

Transforming Cities Fund *Call for Proposals*



Department
for Transport

Application Form

Applicant Information

Bidding City Region: Swindon Borough Council

Bid Manager Name and position: Alistair Cox, Interim Strategic Transport Commissioner

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Swindon SN1 2JH

Additional evidence, such as letters of support, maps or plans should be included in an annex.

The use of statistics, from both government bodies and well-respected independent sources, is encouraged. The suitability and validity of these will be scrutinised as part of the bid.

SECTION A – Definition and challenges

This section will seek a definition of the bidding city. City regions should:

- Explain the city geography, with a clear city region identified
- Indicate workday population (the Fund seeks to target the larger city regions in England)
- Describe the key transport challenges across the city region at a high level. This could include a discussion of productivity, or how transport connectivity is affecting this.
- Further evidence to support this argument – such as congestion, air quality or journey time impacts.

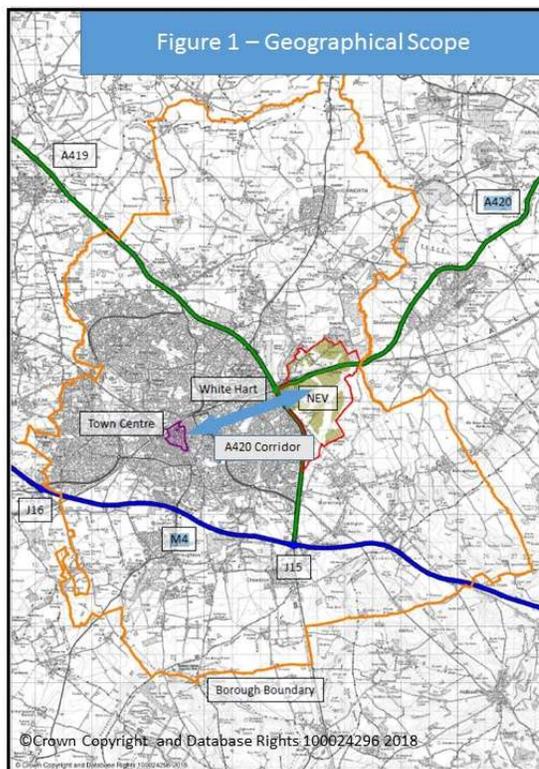
A1. Constituent Local Authorities:

A2. Geographical area:

The geographical area is within the Swindon Borough Council boundary, focussed on the Town Centre and A420 corridor (Figure 1). Swindon is one of the UK's fastest growing towns and one of the 5 UK Fast Growth Cities.

This proposal will transform the Town Centre transport hub and enhance public transport connectivity on the A420 corridor, expanding access to labour, jobs, education and the national transport network.

The A420 connects 8,000 new homes to the Town Centre and is critical to Swindon's industrial hub - connecting large companies and their suppliers. It is the backbone of England's Economic Heartland and gateway through Oxford to Cambridge.



