



Swindon
Town Investment Plan

Swindon Town Deal Board

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SWINDON TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

Executive Summary

If you bank with Nationwide, use Intel products, travel by train, fly in an A330, drive a Mini or a Honda Civic, have ever visited a National Trust property, watched Tim Peake's progress through space, or have simply benefited from scientific or medical research, you've probably got Swindon to thank

Swindon is one of 100 towns preparing a submission to the Governments £3.6bn Town Fund

Swindon Borough Council, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, In-Swindon, Voluntary Action Swindon, the Science Museum, Nationwide Building Society and other key businesses established the Swindon Town Deal Board in March to prepare the Swindon Town Investment Plan. The Town Deal Board established a Community Engagement Panel as one of its first actions to make sure the plan benefitted from the views of residents, as well as those of community and voluntary organisations.

Swindon's Town Deal Vision summarises the Town Deal Board's aspirations for growth

"We're a town that changes with the times, preserving and celebrating the legacy of our past as the foundation for a prosperous, well-connected, green and inclusive future.

Booming with ideas and potential, a place of entrepreneurs, experimenters, dreamers and doers, primed to move forward and break away from the pack.

Driven by technology, we're a town built on progress. An economic powerhouse creating great jobs, building an outstanding range of homes, and empowering people to live their lives to the full. We're setting the pace just as our forefathers did.

A community that really cares about the future; a vibrant town centre with a strong heart and beating rhythm: connected, innovative and welcoming.

Swindon. A clever move"

An open call for projects invited Town Investment Plan proposals. Submissions were then assessed through a clear and transparent process involving the community at each stage. What has emerged is an ambitious package to drive the regeneration of the town centre putting it at the heart of Swindon as a well-connected, innovative, and welcoming town. It is rooted in a clear understanding of the challenges & opportunities in front of it and aims to radically improve local and market perceptions of Swindon. Swindon's Town Investment Plan submission builds on the Town Centre Masterplan and its regeneration framework and includes the following projects (Towns Fund resources in brackets):

1. **Kimmerfields:** priming brownfield land to deliver town centre housing and office accommodation at scale (£7 million).
2. **Heritage Action Zone Streets & Spaces:** public realm and access improvements to tie Swindon's heritage-led regeneration projects together (£3 million).
3. **Health Hydro Refurbishment:** embedding community and leisure uses in the heart of the Railway Village (£5 million).
4. **Carriage Works:** refurbishment of vacant heritage buildings as commercial space for start-ups and innovative businesses (£5 million).
5. **Create Studios at Carriage Works:** fitting out new commercial space in the Carriage Works with modern creative facilities to support Swindon's digital economy (£0.4 million).
6. **David Murray John Regeneration:** modernising Swindon's landmark asset to provide key worker housing and stimulate town centre development (£5.5 million).
7. **Brunel Centre Market:** high quality facilities for food and drink businesses as part of the town centre's changing role (£0.1 million).

Assuming the submission is successful, £25 million will be spent over the next 5 years to create a spine of economic, cultural, and leisure activity through Swindon town centre, linking the Railway Village, major development sites, Swindon's railway station and proposed new bus facilities. It will deliver more than 360 new homes and some 115,000 sq. ft. of skills and enterprise space supporting an estimated 700 jobs making a major contribution to the town centre's regeneration.

1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 If you bank with Nationwide, use Intel products, travel by train, fly in an A330, drive a Mini or a Honda Civic, have ever visited a National Trust property, watched Tim Peake's progress through space, or have simply benefited from scientific or medical research, you've probably got Swindon to thank.
- 1.1.2 Swindon, with its outstanding natural setting and rich heritage, has been at the forefront of British innovation since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Modern Swindon was founded on the vision of Brunel, who established his railway works here in the 1840s.
- 1.1.3 The Great Western Railway supported the development of Swindon's engineering and manufacturing heritage. This spirit of innovation continues to this day and is central to local economic policy making. It is typified by the presence of several innovation-driven sectors including health and life sciences, pharmaceuticals, mobile telecommunications, digital, and high value manufacturing.¹
- 1.1.4 Swindon's key strengths include its innovation and high productivity, regional connectivity, rich heritage, and good quality of life. However, this platform for town centre growth is constrained by a set of interrelated key challenges including the need to build a critical mass of town centre economic activity, poor perceptions and business confidence, severance and car dominance, a skills gap, and multiple deprivation.
- 1.1.5 Where Swindon has grown, this has been concentrated on its outer edges. This has diminished the town centre's role as the cultural, commercial, and civic heart of the town. The town centre is now characterised by a relatively poor post-war built environment, vacant retail units, and several conspicuous undeveloped brownfield sites.
- 1.1.6 The Towns Fund represents an opportunity to tackle head-on the principal challenges facing Swindon. It will fund projects to drive clean and inclusive economic growth with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better connectivity, skills, and culture. This investment will deliver benefits across Swindon town centre to complement broader investment in the wider Borough, primarily taking place outside of the town centre, whilst also aligning with the wider functional economic areas, including the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP area and the Western Gateway and England's Economic Heartland.

Town Deal Area

- 1.1.7 The town deal area is the Swindon Borough Council (SBC) boundary (see Figure 1.1). The Town Deal Board (TDB) subsequently agreed to take the strategic decision to focus on the town centre as it has the highest potential for transformational development, incorporating major employment areas, residential areas and the town centre, which includes primary retail areas, educational campuses, the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) around the railway village and important regeneration sites and opportunities. Figure 1.2 shows the distribution of short-listed projects within the town centre.

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Figure 1.1:
Swindon Towns Deal Boundary: Swindon Borough Council Boundary

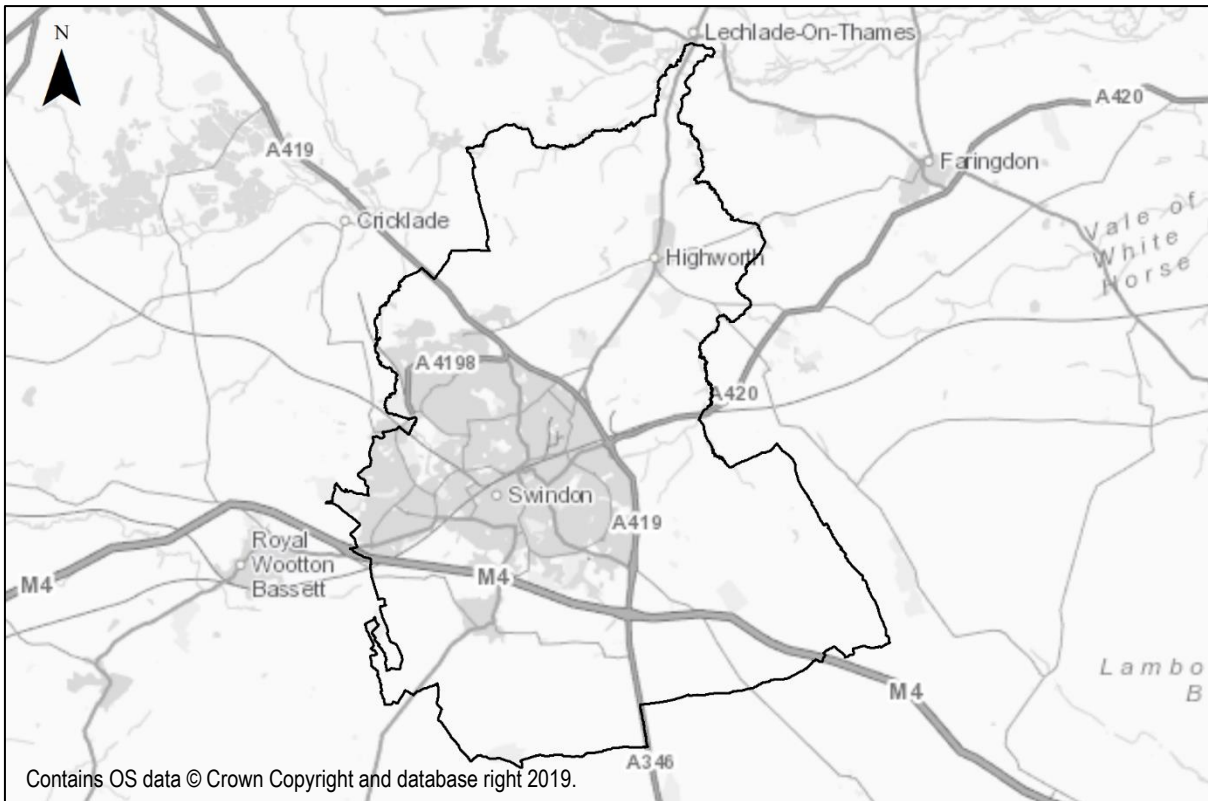
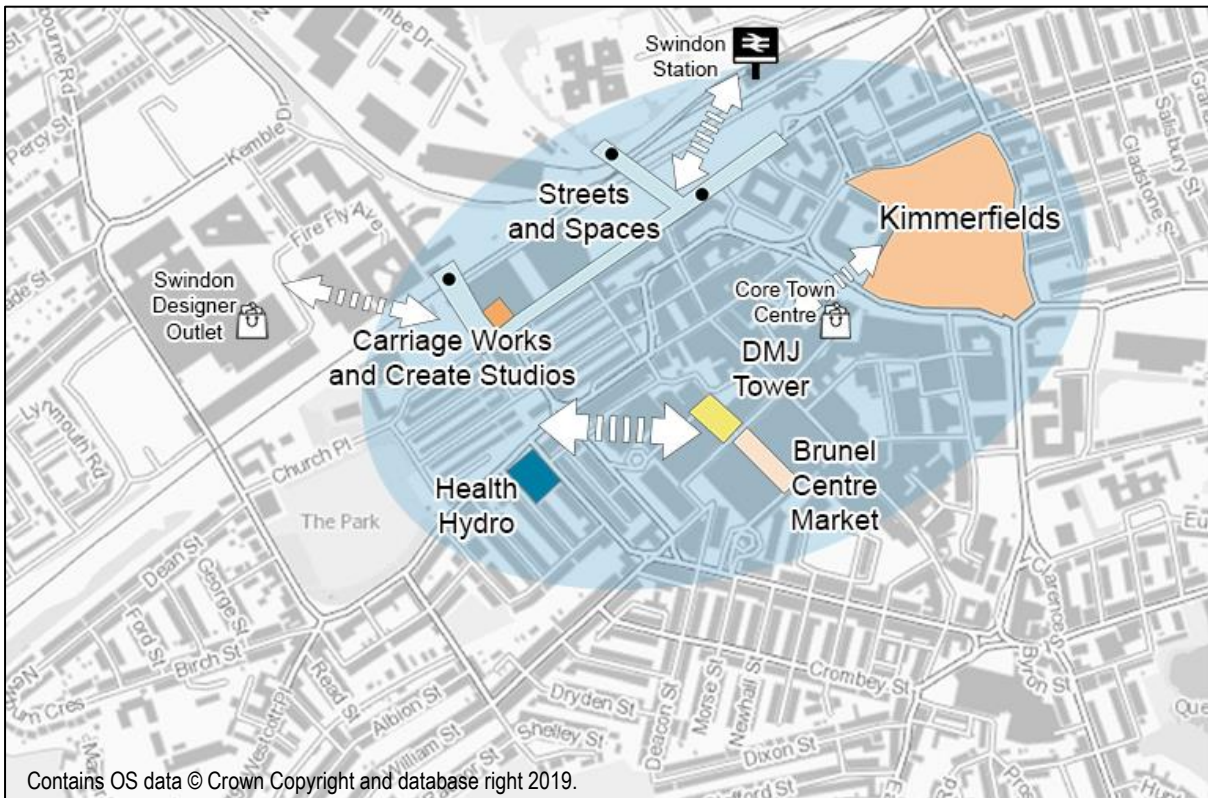


