Places & Placemaking

2.32 Alongside the progressive reform towards other sustainable transport alternatives, active travel policy has also undergone significant restructuring, seeking to reframe walking and cycling as core components of placemaking through a vision-led approach to an integrated, accessible and healthy built environment. This shift builds upon the reformed NPPF, the Third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and Gear Change (2020) and delivers upon the funding commitments set out within the Spending Review (2025).

2.33 Gear Change establishes the strategic foundation for this drive, setting out the intention for England to become a great walking and cycling nation, and to reform placemaking by reshaping street design towards more inclusive and accessible environments. Operating at all levels of government planning, Gear Change seeks to:

- Provide better streets for cycling and people.
- Cement cycling and walking at the heart of decision-making.
- Empower and encourage local authorities; and,
- Enable people to cycle and protecting them when they do.

2.34 To achieve this shift, the DfT announced £2 billion in new funding for active travel schemes under Gear Change in 2020, which is administered and allocated through Active Travel England (ATE). ATE (established 2022) was created to ensure Gear Change's vision and strategic commitments are effectively implemented by managing funding, enforcing quality and design standards, supporting local authorities and monitoring performance. Together, Gear Change provides the policy vision, whilst ATE operates as the delivery body by acting as the statutory consultee on major planning applications, with both seeking to

achieve the overarching aim of half of all trips in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030.

2.35 Alongside Gear Change, the Department for Transport has consulted on the Third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS3), covering the period 2025 to 2030, setting out proposed objectives, metrics and funding principles to support delivery of active travel at scale.

2.36 As an emerging national direction, CWIS3 seeks to strengthen integration of active travel into transport planning through clearer objectives and monitoring expectations. Within this evidence base review, Gear Change, Active Travel England and LTN 1/20 remain the key established mechanisms that operationalise active travel design quality and delivery requirements for plan making and development management.

2.37 Underpinning all these strategies, Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 establishes the national standards for high-quality cycle infrastructure design. It supports the implementation of the vision and delivery mechanisms set out in Gear Change, the CWIS3 and ATE, to ensure that schemes meet detailed design requirements for cycle infrastructure, founded on the principle that high-quality, safe, attractive, accessible and coherent transport networks are required for meaningful behavioural change in travel patterns. Compliance with LTN 1/20 is embedded as a condition of government funding approval, therefore ensuring active travel schemes shape street design instead of prioritising car-led planning design.

2.38 Better Connected further strengthens this policy direction under its 'Create healthier communities' priority, committing £616 million in dedicated funding for walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and confirming the publication of an updated Manual for Streets to guide inclusive street design. The strategy also commits to working with a coalition of 12 mayoral strategic authorities to create a national walking, wheeling and cycling network, and to updating the Network Management Duty Guidance to ensure that footways and cycle paths are treated in the same way as road infrastructure.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Positions walking and cycling as core components of placemaking and healthy, inclusive environments.
- Embeds active travel at the heart of transport and planning decision making.
- Commits substantial long-term funding, administered through ATE, to deliver high quality schemes.
- Sets ambitious national targets to increase walking and cycling mode share.
- Requires compliance with LTN 1/20 design standards to secure funding and promote safe, coherent infrastructure.
- Supports behavioural change and reduced car dependency within the Local Plan strategy.

Accessibility, Inclusion & Equalities

2.39 The Inclusive Transport Strategy (2018) sets out the Government's commitment to ensuring that the transport system is accessible and inclusive for all users, including disabled people, older people, and those with reduced mobility. For SBC, the strategy provides a framework for embedding inclusive design principles within transport planning and scheme delivery, ensuring that new development and transport interventions support equitable access to services, employment, and everyday activities. The strategy is relevant to the preparation of Local Plan policies that promote accessible, safe, and inclusive transport networks.

2.40 The Accessible Travel Policy and Accessible Travel Plan (ORR, 2025) set out regulatory requirements and operator obligations for the provision of accessible transport services and infrastructure, with a particular focus on the needs of disabled passengers and those requiring additional assistance. For SBC, the policy provides guidance to support the integration of accessibility considerations into transport planning and development proposals, helping to ensure that transport networks and facilities are designed and delivered to be inclusive, legible, and easy to use. The policy is relevant to the preparation of Local Plan policies and transport interventions that seek to improve accessibility and promote inclusive mobility across the Borough.

2.41 Better Connected builds upon these frameworks under its 'Make travel accessible and affordable' priority, committing to the launch of an Accessible Travel Charter to establish shared principles for accessible travel across the transport system. The strategy also commits to an improvement plan to increase the data available to help those with accessibility needs plan their journeys, and increasing step-free rail station coverage to 71% of all rail journeys by 2029. These commitments strengthen the national policy basis for embedding inclusive design within Swindon's transport evidence and Local Plan policies.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Requires Swindon's transport evidence to embed inclusive design and equitable access within the Local Plan strategy.
- Promotes accessible, safe and legible transport networks for disabled people, older people and those with reduced mobility.
- Supports integration of accessibility considerations into site allocations and transport interventions.
- Reinforces the need for development to provide inclusive access to jobs, services and everyday activities.
- Aligns local policy with national standards for accessible infrastructure and passenger assistance.

Other Policies

2.42 The UK Government provides plug-in vehicle grants to support the uptake of low-emission vehicles by reducing the upfront cost of purchase. The grants apply to a range of eligible vehicle types, including electric and low-emission cars, vans, motorcycles, taxis, trucks and wheelchair-accessible vehicles, subject to meeting defined eligibility criteria. The level of grant available varies depending on vehicle category and the relevant scheme in place at the time of purchase. The grant is applied at the point of sale, with the discount deducted by the dealer or manufacturer, and is available only for government approved vehicles included on the eligible list.