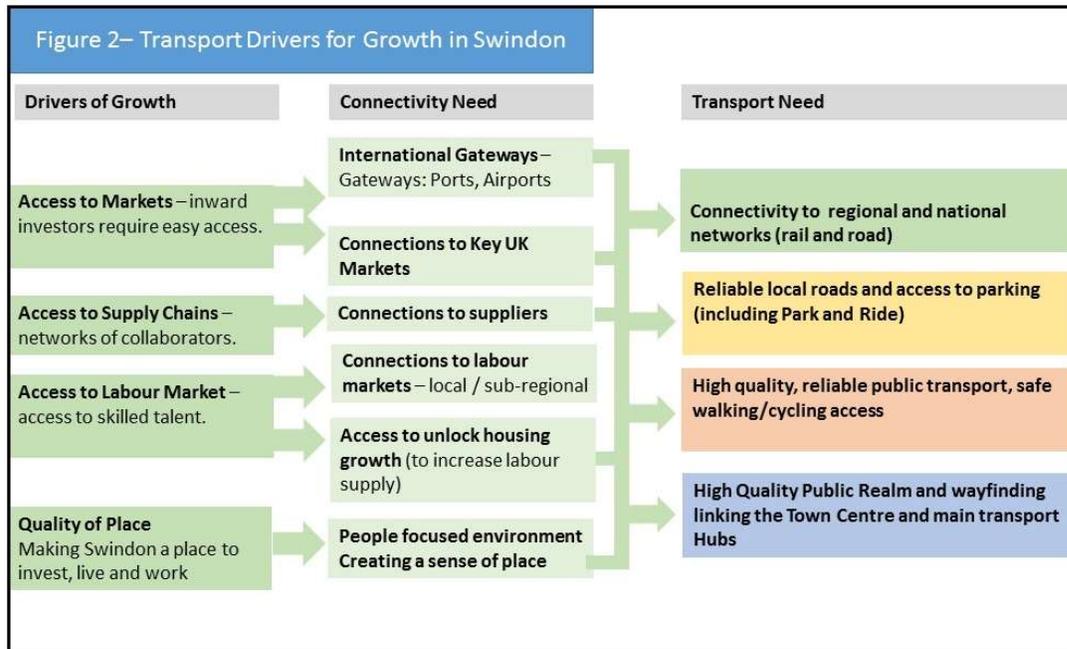
A3. Workday Population

2011 census figure had a workday population of 208,316

(Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/wd1117ew>)

A4. Discussion of key transport challenges:

Swindon Borough Council's Economic Strategy sets plans to create wealth, jobs, housing and new opportunities over the next 10 years. Transport improvements are a key driver for Swindon's further economic growth as summarised in Figure 2 below.



Economic Growth Challenges

Swindon's outward connections are strong and improving, with access to five major cities, numerous international transport hubs and the motorway system, through two significantly enhanced junctions. Railway line electrification will further reduce journey times to London to less than an hour.

However, the Town Centre is too reliant on private cars as the primary mode of transport. This results in increased congestion, unreliable journeys and wider safety and air quality issues.

Swindon has over 10,000 new homes with unimplemented planning permissions and two key central regeneration sites around the Railway Station and Kimmerfields, which are being held back by deficiencies in the wider transport environment.

Although Swindon has high employment, many are in low-skilled jobs. Several employers report long-term skilled vacancies. This lack of a high-skilled, available workforce creates barriers to Inward Investment and growth of existing companies. Better access to the town centre and movement between homes and jobs would improve Swindon's attractiveness to potential high-skilled residents and relocating companies.

Town Centre Challenges

Swindon's bus and rail hubs are not future proofed to meet the scale of future travel demand. There are physical constraints and relatively poor public realm in terms of onwards access to the Railway Station.

The central Bus Station is unattractive and perceived to be unsafe, plus it needs space to grow.

The built environment, transport challenges and labour market constraints have all deterred investment in the town and are reflected in the relatively low land and property values.

Without additional investment, the economy will not capitalise on opportunities that electrification, Heathrow Western Access, Cross Rail and East-West rail will create.

Like most town centres, long stay parking for employees is often overfilled, again a barrier to companies looking for town centre locations.

A420 Corridor

The corridor is critical for labour market access, business to business connections and as the gateway to Oxford for supply chain and customer markets across the advanced manufacturing sector.

However, the route is highly congested at peak times, with traffic monitoring data showing average peak speeds as low as 5mph on the Drakes Way section within the town.

To the east of the A419 the Gablecross junction is a bottle neck for the corridor causing unreliable and slow journeys for public transport and general traffic. There is no dynamic traffic control of the corridor meaning there is no ability to 'platoon' waves of traffic or provide 'green flow' to late running buses.

The A419 also acts as a physical bottle neck for public transport connecting to the housing and employment growth site to the east of the town.

The historic street layout closer to the town centre requires further public transport investment to increase capacity to connect the new homes, jobs and the town centre, labour markets and onward transport connections.