Figure 1.2:
Town Investment Plan projects



1.2 A PLATFORM FOR GROWTH

Assets and Strengths

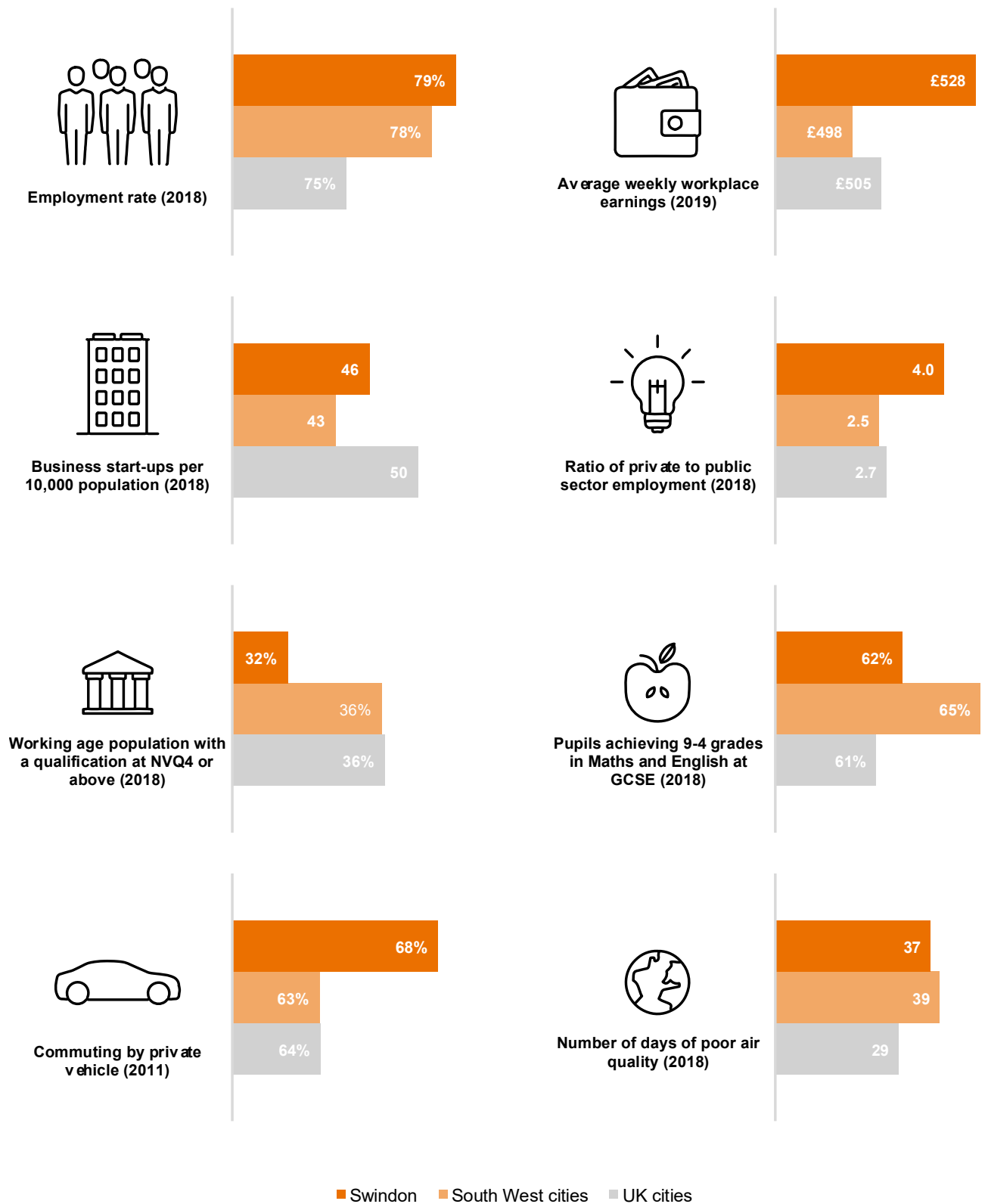
Innovation and Productivity

- 1.2.1 Building on its rich industrial heritage, Swindon has benefited from generations of investment, particularly in road and rail transport links, capitalising on its strategic location in the United Kingdom.
- 1.2.2 The area has nationally recognised clusters in automotive manufacturing; digital and technology; finance and professional services and life sciences and health. Swindon attracts and supports a robust and growing network of over 9,110 companies including headquarters of global brands Catalent, Nationwide Building Society, Intel, and Honda of the UK Manufacturing and WH Smith, alongside many innovative supply chain companies across numerous sectors.²
- 1.2.3 Innovation is central to Swindon's strong economic performance and future growth. World-renowned businesses have invested in the town and its locality including Intel, Dyson, Dolby Laboratories, Zurich, and BMW Group. To make sure Swindon continues to attract leading companies we need to reinforce our town centre and its links to communities and businesses.
- 1.2.4 This innovative character is also recognised by the public sector. Swindon is home to seven national UKRI departments and Innovate UK, as well as the UK Space Agency.
- 1.2.5 These examples typify Swindon's increasing presence as a knowledge-based economy. Swindon is among the ten towns and cities across the UK with the highest proportion of private knowledge intensive business services (17.2%), well above the average of 12.3%.³ Today Swindon is among the most productive towns and cities in the country, with average productivity of £86,000 gross value added per worker.⁴
- 1.2.6 Figure 1.3 and Figure 1.4 below capture the dynamism of Swindon's economy, showing it is highly productive, weighted towards the private sector, and commands higher pay and employment. However, it also emphasises the challenges the town faces – namely car dominance and the skills gap – which are discussed further in Section 1.3.

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Figure 1.3:
Headline Baseline Information



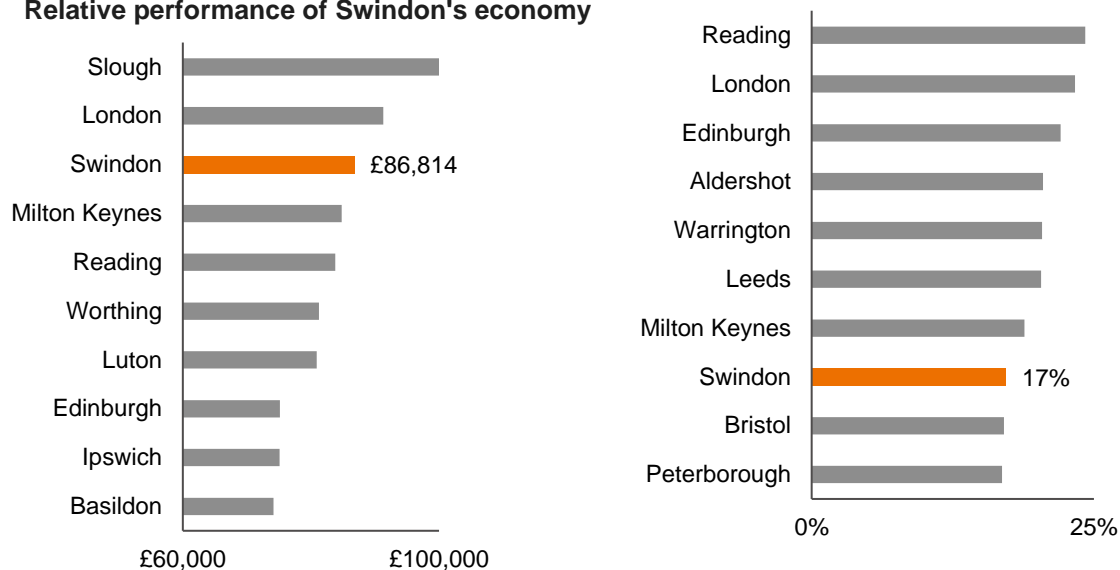
Source: Centre for Cities (2020). *Cities Data Tool*.

Note: South West cities include Bournemouth, Bristol, Exeter, Gloucester, Plymouth, and Swindon.

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Figure 1.4:
Relative performance of Swindon's economy



10 towns and cities with the highest productivity

10 towns and cities with the highest proportion of private knowledge intensive business services

Source: ONS (2019). *Regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current market prices; Business Register and Employment Survey.*

Inward Investment

- 1.2.7 SBC is undertaking specific inward investment sector research, which is due to be published later in 2020 but has initially identified Swindon's key inward investment growth opportunities are focused on:
- Digital technology.
 - Advanced manufacturing.
 - Pharma-manufacturing supply chain.
 - Professional and financial services.
 - Distribution and logistics back office.
- 1.2.8 Several programmes are underway to attract domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI) in these sectors including TechSwindon and a European Structural and Investment funded project and more details on this will be available in the near term.
- 1.2.9 The research also found that while Swindon has an unusually high number of FDI companies for its size, including several headquarters, many of these firms struggle with recruitment related to a net loss of graduate talent which is discussed in Section 1.3 below.

Regional Connectivity

1.2.10 Swindon is well placed to develop its business environment due to its excellent regional connectivity. Five major cities including Bristol, Bath, Reading, Gloucester, and Oxford are less than an hours' drive away, which also provides good connectivity beyond to London in the east and Cardiff and south Wales to the west. Electrification of the Great Western Railway has further reduced journey times to and from Swindon.⁵

Figure 1.5:
Regional connectivity and proximity to centres of innovation



Town Centre Heritage

1.2.11 Swindon’s world-class heritage is one of the town’s strengths. A rich and conserved historic environment can be a key driver of town centre regeneration with extensive economic and social benefits. Research commissioned by Historic England has found that restoration of the heritage-led regeneration can:

- Improve perceptions of the local area

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- Increase civic pride and sense of identity
- Engender a sense of place.
- Influence decisions around where to live, work, and visit.⁶

1.2.12 Railway heritage offers Swindon a unique selling point, offering opportunities for vibrant branding and place making. A HAZ covers much of the heritage linked to the railway related history of Swindon.

Quality of Life

1.2.13 Ranked 7th best place to live in the UK, Swindon is a welcoming, vibrant multi-cultural town with access to beautiful green spaces on its doorstep including Stonehenge and the Cotswolds, the Chilterns and the Wiltshire Downs and historic cities of Bath and Oxford, with London less than an hour away by train.

1.2.14 Sports are an important part of Swindon's economy and quality of life. Over 7,000 local and visiting spectators come to the town centre-based Swindon Town Football Club every other weekend. Swindon Speedway and Wildcats bring a further 50,000 plus visitors per year.

Capturing the Opportunity

1.2.15 Swindon's assets and strengths provide a solid foundation for clean and inclusive growth.

1.2.16 Economic growth has driven up land and property values in nearby competing centres, and in this context, Swindon offers excellent value.⁷

1.2.17 However, the quality of the business environment and public realm in the town centre discourages investors and occupiers, undermining confidence and limiting transformational progress.⁸ Swindon is described by the Centre for Cities as having a "disjointed innovation system", where the town ranks highly for workplace wages but is missing several other crucial components of innovation.⁹

1.2.18 Swindon Town Deal Board believes a comprehensive town centre regeneration strategy will have a transformational impact, encouraging the private sector to step in and deliver development across the town.

1.2.19 This Town Investment Plan (TIP) speaks to other town centre initiatives including the HAZ and the Council's Future High Streets Fund submission while aligning with the Towns Fund intervention framework.

1.2.20 Its projects will deliver infrastructure for innovation and to increase productivity, space for training and skills, high quality public realm to build the town centre's attraction and to support modern, attractive, and sustainable housing. They will bridge the gap between key areas of the town centre such as the retail core, the Outlet Village, Swindon Station, and the Heritage Action Zone to better connect these and drive footfall to and from each.

Context

Town Centre Masterplan

- 1.2.21 The Town Centre Masterplan was published in March 2013 following extensive engagement with key businesses and community stakeholders in Swindon. The masterplan was endorsed with cross party support and continues to play a key role in steering planning for the town centre.
- 1.2.22 The focus has now shifted firmly towards delivery and implementation and the masterplan now comprises the 'Swindon Town Centre Vision' statement and associated Delivery Plan, the latter adopted in December 2016.
- 1.2.23 The primary objective of these documents is economic growth. The Delivery Plan identified discrete realistic and achievable projects that will help change perceptions and create confidence.

1.3 CHALLENGES FACING SWINDON

Town Centre Economic Activity

- 1.3.1 Retaining earnings and wealth in the town is a key challenge for Swindon.¹⁰ Central to this is a shortage of residential, cultural, and leisure activity in the town centre. The town is comprised of distinct areas with little integration or mixed-use.
- “ Swindon Town Centre seems to be becoming more redundant by the year. With some of our bigger stores like Topshop and the Morrisons that only opened a couple of years ago on their way out, it seems like we barely have anything left. ”*
- MyTown Feedback** ” ”
- 1.3.2 Low town centre values make residential development relatively unattractive.¹¹ The ongoing presence of large vacant sites and buildings continue to worsen the quality of the environment and compound the scale of the challenge.
- 1.3.3 Centre for Cities research indicates the town's growth and prosperity is hampered by a lack of high value job density and low residential density in the town centre.¹² This limits achievement of a critical mass of town centre activity particular on weekdays, with knock on effects on the viability of town centre operators. This is compounded by constraints to town centre access caused by congestion and an unreliable transport network.
- 1.3.4 The town centre core is pedestrianised and predominantly in retail use. Whilst relatively well used during the day, it can feel deserted and unsafe once shops close.¹³ With relatively few town centre flats and apartments, the resident population is low and evening footfall suffers as a consequence. These characteristics and a lack of appropriate and affordable town centre accommodation deter people from staying in the town itself, further reducing the availability of skilled labour.

Figure 1.6:
Swindon town centre: day and night-time activity.



Source: Swindon Borough Council (2013). Planning Swindon Together.

- 1.3.5 Further, there are presently no major higher education providers in Swindon, unusual for a town of its size and location. While an Institute of Technology will be delivered on the Swindon College site as part of the Government's current programme, this further highlights the absence of town centre footfall and spend generators.
- 1.3.6 This homogeneity of uses precludes a viable context for cultural, leisure, and food and drink activities. Residential, educational, cultural, and leisure development will build activity and expenditure in the town centre. The range of demands and their scale will then support and reinforce development of a day and night economy
- 1.3.7 Instead, the retail-dominated town centre remains vulnerable to structural economic changes and COVID-19 which have contributed to the decline of high street stores. Swindon needs to diversify its town centre to ensure its growth is clean and inclusive across the whole borough. Without an attractive central cultural, leisure, and food and drink offer, businesses are restricted in their ability to attract skilled workers to live and work in Swindon.
- 1.3.8 In tandem, commercial, retail, and residential development and investment has focussed on greenfield sites around Swindon's periphery. Stakeholders have noted the combination investment on the edge of the town and its absence in the centre as having a 'ring-doughnut effect' -the periphery is doing well but the town centre underperforms. This needs to be rebalanced to ensure investment benefits all of Swindon.

Negative Perceptions of Swindon

- 1.3.9 Part of Swindon's challenge is that the market feels reluctant to invest without greater certainty about and confidence in the town's future. This reluctance reinforces decline.
- 1.3.10 Negative views of the town centre and low values have hindered longstanding plans for continued economic growth. Private investors have been discouraged from bringing forward planned regeneration schemes on brownfield sites. In the present circumstances, town centre development tends to stall without the confidence and certainty of a 'pre-let' to an occupier.¹⁴

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- 1.3.11 The town centre’s business environment has suffered as a result. Under-provision of new and varied space for small and large businesses, dwindling supply, and the poor quality of existing office stock are key constraints. This is further hampered by areas of poor-quality public realm
- 1.3.12 Poor perceptions of Swindon – externally and internally - have been a long-standing thorn in the town’s side, even during the 1980’s when it was the fastest growing town in Europe. The Switch on to Swindon Ambassador Network is heavily engaged in promoting the town as a place to do business and its positive characteristics. Internally, perceptions are driven mainly by the local community and these perceptions focus on the town centre first and foremost. Whether internal or external, the town centre will necessarily be at the core of transforming views of Swindon.

Constraints on Investment

Commercial Development

- 1.3.13 One key objective of this TIP is to raise confidence of the market in Swindon. Uncertainty over occupancy and development values discourages private sector investment in commercial property.
- “A key constraint in the past has been a lack of new and varied space for small and large businesses, dwindling supply, and the poor quality of existing stock.”**
Masterplan Review and Delivery Plan
- 1.3.14 The demand for office space in Swindon has historically been relatively limited, with the Borough facing competition to attract investment and occupiers from other nearby commercial centres such as Bristol and Reading.¹⁵
- 1.3.15 Returns on new office development are also lower in Swindon, reflecting this lack of demand. In addition to relatively low rents office property yields are also estimated to be 2.0 and 1.5 percentage points higher than Bristol and Reading, respectively. This suggests the gross development value of an office development in Swindon would be less than half that in these nearby centres.

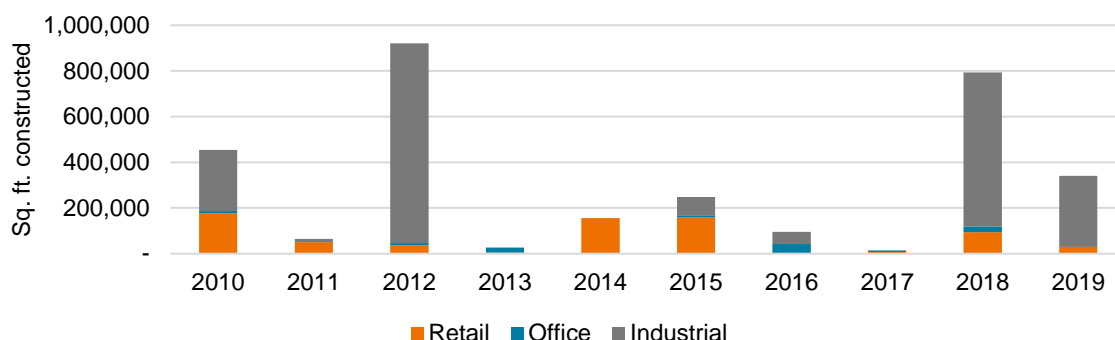
Table 1.1: Return on office developments.

	Swindon	Bristol	Reading	South West
Average rent per sq. ft.	£15	£23	£27	£16
Estimated yield	8.2%	6.2%	6.7%	7.6%
Gross development value per sq. ft.	£180	£369	£405	£213

Source: Stantec analysis of CoStar Properties © data

- 1.3.16 While lower commercial rents may act as an incentive to businesses, take-up is constrained by the ageing stock¹⁶ and local office market inactivity as well as a lack of business attractors. Low returns dissuade investors from new development, as illustrated by the low build-out rates shown in Figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7:
Commercial property constructed in Swindon, sq. ft.



Source: Stantec analysis of CoStar Properties © data

1.3.17 Market constraints on development are further compounded by other barriers to delivery on a significant proportion of the area’s allocated employment land, including site preparation and up-front infrastructure costs.

1.3.18 Centre for Cities analysis shows transport connectivity and access to space are two critical factors for business location.¹⁷ Clearly Swindon is accessible, particularly its proximity to the M4, so in this instance this connectivity acts as a negative for the town centre as the preference is to be located outside it. In terms of availability of space, the average UK city has approximately 50% of its town centre floorplate in office use. Swindon’s has 33%, reflecting the lack of central accommodation.

Residential Development

1.3.19 SBC has a strong track record of housing delivery and is among one of the fastest growing housing markets in the country with 4,900 homes constructed over the last four years.¹⁸ New communities at Wichelstowe, Tadpole Farm, and the New Eastern Village are anticipated to deliver 1,700 new homes a year until 2026.¹⁹

1.3.20 Yet housing growth has historically been concentrated on the periphery of the town while brownfield housing sites in the town centre remain undeveloped. Low viability discourages town centre housing densification and delivery capable of addressing Swindon’s challenges.

1.3.21 As Table 1.2 shows, while house prices are generally consistent with the national average, flats and maisonettes sell for 37% below average. This reflects the existing low demand for housing and the poor quality of the residential environment in the town centre.

Table 1.2: Average residential property prices, 2019

	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Flat/Maisonette	Total
Swindon	£362,000	£246,000	£199,000	£141,500	£243,500
England	£375,000	£231,500	£200,000	£224,000	£247,000

Source: Stantec analysis of Land Registry price paid data.

Context

- 1.3.22 The low return on the development of flats discourages private sector development of town centre housing sites threatening scheme viability. Low sales values are unlikely to cover abnormal costs associated with town centre development.

Severance and Car Dominance

- 1.3.23 Swindon benefits from strategic road and rail connectivity, however this is not balanced by local accessibility. Highways dominate the town centre, reducing ease of movement and causing severance.²⁰

“ The relocation of the town centre to the area immediately south of the railway [...] introduced a permanent split in the perception of the town centre and a dislocation of the Old Town from the retail and commercial centre of Swindon.

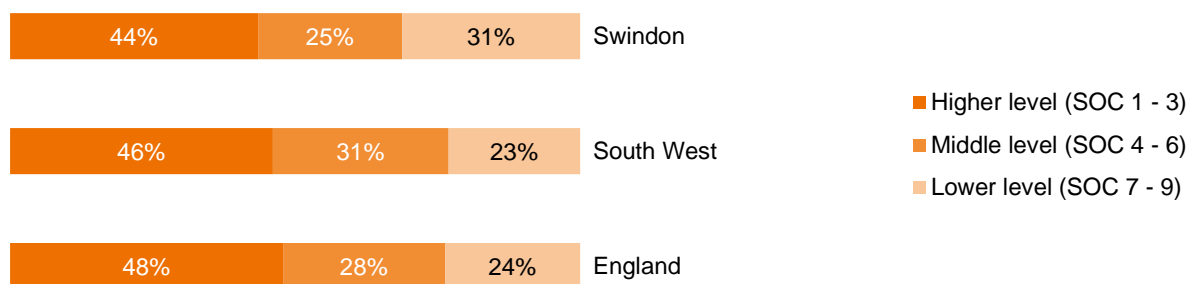
Swindon Masterplan ”

- 1.3.24 While driving is the quickest option for many to access Swindon's town centre, the prevalence of private vehicles generates peak hour congestion.²¹ Pedestrian gateways coincide with general traffic gateways, encouraging pedestrians to use alternative, less direct walking routes. The town's cycle network is fragmented, infrequently segregated, and short on parking, further undermining the use of alternative modes of town centre access, or meaning residents choose not to access the centre at all.²²
- 1.3.25 Road dominance in the town centre erodes Swindon's sense of place and breaks potential links between the centre and different areas of the town, including key residential areas centre.
- 1.3.26 An accessible transport network is essential to the functioning of a successful town. Better access to the town centre and movement between homes and jobs would improve Swindon's attractiveness to residents and businesses while also addressing air quality issues and bringing benefit to general standards of health and wellbeing.
- 1.3.27 The most popular retail area, attracting over 3.4 million users per year, is the McArthur Glen Designer Outlet which is cut off from the town centre and Railway Village by the railway line and poor-quality public realm in the tunnels under it. Helping to build connections across this and through the Railway Village presents an opportunity to drive high levels of footfall into the core town centre.

Skills Gap

- 1.3.28 Although Swindon has high employment, many are in low-skilled jobs. Figure 1.8 shows that 31.2% of Swindon’s residents are in ‘low level’ jobs, compared to a national average of 23.7%. Local businesses identify a shortage of a ready workforce with higher level skills as a major barrier to growth.²³ Several employers report long-term skilled vacancies. A survey undertaken by the LEP found that 31% of vacancies in the town were skills related, compared with 23% across England.²⁴
- 1.3.29 This labour market weakness is partly due to low Higher Education progression and below-average attainment, which can lead to employment in lower skilled jobs. While 86% of English students achieved at least 2 substantial level 3 qualifications in 2018/19, just 66% of Swindon’s students achieved this.²⁵
- 1.3.30 Swindon has a low uptake of higher and degree-level apprenticeships. The LEP Strategic Economic Plan reports the national average for students with an A level or level 3 qualification moving into higher education is 58%. In Swindon it is 35%²⁶.

Figure 1.8:
Resident occupations by skill level, 2019



Source: ONS (2020). Annual Population Survey.

- 1.3.31 The SW LEP commissioned a survey of employers and young people to inform its Higher Education Strategy in 2018. This found that employers have difficulty recruiting to the area, and they are not confident of being able to recruit in the future. It indicated that most young people wish to leave the area.²⁷
- 1.3.32 Graduate flows remain an issue in that a higher than average proportion of learners leave the area and do not return. Graduates are attracted to the area from elsewhere, but overall, Swindon and Wiltshire currently experience a net loss of graduate talent. Higher Education Funding Council England data demonstrates the scale of the challenge, with a large proportion of students across the LEP area across 2010 - 2015 (57.1%) leaving for study and not returning (versus the UK average of 33.1%).²⁸

Multiple Deprivation

- 1.3.33 The Faringdon Road area of Swindon town centre is one of the most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in England. The area is in the bottom 20% overall and bottom 10% for Living Environment and Crime. In 2015 this LSOA was the most deprived LSOA in Swindon Central Ward and within the bottom 20th percentile for deprivation in England ranking 4,377th out of a total 32,844 LSOA's. In Swindon more generally, 64 % of adults are categorised as having excess weight, including 25% who are categorised as being obese.
- 1.3.34 For the two domains, Living Environment and Crime, Faringdon Road LSOA is ranked within the bottom 10th percentile of England and is therefore considered 'highly deprived'.
- 1.3.35 Swindon Central Ward's relative deprivation on the Living Environment domain is driven by the proportion of houses in poor condition, especially in LSOAs Bathurst St, Faringdon Rd, Albion St and Regent's Close.
- The Crime domain is made up of the following indicators:
 - Violence: The rate of violence per 1,000 at-risk population (0.324)
 - Burglary: The rate of burglary per 1,000 at-risk properties (0.189)
 - Theft: The rate of theft per 1,000 at-risk population (0.222)
 - Criminal Damage: The rate of criminal damage per 1,000 at-risk population. (0.265)

2.0 IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON SWINDON

- 2.1.1 COVID-19 has had a significant town centre impact with all offices and most retailers closed. Those essential retailers who remained open reported good levels of business indicating their importance to residents. With the easing of lockdown measures for non-essential retailers, and more recently food and drink establishments and other businesses, footfall has markedly improved, although sizeably down year on year. While too soon to measure the full impact, footfall trends appear to be heading in the right direction.
- 2.1.2 inSwindon BID launched the *#ShineOnSwindon* campaign to support town centre businesses remaining open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and those that have reopened since 15th June. It is being very well received by retailers, the hospitality sector, and residents alike. *#ShineOnSwindon* will continue in various forms for the rest of the year to promote Swindon's Town Centre as a destination of choice for business, shopping, and leisure.
- 2.1.3 Swindon Borough Council is working with partners on a COVID19 delivery plan, its immediate focus being to open high streets and businesses and safeguard jobs. Mid-to-long-term plans focus on growth & innovation underpinned by a clear emphasis on resilience.
- 2.1.4 Operationally, demand for the space enabled by the TIP projects will be linked, in the most part, to residential and commercial demand. COVID 19 may occasion temporary reduced demand for homes and commercial space but it is anticipated that this will have improved as the projects included in the TIP are completed. The experience of lockdown may alter the shape of commercial or residential demand requirements e.g. access to gardens or communal spaces. These aspects are generally harder to accommodate given the densification of development and town centre locations, however, the Town Deal Board will continue to engage with project promoters to ensure they respond to the needs of the market and the Town Investment Plan delivers projects that work for Swindon.
- 2.1.5 Swindon Town Deal Community Panel feedback indicates that Covid-19 has affected Swindon town centre particularly badly, that retail is likely to be significantly affected and that the need for public sector intervention is greater than ever. Sustainable, clean growth and a green recovery is also a clear goal of the Community Panel with a focus on energy efficiency in buildings and promotion of more sustainable transport modes. The Community Panel also identified other options for addressing pandemic-related impacts including opportunities for retraining staff who lose their jobs and diversification of skills into innovative new sectors. Opportunities for small businesses to continue to operate and start up space for independent retailers to give them confidence to trade, were also cited as potential avenues for intervention, providing available resource.