2.43 The plug-in vehicle grant forms part of wider national measures to encourage the transition to cleaner transport, supporting reductions in carbon emissions from road transport and contributing to the achievement of net zero objectives.

2.44 The Local Transport Grant Allocations (2025) set out the Government's funding framework for local transport authorities, enabling the delivery of priority transport schemes at the local level. For SBC, the allocations provide a mechanism to support the implementation of transport interventions that improve connectivity, encourage sustainable travel, enhance accessibility, and support planned growth. The funding is a key enabler in translating national transport policy objectives into deliverable schemes aligned with local priorities and the emerging Local Plan.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Supports uptake of low emission vehicles through national plug-in grants, contributing to net zero objectives.
- Provides Local Transport Grant funding to deliver priority schemes in Swindon.
- Enables implementation of interventions that improve connectivity, accessibility and sustainable travel in line with the Local Plan.

3.0 SUB-NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

3.1 A review of relevant sub-national policy has been undertaken to establish the wider strategic context influencing transport planning for SBC. This includes policies and strategies prepared at a regional, corridor, and functional network level, which provide direction on strategic connectivity, investment priorities, and the role of Swindon within the wider transport network. The review considers how these policies support planned growth and inform the development of Swindon's Local Plan 2023-2043.

3.2 The sub-national policies reviewed provide an important link between national objectives and local delivery and are assessed in terms of their alignment with Swindon's emerging transport vision and strategic objectives. Where relevant, the review identifies how these

policies influence transport evidence, scheme development, and infrastructure requirements over the lifespan of the Local Plan 2023-2043.

Route Strategies (London to Wales) (National Highways, 2023)

3.3 The London to Wales Route Strategy (National Highways, 2023) sets out the strategic context for the Strategic Road Network within this corridor, including the M4 and A419 which are critical to Swindon's regional and national connectivity. The strategy identifies key performance issues such as congestion, journey time reliability, safety, freight movement, asset condition and network resilience, alongside forecast growth and environmental constraints. It highlights priorities for managing and enhancing the network, including targeted capacity and junction improvements, operational measures, safety interventions and asset renewal to maintain performance and support economic growth. While not a committed delivery programme, the strategy informs future Road Investment Strategy decisions and is relevant to SBC in providing cross boundary context for assessing the impacts of Local Plan growth on the Strategic Road Network and informing the transport evidence base.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Requires the transport evidence base to reflect the performance and constraints of the M4 and A419.
- Informs assessment of Local Plan growth impacts on congestion, safety, freight and resilience.
- Supports engagement with National Highways on cross boundary impacts and mitigation.
- Aligns Local Plan assumptions with future Road Investment Strategy priorities.

4.0 REGIONAL & LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

4.1 A review of regional and local policy has been conducted, setting out Swindon's strategic priorities towards long-term growth moving into Swindon's Local Plan 2023-2043. This review outlines the existing policy of the region and assesses how these policies will support growth for SBC as set out within the Local Plan 2023-2043 Regulation 18 Transport Policies and Vision Statement.

4.2 The seven core strategic objectives set out within the Regulation 18 Vision Statement will form the foundation of Swindon's regional and local Transport Evidence Base, with policies assessed on their alignment with these objectives, and any shortfalls in how these objectives are set to be met over the lifespan of the LTP 4 will be identified.

Swindon Local Transport Plan 4 (2022-2036)

4.3 Swindon's LTP4 sets out the Council's statutory transport policies and strategies for investment in transport infrastructure through to 2036. It establishes the long-term vision and strategic objectives for the Borough's transport network, seeking to support the delivery of schemes which:

- "Create a safe, effective and fit for purpose transport network that supports Swindon's ambitions for town centre regeneration and economic growth whilst protecting and enhancing quality of life and the environment for the benefit of local residents, visitors and businesses".

4.4 LTP4 builds on the policies set out within LTP3, whilst reviewing and refreshing the evidence base to reflect changes in population and growth forecasts, travel behaviour and transport demand, safety and accessibility performance, and wider health indicators. It responds to updated national policy, funding frameworks and local challenges, and provides the strategic framework for prioritising investment and securing external funding.

4.5 The evidence base underpinning LTP4 focuses on emerging themes and growing challenges since LTP3, including a heightened emphasis on the transition to a zero carbon transport system in response to climate change, improving air quality, promoting sustainable mode shift towards walking, cycling and public transport, addressing transport related social inclusion, accessibility and equality, managing congestion and network resilience, supporting freight movement, and harnessing technology and innovation to improve network efficiency. It also reinforces the importance of a joined-up approach to land use planning and transport planning to support sustainable growth patterns.

4.6 In the context of the Local Plan 2023-2043, LTP4 forms a core component of the transport evidence base and the adopted local transport policy framework. The Local Plan's modelling assumptions, site allocations, infrastructure requirements and mitigation strategies should therefore demonstrate consistency with LTP4 objectives, particularly in relation to carbon reduction, mode shift, road safety, accessibility enhancement and effective management of the strategic and local road networks. Alignment between the Local Plan and LTP4 is essential to demonstrate a coherent, deliverable and policy compliant transport strategy for SBC.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Provides the statutory transport framework that the Local Plan must align with.
- Sets priorities for carbon reduction, mode shift, safety, accessibility and network management that should shape modelling and mitigation.
- Requires growth strategy and infrastructure planning to be consistent with adopted LTP4 objectives to demonstrate a deliverable transport strategy.

The Swindon Plan (2024-2027)

4.7 The Swindon Plan sets out Swindon's long-term priorities which seek to improve the quality of life for all of SBC's residents. The three priority missions comprise a Fairer, Better and Greener Swindon, looking to improve equality, facilitate town centre improvements and affordable housing provision, and strive towards a net-zero Borough by 2050.

4.8 Under the "Better Swindon" mission, the Swindon Plan includes priorities relating to regeneration of the town centre, delivery of sufficient and quality homes, maintenance and improvement of the highway network, and promotion of active travel. These objectives are directly relevant to the Local Plan transport evidence base, particularly in relation to growth distribution, town centre accessibility, highway capacity, sustainable transport provision and infrastructure investment.

4.9 Under the "Greener Swindon" mission, the Swindon Plan reinforces the Council's commitment to climate action, carbon reduction and environmental enhancement. This includes enabling lower carbon development and travel choices, improving air quality and increasing resilience to climate impacts. These priorities strengthen the requirement for the Local Plan transport evidence to demonstrate support for sustainable mode shift, emissions reduction and integration between land use and transport planning.

4.10 In this context, the Swindon Plan provides the overarching corporate framework within which the Local Plan and its transport evidence base should sit, ensuring that planned growth supports regeneration, inclusion, sustainable mobility and the transition to a net-zero SBC.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Reinforces regeneration and town centre priorities that influence accessibility, connectivity and infrastructure planning.
- Supports delivery of housing growth, requiring transport modelling and mitigation to enable sustainable development.
- Commits to net zero and climate action, strengthening the need for carbon reduction and sustainable mode shift.
- Promotes equality and inclusion, requiring accessible and inclusive transport networks.

Swindon Town Centre Movement Strategy

4.11 Swindon's Town Centre Movement Strategy (SBC, 2020) provides a plan of action to deliver improvement in all elements of the Town Centre's movement system, from car parking to public transport. The strategy is evidence based and its objectives contribute towards the delivery of the Swindon Plan and wider regeneration priorities.

4.12 Its key themes and objectives include:

- Improved Environment for Walking and Cycling - Maximise opportunities for active travel.
- Bus and Taxi Accessibility - Maximise access to public transport.
- Capacity of the Great Western Way Corridor - Facilitate vehicle movement around the outside of central area.
- Rational Street Network - Improve access by car whilst discouraging through movement.
- Improved Public Realm – Improve the quality of the town centre as a place to live and work.
- Effective Car Parking – Support those who need to drive by offering attractive and accessible car parking.

4.13 In the context of the Local Plan 2023-2043 transport evidence base, the Strategy establishes the intended movement hierarchy and identifies infrastructure priorities and network constraints within the Town Centre. It therefore informs transport modelling assumptions, access arrangements, mode share ambitions and mitigation proposals associated with town centre growth and regeneration.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Provides the movement framework that town centre growth must align with.
- Sets priorities for active travel, public transport and managed vehicle access.
- Identifies constraints and interventions that inform modelling and mitigation.

Swindon's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

4.14 Swindon's LCWIP comprises a review of the Borough's current cycling and walking infrastructure and provides a long-term approach to developing active travel networks through high quality infrastructure. Prepared in accordance with DfT guidance, it establishes an evidence-based framework for identifying and prioritising improvements to support walking and cycling across the Borough.

4.15 The Plan builds upon a strong foundation, with high engagement in active travel modes, and seeks to sustain momentum of this modal shift away from cars whilst delivering LTN 1/20 compliant routes across 23 identified schemes. These schemes include strategic corridors, links to key employment and education destinations, connections to regeneration areas and routes serving planned growth locations.

4.16 The LCWIP defines a primary and secondary walking and cycling network, identifies infrastructure gaps and quality deficiencies, and sets clear design expectations consistent with national standards. It is intended to guide future investment, inform funding bids and support the delivery of developer contributions towards active travel infrastructure.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Provides the adopted spatial framework for cycling and walking infrastructure across SBC.
- Identifies prioritised corridors and growth linked schemes that should be reflected in site allocation and infrastructure planning.
- Establishes design expectations aligned with LTN 1/20 that inform development requirements.
- Supports carbon reduction, air quality improvement and sustainable mode share targets.
- Strengthens the evidence base for funding bids and developer contributions.

Swindon Decarbonisation Framework

4.17 Swindon's Decarbonisation Framework seeks to deliver upon one of the Swindon Plan's three core missions - a 'Greener Swindon' - to tackle the growing climate crisis and reach a net zero SBC by 2050, as well as focus on reducing fuel poverty within Swindon. The Framework establishes a structured, sector-based approach to reducing emissions across Energy and Buildings, Transport, Business, Green Spaces and Health, setting out defined goals and actions to support long term carbon reduction and climate resilience.

4.18 In relation to transport, the Framework outlines its main goals, including aims to decarbonise the Council fleet, bolster the provision, quality and safety of transportation options for residents, visitors and school children, and improve electric vehicle charging infrastructure across SBC. It also promotes increased walking and cycling in line with the LCWIP, enhanced bus services, improved road safety, use of lower carbon materials in highway maintenance, and reduction of transport related emissions more broadly.

4.19 The Framework reinforces the importance of reducing car dependency, improving air quality and integrating transport decarbonisation with public health and placemaking objectives. It also highlights the role of planning policy and development in supporting lower carbon travel behaviour and resilient infrastructure.