SECTION B: Who & Where

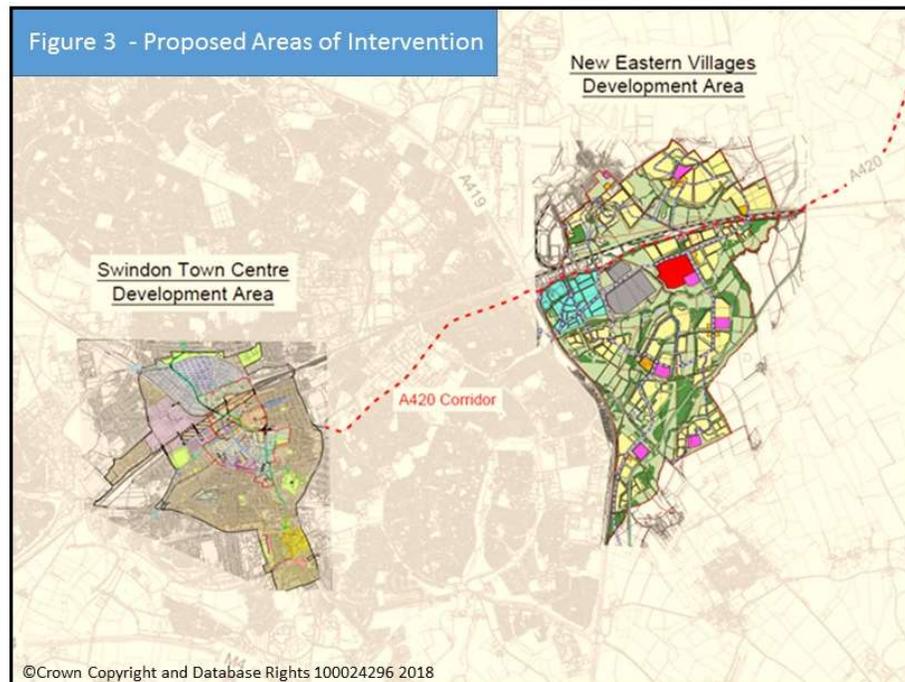
This section will seek detail on the city's key priority areas to invest in, and motivations. City regions should:

- Identify and prioritise the main corridors or places for investment, and why. This could include highlighting where opportunities for growth, productivity or business are within these areas of the city region.
- Identify who would be affected by this investment and how user needs are recognised.

Maps identifying the priority areas can be appended as an annex to this section.

Please limit responses to 500 words.

This proposal focusses on the town centre transport hub and the A420 corridor that links the hubs to the industrial sector, featuring some global Advanced Manufacturing companies and a number of national distributors and the wider Oxford to Cambridge economic spine.



Town Centre

Through improved connectivity and a transformed town centre we can create the market conditions for Swindon to realise its economic potential. This will achieve a better balance between new jobs and homes, access to employment/training opportunities and national/international connections.

The Council's feasibility work on the Railway Station has identified the need for a significant uplift in terms of station access to maximise the economic benefits of the national rail investment programme. The station regeneration project could facilitate around 20,000 sqm of commercial/retail development space and approximately 400 new homes.

There is already a strategic case for delivering the flagship regeneration scheme at Kimmerfields that will deliver around 65,000 sqm of new office/retail space, a new hotel, and up to 450 homes.

Fleming Way adjoins Kimmerfields, providing a hostile environment for pedestrians holding back our regeneration potential. It currently has significant changes in vertical levels, a traffic dominated road layout, subways and sections of footway in 'canyons'.

Transforming Cities would allow the Council to match already identified funding and achieve the ambition for the town centre. The outcome will be transformational - benefiting those living and working in Swindon, leveraging growth, fulfilling the Town's potential and connecting residents and businesses to national and international destinations.

A420 – Advanced Manufacturing Spine

The A420 Corridor boasts the UK's 7th largest automotive and advanced manufacturing employment cluster. It is a key part of the national economy with global brands such as Honda and BMW. The automotive sector invests millions into Swindon and attracts impressive supply chain companies such as Japanese owned TS Tech.



Honda and BMW both operate a Just-in-Time delivery system, which means that the supply of parts to the production line needs to be finely managed to minimise the risk of delays to production line processes. Minor delays in the supply chain can impact on or shut down the production line, which is both disruptive and costly to the local and wider economy

The A420 is also the primary access to the New Eastern Villages development comprising around 8,000 new homes and associated commercial development. Alongside the skills and training agenda this area will provide the supply of homes needed to power Swindon's economic growth potential.