3.0 STRATEGY

3.1 SWINDON VISION

- 3.1.1** Swindon's Town Investment Plan vision and objectives have been agreed by the Town Deal Board. The Town Deal Board was determined to prepare a vision and set of objectives based on the key characteristics of the town which have driven its growth in the past, and at the same time Swindon's ambitions to be, and to be acknowledged as a leading well-connected, innovative, and welcoming town. The vision has been informed by the evidence base presented above and the delivery framework described by the Town Centre Masterplan.
- 3.1.2** In parallel with the issues identified in Section 1, Community Panel feedback highlighted clear directions including: attracting and retaining more income and spending in the town; promoting a major shift in local and market perceptions of Swindon; encouraging sustainable transport while addressing congestion and severance between communities and the town centre; building locally available high level skills through high-quality training and education; and ensuring Swindon's growth is clean and inclusive of its communities. The vision and objectives will support the Town Deal Board in delivering against these needs and respond to the Community Panel's concerns.
- 3.1.3** The Swindon Town Investment Plan vision, and its three strategic objectives, are grounded in the facts. The Town Deal Board has worked through several exercises to strip back the clichés and preconceptions about Swindon, helping its vision to capture what the town has always been, is today, and can be tomorrow.

Our Vision

- 3.1.4** The vision is based on what defines Swindon – its legacy and identity, and ambitions:

We're a town that changes with the times, preserving and celebrating the legacy of our past as the foundation for a prosperous, well-connected, green and inclusive future.

Booming with ideas and potential, a place of entrepreneurs, experimenters, dreamers, and doers, primed to move forward and break away from the pack.

Driven by technology, we're a home built on progress. An economic powerhouse creating great jobs, building an outstanding range of homes, and empowering people to live their lives to the full. We're setting the pace just as our forefathers did.

A community that really cares about the future; a vibrant town centre with a strong heart and beating rhythm: connected, innovative and welcoming.

Swindon. A clever move.

3.2 OUR PILLARS

3.2.1 The vision is supported by three strategic pillars. Their implementation will define the future Swindon. Through delivery of the TIP and related programmes, Swindon will be:

Well-connected

Innovative

Welcoming

Built on...

A practical, sustainable network powering our town centre.

Digitally connected and physically linked by pedestrian areas, cycle routes, and future travel options, our people-focused town centre will bring Swindon's heritage, culture & entrepreneurial spirit together:

Over 200 years of experience in innovation.

Swindon's heritage is England in microcosm: from the railway and engineering boom to modern town planning and the growth of global commerce and world-leading tech innovation. Swindon will continue to lead commercial and industrial innovation.

A sustainable, people-friendly place.

A proudly hospitable, inclusive town, with urban vitality but the down-to-earth, close-knit culture of a small town. It's a place where people prosper at any age surrounded by stunning natural assets.

3.3 OUR OBJECTIVES

3.3.1 Strategic objectives based on these pillars will ensure the Town Deal Board deliver against the vision and achieve its ambitions.

Well-connected

Innovative

Welcoming

To extend and develop a sustainable travel network, adaptable to technological change to meet community need.

We will invest in connecting our town's heritage and commerce with safe and resilient green routes for cyclists, pedestrians, and improved public transport, renewing our place as a hub of transport innovation

To enable the next generation of commercial genius in Swindon.

We will build on our town's successes, from invention and entrepreneurship to international businesses, cementing our reputation to attract & develop the best talent, increase innovation and generate investment.

Swindon is widely recognised as a happy, fulfilling place to live, work, grow and play.

We will be home to proud, accomplished, and well-rounded citizens, who feel fulfilled and able to make the most of the facilities and opportunities we offer. Sustainable, attractive, and distinctive communities will be built which are adaptable, resource efficient, safe, and thriving.

What Does Success Look Like for Swindon?

3.3.2 Swindon is a critical contributor to the regional and national economy. Its population is increasing and commuting is on an upward trend. While continuing to develop the town's regional and national contribution, Towns Fund projects should also deliver benefits to Swindon through regenerating the town, providing opportunities for high-value jobs and ensuring efficient and reliable connections.

3.3.3 Successful delivery will mean that Swindon has:

A dynamic and welcoming town centre

- A vibrant and viable centre for Swindon's living & working communities and its visitors.
- Infrastructure which responds to future needs and a transition to a low carbon economy.
- Good housing which anticipates the needs & expectations of the town's communities.
- Enhanced green networks.
- Heritage assets proudly celebrated.

National and regional recognition as an economic powerhouse, known for its vital industries and innovation

- Diversification into new and low carbon sectors.
- Business processes and infrastructure supported by smart technology.
- Closer business and education & skills collaborations.
- A stronger, more resilient, and diverse business base.
- Enhanced status as a place to do and locate business.

An inclusive heart, widely sharing the benefits of town investment across its communities

- Comprehensive opportunities for high-value work, access to all levels of education, and a broad range of culture & leisure.
- As a designated Sanctuary Town, welcoming to people of all nations, and of different needs and backgrounds.
- A vibrant and engaged voluntary sector.
- Positive community impact in all investments.

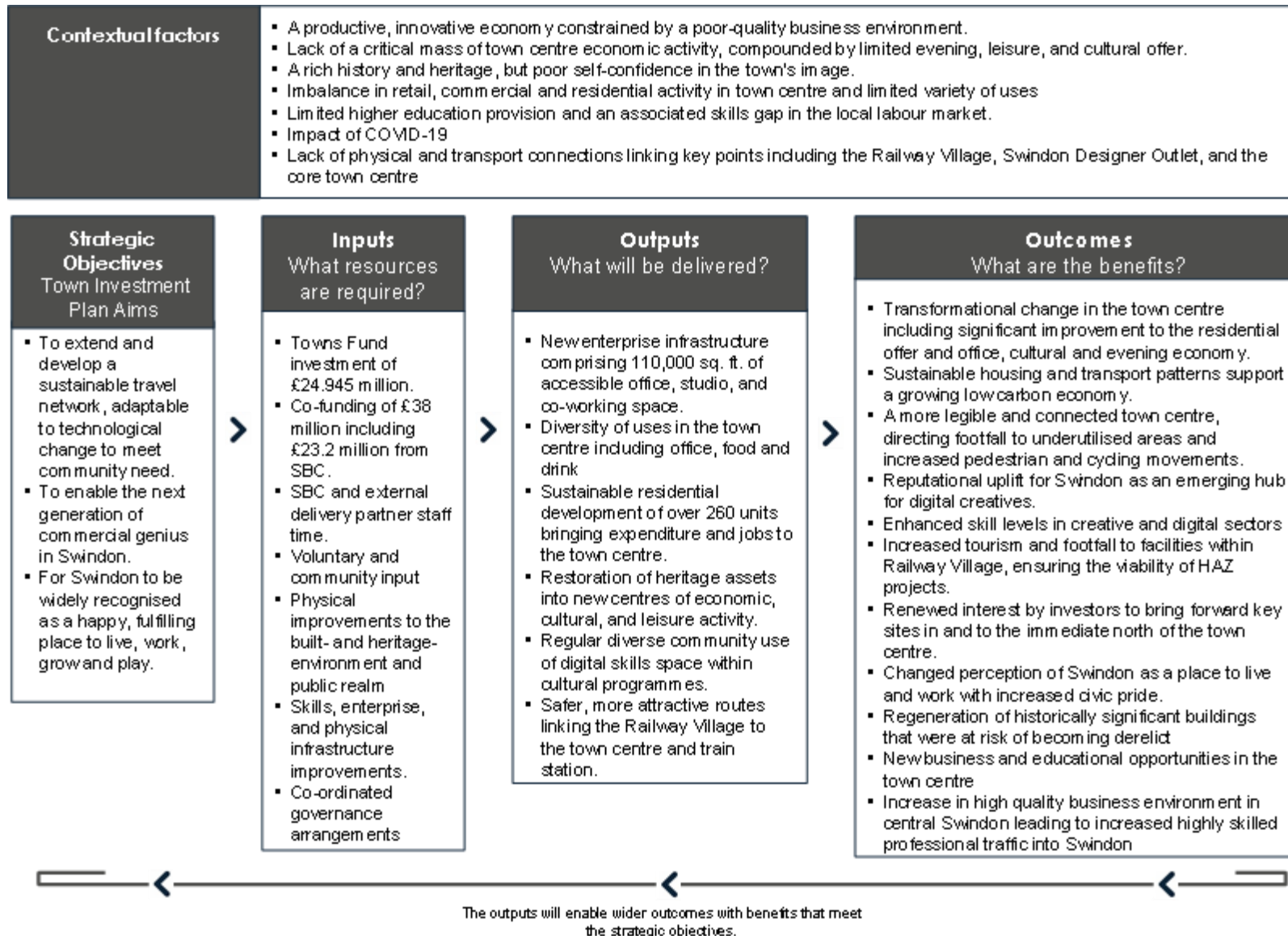
3.4 THEORY OF CHANGE

3.4.1 The Swindon Town Deal Board has agreed a theory of change which describes how these objectives will be achieved. This brings together the challenges and opportunities faced by the town and relates them to the Town Investment Plan projects.

SWINDON TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

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Figure 3.1:
Logic Model: theory of change



3.5 TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN PROJECTS SUMMARY

- 3.5.1 Swindon's Town Deal Board is submitting seven projects in this Town Investment Plan with a funding request of £24,945,000.
- 3.5.2 The seven projects have emerged from a considered and collaborative prioritisation process. After defining its Town Investment Plan Vision and Objectives, the Town Deal Board prepared a 'call' for supporting projects, supported by a Project Prioritisation Guide to assist promoters. This call returned 20 projects from 12 organisations. Potential projects were then sifted for alignment with the Vision and Objectives ahead of an evaluation workshop to prioritise the projects and to ensure a coherent, complementary, and comprehensive set of interventions. Further information on the project prioritisation process is included in Appendix 1.
- 3.5.3 Full details of each project are enclosed in Section 2, with brief summaries as follows:
- **Kimmerfields:** enabling a key strategic asset delivering town centre housing and office accommodation at scale.
 - **Heritage Action Zone Streets and Spaces:** public realm and access improvements to tie Swindon's heritage-led regeneration projects together.
 - **Health Hydro Refurbishments:** embedding community and leisure uses in the heart of the Railway Village.
 - **Carriage Works:** refurbishment of vacant heritage buildings to provide platforms for clusters of economic activity.
 - **Create Studios at Carriage Works:** fitting out the new space to support Swindon's digital economy and upskilling.
 - **David Murray John Regeneration:** modernising Swindon's landmark asset to provide key worker housing and stimulate town centre development.
 - **Brunel Centre Market:** introducing new town centre uses, shifting the function of the area away from traditional retail.

3.6 ALIGNMENT WITH TOWNS FUND INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

- 3.6.1 Swindon Town Deal Board agreed at the outset that its focus is on Swindon town centre, aligning with the Towns Fund's intervention framework which states a strong preference for town centre interventions. To effect town centre transformation, there is a key theme, a spine running through the Town Investment Plan to deliver enhanced connections and connectivity across the town centre between the Outlet Centre, through the railway station and planned bus boulevard, and into the heart of the town centre, complemented with aligned regeneration to diversify the floorplate and increase densities. These objectives are aligned with the Towns Fund intervention framework and will support levelling up in Swindon.
- 3.6.2 The combined projects will increase connectivity and channel footfall and activity at the Designer Outlet through the Railway Village and HAZ into the town centre, with a diversified range of uses. Large developments at Kimmerfields and the DMJ tower will catalyse further private sector investment in the town centre and increase its population.

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- 3.6.3 They will deliver on the Board's vision for Swindon, of a dynamic and welcoming town centre, recognition as an economic powerhouse, with an inclusive heart, widely sharing the benefits of town investment across its communities, but with the preference to focus on the town centre fully met.
- 3.6.4 The projects also align with existing Government policies and programmes. The various projects are all well aligned with the Government's Clean Growth Strategy. The location of the seven projects, all close to one another within the existing town centre, supports the principles of densification of uses and ensuring optimum land use in sustainable locations consistent with Clean Growth delivery.
- 3.6.5 Development on Kimmerfields and the refurbishment of DMJ Tower will be delivered using Modern Methods of Construction, with high levels of insulation and energy efficiency. Development of Kimmerfields and the HAZ Streets and Spaces projects will directly support sustainable transport modes. They will provide links for walking and cycling between the railway station, planned bus boulevard, key retail areas and outlet village, railway village and employment areas around North Star, and STEAM museum, and importantly to the planned Institute of Technology, located to the north and east of the railway line.
- 3.6.6 Those projects involving regeneration & repurposing of existing buildings, including the Carriage Works, Health Hydro, Brunel Centre Market Hall and DMJ projects, will utilise embedded carbon and improve insulation in existing buildings, while refurbishment will support energy efficiency.
- 3.6.7 There are four projects supported by the ongoing HAZ which brings heritage expertise and funding of £1.6 million from Historic England. The HAZ will enhance pedestrian links and associated public spaces and install signage and interpretation.
- 3.6.8 SBC's recent Future High Streets Fund submission proposed the Bus Boulevard to replace existing bus facilities at Fleming Way and the town centre bus station with a new bus interchange running the length of the road. The remaining costs would be covered by £5 million of co-funding from SBC and £3 million from the SWLEP. The Kimmerfields project and the HAZ Streets and Spaces project complement the Bus Boulevard and will ensure benefits will be maximised and felt throughout Swindon.
- 3.6.9 Create Studios, using one of the units to be delivered as part of the Carriage Works project, is also aligned with, and will utilise Arts Council England (ACE) funding. It is aligned with ACE's Ten-Year Strategy 2020-30 (Let's Create) and particularly the following objectives:
- Engagement of diverse participants & producers.
 - Supporting organisations that make work relevant to their communities.
 - Organisations that grow Talent and Aspiration in young people.
- 3.6.10 Create has been acknowledged as Outstanding in meeting the ACE Creative Case for Diversity in its practice and programmes (only 8% of National Portfolio Organisations achieved this). Create will support delivery of training and provide a space for talent in Swindon to hone creative industry skills.

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- 3.6.11 The Cabinet Office's One Public Estate programme has also been engaged in Swindon, contributing to earlier phases of the Carriage Works and funding study work on rationalisation of land around Swindon Station.
- 3.6.12 SBC received £214,515 from the Government's £250 million emergency active travel fund, with the first round to support walking and cycling as part of the national recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. SBC will support measures to encourage active travel capable of swift implementation to provide additional road-space for walking and cycling. This will initially trial schemes to match existing transport strategies with future funding rounds used to formalise successful approaches.
- 3.6.13 In combination with other current projects across Swindon, the Towns Fund will deliver a wide range of outputs and outcomes to directly address the challenges the town centre faces and support levelling up of the town in a sustainable, clean and inclusive manner.

3.7 TOWNS FUND ADDITIONAL FUNDING

- 3.7.1 Swindon Town Deal Board propose to direct the £1million additional funding from Government to the Kimmerfields project, to bring forward delivery earlier in the programme. This funding will be directed to site investigation, site clearance and demolition. These works will de-risk the site by delivering infrastructure to service plots for disposal. This will improve marketability and bring forward parcel delivery. It will build on activity at Zurich, immediately signalling to the market that Kimmerfields is ready for development. It would service plots capable of accommodating up to 200,000 sqft office space and up to 250 homes.

3.8 OVERARCHING STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

Economic Policy Framework

- 3.8.1 Local economic policy making in Swindon is governed by a framework of strategies and plans adopted by SBC and the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP. The Town Investment Plan Vision and Objectives are in turn guided by this framework. Its key elements include:

- Swindon Economic Strategy 2017
- Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan 2016
- Swindon and Wiltshire Local Industrial Strategy 2020.

- 3.8.2 Central to this economic policy framework is the physical and economic regeneration of Swindon town centre. Investment in the town centre is best placed to create an attractive business environment, provide a platform for leisure and cultural development, provide space to support skills and small business development and achieve higher densities enabling sustainable population and housing growth.

Swindon Local Plan

- 3.8.3 The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 is the main planning policy document for the Borough. It sets out how much housing, employment and retail development the Borough needs up to

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the year 2026 and where this should be. The plan also sets out what infrastructure will be needed to enable this development to take place. It includes policies to ensure development is of the highest quality, avoids environmentally sensitive locations, respects the existing built environment and meets the needs of present and future residents.

3.8.4 The Local Plan states that Swindon has a strong potential for growth, however it notes there remain significant threats to economic success, particularly:

- the poor performance of Swindon Town Centre, specifically in terms of the retail and office offer;
- a lower level of higher-educational qualifications of residents compared to competing towns and cities; the perceived poor image of Swindon; and
- a low retention of wealth within the Borough.

3.8.5 SBC are carrying out a review of the current Local Plan for the Borough of Swindon for the period to 2036. The Council has published the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Draft Version of the Local Plan for public representations, which ran from 17 December 2019 to 31 January 2020.

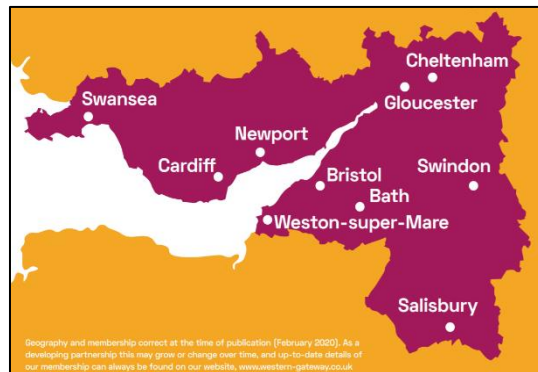
Figure 3.2:
SBC Local Plan Strategic Priorities and Objectives



Western Gateway

3.8.6 The Western Gateway, a grouping of Councils, MCAs and LEPs, aims to generate benefits for the economies on the M4/M5 axis from Swindon and Wiltshire in the east to Swansea in the west. It features investment and internationalisation, skills and innovation and connectivity as key drivers, with clean growth as an overarching principle. Swindon is a founder member and is working with Western Gateway partners to develop a regional economic review to identify the best ways to create good growth across the area.

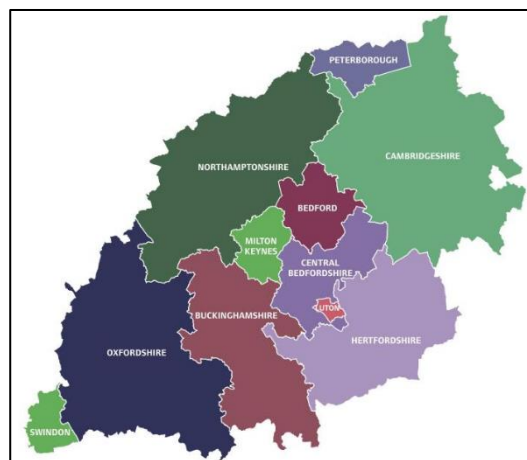
Figure 3.3:
Western Gateway



England's Economic Heartland

3.8.7 Reflecting aspirations to improve regional east-west connectivity with Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge at its core and including Local Authorities, Mayoral Combined Authorities and LEPs, EEH is a group committed to improving connectivity, opportunity and economic growth for jobs and homes across the Economic Heartlands area. Swindon's key location at the western end of the corridor, linking the bloc with other economic groupings, showcases the town's strategic position, opportunities for greater connectivity and the complementary nature of its economy to that of its neighbours.

Figure 3.4:
England's Economic Heartland



Swindon Business Improvement District

3.8.8 Swindon Business Improvement District (BID) is a democratically elected, business-led organisation formed to improve a defined commercial area in Swindon town centre. Established in 2007, it was one of the earliest BID's and was successfully renewed in 2017. Led by businesses, the BID represents 478 hereditaments and has invested more than £5 million in Swindon town centre since 2007.

3.8.9 The Swindon BID recognises the importance of partnership working in delivering results and works closely with various organisations including SBC, Wiltshire Police and SWLEP to shape the town centre. Independent and funded by business levy payers, it aims to add to services rather than substitute them. The Swindon BID is driven forward by a Business Plan that is voted on by the BID levy payers every five years and forms the core of its activities.

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3.8.10 As a member of the Town Deal Board, the BID has been engaged with development of the Town Investment Plan from the initial stages. The BID is also working in partnership with SBC and major stakeholders in the Town Centre on the public realm including improvements to landscaping, lighting, and seating. The BID continues to encourage new businesses into the Town Centre, including letting of units and investigating the sharing of vacant unit by multiple occupants, plus the use of pop up shops.

Business Retention and Expansion Programme

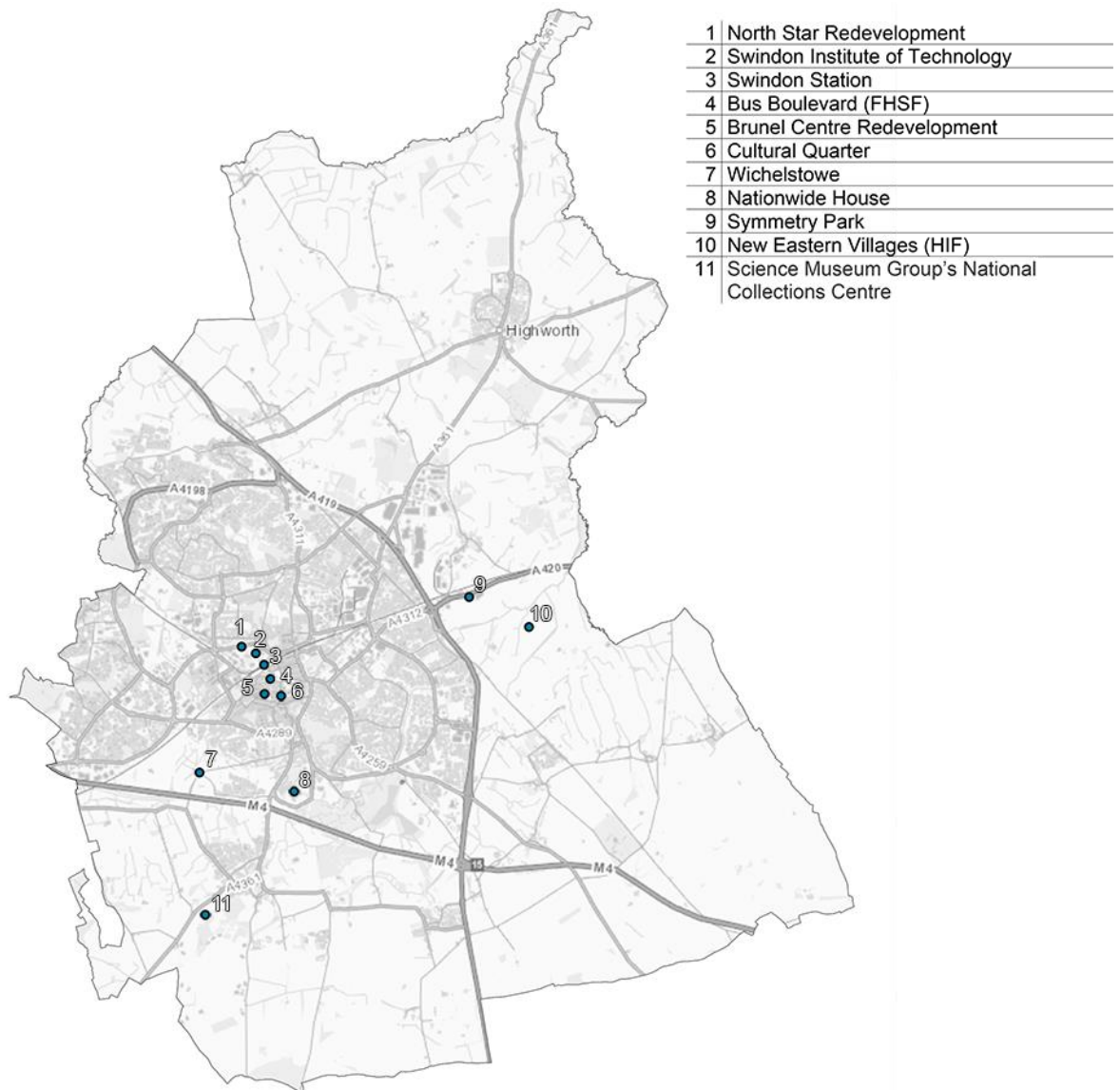
3.8.11 SBC is working to improve the business environment of the town and attract inward investment through its Switch On To Swindon campaign. Central to this is the Business Retention and Expansion Programme which maps and supports around 60 businesses including account management of some of Swindon's largest employers and those in the priority sectors of digital technology, pharmaceuticals, finance and professional services and advanced manufacturing. The team provides a specific support programme for growing digital companies.

3.8.12 The Switch On To Swindon Board has adopted the TIP Vision, as it encapsulates the network's objectives to promote Swindon as the ideal location to live, work and invest.

3.9 ONGOING PROJECTS

3.9.1 Figure 3.5 shows the location of other key projects which align with Town Investment Plan aims and objectives. A brief description of each then follows.

Figure 3.5:
Other Projects and Private Sector Investments



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SWINDON TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

Ongoing and Existing Work

Town Centre Masterplan Delivery Projects

- 3.9.2 The Swindon Town Centre Masterplan and its delivery plan establish a framework for town centre regeneration. The masterplan was developed with the help of local community groups, businesses, and key local stakeholders to ensure it reflects local needs and aspirations.

Kimmerfields and Fleming Way Regeneration

- 3.9.3 Fleming Way is a major dual carriageway through Swindon town centre. It is bounded by a busy retail centre, The Parade, to its south and brownfield development sites and a dilapidated bus station to its north. The masterplan identifies this area as a major priority.

“ Fleming Way and the development sites that bound it represent the most tangible prospect of significant and transformational change in the town centre.”

Masterplan Review and Delivery Plan

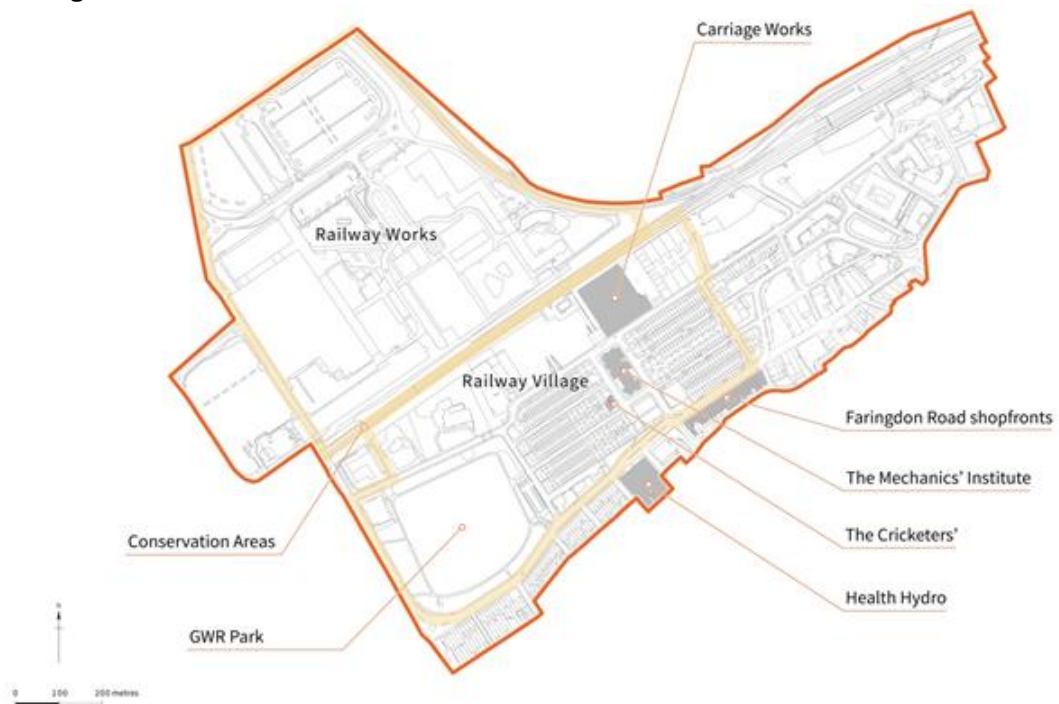
Bus Boulevard

- 3.9.4 Central to these proposals and to unlocking development of the brownfield sites is the proposed Bus Boulevard. This will replace existing bus facilities at Fleming Way and the town centre bus station with a new bus interchange running the length of the road.
- 3.9.5 The delivery of this scheme is dependent on a successful outcome of SBC's £25 million bid to the Future High Streets Fund, with the remaining costs being covered by £5 million of co-funding from the Council and £3 million from the SWLEP.

Heritage Action Zone

- 3.9.6 SBC is working to restore, conserve, and drive value from the town's most distinctive heritage asset – the former Great Western Railway Works and the railway village which housed its employees.
- 3.9.7 In partnership with Historic England, SBC has established a HAZ to promote the railway quarter as a coherent destination. Heritage-led regeneration and the enhancement of its unique railway heritage assets will help shape a more positive and distinct identity for Swindon and support the town's continued growth, improving investor confidence, and restoring much needed civic pride.

Figure 3.6:
Heritage Action Zone.



3.9.8 A set of 16 projects have been identified that will transform the former railway works into a distinctive and vibrant, mixed use, pedestrian-friendly area. The Heritage Action Zone and TIP will assist masterplan delivery through inclusion of the following projects:

- Securing a sustainable future for the **Mechanics' Institution**, the architectural centrepiece of the Railway Village.
- Improving the condition of the **Health Hydro**, a leisure centre within the former GWR Medical Fund Baths built in 1891.
- Repairing and reusing the **Carriage Works** as a new co-working business hub creating a base for the Royal Agricultural University's Cultural Heritage Institute and Create Studios.

Cultural Quarter

3.9.9 SBC is developing plans to build a town centre cultural quarter to attract investment and provide Swindon with a cultural offer of regional significance, complementing wider mixed-use regeneration. Work is ongoing to produce a viable masterplan and delivery strategy to accommodate and enhance Swindon's existing cultural assets. Proposals include redeveloping the Wyvern Theatre and creating a new museum and art gallery.

Town Centre Movement Strategy

3.9.10 A key deliverable of the masterplan review and delivery plan was the production of a movement and access strategy, recognising the role that safe and comfortable movement plays in facilitating regeneration.

SWINDON TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

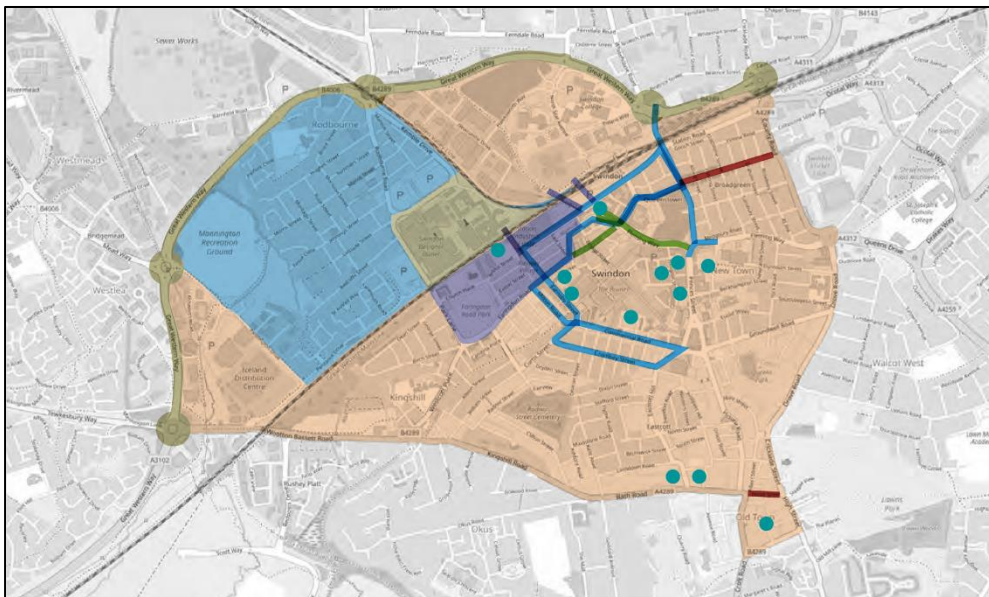
Ongoing and Existing Work

3.9.11 SBC Cabinet approved the Town Centre Movement Strategy (TCMS) in April 2020. This plans to improve all elements of the town centre's movement system, from car parking to walking, driving to cycling and public transport.

3.9.12 A series of 25 interventions were identified grouped into six categories, colour coded in Figure 3.7 below:

- 1 Rationalise street network.
- 2 Maximise bus and taxi accessibility.
- 3 Improved walking and cycling environment.
- 4 Improved public realm.
- 5 Effective car parking.
- 6 Maximise capacity of Great Western Way corridor.

Figure 3.7:
Town Centre Movement Strategy Interventions



3.9.13 Similarly, there are complementary commitments in place for Swindon Rapid Transit (£9.8m) and a Sustainable Transport Package (£3.75m) which will deliver against objectives of the TCMS.

3.9.14 The Heritage Streets and Spaces project included in this TIP will deliver one of the interventions identified under the improved walking and cycling environment theme. This will increase the connectivity of the railway village to the rest of the town centre.^{xxix}

Other Projects and Private Sector Investments

Town Centre Projects

- 3.9.15 While not specifically identified in the Town Centre Masterplan Delivery Plan, the projects described below nevertheless align with its overarching aims of directing investment towards the town centre to create a critical mass of economic activity. They are also consistent with the Towns Deal intervention framework and its aims to 'level up' town centres through increased regeneration, improved connectivity, and new skills and enterprise infrastructure.

North Star Redevelopment

- 3.9.16 The private sector-led North Star development is a proposed 500,000 sq. ft. leisure scheme including a cinema, 130-bed hotel, and indoor sports complex including skiing and trampolining. It is set to be one of the largest of its kind in the UK.

- 3.9.17 This £270 million development aims to regenerate the North Star site and create a regional leisure centre. It is located directly north of the Heritage Action Zone and will link with related Town Investment Plan projects to reinforce a spine of economic activity, driving footfall into the town centre.

Swindon Institute of Technology

- 3.9.18 Supported by Government, an Institute of Technology is being developed in Swindon as a state-of-the-art upgrade to Swindon College's North Star campus, creating an industry standard facility. The Institute aims to become a centre of excellence for higher level technical skills, with employers playing a key role in its leadership, curriculum design and delivery. It targets 1,800 students by year 5, to include 50% of the learner cohort as apprenticeships, in addition to full and part time study programmes.

- 3.9.19 This partnership between education providers and employers will provide higher education provision from Levels 4 – 6 in advanced manufacturing, engineering, digital technologies, creative and media, and life and health sciences, meeting demand for higher level STEM skills.

- 3.9.20 The development of the IoT reinforces the Innovation direction, one of the three strands of the Town Investment Plan. Close to the proposed Carriage Works project, its development will create synergies with the digital and creative skills training offered by Create Studios.

Swindon Station and Future Connectivity

- 3.9.21 Network Rail has started consultation with Swindon Station stakeholders. Although there are no plans in the public domain for any redevelopment in the area, any rationalisation of land uses may create opportunities for further development.

- 3.9.22 Network Rail's restructuring of its operating model to help Put Passengers First and drive economic growth includes accelerating release of sites for partnership development to transform unused railway land, and introducing new multi-site packages for housing development, designed to accelerate its land delivery programme and maximise value.

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3.9.23 Potential new and additional service provision is likely to focus on three possible areas, including:

- A trans-Wiltshire service, running north-south across the county to link to Salisbury.
- Improved services and connectivity to the north and west to Cheltenham.
- A direct service to Oxford rather than a change at Didcot.

3.9.24 Swindon Station is the heart of the Railway Village. Its redevelopment will reinforce the heritage-led regeneration strategy of the Town Investment Plan, add to improved perceptions of the area, and better link to the regeneration areas to its north.

Great Western Electrification

3.9.25 Network Rail has now completed electrification of the route between Cardiff and London, including through Swindon, significantly enhancing connectivity and capacity of services, including the east-west services passing through Swindon and connecting to Reading, Bristol, Bath and Swansea, as well as Cardiff and London.

3.9.26 Electrification has reduced commuting times to Bristol Parkway to 27 minutes and to London in under 50 minutes. This will increase the attractiveness of Swindon as business location, potentially helping to address issue in attracting skilled labour. Both of which will be conditional on the town centre being considered a modern and attractive business, working, and living environment.

3.9.27 The Town Investment Plan's Heritage Streets and Spaces project will better link the station to adjacent heritage assets and the town centre.

Brunel Shopping Centre Redevelopment

3.9.28 A major private sector-led town centre development, the redevelopment of Brunel Shopping Centre seeks to add two residential towers to Swindon's skyline. The outline application for planning permission provides for 297 units and 30,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. The Brunel Market intervention included within the TIP forms part of this wider development and will help kickstart its construction.

Out of Town Investment

3.9.29 Other projects across the wider Borough are anticipated to deliver economic growth, yet they exemplify the challenges of attracting private sector investment to the town centre.

Housing and Employment Development

3.9.30 Swindon is a growing town with several major urban extensions capable of delivering significant housing and employment growth, including:

- **Wichelstowe:** allocated in the Local Plan as a Major Development Area. A mixed urban extension to the south west of the town adjacent to the M4, including 4,300 houses, commercial development for 5,000 jobs, four schools, a 1,000-space park-and-ride site, major investment in the Wiltshire and Berkshire canal, a new superstore and district centre is now being delivered.

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- **Symmetry Park:** Permission has been granted for a £400 million investment in the east of the town, south of the A420. The huge new warehouse, the size of seven football pitches, will bring around 2,000 jobs to Symmetry Park, an area of employment land near the Borough's planned 8,000-home New Eastern Villages.
- **New Eastern Villages:** SBC has been working with private developers on the 8,000-home New Eastern Villages. East of the A419. This is one of the largest planned greenfield developments in the country and will create high quality communities via a series of linked villages. It supports the objectives of the Swindon TIP for Swindon to be well connected and welcoming.

The project was awarded £19 million from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) in November 2019 to construct a 1.5-mile two-way single carriageway. The Department for Transport also allocated £22.5 million to improvements to the nearby White Hart roundabout as part of a £48million allocation through the Local Growth Fund.

- 3.9.31 With population growth and employment opportunities at its edge, the Town Investment Plan is an opportunity to deliver the level of town centre service and diversity of amenities expected of a growing town of Swindon's scale and nature with growth in the town's population and employment opportunities at its edge.

Nationwide Building Society

- 3.9.32 Nationwide is the biggest employer in Swindon with its head office in the town. The company recently acquired and opened another large facility to host its back-office tech functions. Nationwide have a longstanding history in Swindon and continue to take an active role in the town and are engaged with community, private and public stakeholders.

Common Farm, Chapel Farm and Barnfield Solar Parks

- 3.9.33 SBC has invested in three large scale solar farms – Chapel Farm (a 5MW scheme to the north of Swindon, sited on a landfill site), Common Farm (a 5MW scheme on low grade farmland to the south of Swindon) and Barnfield (a 2.5MW scheme which is directly connected to and provides 60% of the electricity for the waste treatment facility which treats all of Swindon's municipal waste and creates a useful fuel for industry). The Council has exceeded a target of 200MW of renewables by 2020.
- 3.9.34 Public Power Solutions (PPS), a wholly owned subsidiary of SBC offering innovative solutions for public sector organisations in the areas of Power and Waste, is developing the Waterside facility (the base of the Council's waste operations and also where most of the fleet is based) as an energy innovation hub. PPS have now successfully passed through the competitive stage of a £2.4 million ERDF bid and are working with an industry partner to deploy 2 large scale batteries, additional canopy solar on car parks and electric vehicle (EV) charging points. The Waterside Innovation Hub project is a key opportunity to facilitate the electrification of the Council's vehicles fleet by creating large scale charging facilities.
- 3.9.35 PPS is in the process of selling the project rights for the development of a 30MW battery storage scheme at Mannington retail park in Swindon.
- 3.9.36 Given the work highlighted above and the commitment by the Council to become net zero on its operations by 2030, a Town Deal presents an opportunity to consider how some of these

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strands join up within a town centre investment to create a clear net zero proposition. The projects also support the objectives of the Swindon TIP for Swindon to be innovative and welcoming.

Swindon Hydrogen Hub

- 3.9.37 The UK Hydrogen Hub seeks to drive investment in hydrogen and fuel cell innovation by shaping the energy and transportation policy in the UK. It does so by putting forward costed, evidence-based recommendations for policy change drawing on interactions with customers and supply chain stakeholders. The Hydrogen Hub engages with policy makers and external stakeholders based on a structured and objectives-driven plan.
- 3.9.38 The Swindon Hydrogen Hub has over 30 organisations working together to develop projects to deploy hydrogen and fuel cell technology. Working Groups meet quarterly and are focussed on the deployment of different technologies: cars, buses, material handling vehicles and stationary power.
- 3.9.39 Swindon was the first town outside of London to have two hydrogen refuelling stations, one at Honda's manufacturing plant at South Marston and the other at the Swindon HQ of engineering firm Johnson Matthey at Lydiard Fields. Johnson Matthey also design the fuel cells used in hydrogen-powered cars.
- 3.9.40 SBC are now working with the SWLEP and Ecuity Consulting to develop plans for a hydrogen demonstrator project in the town. These interventions, and the Swindon Hydrogen Hub itself, support the objectives of the Swindon TIP for Swindon to be well connected, innovative and welcoming.

Science Museum Group's National Collections Centre

- 3.9.41 The Science Museum Group is developing its National Collections Centre (NCC) in Wroughton. Nearing completion is a new 26,000 sqm. collections facility into which over 300,000 objects in the national collections will be stored and made accessible to visitors. Once complete the facility will be visited by around 15,000 visitors with a strong focus on schools.
- 3.9.42 Improvements in connectivity between the site and central Swindon are key to realising this programme. Alongside the new collections facilities, the NCC site also provides accommodation for other museums, provides space for science and engineering companies to carry out research, and hosts the University of Bath's Buildings Research Park.
- 3.9.43 The Science Museum Group will continue to develop the NCC incrementally to; expand facilities for the museum and heritage sector, further support science and engineering research (with a strong focus on the autonomous/ EV vehicle and environmental technologies sectors), grow renewable energy production and storage, and optimise opportunities for cultural and digital industries, all set within a 545-acre, publicly-accessible, biodiverse site.

4.0 ENGAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

Effective engagement with community and private sector stakeholders has been a priority for the Town Deal Board since its establishment. While it has been affected by COVID-19 restrictions on public gathering, the TDB with its Community Panel has adopted a variety of approaches to ensure meaningful input.

4.1 MY TOWNS

- 4.1.1 Residents of Swindon have been invited to comment on the potential direction of the Town Investment Plan via the MyTown Portal. Some 181 comments were received, and they have been reviewed in detail ensuring local voices help shape the Town Investment Plan.
- 4.1.2 Many highlighted a negative perception of Swindon, especially concerning the declining town centre. A strong sense of pride in the town's cultural heritage and historic buildings was also clear. Numerous recurring themes were identified, including:
- The need for town centre regeneration,
 - The importance of restoring historic buildings,
 - The opportunities associated with the town's cultural heritage; and
 - The need for improved transport infrastructure.
- 4.1.3 When discussing the town centre, comments detailed the decline of the high street, the loss of community and how this area often resembled a 'ghost town'. There were numerous calls for better support for local businesses, affordable business rates and a traditional market hall to replace the former Victorian market. Within the comments, there is clear support for a market facility to act as hub for the community and help attract independent traders back to the town.
- 4.1.4 Other comments and suggestions explored Swindon's cultural heritage and the importance of its preservation and celebration. Many suggested that historic buildings associated with the town's railway heritage should be restored and revitalised. It is hoped that the restoration process would allow these buildings to house cultural institutions, provide a range of leisure activities and support local youth – either through education or entertainment.
- 4.1.5 People frequently discussed the importance of improved transport infrastructure. While many comments concerned road resurfacing, some highlighted and recognised the benefits and value of improved cycling and pedestrian infrastructure.

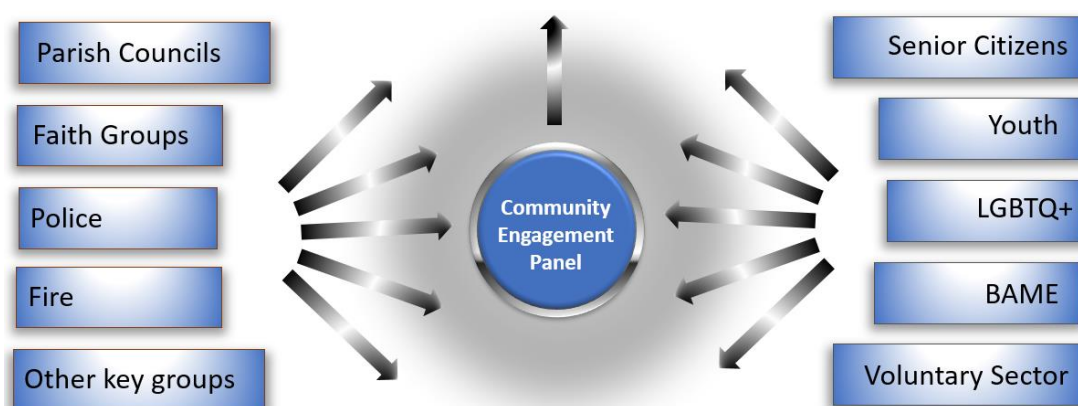
4.2 EXISTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.2.1 It is recognised that several recent consultations concerning the town centre and its challenges have taken place. Whether concerning the Local Plan Review, the Town Centre Masterplan or other processes, the observations of local people, businesses and other stakeholders in these consultations are just as relevant to the development of the Town Investment Plan. Consultation on the emerging Local Plan Issues and Options ran from 07 November 2017 to 19 December 2017, consultation on the emerging strategies was carried

out between 29 July 2019 and 23 September 2019, with the submission draft being consulted upon between 17 December 2019 and 31 January 2020. The emerging direction from these strategies and programmes is captured in the direction of the Town Investment Plan.

4.2.2 As indicated above, involving the community is recognised as a key focus by the Swindon Town Deal Board. In preparing its Town Investment Plan, the Town Deal Board formed a community engagement panel as a representative group drawn from a broad range of the local community. Figure 4.1 shows the make-up of the organisations, groups and sectors that make up the panel.

Figure 4.1:
Groups engaged with the Community Engagement Panel.



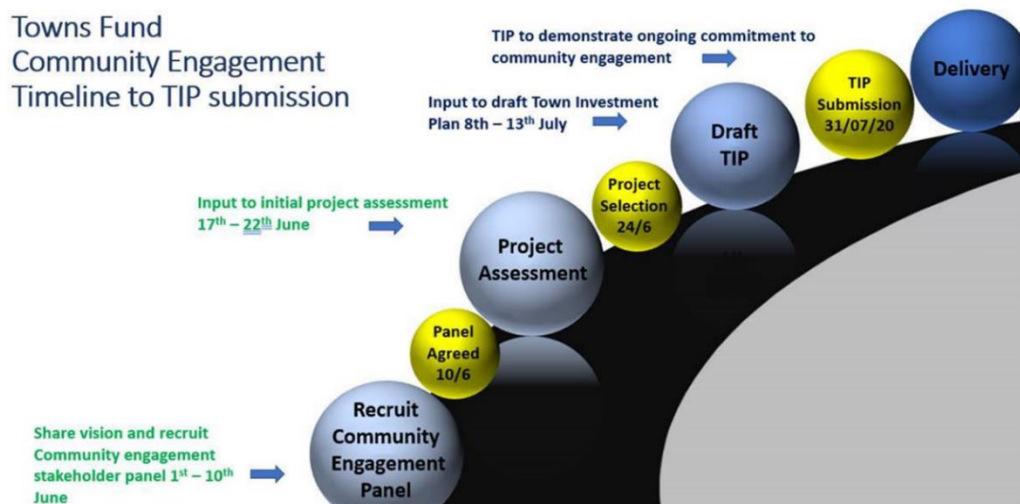
A representative group drawn from a broad range of the local community.

4.2.3 The Community Engagement Panel sought to hear a wide range of views from residents, organisations, and the voluntary sector. Over 68 groups were invited with 25 initially accepting, and 22 providing feedback on projects, 18 of whom commented on the emerging TIP in a fair and proportionate way during the ongoing pandemic. Given the tight timeframes for producing the Town Investment Plan the commitment of those involved to providing informed and timely comment and input has been particularly impressive and the Town Deal Board appreciates this. Going forward the Panel will ensure strong engagement throughout the lifecycle of the Town Investment Plan and in ongoing project development. The Town Deal Board will endeavour to have clear processes with sufficient time to allow for Panel input as required.

4.2.4 To support the Panel with providing constructive comments on the TIP, and the projects themselves, the Town Deal Board prepared targeted questions for the Panel to respond to. In respect of the projects, this included questions regarding the likely benefits the Panel felt projects would deliver from a community perspective, how they thought any changes to the projects could improve them and to indicate, by way of a score of 1 (poor added value) to 5 (high added value), how much value the project would deliver in terms of community benefit. Figure 4.2 shows the timeline for community engagement in producing the TIP. This information was then fed into the project evaluation process before projects were finalised. More information and some key points from Community Panel processes, and feedback on

the submitted projects and a draft version of the Town Investment Plan is included at Appendix 2.

Figure 4.2:
Community Engagement timeline prior to TIP submission.



4.3 PLANNED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.3.1 Through the Swindon Town Deal, the Town Deal Board and panel will transition to using established, and innovative, engagement approaches alongside the experience available to the Town Deal Board to reach all sectors of society, including those hard to reach and poorly represented in public life. The Town Deal Board will lead on how the community will be engaged to work with private and public sector scheme promoters and ensure community benefit impacts are maximised to transform Swindon.
- 4.3.2 Moving forward, the Town Deal Board will look to supplement and evolve the Community Panel to ensure key parts of the Swindon community are fully engaged. It may be that sub-groups of the panel can be engaged to consider particular issues, environmental considerations in respect of clean growth, disability and groups concerned with accessibility and inclusivity, or parish and town councils, for example, so that the Panel’s engagement can be focused on particular issues as they arise and they can add more value to TIP projects as they are developed and delivered.
- 4.3.3 The Town Deal Board will consider a range of approaches to ensure the continued buy-in of the Panel and the wider community. Town Deal Forum can be arranged on, at least, a twice-annual basis to report on progress with TIP delivery, discuss emerging issues and opportunities and shape future stages. Similarly, an annual report will be produced setting out success against Town Investment Plan objectives, updating on project progress and setting out the targets and objectives for the coming year as well as updating on engagement. Engagement with a stand and information at key town events on TIP delivery progress may also allow the broader public to engage and understand the Town Deal and the projects which it will fund. In the short-term, if these processes need to be undertaken virtually the Town Deal Board has the resources in place to deliver on this basis and could engage tools such as Survey Monkey again.

4.4 PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Preparing the Town Investment Plan

- 4.4.1 The Town Deal Board itself is made up of private, public and third sector representatives. Private sector representation is led by Nationwide, with the TDB Chair being an employee. Other Board members include those representing the private sector with members from Business West / In-Swindon, Switch on to Swindon, First Investments, the SWLEP and the FSB.



- 4.4.2 Preparing the Town Investment Plan has involved stakeholder and partner sessions with private sector representatives involving discussions on economic, investment and other perceptions of Swindon, existing and planned activity, influence on planned interventions and ability and willingness to resource or otherwise support Swindon’s TIP. These sessions led to positive and productive conversations, highlighted further opportunities for the private sector to engage with and add value to a Swindon Town Deal and supplement the understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which exist in Swindon, to the benefit of this TIP.
- 4.4.3 These sessions have also provided the foundation for further engagement over the coming months and years to ensure the private sector is engaged and embedded in Swindon’s Town Deal. This will be achieved and maintained going forward through the Town Deal Board’s continuing oversight of the TIP, planned monitoring and evaluation processes and further engagement across the Swindon community as part of the forward engagement plan.

Leveraging Private Sector Investment

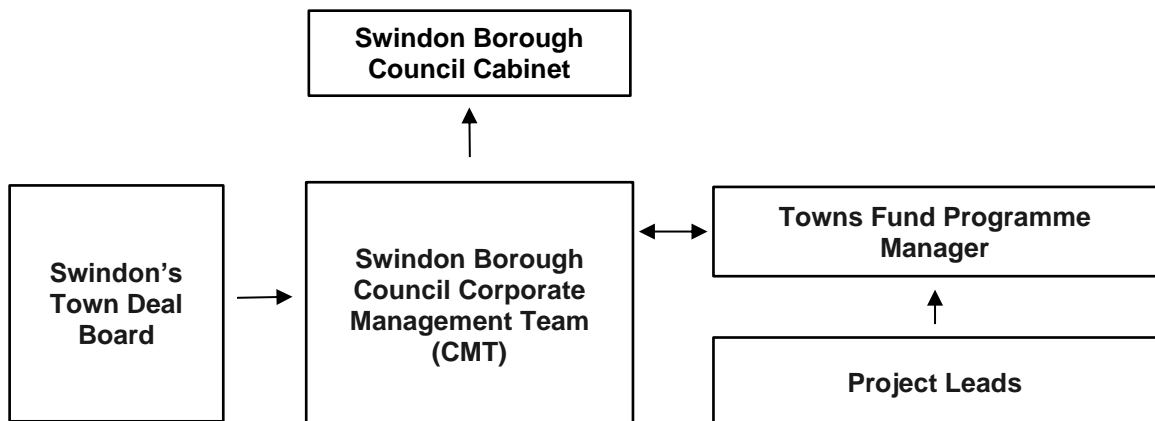
- 4.4.4 The Swindon Town Investment Plan is largely supported by public sector co-funding initially, reflecting the current economic climate. Swindon TDB will continue to explore opportunities to attract private investment to it.

4.5 HIGH-LEVEL DELIVERY PLAN

Governance

- 4.5.1 Following the agreement of Heads of Terms, SBC will act as the accountable body for Towns Deal funding. The Council will appoint a dedicated Programme Manager who will have oversight of the programme and will co-ordinate activities in relation to monitoring and management of the programme’s projects, including financial and legal implications.
- 4.5.2 Overall responsibility for business case development will lie with the SBC Cabinet. Where appropriate, delegated authority will be given to the Council’s Corporate Management Team (CMT) who will be advised by the appointed Programme Manager. The Town Deal Board will have an advisory role to inform both the CMT and Programme Manager and will lead community engagement going forward.
- 4.5.3 Each project will be assigned a dedicated Project Lead, who has helped to develop the project to date and who will lead delivery of their respective project with oversight from the Programme Manager. This is summarised in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3:
Proposed governance structure.



Business Case Development

- 4.5.4 Following agreement of Heads of Terms, the TDB will develop full business cases for each agreed project. SBC will act as the accountable body and will develop the business cases in partnership with scheme promoters.
- 4.5.5 Project leads will be responsible for the development of individual business cases, with an assurance role played by the Programme Manager. The Programme Manager will manage this through SBC’s Green Book-compliant assurance processes.
- 4.5.6 Once business cases have been through this process, they will be presented to the Towns Hub with a summary which provides assurance that the business case approval process has been robust, along with details of the delivery arrangements, including financial commitments.

SWINDON TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

Engagement and Delivery

- 4.5.7 Concurrently, the Town Board will also progress project design, planning actions, and set in place delivery agreements for the projects which are not yet shovel ready. The Town Board will also consult with potential private investors and secure funding agreements with external partners.

Deliverability

- 4.5.8 TDB members have considerable and relevant experience in delivering and overseeing comparable projects. SBC has a strong track record of partnership working in the delivery of major projects with private and public sector partners. Recent success stories include:
- **1-3 Faringdon Road:** Forward Swindon, SBC's regeneration company, restored this set of 1890s buildings to provide eight apartments and 2,400 sq. ft. of commercial space.
 - **Brunel Shopping Centre:** with the support of SBC, FI Real Estate Management has submitted an outline application for planning permission for the revitalisation of the iconic shopping centre. The plans suggest this will soon deliver 290 residential units and 30,000 sq. ft. of commercial floorspace.
 - **Carriage Works:** SBC completed redevelopment of phase 1 of the former Great Western Railway building to provide new flexible office space for small businesses and this has become a hub for our burgeoning digital technology sector. A second phase is underway to locate the Royal Agricultural University' Cultural Heritage Centre on site.
 - **Common Farm and Chapel Farm Solar:** SBC and Abundance Investment bond-financed these two award-winning solar parks, additionally Barnfield Solar Farm built on a former landfill site which supplies power to the Council's waste processing plant.
 - **Wichelstowe:** The site has permission for 4,500 homes, 700 are already built in East Wichel and the current joint venture covers 3,800 more including 185 specialist houses with canal views for older people.
- 4.5.9 Procurement of specialist advice at project and programme level will be required. Projects will be commissioned via the Project Lead, and the Council's Procurement Officer will ensure that procurement regulations are adhered to in sourcing of any specialist expertise required for the delivery of the project.

Timeframes

- 4.5.10 The TDB is confident that all projects in this Town Investment Plan can be delivered within the spending timeframes. Figure 4.4 below presents a high-level programme showing the timescales associated with each project.

SWINDON TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

Engagement and Delivery

Figure 4.4:
Overarching programme.

Fiscal Year:	2020/2021				2021/2022				2022/2023				2023/2024				2024/2025			
Quarter:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Project 1: Kimmerfields Enabling Infrastructure																				
Site Investigation																				
Clearance and Remediation																				
Design																				
Procurement																				
Works																				
Project 2a: Heritage Streets and Spaces - Station Road Public Realm Improvements																				
Business Case																				
Design																				
Procurement																				
Works																				
Project 2b: Heritage Streets and Spaces - Sheppard Street Tunnel																				
Business Case																				
Design																				
Procurement																				
Works																				
Project 2c: Heritage Streets and Spaces - Bristol Street Tunnel																				
Business Case																				
Design																				
Procurement																				
Works																				
Project 3: Health Hydro Refurbishment																				
Business Case																				
Procurement																				
Design																				
Decant Building																				
Works																				
Project 4a: Carriage Works - Units 7 & 9: structural																				
Business Case																				
Design																				
Procurement																				
Works																				
Project 4: Carriage Works - Units 7 & 9: fit-out																				
Business Case																				
Design																				
Procurement																				
Works																				
Project 4: Carriage Works - Bristol Street frontage																				
Business Case																				
Design																				
Procurement																				
Works																				
Project 5: Create at Carriage Works																				
Business Case																				
Design																				
Procurement																				
Works																				
Project 6: DMJ Tower																				
Detailed Business case																				
Design and Procure																				
Design and Approvals																				
Works Procurement																				
Final Resident Engagement																				
Contractor Design																				
Works																				
Project 7: Brunel Market																				
Finalise Procurement																				
Works																				

5.0 ENDNOTES

- 1 Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (2016). *Strategic Economic Plan*.
- 2 Switch on to Swindon (2018). *Inward Investment*. Available at: http://switchontoswindon.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Inward-Investment-Folder_6pp_hi.pdf
- 3 Enenkel, K., et al. (2020). *Cities Outlook 2020*, Centre for Cities.
- 4 Enenkel, K., et al. (2020). *Cities Outlook 2020*, Centre for Cities.
- 5 See: Hardisty Jones (2016). *Swindon and Wiltshire Functional Economic Market Area Assessment*
- 6 AMION and Locum Consulting (2010). *Impact of Historic Environment Regeneration*
- 7 Office rentals in Swindon are £15 / sq. ft. on average – lower than competing centres such as Bristol (£23 / sq. ft.) and Reading (£27 / sq. ft.). See Table 1.1 for more information.
- 8 Poor perceptions and a low-quality business environment are identified as a key weakness in Swindon Borough Council and Partners' Inward Investment Strategy June 2019 - June 2021.
- 9 Centre for Cities (2020). *Identifying Growth Centres Across the UK*. p.9. Available at: <https://www.centreforcities.org/publication/which-cities-are-the-uks-next-economic-growth-centres/>
- 10 This is recognised in Swindon's Local Development plan, see: Swindon Borough Council (2015). Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026. p.10.
- 11 *Swindon 2020 Masterplan Review and Delivery Plan* (2016). pp.12-13.
- 12 Centre for Cities (2019). *Swindon Insights*. Workshop information available at: <https://www.centreforcities.org/event/whats-in-store-for-swindon/>
- 13 *Swindon 2020 Masterplan Review and Delivery Plan* (2016). p.20.
- 14 *Swindon 2020 Masterplan Review and Delivery Plan* (2016). p.4.
- 15 Swindon Borough Council (2017). *Swindon Employment Land Review*.
- 16 No new office developments have been delivered in central Swindon since 1999 according to CoStar Properties ©
- 17 Centre for Cities (2019). *Swindon Insights*.
- 18 Swindon Borough Council (2019). *Housing Monitoring Report*.
- 19 Swindon Borough Council (2019). *Invest in Swindon*.
- 20 Swindon Borough Council (2020). *Town Centre Movement Strategy*. p.9.



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Endnotes

- 21 The *Town Centre Movement Strategy* (2020) states: “*Within the central area, evidence of congestion is seen in Station Road and Westcott Place and occurs in the PM commuter peak only*”
- 22 Swindon Borough Council (2020). *Town Centre Movement Strategy*. p.12.
- 23 Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (2016). *Strategic Economic Plan*. p.11
- 24 SW LEP (2018). *Higher Education Strategy Evidence Base*. p.90
- 25 ONS (2020). *A level and other 16 to 18 results: 2018 to 2019 (revised)*
- 26 Further information is presented in the Higher Education Strategy Evidence Base commissioned by the LEP. Available at: <https://swlep.co.uk/docs/default-source/strategy/economic-priorities/higher-education-draft-strategy-evidence-base---april-2018.pdf>
- 27 SW LEP (2018). *Higher Education Strategy*. Available at: https://swlep.co.uk/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/he-strategy-short-version-consultation-final-draft.pdf?sfvrsn=897cdd1c_10
- 28 SW LEP (2018). *Swindon and Wiltshire Economic Assessment Chapter 4: People and Communities*. Available at: <https://swlep.co.uk/docs/default-source/strategy/economic-priorities/economic-assessment-2018/chapter-4-people-and-communities-may-2018.pdf>
- xxix TCMS Project L.