4.20 In the context of the Local Plan 2023-2043 transport evidence base, the Decarbonisation Framework strengthens the requirement for growth to align with SBC's net zero ambition, sustainable mode shift, fleet transition and EV infrastructure provision. The Local Plan's modelling assumptions, infrastructure requirements and mitigation strategies should therefore demonstrate consistency with the Framework's carbon reduction and climate resilience objectives.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Provides the Borough's net zero framework that the Local Plan transport evidence must align with.

- Strengthens the requirement for carbon reduction, sustainable mode shift and reduced car dependency.
- Supports expansion of walking, cycling, bus services and EV infrastructure within growth areas.
- Reinforces integration of transport planning with air quality, health and climate resilience objectives.
- Strengthens the requirement for Local Plan growth and transport strategy to align with the Borough's 2050 net zero commitment.

Swindon's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2010-2026)

4.21 Swindon's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2010-2026) sets out SBC's vision for a connected network of green spaces, protected sites, nature reserves and green links to support Swindon's future growth and ambitions. The Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies a hierarchy of inter-connected Green Infrastructure networks, comprising both enhancement of existing infrastructure and provision of new corridors and facilities.

4.22 The Green Infrastructure Strategy recognises Green Infrastructure as multi-functional, delivering biodiversity, flood risk management, climate resilience, recreation, health and wellbeing, and sustainable movement. It identifies strategic green corridors and links that provide opportunities for walking and cycling, helping to integrate active travel routes within the wider transport network and reduce reliance on car travel.

4.23 In the context of the Local Plan 2023-2043 transport evidence base, the Green Infrastructure Strategy establishes spatial corridors and environmental considerations that should inform growth strategy, infrastructure planning and transport modelling. It supports integration between green corridors and LCWIP routes, enhances connectivity between residential areas, employment sites and open spaces, and reinforces the role of sustainable travel within a high quality and resilient urban environment.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Provides the spatial green network framework that should inform growth and infrastructure planning.
- Identifies green corridors that support walking and cycling connectivity across the Borough.
- Supports integration of active travel routes with environmental and placemaking objectives.
- Highlights environmental and climate resilience considerations relevant to transport modelling and site allocation.

SBC Bus Service Improvement Plan

4.24 SBC's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) comprises the public transport element of the Borough's Local Transport Plan and replaces the Local Bus Strategy (2016). It has been

prepared in response to the National Bus Strategy and will be delivered through an Enhanced Bus Partnership between the Council and local operators**.**

4.25 The BSIP sets a clear ambition to increase bus passenger boardings by 44% between 2019 and 2030, rising from 11.9 million to at least 17.1 million journeys, with further growth to 2035. This uplift is intended to support decarbonisation, reduce congestion, address socio economic exclusion and accommodate planned growth across the Borough.

4.26 The BSIP identifies a Strategic Bus Network structured around four Quality Bus Corridors serving major growth areas including Wichelstowe, Kingsdown, Tadpole Garden Village and the New Eastern Villages. It prioritises bus priority infrastructure, journey time reductions, reliability improvements, enhanced frequencies, new orbital services, demand responsive transport in rural areas and significant upgrades to bus stop infrastructure and passenger information.

4.27 The BSIP also includes commitments to fleet modernisation and decarbonisation, with targets for Euro VI compliance and a transition towards zero emission buses, alongside improved ticketing, multi operator integration and fare simplification.

4.28 Importantly, the BSIP explicitly links bus service enhancement to planned housing and employment growth, recognising that substantial mode shift is required to accommodate Local Plan development within available highway capacity. It states that improved bus provision is necessary to support the delivery of 21,400 new homes and major employment sites.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Sets a quantified target for bus patronage growth that modelling assumptions should align with.
- Identifies priority bus corridors and infrastructure that inform mitigation strategy and support planned growth areas.
- Supports delivery of major growth areas through enhanced frequency, reliability and bus priority.
- Promotes mode shift and decarbonisation to manage congestion and reduce car dependency.
- Provides the governance and funding framework for bus service enhancement across SBC.

Swindon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) & Health and Wellbeing Strategy

4.29 Swindon's JSNA provides an overview of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of Swindon's residents, guiding the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy through detailed demographic analysis, including active travel and transport engagement. This report seeks to guide strategic planning through local and actionable intelligence, highlighting

demographic based inequalities and placing the health of Swindon's residents at the forefront of placemaking for SBC.

4.30 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2033 sets out the overarching ambition to increase the number of years residents live in good health and to reduce inequalities in healthy life expectancy. It identifies priority themes including improving mental health and wellbeing, enabling residents to eat well and move more, and reducing the harms associated with smoking and alcohol.

4.31 Of relevance to the Local Plan transport evidence base is the emphasis on increasing physical activity, promoting active travel, improving access to green space and creating environments that support healthier lifestyles. The strategy recognises the relationship between the built environment, accessibility, transport choice and health outcomes, particularly in addressing inequalities across different communities.

4.32 In the context of the Local Plan 2023–2043, the JSNA and Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlight the importance of growth proposals supporting safe and accessible walking and cycling networks, inclusive public transport and access to open space. The transport evidence base should demonstrate how planned development aligns with the Strategy's objectives to increase physical activity, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier placemaking across SBC.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Provides the evidence base on health inequalities that growth and transport strategy should respond to.
- Prioritises increasing physical activity through walking, cycling and access to green space.
- Highlights the link between transport choice, accessibility and health outcomes.
- Supports inclusive mobility and reduced car dependency as part of healthier placemaking.
- Reinforces alignment between transport planning and improved healthy life expectancy.

Swindon Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

4.33 Swindon's Travel Plan SPD provides guidance on residential, employment and school-based Travel Plans for the Borough, setting out a framework to achieve consistency of quality while allowing flexibility to respond to site specific conditions.

4.34 The SPD supports Local Plan policies TR1 and TR2 and sets out thresholds at which Travel Plans or Travel Plan Statements are required. It requires Travel Plans to be secured through Section 106 obligations or planning conditions and implemented for a minimum period of five years post occupation.

4.35 The document establishes clear requirements for baseline travel surveys, annual monitoring, modal shift targets and a Sustainable Travel Action Plan, including measures to promote walking, cycling, public transport use, car sharing and reduced single occupancy vehicle trips. It introduces quantified reduction targets in car driver mode share, typically in the range of 8 to 10 percentage points over the life of the plan, subject to site context.

4.36 In the context of the Local Plan 2023–2043 transport evidence base, the Travel Plan SPD provides the mechanism through which development related trip reduction and mode shift commitments are secured and monitored. It informs assumptions regarding sustainable travel uptake, mitigation strategy, infrastructure contributions and long-term behavioural change associated with allocated sites. It therefore forms a critical implementation tool supporting delivery of the Local Plan's sustainable transport objectives.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Provides the adopted framework for securing Travel Plans through planning conditions and Section 106 agreements.
- Sets thresholds, monitoring requirements and quantified car driver reduction targets that influence modelling assumptions.
- Requires baseline surveys, mode shift targets and five-year monitoring to secure behavioural change.
- Supports delivery of sustainable travel measures for allocated sites.
- Acts as a key implementation mechanism for achieving Local Plan sustainable transport objectives.

Swindon's Parking Standards for New Development

4.37 Swindon's Parking Standards for New Development SPD provides NPPF compliant parking standards and technical guidance for the Borough. It supports Policy TR2 of the adopted Local Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD establishes minimum parking standards for developments, including car, motorcycle, disabled and cycle parking provision, alongside design requirements.

4.38 The standards are structured around defined accessibility geographies, applying lower car parking provision in more sustainable and accessible locations, particularly within the central sector where car-free development may apply. This approach seeks to balance the need for parking with wider objectives to promote sustainable transport, manage car ownership and reduce reliance on fossil fuel vehicles.

4.39 The SPD also sets requirements for electric vehicle charging infrastructure and secure cycle parking, aligning parking provision with decarbonisation, active travel and mode shift objectives.

Relevance to Local Plan 2023-2043

- Provides the adopted framework for minimum parking provision across defined accessibility sectors.
- Influences trip generation, car ownership assumptions and modelling inputs.
- Supports sustainable mode shift through reduced parking in accessible locations.
- Requires EV charging and cycle parking provision, supporting decarbonisation and active travel.
- Acts as a key implementation tool linking parking standards with sustainable transport and growth strategy.

5.0 POLICY & VISION ALIGNMENT

Introduction

5.1 This chapter builds on the review of national, sub-national and local planning and transport policy set out in the preceding chapters and assesses how this policy context supports and informs SBC's Regulation 18 Local Plan Strategic Objectives.

5.2 The chapter provides a structured assessment of the extent to which the emerging Local Plan vision and objectives are consistent with relevant planning, transport, decarbonisation, active travel, accessibility and placemaking policy and best practice.

5.3 Each Strategic Objective is reviewed in turn, drawing on the policy context summarised earlier in this Technical Note, to identify areas of alignment and to highlight any implications for the Local Plan transport evidence base, policy formulation and future implementation.

5.4 This approach is intended to demonstrate that the Local Plan's transport strategy is underpinned by a coherent and policy-compliant framework capable of supporting effective plan-making and decision-taking.

Local Plan 2023 to 2043 (Regulation 18) Vision and Objectives

5.5 The Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan 2023 to 2043 sets out seven strategic objectives, summarised below:

- **SO1 – Regenerating Swindon Town Centre:** Revitalise the Town Centre as the heart of Swindon through supporting and delivering mixed use residential and commercial development, supported by appropriate social and transport infrastructure.
- **SO2 – Place and Belonging:** Enhance community belonging and wellbeing, strengthen Swindon's identity, support good placemaking, preserve and enhance heritage, and provide high quality sustainable development with the right infrastructure and access to services.

- **SO3 – Homes for All:** Deliver the right types and tenures of housing to meet current and future needs, including affordable and specialist housing, with well-designed development.
- **SO4 – Economic Prosperity:** Facilitate a resilient economy that capitalises on Swindon's strategic location and town centre redevelopment potential, delivering opportunities for all.
- **SO5 – Connected Communities and Sustainable Movement:** Improve connectivity and sustainable transport choice, reduce public transport times and reduce car dependency, connecting people, neighbourhoods and communities.
- **SO6 – Low Carbon:** Seek to achieve net zero carbon by requiring appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures for new and existing development, and improve the sustainable travel offer.
- **SO7 – Health and Wellbeing:** Deliver healthy, active and inclusive communities through a holistic plan led approach that secures good quality housing, enhanced connectivity and accessibility to services, social and leisure infrastructure, and inclusive design.

SO1 – Regenerating Swindon Town Centre

5.6 The first strategic objective of the Vision Statement seeks to ensure that the provision of appropriate social and transport infrastructure supports the revitalisation of Swindon's Town Centre, enabling high-quality and integrated mixed-use residential and commercial development.

Policy & Vision Alignment

5.7 The National Design Guide and revised NPPF promote transport networks that are intertwined with high quality placemaking, where street design contributes to local identity and healthy, inclusive environments. They also strengthen the requirement to consider transport early in the planning process, understand and address development impacts on networks, and pursue opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport, alongside patterns of movement and parking that support high quality placemaking and sustainable development. This national policy direction reflects SBC's ambition for plan led growth and infrastructure delivery through town centre regeneration, with a vision led approach that prioritises design quality, accessibility and inclusivity through a more directive planning system. This is further reinforced by Better Connected, which under its 'Align transport and development' priority expects higher-density development to be focused around public transport nodes, and transport and land-use decisions to be integrated through vision-led planning, directly supporting the town centre's role as a sustainable, well-connected destination.

5.8 This ambition is reinforced through the Swindon Plan and the Town Centre Movement Strategy, which aim to enhance the quality of the town centre as a place to live and work

through coordinated built and movement improvements. In transport terms, this includes improving the environment for walking and cycling, maximising bus and taxi accessibility, managing the street network to discourage through movement while maintaining appropriate access, and providing effective car parking that supports those who need to drive.

5.9 Aligning town centre regeneration with the wider policy context requires sustainable travel modes to be integral to accessibility, inclusion and reduced car dependency, supporting carbon reduction and air quality objectives. Early transport planning should set clear expectations for mode integration and permeability and should embed inclusive mobility principles so that the town centre environment is legible, safe and accessible for disabled people, older people and those with reduced mobility, supporting equitable access to services, jobs and everyday activities.

5.10 This approach should be delivered through sustainable access policy that establishes a town centre mode hierarchy and translates it into street design, junction priorities and kerbside management. Minimum expectations should include pedestrian priority streets and crossings, permeability, wayfinding and inclusive design, alongside continuous, coherent and safe walking and cycling routes that reflect national design standards such as LTN 1/20 where applicable. The hierarchy should also support high quality public transport outcomes, including bus and taxi accessibility, with measures that improve bus journey time reliability and passenger experience, aligned with the BSIP direction on priority measures and service enhancement. Parking, servicing and loading policy for the town centre should manage supply, location and timing, protect essential access including disabled provision, and reduce through traffic and unnecessary circulation to support regeneration.

5.11 Additional or restructured policy requirements for residential, commercial or mixed-use development may be required for implementation clarity. This should include proportionate Transport Assessments and Travel Plans where required, secured through planning conditions or obligations, with baseline surveys, mode share targets and monitoring for an agreed period, and review triggers linked to phasing and occupation. Parking provision should reflect the adopted parking standards by accessibility location, supporting lower parking provision in the most accessible areas, alongside appropriate cycle parking and electric vehicle charging. These mechanisms provide the route to robust impact assessment, cumulative testing and proportionate mitigation, supporting effective transport management and delivery of mode shift in the town centre.

SO2 – Place and Belonging

5.12 The second strategic objective of the Vision Statement seeks to enhance placemaking and wellbeing beyond the Town Centre focus of SO1, supporting a sense of place and belonging

across the wider urban area by improving access to key services, facilities and opportunities.

Policy & Vision Alignment

5.13 The objective aligns with the revised NPPF and National Design Guide emphasis on vision led planning, high quality design and sustainable, integrated transport, and is reinforced by best practice that repositions streets as multifunctional public spaces rather than solely traffic corridors. Manual for Streets supports a place led approach where street design, movement and public realm quality are considered together to deliver safe, inclusive and attractive environments. This position is strengthened by Better Connected, which commits to publishing an updated Manual for Streets and to updating the Network Management Duty Guidance so that footways and cycle paths are maintained to the same standard as road infrastructure, reflecting the strategy's principle of using transport investment to create better-connected places.

5.14 This policy direction places emphasis on development that is designed around social interaction, community cohesion and placemaking first, with vehicle movement accommodated but not dominant. In promoting lower traffic speeds, improved permeability, coherent pedestrian networks, and high-quality streets and spaces, Manual for Streets closely aligns with SO2's focus on belonging, identity and wellbeing. These principles are also consistent with the National Design Guide characteristics relating to context, movement, identity, built form and public space.

5.15 The national active travel policy direction, including Gear Change, CWIS3 and the role of ATE, further strengthens the alignment of SO2 with transport policy. These policies embed walking and cycling at the heart of decision making and set clear expectations that infrastructure should be safe, coherent, accessible and attractive to support behavioural change. LTN 1/20 provides the national design standard that translates this policy direction into deliverable requirements, reinforcing that placemaking outcomes are inseparable from health, inclusion and accessibility.

5.16 Achieving this vision also requires early consideration of transport and public realm in the planning process, with robust assessment of development impacts and proportionate mitigation to support sustainable access to services and opportunities. Policies focused on healthy streets and connected neighbourhoods should identify and address severance and barriers created by transport infrastructure or large-scale development, and should require inclusive design that supports disabled people, older people and those with reduced mobility. Local policy should also provide clear delivery mechanisms, including requirements for high quality walking and cycling links aligned with the LCWIP, appropriate public transport accessibility where relevant, and monitoring or review triggers for major schemes to confirm that connectivity and placemaking benefits are achieved in practice.

SO3 – Homes for All

5.17 Strategic Objective 3 focuses on SBC's commitment to housing delivery, with an ambition to provide high quality, inclusive homes that meet the Borough's needs over the plan period. In transport terms, this objective has direct implications for the scale, location and phasing of growth that the transport evidence base must test, and for the mitigation and sustainable travel measures required to support delivery.

Policy & Vision Alignment

5.18 The Swindon Plan establishes the local growth and inclusion context, including priorities relating to housing delivery, regeneration, equality and the transition to a net-zero Borough. For the transport evidence base, this reinforces the need for housing growth proposals to be supported by infrastructure planning that enables access to services and opportunities and avoids creating or worsening accessibility inequalities. Better Connected reinforces this through its expectation that transport and housing decisions should be integrated, with higher-density development focused around public transport.

5.19 National policy places emphasis on ensuring that development is supported by timely, deliverable infrastructure and that the transport impacts of growth are understood and addressed. In transport evidence terms, this requires proportionate assessment of the likely network impacts arising from the scale and distribution of housing growth, including cumulative effects where relevant, and the identification of mitigation and/or interventions necessary to support delivery.

5.20 To align with the wider policy direction on sustainable movement, decarbonisation and inclusion, housing growth should be planned and designed to support access to employment, education and healthcare through sustainable travel modes, and to reduce reliance on single-occupancy car travel. This includes embedding inclusive access considerations within walking, cycling and public transport connectivity so that the needs of disabled people, older people and those with reduced mobility are addressed as part of scheme design and place-making outcomes.

5.21 Delivering this objective will therefore depend on the Local Plan spatial strategy and transport evidence base demonstrating that housing growth is directed towards locations with good accessibility (or where accessibility can be improved), supported by a realistic programme of walking, cycling and public transport measures. Where necessary, Local Plan policy may require clearer implementation mechanisms - such as Travel Plans and Transport Assessments - to support mode share assumptions for major housing schemes and secure appropriate mitigation and contributions, alongside parking standards (including cycle parking and EV charging) that are consistent with the adopted framework.

SO4 – Economic Prosperity

5.22 Aligning with Swindon's LTP4 and The Swindon Plan, Strategic Objective 4 seeks to support economic prosperity for the Borough, including through growth and resilience associated with the redevelopment potential of Swindon's town centre.

Policy & Vision Alignment

5.23 The objective aligns with national policy that seeks to support economic growth while reducing emissions and managing transport demand. The revised NPPF reinforces the need to integrate land use and transport planning, consider transport early, assess and mitigate development impacts, and prioritise walking, cycling and public transport to support sustainable patterns of movement. This is reinforced by national decarbonisation policy, which strengthens the requirement for growth strategies to support mode shift, reduced car dependency and lower carbon travel, without undermining productivity or accessibility. Better Connected supports this through its commitment to over £1 billion per year in bus services, the establishment of Great British Railways to improve rail connectivity and integration, and the introduction of simplified ticketing and real-time passenger information to improve journey reliability and labour market access.

5.24 The policy context also recognises the role of strategic and local road networks in supporting regional connectivity, freight movement and economic function. The transport evidence base should therefore consider the performance and resilience of key corridors and strategic routes, including cumulative growth impacts, and should test the effectiveness of mitigation under different demand and uncertainty scenarios. In parallel, regeneration and employment growth should be focused on locations that can support high levels of accessibility by sustainable modes and provide strong interchange and hub connectivity, while maintaining appropriate servicing, loading and freight access.

5.25 Maximising economic prosperity will rely on town centre and wider growth proposals demonstrating reliable labour market access, integrated networks and efficient movement of goods, alongside a balanced approach to network management. Policy and infrastructure should support enhanced public transport accessibility and reliability, safe and direct walking and cycling connections, and appropriate demand management, parking and kerbside measures that reduce unnecessary through movement while safeguarding essential access for businesses and servicing. The transport evidence base should identify the interventions, phasing and delivery mechanisms needed to support these outcomes, including monitoring and review triggers where major schemes or corridor impacts require adaptive management.

SO5 – Connected Communities and Sustainable Movement

5.26 Strategic Objective 5 seeks to improve connectivity and sustainable transport choice, reduce public transport journey times and reduce car dependency, connecting people, neighbourhoods and communities across the Borough.

Policy & Vision Alignment

5.27 The national policy context emphasises that transport should be considered early in plan-making and decision-taking, that development impacts should be understood and addressed, and that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be pursued to support sustainable patterns of movement and high-quality placemaking. In this context, the transport evidence base should demonstrate how the Local Plan spatial strategy and proposed growth locations support (or can be supported by) connected networks for walking, cycling and public transport, including the identification of barriers to movement and opportunities to address severance.

5.28 The objective is reinforced by the national active travel policy direction (including Gear Change, ATE and LTN 1/20) and by bus policy and BSIP frameworks which seek to improve public transport provision, integration and passenger outcomes. Better Connected provides the overarching strategic framework for these commitments, establishing a vision for transport that is safe, reliable, affordable and accessible, and committing to empowering local leaders to deliver integrated networks, simplifying payments and information across modes, and championing data and technology to improve connectivity and journey planning. For the evidence base, this implies that mode shift assumptions and accessibility outcomes should be supported by a realistic and deliverable programme of measures - such as continuous walking and cycling connections aligned with relevant network priorities, and public transport improvements where required - together with proportionate assessment of likely impacts and mitigation where necessary.

5.29 Delivering the objective may therefore require Local Plan policy to provide clear implementation mechanisms, including expectations for connectivity and permeability standards in new development, safeguarding and delivery of walking, cycling and public transport links, and the use of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans (secured where appropriate through conditions/obligations) with monitoring and review triggers to confirm that sustainable access outcomes are achieved in practice. Where town centre proposals are relevant, these provisions should align with any defined mode hierarchy and associated public realm, parking and servicing approach.

SO6 – Low Carbon

5.30 Strategic Objective 6 seeks to support the transition to a low carbon Borough through the integration of mitigation and adaptation measures within new and existing development,

including measures that reduce transport emissions and improve the sustainable travel offer.

Policy & Vision Alignment

5.31 The objective aligns with the national decarbonisation agenda established through the Climate Change Act 2008 and subsequent transport policy, including the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, which strengthens the expectation that Local Plans contribute to reducing transport emissions. At the local level, this aligns with Swindon's Decarbonisation Framework, which sets the Borough ambition to reach net zero by 2050 and promotes measures including improved walking and cycling, enhanced bus services, reduced car dependency and expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

5.32 For the transport evidence base, alignment with this policy context requires that the Local Plan's growth strategy and associated transport interventions demonstrate a credible approach to reducing emissions through mode shift and reduced reliance on higher-emission travel, supported by appropriate infrastructure and implementation mechanisms. This includes showing how walking, cycling and public transport measures are embedded within the strategy and how they contribute to carbon reduction objectives over the plan period. Better Connected strengthens this expectation through its commitment to over £7.5 billion for electric vehicle transition, £616 million in active travel infrastructure, and the publication of Local Transport Quantifiable Carbon Guidance to help local authorities assess the carbon impacts of their transport strategies.

5.33 The policy context also highlights that decarbonisation is linked to investment and delivery frameworks, including funding for public transport and active travel, and to wider place-based design expectations set out through national planning and design guidance. Accordingly, the evidence base should demonstrate that proposed transport measures are deliverable and appropriately phased, and that they support both emissions reduction and high-quality placemaking outcomes.

5.34 Delivering a low carbon outcome also requires consideration of climate resilience and adaptation. The transport evidence base should therefore address the resilience of critical routes and transport infrastructure and consider how maintenance and long-term performance (including for active travel routes) will be managed, drawing on relevant local context such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Borough's decarbonisation objectives.

SO7 – Health and Wellbeing

5.35 Strategic Objective 7 focuses on delivering healthy, active and inclusive communities through high-quality development and enhanced connectivity and accessibility to key services, social and leisure infrastructure, and inclusive design.

Policy & Vision Alignment

5.36 The policy context reviewed in Chapters 1-4 emphasises the relationship between transport choice, accessibility and wider outcomes, including health and wellbeing. Swindon's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlight the importance of increasing physical activity, promoting active travel, improving access to green space and creating environments that support healthier lifestyles, alongside the need to address inequalities in healthy life expectancy. For the transport evidence base, this reinforces the need to demonstrate how the Local Plan growth strategy supports these objectives through sustainable access and inclusive mobility. Better Connected directly supports this under its 'Create healthier communities' priority, which commits to £616 million in walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, an updated Manual for Streets to guide inclusive street design and working with 12 mayoral strategic authorities to create a national walking, wheeling and cycling network.

5.37 National planning and design policy also places weight on creating safe, inclusive and accessible environments and on considering transport early in the planning process. In transport terms, this requires that the evidence base identifies where growth proposals may create or exacerbate severance or barriers to movement and sets out proportionate measures that support safe and direct walking and cycling connectivity, inclusive public transport access, and convenient access to everyday services and facilities.

5.38 Delivering the objective will therefore rely on the Local Plan transport evidence base and supporting policies demonstrating how growth proposals support increased physical activity through walking and cycling and better access to green infrastructure, and how public transport accessibility is maintained or improved for a range of users. The evidence base should also demonstrate how inclusive design requirements are embedded to support equitable access to services and opportunities, reflecting the wider accessibility and inclusion policy context.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

6.1 This Technical Note has been prepared to support SBC's Local Plan Transport Evidence Base by summarising relevant national, sub-national and local transport policy and best practice guidance. The review identifies the key policy themes that should inform the strategic transport framework for the Local Plan 2023-2043 and the development of transport-related policies.

6.2 At a national level, the policy context places emphasis on integrating transport early in plan-making, understanding and addressing development impacts, and promoting sustainable movement, high-quality design and inclusive placemaking. The publication of Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport reinforces and consolidates this

policy direction, establishing a national vision for transport that is safe, reliable, affordable and accessible, and framing eight national priorities that inform the preparation of Local Transport Plans. The review also highlights the growing focus on environmental performance, including carbon reduction, and the expectation that transport evidence should support timely, deliverable infrastructure and proportionate mitigation where required.

6.3 At a local level, the review confirms the importance of alignment between the Local Plan transport strategy and adopted local transport and corporate priorities, including carbon reduction, mode shift, accessibility, safety and effective network management. Local strategies and guidance provide the delivery context for interventions and implementation mechanisms, including travel planning, parking standards and measures supporting walking, cycling and public transport.

Conclusion

6.4 The policy context summarised in this Technical Note supports a Local Plan transport strategy that is integrated with the spatial strategy and demonstrates how growth will be supported by timely, deliverable infrastructure. For the transport evidence base, this requires robust and proportionate assessment of growth impacts, the identification of appropriate mitigation where necessary, and clear links between evidence, policy and delivery mechanisms.

6.5 The review reinforces that national and local policy direction consistently prioritises reducing car dependency through connected walking, cycling and public transport networks, supported by high-quality design and inclusive accessibility. It also confirms the importance of addressing decarbonisation and climate resilience considerations within the evidence base, including how transport measures will contribute to emissions reduction and how critical routes and infrastructure will be maintained over the plan period.

6.6 Overall, this Technical Note provides the policy framework against which the Local Plan's transport evidence, proposed interventions and supporting policies can be developed and tested to demonstrate consistency with national policy and local objectives.