The corridor also represents a significant opportunity to create a bridgehead from Swindon and its town centre, along the A420, connecting the New Eastern Villages development and looking eastwards. This is fundamental to Swindon's contribution to England's Economic Heartland and Swindon's ability to support connectivity to Oxford and beyond, underpinning growth in jobs and homes along this corridor.

The Council has already embarked on a major programme of transport improvements, funded through the Local Growth Deal secured by the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and from future development contributions.

SECTION C: Ambition for change

This section will seek evidence of how investment will tackle these challenges, and wider fit with existing plans. City regions should:

- Articulate their vision for improved connectivity from the Fund and how this links to the assessment of need outlined in the previous sections.
- Demonstrate support from stakeholders for investment in the identified areas, such as from the relevant Local Enterprise Partnership(s), employers and transport providers. This could also include commitments of further local and private funding.
- Highlight ambition to align with existing funding streams and to utilise new approaches and powers available to improve public transport.
- Demonstrate how the Fund would link to wider long-term plans and spatial strategies around housing, local growth, productivity and air quality.

Supporting letters may be attached as an annex.

Please limit responses to 500 words.

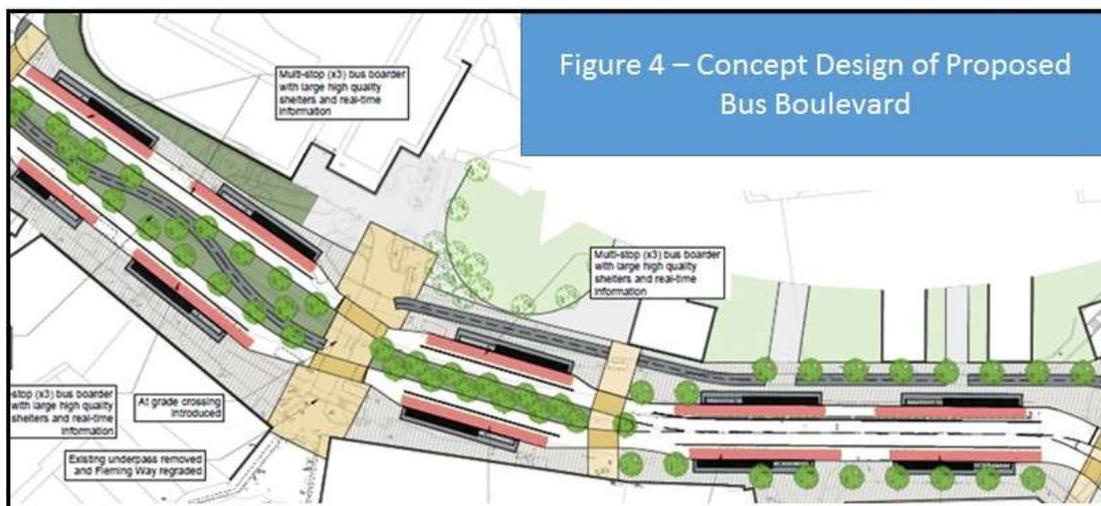
Swindon is one of the 5 UK Fast Growth Cities, with the potential to deliver 1,700 new homes each year until 2026. The A420 corridor is critical to the UK automotive and distribution sectors and integral to housing and employment growth.

Through the Council's work developing the Central Area Action Plan and Town Centre Masterplan with businesses, bus operators and wider stakeholder groups there is consensus that the town needs a new bus boulevard and transformed rail station to act as a catalyst to unlock over half a billion pounds of regeneration investment potential.

The infrastructure will complement the highly successful Bus Quality Partnership ensuring that our transport and productivity outcomes are achieved.

