

Your Council

Delivering for Swindon
2019/20



www.swindon.gov.uk



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Council Leader's introduction

Welcome to this year's council tax booklet which provides an overview of where the Council's money comes from and how it is used.

Here you can read about the Council's continued progress working with partners to deliver our vision for Swindon, so that the borough continues to thrive.

As ever, the Council continues to fight Swindon's corner on the local, regional and national stage to attract external funding, building on our recent successes. Investment in new housing, schools, roads and town centre regeneration projects will benefit current and future residents.

Construction work is due to begin this year on an exciting landmark development for Swindon: the £270m North Star Village regional leisure destination. You can read more on pages 11 and 12.

The Council is also playing its full part to support everyone affected by Honda's announcement that it intends to close its Swindon plant. We are working with all partners to try to retain automotive production on that site. However, should the plant closure be confirmed, we are fortunate that Swindon's economy is growing strongly and well-placed to respond.

This year we will continue to modernise our services, putting more online, so that you can get in touch with us at a time that suits you, with a few taps on your smartphone or clicks of your mouse.

Around 84% of the Council's budget in 2019/20 will be used to help the most vulnerable in our community. We have to meet the ongoing challenge of providing our services with less money which is why you will see your council tax bill going up this year.

I believe this money will be well spent and I urge you to read on to see where your money goes and how we are using it to benefit the town and everyone who lives here.

Cllr David Renard, Leader of the Council

Overview of the Council's budget

Swindon Borough Council's net budget for 2019/20 is £142.5m. This is funded by council taxpayers, a share of the business rates collected locally and Government grants.

The Government has been reducing local authority funding for some years in order to minimise the national debt. This has meant the Council's income has reduced at a time when demand and the cost of delivering services is rising.

The Council uses its budget to provide hundreds of different services to residents of the borough, some of which are highly visible, such as waste collection and road maintenance.

Other services often go unseen, such as providing foster carers for children in crisis, caring for older people, carrying out food hygiene inspections and providing education for children with special needs. Some of these services are statutory and must be provided by law, whereas the Council can decide whether to provide others.

During the last decade the areas where the Council spends its money have changed dramatically. The demand for statutory children's services and adult social care has increased significantly, while at the same time the Council's budget has reduced, meaning a lot less can be spent on other services.

The Council has identified £21.6m of savings that need to be achieved in 2019/20 to make sure the budget stays balanced.

This year's average council tax has increased by 3.99% which includes a rise of 2.99% for general funds (which can be spent on any services) and 1% which is ring-fenced for adult social care.

For more detailed information on your bill please visit **swindon.gov.uk/annualreport**

Where our income comes from

Before the start of each financial year, the Council has to set a budget for its day-to-day expenditure. The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget. The expenditure cannot be more than the Council's income which comes from a number of different sources and is sometimes ring-fenced for certain services.

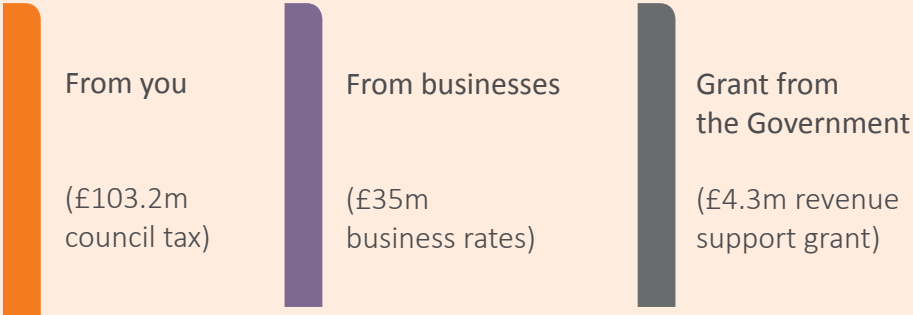
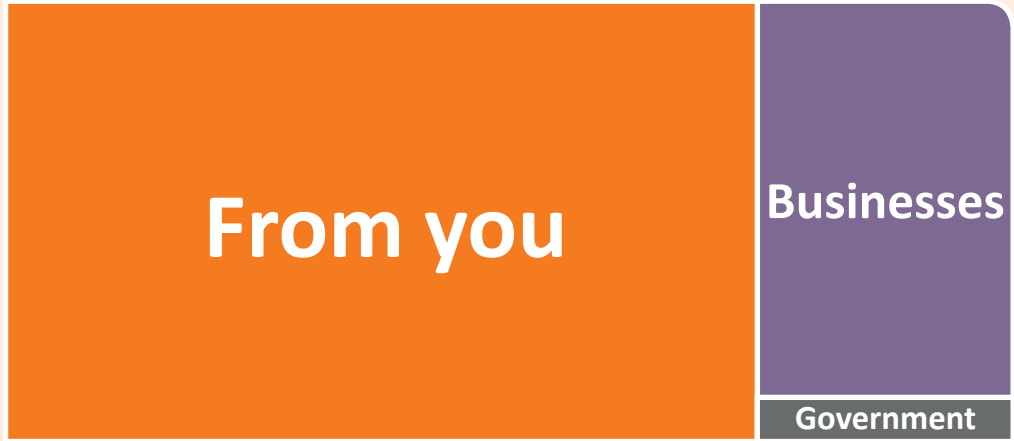
General grant from the Government: This is the revenue support grant that the Council receives from the Government. It can be used to pay for any service.

Specific grants: Given to us by the Government to be used on very specific services such as running schools, health promotion work, road improvements and housing for vulnerable people. This money can only be spent on the service it is ring-fenced for.

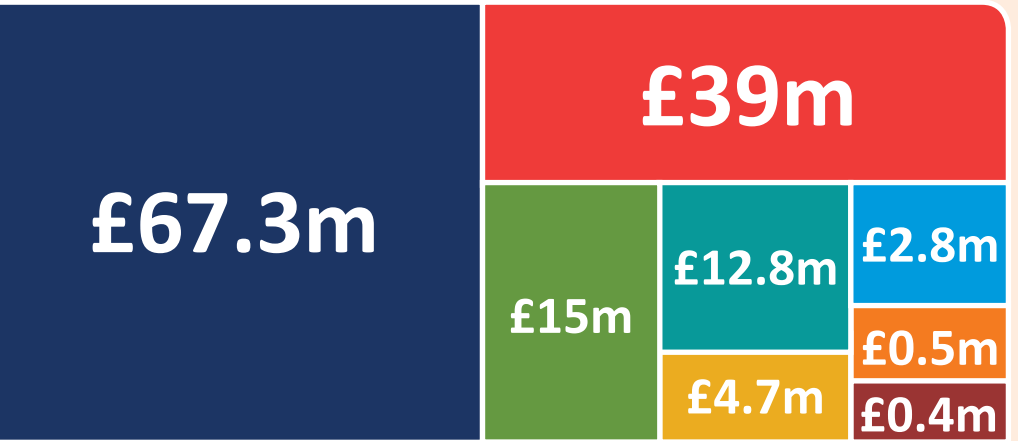
Other grants: The Government and other organisations make money available for specific things such as major road improvements and heritage projects. This sometimes enables councils to spend more freely on certain projects when other departments may be struggling. Grants are not widely available and are therefore limited, which means there is a lot of competition for funding.

Other income and council tax: The Council collects income from a number of sources including parking, housing, fines, waste removal and council tax. This money can be spent on any service but is sometimes ring-fenced for the service area that collects the income such as bus lane fines which go straight back into road improvements.

Where the money comes from



Where the money goes



Helping those who need it most

We have budgeted £119.1m to be spent on children's services and adult social care in 2019/20, including Public Health. That is 84% of the total budget, compared with 48% in 2007.

A relatively small percentage of the borough's population need these services but they are vital for the vulnerable adults and children who depend on them. While you may not receive these services yourself, your council tax in 2018/19 so far has directly contributed to:

20,500

items and equipment like ramps and mobility aids to help keep people mobile and at home

872

adults too vulnerable to live by themselves had a permanent residential or nursing care placement provided for them

1,017

older people supported to live independently at home with daily help

357

children looked after, who have either lost their parents or who can no longer live with their parents

1,985

children and young people supported with an Education, Health and Care plan to support their special educational needs

163

disabled children assisted with specialist equipment to help with things like mobility and hygiene

Progress on our priorities and pledges

Over the past year we have made significant progress towards realising our council vision, priorities and pledges.

To find out more about the work we are doing to improve Swindon visit swindon.gov.uk/vision



Priority one: Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy.



The Council completed the £11.5m improvements to Junction 16 of the M4 to increase its capacity. Work to improve Junction 15, which will be led by Highways England, will start this autumn.



Invested in resurfacing and relining the busy Coate Water roundabout, improving infrastructure at one of the town's key junctions.



Artist impression: Nationwide Building Society

We're working with Nationwide Building Society to build a new community at the former Oakfield Campus, created hand in hand with those who live, work, learn and play close by.



Built 14 affordable new homes on the former Royal British Legion site in Penhill. The houses were all built and occupied within just 13 months.



Completed major improvements to Regent Circus. Work included widening and repaving footpaths, new bus shelters, street lighting and landscaping featuring new sculptural planters.



Last summer, almost half a million pounds was spent rebuilding Upham Road, a residential street in Old Walcot, which included replacing its 60-year-old crumbling concrete base.



Worked with developers to produce the multi award-winning housing project Tadpole Garden Village in North Swindon, including Best Housing Scheme in the Planning Awards 2018.



Priority two: Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places.



Over 85% of schools are taking part in the town's Healthy Schools programme.



Swindon has the seventh highest economic output per worker out of 62 towns in the UK.



We are supporting the bid for an Institute of Technology in Swindon. If successful it will provide higher level technical training to over 1,000 students each year.



We hosted Swindon's JobFest for the fifth year and employers reached out to over 800 local people who could join their future workforce.



Priority three: Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture.



We are at the forefront of plans to build a £3.6m state-of-the-art sports hub in Moredon. The development will include a new pavilion, closed road cycling circuit, a BMX track and a 3G all-weather football pitch.



We led a successful application for the Railway Village to become a Heritage Action Zone, one of only two in the South West. This will help to regenerate neglected buildings and enhance attractions to draw in residents and visitors.



We secured funding for the giant interactive fitness game, Beat the Street, last autumn which saw residents clock up 313,353 miles improving their health by walking, cycling and running.



Worked with partners to reduce hospital transfer delays and get vulnerable people back into their homes faster, becoming the best performing local authority in the South West.



Priority four: Help people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults.



Awarded £2.3m funding to support children and young people with their mental health, working with Swindon CCG.



More than 7,000 people are signed up to be Dementia Friends supporting Swindon to become a Dementia Friendly Community.



We worked with First City Nursing and our re-ablement service to help older people stay in their own homes for longer. This helped to reduce residential and nursing care in Swindon by 15%.



Managed a successful winter homelessness project which helped more than half a dozen rough sleepers into permanent accommodation in 2018. The project was repeated and a new day centre launched this year.



We introduced the Housing First model which helps to get rough sleepers into secure accommodation with close personal support like help with budgeting, timekeeping and travel to appointments.



More than 600 vulnerable people in Swindon benefitted from the work of our 102 Swindon Circles befriending volunteers last year. They set out to help isolated residents with daily tasks, transport, companionship and meeting up with friends.

A landmark development for Swindon

Making sure that Swindon has a vibrant economy is one of the Council's key priorities. By growing the economy, Swindon will become a better place for everyone living here, with more jobs, more houses and more leisure opportunities. Plenty of progress is being made towards this aim, which you can read about on the following pages.

North Star Village is just one of a number of exciting schemes we have helped to bring to Swindon and there will be significant progress onsite this year.

North Star

Work to create a £270m leisure complex in Swindon will start soon.

The North Star Village will include:

- Two real-snow ski slopes
- The largest IMAX cinema in Europe
- 19-lane bowling alley
- 27,000 sq. ft. of trampolining space
- Shops, restaurants and parking

This project, due to be completed in 2021, is being led by private developer SevenCapital with the Council playing a key role as land owner and also facilitating the development.



northstarvillage.co.uk

Artist impression: SevenCapital

Investing in Swindon's future

Swindon's new workspace

The Council has invested over £5m into the Grade II listed Carriage Works, part of Brunel's former Railway Works. It has been transformed into a modern office space for digital and tech start-up businesses and will also become a base for the Royal Agricultural University later this year.

Image credit: The Enterprise Network



Building a new community in Wichelstowe

Work to create a thriving community with thousands of families in Wichelstowe is progressing quickly. The district centre, which is being led by the Council, already boasts a new flagship Hall & Woodhouse pub. Two new schools will provide top-class educational facilities along with new homes and a retirement complex. The Wilts and Berks Canal forms the centrepiece of this modern development.



Zurich investment

The Council is working closely with one of the town's major employers, Zurich, to start the next phase of the Kimmerfields site redevelopment, by supporting them to build a state-of-the-art new office building. The site is in the town centre, next to the bus station.

Artist impression: Zurich Insurance PLC



New homes

The Council has signed a joint venture with Barratt Developments, one of the UK's largest housebuilders, to deliver 3,000 new homes in Wichelstowe. The first homes will be available later this year.

Register your interest at barratthomes.co.uk or dwh.co.uk

Image credit: Barratt Developments PLC

Keeping Swindon moving

Replacing the bus station

Plans are being developed to turn Fleming Way into a new hub for Swindon's buses, replacing the current bus station. It is part of ambitious plans to redevelop Kimmerfields and the wider town centre. A bid to fund the project will be submitted this year and we will aim to start work in early 2021.

New Eastern Villages

We are working with developers to create Swindon's New Eastern Villages housing development, which includes 8,000 houses, employment space, new schools and a new district centre in East Swindon. Work will include improvements to roads in the area at the White Hart roundabout and the Gable Cross junction on the A420, which are due to start later this year.

Mead Way

We will be improving traffic flow on Mead Way by widening a section of the road later this year, improving journey times and increasing capacity during peak times.

Moonrakers junction

Our Highways team have just finished consulting on a redesign of the Moonrakers junction which will help to ease congestion in this part of the town and improve journey times for all users. We are reviewing the consultation feedback and will let residents know what's happening in the next few months.



Artist impression

Creating a cleaner and greener Swindon

Swindon is leading the way in becoming an environmentally friendly town in partnership with Public Power Solutions (PPS), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Council. Over the past few years we have made great progress in generating renewable energy in the borough and we are in the process of implementing a strategy to make the way we collect and process Swindon's waste more environmentally and financially sustainable. You can read about our waste strategy on page 19.

Reducing landfill and making use of our waste

Swindon was the first council in the UK to develop a Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) plant to process household waste. The plant takes black bin waste and turns it into fuel which replaces fossil fuels. Thanks to our plant, only 4% of Swindon's waste is sent to landfill. The SRF plant is incredibly clean, emitting 99.9% steam and is powered by solar energy during daylight hours, saving money as well as cutting our carbon footprint. There are plans to upgrade the plant this year to turn the fuel into pellets making it more efficient and allowing us to sell the fuel in the UK.



Sheep grazing at Chapel Farm solar park

Powering Swindon through renewable energy

In December 2018, PPS switched on Barnfield Solar Farm, which was built on a former landfill site. Barnfield follows our other solar power schemes at Common Farm and Chapel Farm. Over the next 18 months PPS are planning further projects which will contribute to the creation of Swindon's own "energy innovation zone" including battery energy storage and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.



A new strategy for Swindon's waste



Last December the Council's Cabinet approved a new waste strategy for Swindon.

The strategy aims to lead the way by encouraging Swindon's residents, businesses and visitors to reduce waste and recycle more. It also sets out how we will process Swindon's waste in the future as we aim to achieve the 60% recycling target set by the Government for 2025. Our current recycling rate across the borough is around 39%.

It's a 10-year strategy but some of the things you can expect to see during this first year are:

- Improved information for residents
- More help and advice from additional Waste Wardens
- New initiatives to help improve recycling and waste reduction
- Reducing waste and increasing recycling across council buildings

It is everyone's responsibility to recycle more and reduce waste in Swindon. Changes are due to come into place to improve how we all manage our waste. Look out for service updates through your letterbox, on our website and across social media.



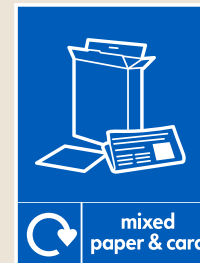
Find out more about the strategy at sustainableswindon.co.uk



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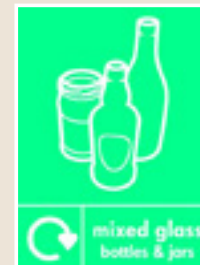
Lid firmly closed

Box 1



Lid firmly closed

Box 2



Textiles should be put into a separate tied bag, which is clear or labelled **textiles**

Sign Up

Sign up to our fortnightly garden waste recycling service at swindon.gov.uk/gardenwaste

For £50 per year, your garden waste will be collected and recycled into sustainable compost



Find out more information at swindon.gov.uk/recycling

Tackling potholes

The Council maintains more than 510 miles of roads across the borough. The team identify and repair potholes and other problems with roads, pavements and cycle paths.

You can report a pothole on our website at swindon.gov.uk/potholes

In 2018, we fixed 7,592 potholes and damaged patches in roads and footpaths

and we responded to 910 pothole reports from the public, including emergency repairs.



Gritting Swindon's roads

Our team of 16 drivers and eight gritting lorries are on standby 24/7 to treat the roads when the temperatures drop. Last winter, we had a stockpile of **2,300 tonnes** of salt available to use across the borough and the team were also on hand to plough our roads in heavy snow.

Find out more about our gritting services at swindon.gov.uk/roadgritting

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Follow us on social media for news and updates on Council services.

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 [SwindonBoroughCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/SwindonBoroughCouncil)

Get the latest news and information by signing up to our newsletters








swindon.gov.uk/newsletter



Save time, go online

You can use our online services to make a report, query or request quickly and easily through our website. Our My Account system also lets you track the progress of your enquiries.

Many services are available online:

-  Garden waste sign up and renewals
-  Bin collection services
-  Council tenants housing repairs
-  Street lighting
-  Graffiti
-  Pay for something
-  School applications

This publication is delivered to approximately 89,000 households throughout the borough. If you have any questions please email communications@swindon.gov.uk

The information contained in this booklet is available at swindon.gov.uk/annualreport and can be reproduced in large print or other accessible formats by emailing customerservices@swindon.gov.uk

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12p per
booklet to
produce

Where your money goes

Your council tax bill 2019/20

Where every £1,000 of your council tax goes

Caring for older people & adults with special needs	£480
Protecting children & vulnerable young people	£275
Waste collection & disposal	£87
Investment in major projects	£42
Supporting young people (not including schools)	£31
Leisure, libraries & culture	£22
Revenues, benefits & customer services	£18
Street cleaning & street lighting	£16
Housing the homeless & housing planning	£13
Keeping people safe e.g. food hygiene inspections	£9
Maintaining roads & grounds	£5
Business support, insurance costs, HR, IT, communications, legal and financial support	£2

TOTAL**£1,000**



This bill only represents services directly funded by residents' council tax. Other council services such as planning, car parking, schools and public health are funded by the income they raise or specific grant funding rather than council tax and so are not included in the figures above.