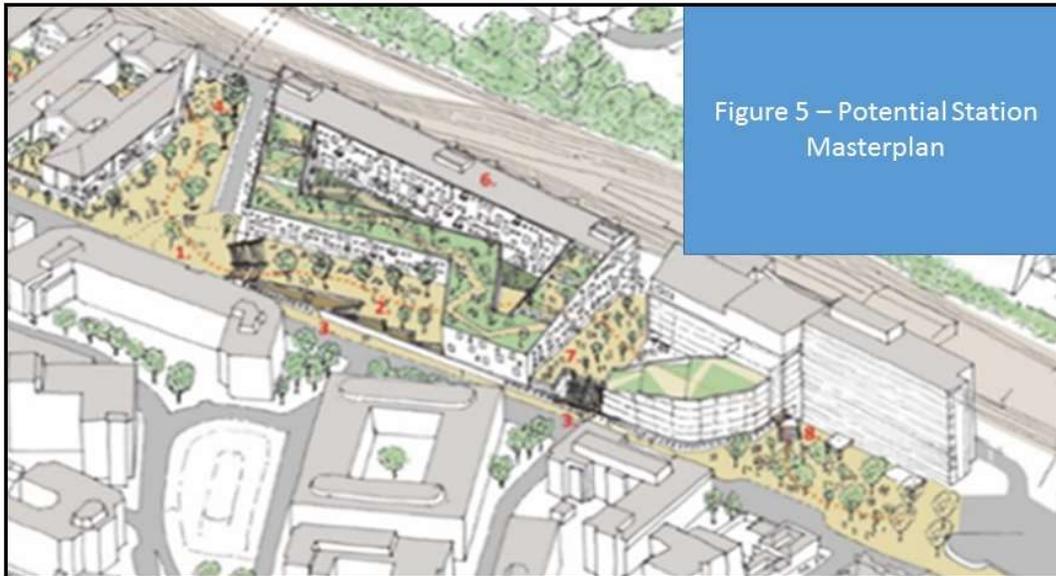
Bus Boulevard

Transforming Cities Fund can provide match funding to ensure Swindon Council delivers its full vision for the bus boulevard transforming the Town Centre and bus connectivity, and the interchange with the railway station.



Station Interchange and Access Improvements

A Feasibility Study undertaken jointly with Network Rail during 2017-18 sets the ambition for creating a new arrival landscape by rail. Transforming Cities can take forward elements external to the station including transforming the public realm to create a positive first impression to visitors and improving pedestrian linkages to the Town Centre and bus boulevard.



To improve traffic flow and reliability of buses the Council will upgrade the signal junctions near the station to control them as one SCOOT region. This will allow better management of the complex movements of traffic and ensure that buses benefit from consistent and reliable access through the area.

By enhancing the onward transport connections and the general environment surrounding the railway station the Council can encourage further business and leisure traffic to use rail as a mode of travel.

Strengthen the A420 Corridor and connecting to New Eastern Villages

There is the opportunity to match existing funding (£45-50m from public and private sector sources) and further strengthen public transport on this corridor. The Council will upgrade Gablecross roundabout that acts as a throttle to public transport and traffic. It will also deliver a new Park and Ride site and express bus corridor to the town providing a fast and direct service for both intra-urban travel and for bus/park and ride movements from the wider A420 corridor.

Between the A419 and the Town Centre, the enhanced bus services will utilise the 'fluid mesh' being installed through the C-ITS to update the junctions to provide dynamic control through SCOOT. Swindon will prioritise late running buses and have more dynamic control when there are major incidents including on the A419.

The outcome will be transformational modal shift and reliable customer/supply chain interactions using the A420 corridor. These improvements will act as a bridgehead for the wider connection to Oxford and beyond. Recognising that the full bid would be developed in partnership with DfT the total amount of funding we are potentially seeking ranges from £10m to £25m depending on the scope and scale of the final proposal.

When authorities submit a bid for funding to the Department, as part of the Government's commitment to greater openness in the public sector under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, they must also publish a version excluding any commercially sensitive information on their own website within two working days of submitting the final bid to the Department. The Department reserves the right to deem the business case as non-compliant if this is not adhered to.

Please specify the weblink where this bid will be published:

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20136/transport_strategy/908/transport_policy

Submission of proposals:

Proposals must be received no later than 2359 on **Friday, 8 June 2018**.

An electronic copy only of the bid including any supporting material should be submitted to:
TCFproposals@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Enquiries about the Fund may be directed to TCFenquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk