

Swindon Borough Local Development Framework

Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026

Swindon: Planning for our future

Pre-Submission Document

www.swindon.gov.uk/localplan

December 2012



Foreword

This is a time of challenge and opportunity for Swindon Borough. Whilst the building blocks for successful economic growth remain, against a background of economic recession and public sector spending cuts, the need to plan responsibly and realistically is of greater importance. We have a responsibility not only to deliver the much-needed regeneration of the town centre but also plan for growth in a way that benefits existing and future residents of the Borough. Sustainable development is not just about providing homes, local jobs and a vibrant and successful town centre; it is also about creating inclusive, cohesive, safe and healthy communities. Fundamental to this is the timely provision of infrastructure.

This Consultation Document has been produced following on from Royal Assent of the Localism Act 2011, which includes measures to revoke Regional Strategies and to allow local authorities to set their own targets for economic and housing growth through the development of a Local Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) states that one of its key principles should be a proactive approach to driving and supporting sustainable economic development in order to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Swindon needs to rise to this challenge whilst meeting the other planning principles of conserving environmental and heritage assets and responding to the impact of climate change. Therefore the Council has taken a responsible and balanced approach to delivering growth that is achievable, deliverable and suitable. The message from the Council is "we are open for business"; but growth should be plan-led to ensure local empowerment and give clarity and certainty to both investors and residents alike.

This Local Plan provides the policy framework to deliver sustainable growth to 2026 and beyond. It provides a clear strategy for how we can address the challenges we face and identifies how much, where, when, and how new development will take place in Swindon Borough.



Councillor Bluh
Leader of the Council



Dale Heenan
Cabinet Member for
Strategic Planning and
Sustainability

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Part I:

Introduction



Part 1: Introduction

What is the Local Plan?

- 1.1 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 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.
- 1.2 The Local Plan includes:
- a vision and strategic objectives for the development of Swindon Borough up to 2026;
 - clear policies to guide decisions on planning applications;
 - broad locations of development and the allocation of strategic sites;
 - the infrastructure requirements required in support of the proposed development;
 - the strategic context for the allocation of specific sites in either a future Council planning document and/or Neighbourhood Plans;
 - a key diagram, illustrating the main provisions and the strategic site allocations;
 - an indication of how the plan will be delivered; and
 - indicators to monitor the progress of the Plan.
- 1.3 **The Plan should be read as a whole**, with proposals for development being considered against many policies depending on the details of the proposal and its location.

The Evolution of the Swindon Borough Local Plan

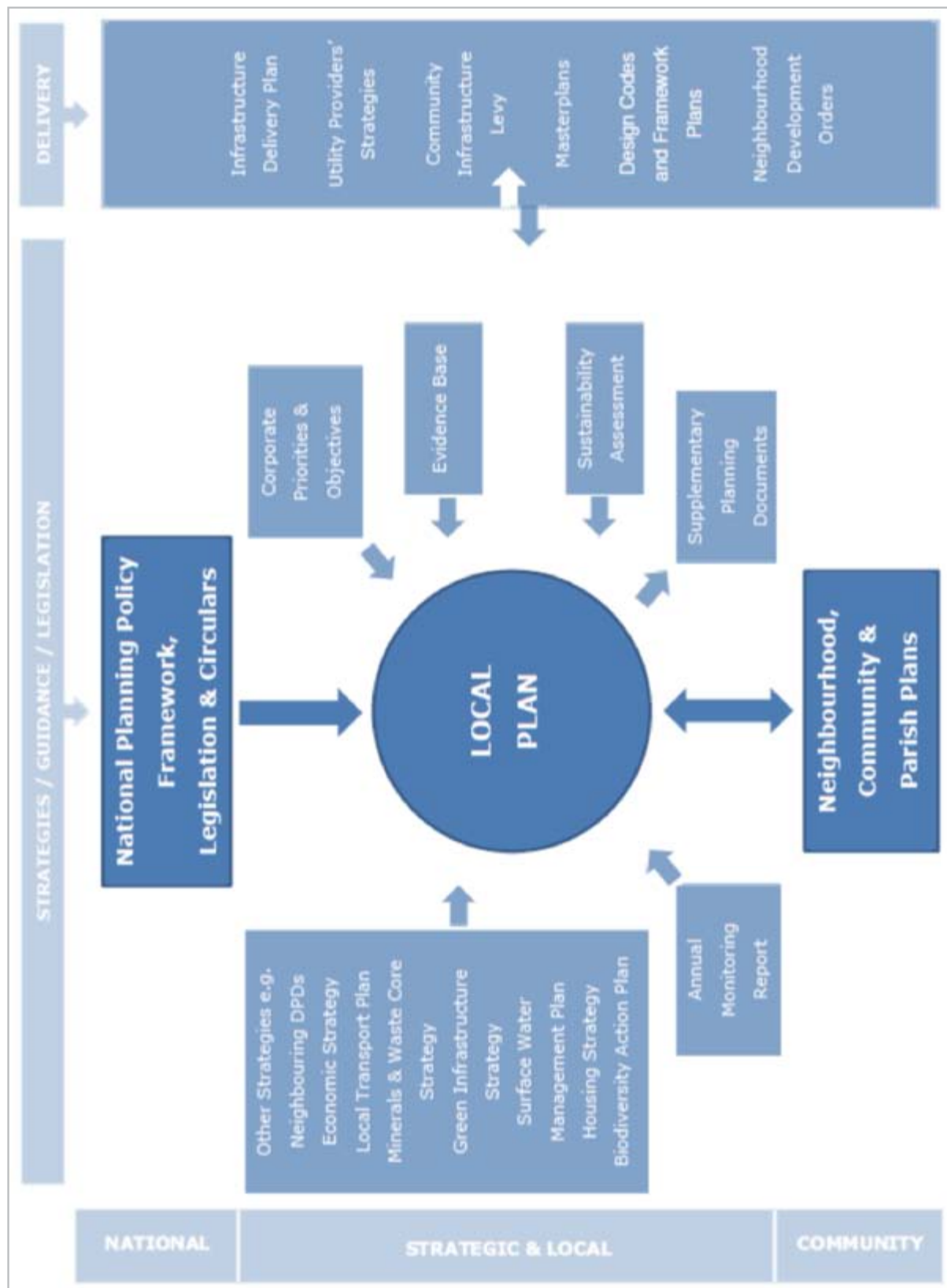
- 1.4 The Statement of Community Involvement (adopted January 2007) sets out how, at that time, the Council intended to involve the community in the preparation of the Borough's main planning documents. The Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with that Statement.
- 1.5 Until the Localism Act was introduced in 2011, Swindon Borough Council had been preparing a Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework. This was in line with previous planning legislation introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Following the introduction of a revised development planning process by the Localism Act, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012, the Council has been using the work done on the preparation of a Core Strategy to form the basis of this new Local Plan. This Pre-Submission Consultation Draft has been produced with particular reference to paragraph 154 of the NPPF as follows:

"Local Plans should be aspirational but realistic. They should address the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change. Local Plans should set out the opportunities for development and clear policies on what will or will not be permitted and where. Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal should be included in the plan."

- 1.6 Work on the Core Strategy has developed through four previous rounds of public consultation plus numerous workshops and sessions with Town and Parish Councils and community groups. At each stage the Core Strategy has been revised in light of the comments received.
- 1.7 The public consultation exercises were undertaken at key stages in the preparation and were as follows:
- **Swindon Borough Core Strategy Issues and Options (April 2007).** This set out the issues facing Swindon Borough and a series of options for responding to those issues;
 - **Swindon Borough Core Strategy Preferred Options (March 2008).** This set out for consultation the Borough Council's proposed policy directions, and highlighted alternatives where appropriate;
 - **Swindon Borough Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document (July 2009).** This was intended to be the last stage of consultation before the Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State. The public consultation raised general concerns about the overall level of growth at Swindon, and in particular the provision of essential infrastructure in uncertain economic times, and it was becoming evident that the housing targets were unachievable. This was at odds with the targets set through the emerging Regional Strategy. Subsequently, the new Coalition Government announced its intention to abolish the Regional Strategies and allow local planning authorities to determine their own housing targets; and
 - **Swindon Borough Core Strategy Revised Submission Draft (March 2011).** This contained significant changes in relation to overall housing numbers and the spatial distribution of these. However, whilst there remained public concerns over the scale of growth and in particular the allocation of greenfield sites to meet the revised targets, the business community expressed the view that the assumptions regarding the economy of Swindon were unduly pessimistic and the resultant strategy could undermine economic growth.
- 1.8 Significant public involvement has been undertaken during the preparation of this Local Plan. Specifically during the autumn of 2010 a series of community participation events were held across the Borough. The outcomes of these events are detailed in the Shaping Your Community Report (2011).
- 1.9 In light of the comments received and the publication of the NPPF, revisions have been made to the Core Strategy, translating it into a Local Plan. These revisions are sufficient to warrant a further round of public consultation before it is submitted for examination.
- 1.10 The Borough Council has already adopted the Swindon Central Area Action Plan (2009), which provides the planning framework to facilitate the delivery of the regeneration of Central Swindon. There are two policies detailed in the Swindon Central Area Action Plan which will be replaced by policies in the Local Plan. These are detailed in Appendix 1.

- 1.11 A small number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are considered necessary to provide more detailed advice on specific topics and areas in support of the Local Plan. Further details on the contents of these SPDs are referenced at the appropriate policy. The SPDs which will accompany this Plan are:
- The Swindon Design Toolkit (this includes a number of SPD's as referenced in paragraph 4.26);
 - Developer Contributions;
 - South Marston Village; and
 - Eastern Villages.
- 1.12 The Local Plan includes a Proposals Map, which shows the geographical areas to which policies contained within the Plan relate. It should be noted that, unless detailed in the relevant policy within this Plan, the defined settlement boundaries will remain unchanged until such time when they are reviewed either through development of Neighbourhood Plans or further site allocations work undertaken by the Borough Council.
- 1.13 An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (formerly known as the Implementation and Monitoring Plan) sits alongside the Local Plan. It provides more detailed information on the Borough's infrastructure needs and how they will be met.
- 1.14 For clarity, the Development Plan for Swindon Borough will consist of:
- The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (on adoption);
 - The Swindon Central Action Plan (2009);
 - The Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy 2006-2026 (2009);
 - The Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2009);
 - The Wiltshire and Swindon Aggregate Minerals Site Allocation Local Plan (on adoption);
 - The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy 2006-2026 (2009);
 - The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2009);
 - The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan (on adoption); and
 - any subsequent Site Allocation Plans and Neighbourhood Plans (on adoption).
- 1.15 The Council will produce an Annual Monitoring Report to measure the progress and effectiveness of the Development Plan.

Figure 1: Relationship with Other Plans, Documents and Strategies



Relationship to other Strategies, Plans and Priorities

- 1.16 The Swindon Borough Local Plan is influenced by many other policies and strategies that affect the future development of the Borough. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the Local Plan, other planning documents, national policy and other strategies.

National

- 1.17 In March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable Councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.
- 1.18 The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. This Pre-Submission document has been prepared to be in conformity with the NPPF.
- 1.19 International and national bodies have set out broad principles of sustainable development. Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the Future set out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development and four priorities.

Principles:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

Priorities:

- Sustainable production and consumption
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Creating sustainable communities

Local

- 1.20 The Local Plan articulates the planning strategy which will help to enable the delivery of other Borough Council plans, strategies and priorities in the Borough. The key ones are summarised in the following paragraphs. Reference is also made to them and others throughout the Plan, particularly where there are clear linkages to specific policies of the Plan.
- 1.21 **The Swindon Sustainable Community Strategy: A Shared Vision for Swindon 2008–2030** is the overall vision of how we want our Borough to be by 2030. From this big picture, all types of organisations, from public services like the police and health agencies to community groups and parishes, will take their cue to develop plans and policies to make this Vision a reality.
- 1.22 The vision in the Community Strategy is based around six themes:
- Swindon as a destination of choice;
 - all people are benefiting from our growing economy;
 - we have safeguarded our environment for future generations;
 - a healthy, caring and supportive community;
 - a place where high aspirations are supported by superb education provision for all ages; and
 - a place where local people can have real influence and where they feel safe.
- 1.23 **'One Swindon'** sets out a commitment to a new partnership of the public sector working with the business, community and voluntary sectors and above all local people to deliver on a shared focus over the period 2011 – 2015. The following priorities for One Swindon have been developed:
- I like where I live;
 - We can all benefit from a growing economy and better town centre;
 - Everyone is enjoying sports, leisure and cultural opportunities; and
 - Living independently, protected from harm, leading healthy lives and making a positive contribution.
- 1.24 The Council's **Corporate Strategy 2012** sets out the priorities for the council over the next 3-5 years:
- Work with residents to create neighbourhoods, which are clean and cared for;
 - Create the environment for good economic growth;
 - Rebalance the mix of our interventions to prevent or reduce vulnerability and health inequalities;
 - Work together with young and older people, families and communities to help them reach their potential; and
 - Make full use of Swindon's untapped resources, while better prioritising the Council's spending

1.25 The Local Plan is aligned to and enables the spatial delivery of the **Swindon Borough Economic Strategy**. The Economic Strategy identifies the following priorities:

- Create a Place of Opportunity for Young People;
- Develop Higher Education Facilities for Swindon;
- Position Swindon as a hub of advanced engineering and technology;
- Revitalise Swindon town centre;
- Establish Swindon as a regional leisure destination; and
- Create Low Carbon Swindon.

1.26 **The Local Investment Plan** sets out Swindon's long-term investment needs which are required to support the development strategy and has been developed with input from partner organisations and the community. It seeks to build on information in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and bridge any funding shortfalls. It will be updated on a regular basis in light of changing circumstances.

Other Local Strategies & Evidence Base

1.27 There are numerous other Borough Council and partner organisation strategies that have informed the development of the Local Plan. These and others are also referenced throughout the Plan where they have a specific relationship with a policy or theme and a full list of evidence base documents can be found in Appendix 3. In developing the Local Plan, the Borough Council has undertaken or commissioned research into a variety of subject areas to help shape its policies. In many cases this has involved working closely with other stakeholders, including infrastructure providers and other public and private sector bodies and organisations that are responsible for delivering change, to produce the various studies and strategies.

1.28 The Borough Council is working with the business community through the Wiltshire and Swindon Enterprise Partnership to enable economic growth. It is also working with Influence Swindon to understand the business community needs.

Duty to Co-operate

1.29 The Localism Act 2011 (The Act) introduced a requirement on local planning authorities to co-operate with neighbouring local authorities and other bodies with a regulatory or strategic interest in Local Plan issues. The "Duty to Co-operate" (The Duty) includes the need to consider the impact of the strategy as a whole and its proposals for major development on other places close to Swindon Borough and on those places where the Plan's proposals have a strategic impact. As a result, the Borough Council has produced a 'Duty to Co-operate Statement' which documents how the Council has fulfilled the Duty and how the bodies referred to in the Act and their recommendations have helped to shape the Plan. As shown in Figure 2, this includes our relationships with Communities and Local Government (CLG), the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Wiltshire Council and Forward Swindon.

Figure 2: Relationship with prescribed and other bodies



Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.30 The achievement of sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the planning system. This Pre-Submission Document is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report, which aims to ensure that the principles of sustainable development have been incorporated throughout the development of the Local Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal Report incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), meeting the requirements of EU Directive 2001/42/EC.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.31 This Pre-Submission document is accompanied by a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) to meet the requirements of The European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive). The HRA is required to be undertaken on proposed plans or projects which are likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites either individually, or in combination with other plans and projects.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 1.32 Diversity Impact Assessments analyse functions and policies to make sure that Swindon Borough Council's duty to promote equality and recognise diversity are met. The Local Plan has been subject to a Diversity Impact Assessment in line with the Council's guidelines.

Health Impact Assessment

- 1.33 A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has been undertaken on the Local Plan to assess the potential effects that the policies may have on the health of the population and the distribution of those effects within the population.

Making Representations to this Local Plan

We need your views

- 1.34 Your views are sought on the contents of this Plan. The Borough Council will summarise the main issues raised by the consultation, and, before the document is formally submitted to the Secretary of State for adoption, will consider what changes may need to be made to it. All comments that we receive, together with the Council's proposed changes, will be submitted to the Secretary of State to be considered as part of the examination of the Local Plan. An independent Planning Inspector will examine the Local Plan before it can be adopted, and will consider whether the strategy complies with legal requirements and is 'sound'. Whilst the issues raised by the consultation will be taken into account, the Public Examination will focus only on matters that help the Inspector assess the soundness of the Plan. Therefore, representations submitted should relate only to the requirements of legal compliance or the 'Tests of Soundness.'
- 1.35 Representations should be made on the accompanying form made available during the period of consultation. The form includes a guidance note on how to respond and an explanation of the legal requirements and test of soundness.
- 1.36 Comments can be made by :
- e-mail to forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk
 - Online, using the online form on the Council's website www.swindon.gov.uk/localplan
 - In writing using the response forms provided, to the following address:
- Planning Service,
Freepost SCE5251,
Swindon Borough Council,
5th Floor, Wat Tyler House West,
Beckhampton Street,
Swindon
SN1 1JH**
- 1.37 Please ensure that you include your name and address with any comments. Please note that all comments will be placed on a public register that will be available for the general public to view, and will be forwarded to the Inspector who will conduct the Public Examination.
- 1.38 The Sustainability Appraisal Report, Habitats Regulations Assessment Report and evidence base documents are also available for public consultation.
- 1.39 The formal consultation on the Local Plan and associated reports will take place between **Thursday 20th December** and **Thursday 21st February**. The deadline for responses will be 6pm on 21st February.

Part 2:

Context, Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives



Part 2: Context, Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

Context

- 2.1 The Borough is 230km² (89 square miles) in area and is home to about 209,000¹ people. It consists of the town of Swindon itself, the market town of Highworth, the large village of Wroughton, and a number of smaller villages and hamlets. Swindon is a daily destination for many people. Swindon is at the heart of the M4 corridor and has excellent links to the rest of the UK and beyond, together with a superb natural setting.

Figure 3 Map of Swindon Borough



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- 2.2 Swindon probably derives its name from the Saxon 'swine dun' (hill where pigs were raised) although its occupation extends before that period to when Prehistoric and Romano-British settlers were attracted to the ridge. Latterly it developed throughout the Medieval period when it became established as a small market town with a charter being given in 1626. It prospered but remained relatively small until the coming of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal in 1810 and shortly afterwards the railway, which was the key driver in the town's expansion.

¹ 2011 Census First Release

- 2.3 Modern Swindon was established on Brunel's vision, when he located his railway works here in the 1840s and a special and significant heritage remains from this Victorian era. Swindon has a post-war history of confident and continuous growth. In the face of decline in the railway industry, the attraction of new industries and new people was seen as the town's only means of escaping from economic decline. The 1950s and 1960s saw considerable migration from the rest of the UK, particularly from London.
- 2.4 Swindon has transformed itself from a town dominated by the railway industry into one with a prosperous economy with a mix of modern industries. It has attracted considerable inward investment from national and international businesses, including Honda, BMW, Zurich, Nationwide, WH Smith and The National Trust. The remainder of the Borough is characterised by small market towns, villages and high quality landscape, including parts of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Thames Vale.
- 2.5 Swindon Borough has a rich variety of historic and natural features that add to the local distinctiveness, character, appearance and sense of identity of the Borough's towns, villages and countryside.

The Challenge for Swindon Borough

- 2.6 Working with the community and with other organisations, the challenge is to deliver economic growth in Swindon Borough in a way that is balanced, sustainable and improves the quality of life of all.
- 2.7 Creating sustainable communities is about more than just housing. It is also about:
- increasing jobs and economic growth, promoting social justice and improving the quality of life;
 - meeting the needs of a changing population, particularly one that is ageing;
 - encouraging people to get involved in the decisions that affect their community;
 - ensuring the delivery of better public services;
 - building schools, hospitals and transport as an integral part of development, not an afterthought;
 - improving the environment, for example by making streets, parks and squares cleaner, safer and greener, and building more environmentally friendly buildings;
 - responding to the threats posed by climate change; and
 - recognising and understanding the social and economic value of historical, cultural and natural assets.

- 2.8 Swindon has a strong potential for growth, however 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
- 2.9 Unplanned and un-coordinated growth could damage the longer-term investment prospects for the Borough. Past experience of the town's expansion has demonstrated that the more successful areas of growth have been where a long-term vision and plan has been in place. Equally, the Borough Council is keen to learn from recent developments and has undertaken resident surveys of new estates to inform this Plan.
- 2.10 A considerable amount of new and improved infrastructure will be needed to support the new developments proposed. A significant amount will be funded from the new developments themselves, by means of planning permission conditions and/or development contributions.

Swindon's Economic Prospects

- 2.11 The headline messages about Swindon's comparative performance are:
- Swindon continues to have a **productive economy** with one of the highest gross value added (GVA) per capita figures amongst locations outside London. However, it has fallen behind Milton Keynes, Newbury and Reading and has seen growth slow significantly in the last decade compared to other competitor locations;
 - The Borough has also seen **employment losses over the past decade**, a period when many comparator locations saw growth. Youth unemployment has become a particularly acute problem as the recession took hold;
 - The Borough's resident **skills base is well matched to its current economy** in which manufacturing, logistics/distribution and consumer services play a large part;
 - However, it is a **relatively lower skilled location**. Residents tend to have higher proportions of lower level skills and work in lower skilled occupations than other locations;
 - The Borough is **well located**, with excellent access via road and rail to London, Heathrow, the Greater South East, the Midlands, the West Country and Wales;
 - Swindon's excellent location also enables it to draw on an **extensive labour market** along the M4 corridor and Great Western rail route. In this respect, it should be well placed to capture a share of future economic growth in south east/south west England; and
 - It is a **cost competitive location** in which house prices are lower than many areas and which compares favourably to other locations in terms of commercial property prices.

The Local Plan's Role in Responding to the Challenge

- 2.12 The Local Plan has a key role in realising the economic advantages of Swindon and in helping to address those aspects in which the Borough is comparatively weak, whilst at the same time conserving and enhancing the natural and built environment and improving the quality of life for its residents. It does this by allocating sufficient land for economic growth and setting out clear policies on which to make decisions. These are set out in Part 3 and in more detail in Parts 4 and 5 of this Local Plan.

The Spatial Vision

“The Borough of Swindon will become a place where people choose to live, visit and invest. As an important regional centre, Swindon’s appeal will stem from having an attractive and well-equipped town that has successfully blended traditional architecture with high quality contemporary buildings that incorporate sustainable design and construction principles.

The achievement of a high quality public realm in the heart of the town linked to the countryside will provide a real focal point for visitors and Swindonians alike.

Swindon will become one of the best business locations in the UK, offering a high quality of life, not just to its residents, but also to those from a much wider catchment area. New jobs will be created and there will be the fullest range of employment opportunities for the whole community.

Swindon will be at the centre of a network of multifunctional green spaces linking the town to the wider countryside. Swindon will have responded to the needs of a growing population in a way that has protected and enhanced our natural and historic environment.

People in Swindon will have the opportunity to live active, healthy and learning lifestyles.”

- 2.13 The Spatial Vision is drawn from the **Swindon Sustainable Community Strategy: A Shared Vision for Swindon**, which has been widely consulted on and received general support.

The Strategic Priorities for Swindon Borough Local Plan

- 2.14 The key development priorities which guide the Local Plan's Strategic Objectives are set out below:
- Deliver growth that is balanced and sustainable, and provides the necessary infrastructure, while addressing the impacts of climate change;
 - Deliver regeneration in a way that meets the needs of Swindon's future, but conserves and enhances the best of the past; and
 - Recognises the important role of green infrastructure to enhance the quality of life for existing and future residents.
- 2.15 The delivery of these priorities is underpinned by a need for high-quality design, and a need to protect and enhance existing and deliver new green infrastructure, ensuring that opportunities for designing in measures to improve mental and physical wellbeing meet local community needs and aspirations.

The Local Plan Strategic Objectives

- 2.16 Underpinning the Spatial Vision for Swindon and the Borough Council's priorities is a themed set of Strategic Objectives based on the strategies of the Borough and its partners, and developed through consultation. These are illustrated in Figure 3 and set out below:

Strategic Objective 1: High Quality Sustainable Development – to improve the image of Swindon, enable inclusive communities and address climate change by the provision of high quality, well designed and sustainable development.

Strategic Objective 2: Infrastructure - to meet the infrastructure needs for and arising from the growth of Swindon (including health and community needs) in a timely and co-ordinated manner and being adequately funded.

Strategic Objective 3: Economy - to meet the needs of local businesses and the forecast growth in the local economy, and to enhance Swindon's position as the UK's best business location.

Strategic Objective 4: Housing - to meet the Borough's housing needs by the provision of well-designed sustainable housing, at sustainable locations and at a range of types and densities according to local needs and circumstances, and that promotes the effective use of land.

Strategic Objective 5: Education - to meet the need for education provision arising from the anticipated growth in population and to enable an improvement in skills and qualifications, particularly through the provision and support of tertiary education opportunities.

Strategic Objective 6: Community and Health – to promote healthy lifestyles and to meet the need for community and health facilities arising from growth and demographic change in the Borough.

Strategic Objective 7: Transport - to support Swindon's growth through the provision of a comprehensive and sustainable transport network that is efficient, safe, affordable, accessible and easy to understand, and offers a genuine choice of modes.

Strategic Objective 8: Culture and Leisure - to enable the provision of cultural and leisure facilities commensurate with Swindon's size and growth in population and realise Swindon's potential as Regional Leisure Destination

Strategic Objective 9: Green Infrastructure - to provide an attractive and inspirational environment to live, work, learn and play, by the provision of a far-reaching network of connected and multi-functional green spaces linked to the wider countryside.

Strategic Objective 10: Natural, Built & Historic Environment - to ensure that development respects, enhances, and conserve the best of the existing built, historic and natural environment in the Borough.

Figure 4 –The Local Plan Strategic Priorities and Objectives



Part 3:

Sustainable Development



Part 3: Sustainable Development

Strategic Objectives

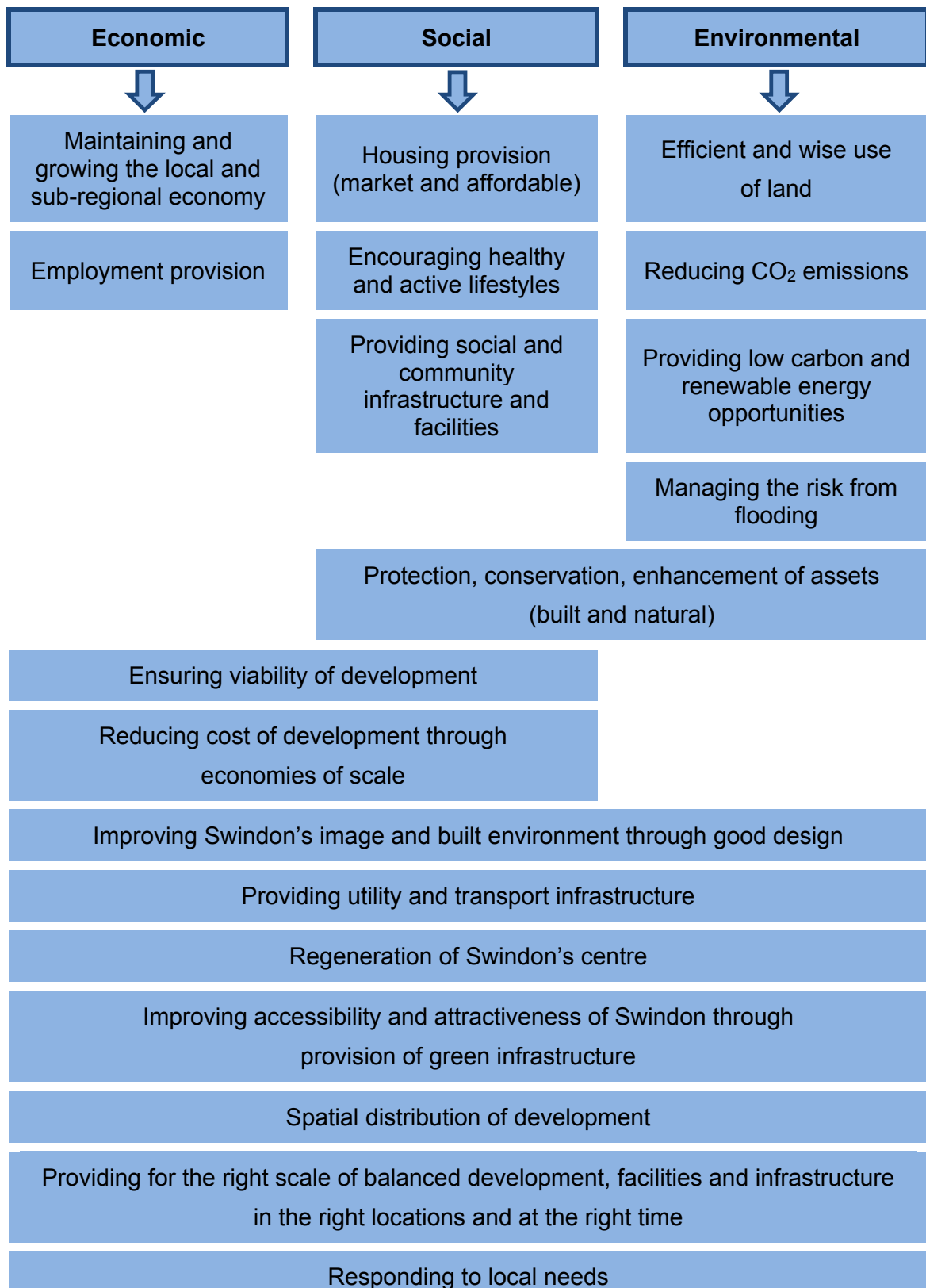
The Sustainable Development Policies flow directly from and help to implement all Strategic Objectives set out in Part 2 of this Plan.

- 3.1 Part 3 outlines the approach to sustainable development within Swindon Borough for the period to 2026. It sets out policies which:
- establish sustainable development principles by which all development proposed in the Borough will be assessed;
 - propose the appropriate amount and broad location of future development in the Borough, based on robust evidence and consultation; and
 - determine how development will be managed including how the presumption in favour of sustainable development will be applied.
- 3.2 The greatest challenge in planning for growth and change is to ensure that a balance is struck between responding to local needs, accommodating growth in population and enabling growth in the local economy, whilst at the same time protecting and conserving vital assets, facilities and services and what is good about our built and natural environments. It is the purpose of this Plan to ensure that this balance is struck in the interests of all its existing and future residents, workforce and visitors.
- 3.3 Within these constraints, opportunities and needs, the Local Plan sets out clearly how development proposals are going to be fulfilled; where, by when and how growth and change will be managed. To regulate this change, robustly evidenced policies have been developed to guide and enforce the strategy and steer decisions on proposals for development throughout the Borough. However, planning cannot make desired changes happen; it can only ensure that the right set of policies and plans are in place to help enable them to happen.
- 3.4 The choices made through this Plan, and the consultations which have run before it, have been based on the principles of providing sustainable and balanced development and, within the context of the ability of the local authority, development industry and other bodies and agencies, to deliver this change.

- 3.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encapsulates the approach that planning must take to planning for and delivering balanced growth and change. This continues a direction of travel set in motion by the UK Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future'², and by the United Nations before it when it defined 'sustainable development' as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The NPPF defines "sustainable" as "ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations" and development as "growth". It suggests that in delivering sustainable development, the planning system needs to perform social, economic and environmental roles and that the principle of sustainable development should be a "golden thread" throughout planning. In broad terms, 'sustainable development' can be read as providing 'balanced development'.
- 3.6 In Swindon Borough there are a multitude of issues that this Plan must address when setting a framework for the effective management and delivery of sustainable and balanced development. Many sit across social, economic and / or environmental roles rather than neatly fitting within one category. These include (but are not limited to), those listed in Figure 5 (in no order of priority).

² Securing the Future set out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly. See United Nations, 1987, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987

Figure 5. Key Issues for Swindon Borough Local Plan



Policy SD1: Sustainable Development Principles

To enable the delivery of sustainable development and sustainable communities in the Borough all development proposals will:

- be of high quality design;
- promote healthy, safe and inclusive communities;
- respect, conserve, and enhance the natural, built and historic environments;
- assess and address the impact of climate change through mitigation and / or adaption measures;
- provide or contribute to the assessed local and borough wide infrastructure and service requirements;
- contribute to the retention and growth of the local economy and complement town centre regeneration;
- be accessible by walking, cycling and/or public transport; and,
- use land and resources (such as water, energy, minerals and waste) in an efficient and effective way.

3.7 In the planning context, sustainable development principles are a combination of factors to help ensure that new development minimises and mitigates its impact where it is proposed, by providing adequate and accessible services and facilities for the occupiers of the new development and overall delivers a “balanced development” which respects the social, environmental and economic demands placed upon it. In short, they are the critical components required to deliver balanced growth and change.

3.8 Policy SD1 sets out the development principles which underpin this Local Plan and the development proposals which will come forward in the Borough. They represent a sustainable and balanced approach to the provision of new development and respond to:

- Swindon Borough's Strategic Objectives and Priorities identified in Part 2 of this Plan, translating them into “on the ground” positive requirements and outcomes;
- the key issues pertinent to Swindon Borough identified in Part 2 of this Plan;
- the need for all new development to contribute to sustainable and balanced growth and change for the better in the Borough; and,
- the Government's desire, through the NPPF, to see sustainable economic growth at the heart of planning which respects and balances all social, economic and environmental factors with the need for development.

- 3.9 In doing so the criteria provides the basis of standards and requirements that all new development in the Borough should meet, whatever the scale and wherever it is located. The policy provides the platform for more detailed policies which follow in Parts 4 and 5 of this Plan.

Evidence Base

- 3.10 The key evidence base documents for Policy SD1 include:

- The Swindon Sustainable Community Strategy: A Shared Vision for Swindon 2008–2030 (2008)
- A Swindon Climate Change Action Plan for Swindon Borough 2006–2010 (2006)
- An Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012–26 Consultation Document (2012)
- Active Swindon Strategy 2009–2015 (2009)

Delivery and Links with Other Key Policies

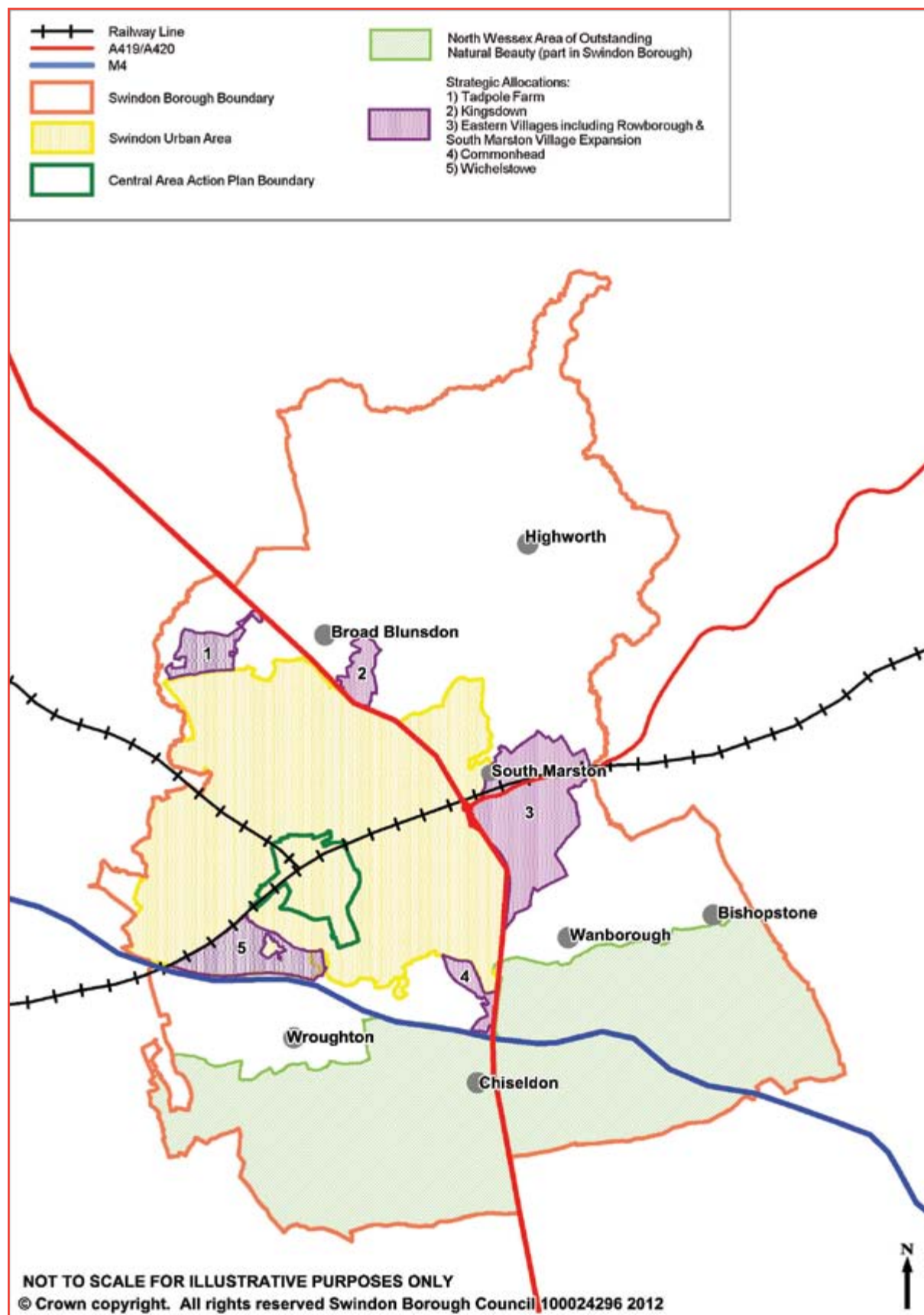
- 3.11 The delivery of sustainable development will be achieved through:

- The implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy in this Plan and associated Development Plan Documents (DPDs);
- Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders adopted by the Borough Council;
- Collaboration with other local authorities, Neighbourhood Forums, Parish Councils, developers, infrastructure providers and other key stakeholders as appropriate to enable the delivery of the above Plans and proposals for sustainable growth and development; and,
- The consideration of development proposals within and outwith of these processes through the application of Policies SD2 and SD3 and other relevant policies in this Plan.

- 3.12 The Swindon Design Toolkit will set out our approach to successful regeneration and place making to deliver the best and most sustainable outcomes for Swindon. Targeted investment beyond the standard at key destinations can help deliver high quality development that can help in transforming Swindon's image and redressing its design legacy.

- 3.13 As this policy sets out the key principles for the strategy, policy SD1 links through to all other policies in this plan.

Figure 6. Key Diagram



Policy SD2: The Sustainable Development Strategy

- a. Recognising its role and function in the wider area development in the Borough will be concentrated at Swindon through a combination of:
 - realising development opportunities within Swindon's urban area; and
 - allocated strategic sites at; Wichelstowe, Commonhead, Tadpole Farm, Kingsdown and the proposed New Eastern Villages, Rowborough and expanded South Marston, as defined on the Key Diagram.
- b. The Swindon Central Area, as defined on the Key Diagram and at Figure 7, will be the main focus and first preference for the location of built civic, cultural, further education, office, retail, leisure and regional sports facilities.
- c. Outside Swindon:
 - rural development will be located primarily at Highworth and Wroughton, which (of the rural settlements) are the most accessible and maintain the largest range of facilities;
 - South Marston will be extended as part of the allocated strategic extension sites in part a. above;
 - development at Broad Blunsdon, Chiseldon, Wanborough and Bishopstone will be supported where it delivers (at least) the quantum of development identified in the Plan and responds positively to address local needs through the Neighbourhood Plan process or further site allocation work as detailed in policy LN1; and,
 - development proposals in rural and countryside locations outside these named settlements will be permitted where:
 - o local needs have been identified and allocated through a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order; and /or
 - o it supports the expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centre; or
 - o the proposals satisfy the policy requirements of this Plan.

d. Sustainable economic and housing growth will be delivered in Swindon Borough during the plan period through the provision of:

- 119.5 hectares of employment land (B-use class) through:
 - 77.5 hectares of additional employment land³; and,
 - 42 hectares with extant permission and existing allocations carried forward (see Table 2)
- About 22,000 dwellings between 2011 and 2026, phased as follows:
 - 1,150 average per annum between 2011 and 2016; and,
 - 1,625 average per annum between 2016 and 2026.

e. This quantum of employment land and dwelling numbers for the period 2011-26 will be distributed as set out below:

Table 1. Housing and Employment Land Distribution

	Dwellings	Additional Employment Land ⁴ & Floorspace Employment
Swindon's Central Area	about 1,000	90,000 m ² office
Remainder Swindon's existing urban area	about 3,500	
Northern Development Area	589	
Wichelstowe	4,064	12.5 hectares
Commonhead	890	15 hectares
Tadpole Farm	1,695	5 hectares
New Eastern Villages	about 6,000	about 40 hectares
Rowborough	about 1,500	
South Marston Village: Greenfield Brownfield	500 about 140	
Kingsdown	about 1,650	
Highworth	at least 200*	5 hectares

³⁴ Including land with permission at Wichelstowe, Tadpole Farm and Commonhead

	Dwellings	Additional Employment Land⁴; & Floorspace Employment
Wroughton	at least 150*	
Other Villages	at least 100*	

* See paragraph 3.26 below

The Northern Development Area, Wichelstowe, Commonhead and Tadpole Farm have existing permissions. The number of dwellings and employment land for these areas shown above are per the existing permissions (excluding completions prior to April 1st 2011).

3.14 The development strategy aims to meet Swindon's development needs whilst protecting the Borough's most important assets. Development is to be concentrated primarily at Swindon as the focal point for the economy, services and facilities and transport for the Borough and the wider-area. Urban concentration is the most sustainable development strategy because:

- it will create a better balance between job growth and housing; and,
- critical mass and economies of scale can be more easily attained; and
- it will make the best use of existing and planned infrastructure and making the most efficient use of public resources and developer contributions.

3.15 The convenience and low prices at large supermarkets and the flexibility, choice and mobility provided by the car are increasingly undermining the prospects and viability of shops and services in smaller towns and villages. A limited amount of development has the potential to help support the long-term viability of these and other local facilities, and provide local job opportunities.

3.16 The Borough Council recognises that not all of Swindon's development needs can be met within the existing urban area. Therefore Swindon Borough is adopting a rational and responsible approach to town expansion in order to deliver the best and most sustainable outcomes for the town. Accordingly, development opportunities should be realistic and not compromise the existing or emerging longer-term vision and strategy. To ensure that this takes place, due consideration has been given to constraints and advice received both from statutory and non-statutory bodies and organisations to ensure that the allocations of the Local Plan are realistically capable of being implemented.

Economic Growth

- 3.17 The Swindon Borough Economic Strategy demonstrates the potential for continued economic growth for the Borough over the next 15 years, based on a number of priority key sectors. Economic growth not only secures future jobs for residents, but also provides much continued investment in the town that enables improvements to infrastructure and services. The Local Plan's key role in supporting economic growth is through the identification of sufficient and deliverable employment land and housing commensurate with growth forecasts. Since the previous draft of the Core Strategy (2011) work underpinning the Economic Strategy has been undertaken to address comments that the Plan was based on a single economic growth projection. This work produced a base scenario and higher growth scenario for the forecast increase in jobs for the period 2011-26, as follows:

■ Base scenario	+10,400
■ High scenario	+19,600
■ Core Strategy (2011)	+14,500 (for comparison)

- 3.18 On the basis of the following requirements the high scenario has been adopted as the target.
- 3.19 The Local Plan needs to:
- be NPPF compliant;
 - be in line with the Borough's Economic Strategy involving the prioritising of sectors;
 - acknowledge the aspirations of the Local Economic Partnership;
 - send out a 'positive message' to the business community that Swindon is 'open for business'; and
 - respond positively to the Government's growth announcements.
- 3.20 The development strategy for the Borough is based on a position of moving from recession to recovery during the Plan period, whilst recognizing that this recovery could be a slow transition to one of growth. On this basis, should the economy recover either much quicker or much slower than anticipated by the Plan's evidence base, and the strategy no longer becomes a true reflection of the pace or type of growth and change expected at the time of adoption, the Plan will be reviewed to adjust the strategy to reflect the different pace of change.

Employment Land

- 3.21 To meet future employment land (B-use Class) an additional requirement of 77.5 hectares of employment land has been identified. This is in addition to permissions⁵ yet implemented (39.6 hectares) and allocations taken forward from the Adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan (2.4 hectares), as set out in Table 2. In addition 90,000m² of B1 (office) floorspace is provided for in the Swindon Central Area.

⁵ Excluding Commonhead, Tadpole Farm and Wichelstowe

Table 2. Employment land with extant permission and allocations

Site	Area (hectares)	Potential Likely Use
Delta 300	0.3	Light industrial or distribution
Edison Road, Dorcan	2.42	Light industrial
Penny Lane, Drakes Way	1.12	Office
Europa/Brittania	1.65	Manufacturing
Adjacent to Abbey Stadium	4	Office – business park
Hillmead (2 sites)	7.9	Light industrial or distribution
Keypoint- K3	2.9	Distribution
Rivermead	1.3	Light industrial or distribution
Site 10a – South Marston Park	0.6	Office
Site 10b – South Marston Park	1.45	Distribution
Site 4 – South Marston Park	0.7	Light industrial or distribution
G-Park (remainder)	15.25	Large Distribution
Plot 9 Windmill Hill (allocation)	2.38	Office
Total	42	

- 3.22 The existing available sites are mainly small sites with the exception of the remainder of the G-Park site. In order to provide for a range of sites to meet market expectations; to allow for expansion and relocation of existing businesses in Swindon; and to allow for churn, a substantial amount of new employment land is allocated. In particular, it is recognised that Swindon's location makes it attractive to regional distribution centres. These large distribution units have a role to play in a balanced approach to economic growth in the Borough, but are land-hungry, typically 15 to 20 hectares. It is also critical that land is available in both the short and longer term to realise the aims of the Economic Strategy. The additional allocations include provision for advanced manufacturing, and low carbon, creative and ICT industries. Table 3 sets out the additional allocations and the likely potential uses and their likely delivery timescale.

Table 3 – Employment Land Allocations

Allocation	Area	Potential Use	Likely timescale
Wichelstowe	12.5 ha	B1b/c – Advanced Technology Park and Low Carbon R&D	5-10 years
Commonhead	15 ha	B1a – Prestige Business Park	10-15 years
New Eastern Villages	2.5 ha	B1a – Office Space Business Professional Financial Services	0-5 years
	7.5 ha	B1c/B2 – advanced manufacturing	0-5 years
	30 ha	B8 – Medium & Large Distribution	0-5 years
Tadpole Farm	5 ha	B1a/b –Low Carbon and creative sectors	5-10 years

Housing

- 3.23 On this basis of new economic projections and to meet locally derived demand for new housing, about 22,000 additional homes are required for 2011-2026. After taking account of completions between 2006 and 2011 (6,852), this equates to about 29,000 houses for the period 2006 to 2026. Approximately one-third of the additional housing requirement is needed to meet local needs through forecast changes in household and demographic structures in the Borough.
- 3.24 This revised requirement represents 1466 new homes per year on average (2011 to 2026), a 28% increase on the annual average completions since 1996, and thereby providing for a significant boost in housing as required by the NPPF. However, as economic growth projections over the short-term are less optimistic than they would be during a period of strong economic growth, the phasing of the release of housing sites is particularly important as there is no advantage in releasing too many development sites which are unlikely to be delivered. To prevent unnecessary release of additional greenfield housing sites the housing targets are phased to an annual average of 1,150 dwellings a year for the period to 2016, with 1,625 per annum from 2016 to 2026. Housing and economic growth will be regularly assessed to ensure they are consistent with the assumptions underpinning this Plan. If proven to be significantly out-of step a review of the targets will be undertaken which may result in an extension of the phasing period⁶. A housing trajectory is shown at Appendix 6.

⁶ A review of housing targets would be subject to the statutory process including public consultation, sustainability assessment and examination.

- 3.25 Development of previously developed land will be maximised. However, this alone will not be sufficient to deliver the housing numbers required by 2026. To complement development in the urban area, additional housing is allocated at Kingsdown and the New Eastern Villages, Rowborough and expanded South Marston Village, in addition to the existing planning consents at Wichelstowe, Commonhead and Tadpole Farm. More detail policies for these allocations are included within Part 5 of this Plan. Limited development is also proposed at the remaining settlements to support the viability of local services and facilities, particularly Highworth and Wroughton, which have the greatest range of services and facilities, and are the most accessible.
- 3.26 Outside of the strategic allocations at the new communities, the Local Plan sets an approximate number of dwellings which, has been demonstrated through evidence are broadly appropriate, in terms of scale and fit within the overall spatial strategy for the Borough, for the places specified Highworth, Wroughton and in total for the other villages in the Borough. The Neighbourhood Planning process allows for the additional allocation of specific numbers of dwellings above that set in adopted Local Plans, where they have been tested through the Neighbourhood Planning process, and the Plans proceed to adoption by the Borough Council. Policy LN1 sets out the approach to Neighbourhood Planning which will be taken within the Borough. The scale of development at individual settlements should be proportional to the size and function of the settlements.
- 3.27 There is a significant cross border relationship with Wiltshire Council. The former emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West proposed that part of Swindon's housing needs was to be met on land to the west of Swindon within Wiltshire. Due to the levels of growth being proposed there is no longer a need to provide growth on land to the west of Swindon within Wiltshire due to alternative proposals. Should the proposed strategy and level of growth for Swindon change, Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council as co-operating authorities, will continue to discuss the most appropriate strategy for Swindon's future growth. If land to the west of Swindon area becomes a potential option for growth again appropriate consultation will be undertaken and if necessary the two authorities can pursue a single issue joint Site Allocations DPD for this area.
- 3.28 In accordance with the NPPF the Council will identify and update annually a supply of deliverable sites to provide 5-years' worth of housing against the targets in this plan with an additional buffer of 5% moved forward from the later part of the plan period. Should there be a shortfall identified the Council will rapidly review the allocations of housing sites in the Local Plan to ensure a continuation of supply. Housing sites that come forward that are not in accord with policy DS2 and where there is a shortfall of supply identified will be assessed against Policies DS1 and DS3.

Evidence Base

3.29 Key evidence base documents include:

- Swindon Workspace Strategy (2009)
- Swindon Employment Land Review (2007)
- Active Swindon Strategy 2009-2015 (SBC & NHS, 2009)
- Economic Testing of Swindon Core Strategy (2012)
- An Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-26: Consultation Document (2012)
- Swindon Housing Requirement Update Report (2012)
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2009)
- Swindon Joint Study 2026 (2005)
- Swindon Small Scale Urban Extensions Study (2008)
- The Swindon Small Scale Urban Extensions Evidence Review Paper (2012)
- Swindon Housing Needs Survey (2006)
- Swindon Housing Market Area Strategy 2009-2014 (2009)
- Swindon Borough Housing Monitoring Report (2012)

Delivery and Links with Other Key Policies

3.30 The delivery of the strategy will be achieved through:

- Alignment of proposals with other related (but non-planning) strategies and plans identified in the "Evidence Base", particularly the Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-26: Consultation Document above;
- Land identification for urban extensions in Part 5 of this Plan;
- The adopted Central Area Action Plan;
- Framework Plans and masterplanning for new communities;
- The implementation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Swindon Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document;
- Public funding where it can be secured, developer contributions and / or the Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Forward Swindon; and,
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

3.31 The Duty to Co-operate Statement also signposts where co-operation and collaboration with key stakeholders has influenced decision-making on the Sustainable Development Strategy.

3.32 The Local Plan should be read as a whole, with proposals for development being considered against many policies depending on the details of the proposal and its location.

Policy SD3: Managing Development

- a. When considering development proposals, a positive approach will be taken to reflect a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:
- applicants will work with the local planning authority to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions, and promotes health and well-being, for those people living and working in Swindon Borough;
 - planning applications that are in accordance with the policies in this Local Plan (and with policies in adopted neighbourhood plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise; and,
 - where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Borough Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:
 - o any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
 - o specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted
- b. At all significant development areas:
- following outline permission being given to proposals comprehensive Design Codes and / or Framework Plans will be adopted prior to the approval of any Reserved Matters;
 - management strategies will be agreed to secure the long term maintenance of infrastructure prior to development, and
 - the production of Diversity Impact Assessments and Health Impact Assessments will be encouraged
- c. For the Swindon Central Area a Masterplan will be produced to give further guidance to development proposals to realise the aims of this Plan and the Swindon Central Area Action Plan

- d. For the Strategic Allocations a tariff or model legal agreement will be developed to ensure timely delivery of infrastructure, maintenance and mitigation and fair and equitable contributions between phases. This will require landowners to enter into equalisation agreements.**
- e. For the New Eastern Villages (including Rowborough), and South Marston Village, Supplementary Planning Documents will be adopted.**

3.33 In setting out national policy guidance, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to oversee the delivery of sustainable growth and change, having at its core a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The NPPF states that the presumption should be seen as a “golden thread” through both plan-making and decision taking. Paragraph 15 states that:

“Policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay. All plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.”

3.34 Policy SD3 aims to meet these requirements, setting out clearly what the presumption means in the Swindon context, whilst at the same time taking into account the wording of the Government’s model policy on the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” which it recommends is included in each development plan.

3.35 At large significant sites Design Codes and/or Framework Plans must be approved prior to Reserved Matters approval to guide the physical development of the site. They should provide a clear sense of identity, character and provide a clear land use and movement structure to support the vision and principles. It will be critical in their preparation that a partnership approach is adopted between the Local Planning Authority, developers, stakeholders and service providers. They will:

- help to deliver high quality sustainable development;
- help facilitate delivery; and,
- provide certainty and clarity to developers, community groups and parish councils.

- 3.36 The Borough Council is committed to reducing inequalities across all Swindon's communities and put in measures to improve the health of residents. Development has a role in such a process and working with the Council developers are encouraged to undertake Diversity Impact Assessments and Health Impact Assessments at an early stage in the application process to deliver schemes that are of the highest quality in this regard.
- 3.37 A model Section 106 agreement will be developed for the allocated strategic sites for the following reasons:
- development of this scale generates the need for an entirely new set of infrastructure, services and facilities and needs to be calculated differently;
 - there are high cost infrastructure items that the existing policy would not generate enough funds to deliver;
 - funding needs to be directed to the highest priority infrastructure, which may not be consistent with the Developer Contributions SPD; and,
 - external funding will need to be secured to deliver high cost infrastructure items in the form of gap-funding to deliver sustainable development.
- 3.38 In order that the New Eastern Villages and expanded South Marston are delivered in a co-ordinated and timely manner, with the requisite infrastructure, Swindon Borough Council will prepare Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) for the New Eastern Villages (including Rowborough) and, with the South Marston Parish Council, for South Marston village. These will be adopted following the adoption of the Local Plan. These SPDs will :
- provide a more detailed planning context against which to consider planning applications and to provide Swindon Borough Council with the confidence to approve a first phase;
 - provide the mechanism to control the quality of development and to ensure that the needs and aspirations of Swindon Borough Council, its partners and the community are achieved;
 - provide a mechanism to identify in more detail and deliver the necessary infrastructure and mitigation schemes;
 - ensure that development is phased in a sustainable way, which is both economically viable and provides the opportunity for behavioural change and more environmentally sustainable living; and
 - enable local communities, particularly in South Marston, to have a greater input into the planning and development of the area.
- 3.39 A draft Swindon Town Centre Masterplan has been produced which on adoption will form an important framework to guide and steer development at a detailed level in the Central Area.

Evidence Base

- 3.40 Evidence base includes the Government's model Local Plan policy on the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (2012).

Delivery and Links with Other Key Policies

- 3.41 Effective management of development will be achieved through the application of this policy and through:
- Alignment of proposals with other related (but non-planning) strategies identified in the "Evidence Base" above;
 - Implementation of the adopted Swindon Central Area Action Plan;
 - Implementation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
 - A Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document;
 - A 'New Eastern Villages' Supplementary Planning Document;
 - A 'South Marston Village' Supplementary Planning Document
 - New community development Framework Plans, design codes and masterplans;
 - Early and continuing dialogue between the Council, local community and developers;
 - The development management process; and,
 - Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders which might be developed by Neighbourhood Forums and are then consequently adopted by the Council, and / or, further work on the detailed location and specification of individual development sites undertaken by the Council (through masterplanning, site allocations work, development briefs and so on) augmented by Parish and other Community Plans.

Part 4:

Enabling Sustainable Development



Theme 1: High Quality Design and Sustainable Development

The High Quality Design and Sustainable Development theme's policies flow directly from and help to implement the following Strategic Objectives set out in Part 2 of this Plan:

SO1: High Quality Sustainable Development
SO3: Economy
SO4: Housing

4.1 Theme 1 sets out policies to:

- ensure high quality design in all new development;
- ensure that new development is constructed to the highest possible sustainable construction standards to help meet targets in the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and
- assess and determine proposals for development in accordance with these high quality design and sustainability standards.

Key Issues

- 4.2 The quality of Swindon's urban environment is perhaps one of the most emotive issues to residents of Swindon. Well-designed buildings and urban space help give a sense of place and identity and contribute to civic pride. Design plays an important role in shaping a healthy and safe environment, and can contribute to healthy and active lifestyles. This is not only through the construction of high quality buildings and public realm but also through the provision of open spaces and other 'soft' or 'green' infrastructure, as detailed in Theme 7 of this Plan. To realise Swindon's economic potential, well-designed fit for purpose employment space will be required, as well as an attractive working and living environment.
- 4.3 The changing climate has implications for the design of buildings and the urban environment. There are requirements set through legislation and applied through Building Regulations for new developments to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide they emit. As targets regarding emissions tighten, buildings will need to be designed to incorporate both on-site and off-site measures to offset carbon dioxide emissions such as energy saving, and renewable and low carbon energy generation solutions. These types of measures will also assist in addressing concerns about the future security of energy supply and higher energy costs.
- 4.4 Significant steps have already been taken to effect positive change to the Swindon central area's urban landscape and overall appearance through the adoption of the Swindon Central Area Action Plan (CAAP). However, local planning policies need to be set to help ensure that the aspirations of the CAAP are realised and to ensure high quality sustainable design and construction is delivered across the Borough.

- 4.5 Planning for well-designed large scale developments, will require a significant amount of co-ordination to be delivered successfully. Masterplans and design codes play a critical role in achieving high quality design in such developments as set out in Policy SD3.
- 4.6 As well as the application of policies in this Plan other organisations, both private and public, have a role in delivering high quality design and sustainable construction standards.

Key Evidence Base for Theme 1

- 4.7 Key evidence base documents for high design and sustainable development include:
- Swindon Design Guide (2006)
 - Swindon Borough Core Strategy Sustainable Development Policies (2009)
 - District Energy Pre-Feasibility Study (2011)
 - Swindon Sustainable Energy Framework (2011)

Policy DE1: High Quality Design

a. High standards of design are required for all types of development. Proposals for development shall respond to the objectives of sustainable development through high quality design and place-making principles. To ensure this, proposals should address and will be assessed against all the following design principles:

- context and character; and
- layout, form and function of the development, including:
 - accessibility;
 - integration;
 - legibility;
 - inclusivity;
 - safety & security;
 - efficiency;
 - permeability; and
 - adaptability;
- amenity; and
- the quality of the public realm

b. All development should address and incorporate the following considerations as applicable:

- **sustainable construction (in accordance with Policy DE2);**
- **managing flood risk (in accordance with Policy EN6);**
- **transport (in accordance with Policy TR2);**
- **green infrastructure (in accordance with Policy EN1); and**
- **the historic environment (in accordance with Policy EN10)**

- 4.8 Development proposals can only be acceptable and sustainable where they meet the requirements for high quality design. The Borough Council considers that high quality design transcends development scale and is an essential requirement of all proposals across the Borough. Policy DE1 sets out the design principles that development proposals should be assessed against. These include: the place and setting of the development (context & character); how the development will feel and work for the users of it (layout, form & function); how it will provide for people's needs and protect important features (amenity); and what benefits the development will bring to the urban environment (quality of the public realm). The result should be a more attractive environment, embracing high quality place-making ideals, well-functioning and robust enough to withstand future changes.

Design Principles

Character and Context

- 4.9 Each place has its own distinctive character and possesses inherent design assets and opportunities. As such, all development must be in context with the existing natural, built and historic environment and proposals must respond positively to enhance or create distinctive character and identity.

Layout, Form and Function of Development

- 4.10 Assessing the quality of design requires an understanding of the considerations of layout, form and the functioning of proposals. "Layout" refers to the structuring or setting out of development, the way buildings, routes and open spaces relate to one another, "Form" refers to the detailed aspects which make up the configuration of the three-dimensional built form, and "Function" refers to the utility or need required to satisfy the proposed use and its users.
- 4.11 Layouts should be designed to ensure a clear and logical structure which is easy to navigate and understand. This should be achieved through a well-ordered and defined public realm, with clear relationships between uses, buildings, routes and spaces.

- 4.12 The network of streets and public spaces should connect visually and physically as a sequence of public spaces that form part of a high quality public realm network.
- 4.13 The function of development layouts should take into account how all the aspects of the development proposal will operate, by considering their inter-relationships and synergies. This should be achieved without compromising the quality of the public realm and sense of place. In considering the function of development proposals, layouts will need to accommodate the necessary service, utility and amenity requirements appropriate to it. Such requirements should be provided in a way that does not compromise the social, environmental or economic benefits of the scheme proposed.
- 4.14 Development layouts should aim to achieve the following principles as follows:
- **Accessibility** by all modes of transport giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists;
 - **Integration** between new development and the existing context and character relating to the historic environment; urban structure; urban grain; green infrastructure; public realm; and public and community facilities;
 - **Legibility** - through a clear and logical structure that is easy to navigate and understand. This should be achieved through a well-ordered and defined public realm, with clear relationships between uses, buildings, routes and spaces;
 - **Inclusivity** across all user groups through the principles of inclusive design. Inclusive access to places, spaces and buildings is a crucial part of achieving social equality;
 - **Safety & Security** - development must be safe, secure and attractive to minimise opportunities for criminal activity and reduce the fear of crime. This will be assessed in terms of mix of uses, active frontages onto streets, access routes and routes through the development (including integrated routes), public realm, surveillance, lighting, clear entrance points and the location and extent of planting;
 - **Efficiency** - in design and layout to optimise energy efficiency through passive solar design considerations; and in the use of land without compromising existing and proposed amenity;
 - **Permeability** - by creating development which is well connected to the surrounding movement network and which enables ease of movement within and across the site; and
 - **Adaptability** - in the robustness of the pattern, arrangement, size and configuration of plots and blocks of development and of building design to allow for change over the long term.
- 4.15 **The Form** of development proposals should create a strong contextual response to site and be of good quality architecture in order to create distinctive identity. The form of development proposals will be assessed in terms of siting and orientation, scale, proportion, shape, massing, rhythm, materials, colour and architectural detailing.

- 4.16 The quality of architecture is a fundamental in achieving a high quality built environment. A positive approach to good quality architecture will be expected in the Borough and will be assessed in relation to the considerations above. The Borough Council considers that innovative and exemplar architecture has a key role in improving Swindon's quality and image. Where development proposals are outstanding or innovative and which help to raise the standards of urban design and architecture, they will be afforded significant weight.

Amenity

- 4.17 Development proposals must ensure convenience and levels of comfort and enjoyment, and promote good health and well-being. This will be assessed in terms of light, privacy, visual intrusion, internal space standards, noise, smell, pollution, and light pollution or other disturbances.
- 4.18 Development proposals should also respect and accommodate any existing feature of acknowledged importance, including (but not limited to) trees, hedgerows, and historic structures and buildings on, or in the vicinity of, the site.
- 4.19 Residential development should provide an acceptable level of internal and external amenity for all types of dwellings in order to protect future users and contribute to sustaining populations within their communities over the long term. Accommodation that falls below an acceptable level inevitably compromises its function and usability over the long term, and can have a cumulative negative impact on the local area. It can also have a negative impact on the health and well-being of the residents themselves. The Borough Council will issue supplementary guidance in respect of space standards applicable to residential development. Such guidance will be in the context of sustainable development as it relates to the efficient use of land, and will provide equitable minimum standards to ensure new housing is of a high quality that maintains long-term social benefits to the wider community.
- 4.20 Features of acknowledged importance form an important aspect of existing amenity established over time. They often form an inherent part of the character of an area, its identity and its enjoyment by local residents. Development proposals should respect and integrate such features where appropriate.

Quality of the Public Realm

- 4.21 The quality of the public realm and open space is a key issue in creating and maintaining a sense of place and providing for social cohesion. A very high quality approach to the design of new, and works to existing, public realm and open space is required.

- 4.22 Public realm includes streets, hard and soft spaces and routes used by the public. The design of public space should take careful consideration of the proximity and accessibility to local residents and all public realm should be designed with the principles as set out under layout, form and functioning of development above.
- 4.23 Streets perform a major role in defining the quality and character of the urban environment. Their detailed design and the integration of the buildings and other structures fronting them are key attributes to establishing local identity. Streets should be designed with a strong place-making approach justified through good sections and plans in order to establish their specific role and function for each site.

Design Considerations

- 4.24 Major development proposals must be prepared in a co-ordinated manner taking into account the local, physical, social, economic and environmental context at the earliest stage of the design process.
- 4.25 Policy DE1 requires that the following considerations are taken into account in the design of development:
- **Energy and Sustainable Construction** – to ensure the design, layout, and orientation, including the passive solar design, of the development, support and achieve energy efficiency, generation and sustainable construction methods;
 - **Flood Risk** – to ensure that the location, layout, and design, incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), mitigates and manages flood risk arising from new development;
 - **Transport** – to ensure that the design and layout of the development integrates into the transport network for all modes of travel;
 - **Green Infrastructure** – to ensure that the design and layout of the development protects and enhances green infrastructure, and to integrate measures to improve mental and physical wellbeing into the design; and
 - **Historic Environment** – to ensure that historic assets and their settings are protected and integrated into the design where appropriate.

Additional Evidence Base

- 4.26 Where to find additional information:
- Swindon Design Guide (SBC, 2006)
 - Swindon Shop-Fronts Developer Control Guidance Note (SBC, 2006)
 - Manual for Streets (Department for Transport, 2007)
 - Manual for Streets 2 (Department for Transport, 2010)

Delivery and Links with Other Key Policies

- 4.27 High quality design will be delivered through the application of this policy and through:
- the Swindon Design Toolkit, which will provide further detail on:
 - o Urban Design Principles & Policy;
 - o Context and Character;
 - o Green Infrastructure;
 - o Residential Layouts;
 - o Transport Requirements for Development;
 - o Sustainable Design and Construction;
 - o Residential Extensions and Alterations;
 - o Residential Space Standards;
 - o Shopfronts and Signage;
 - o Access for All; and
 - o Public Art.
 - Design and Access Statements, the detailed requirements for which are included in Council guidance;
 - design briefs and masterplans; and,
 - the development management process.
- 4.28 Information submitted with a planning application should be proportionate to the scale, significance and impact of the proposal.
- 4.29 Where necessary, the Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority will seek the advice and recommendation of recognised local, regional or national design review panels to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design on development proposals are achieved.
- 4.30 The Borough Council will produce a measurable standard of criteria against which development proposals can be assessed. This will assist the design process from early on and assess design quality over time,
- 4.31 Where a Design and Access Statement is required, it must clearly set out the overall design approach, site constraints and key considerations for the site. The Borough Council will produce guidance on what should be included within a Design and Access Statement.
- 4.32 All applications for significant development will be deemed premature until a Design Brief or Masterplan has been prepared, that has been subject to public consultation undertaken broadly in line with the Statement of Community Involvement. Those commissioning development projects should aim to achieve high quality design. It is recommended that appropriately qualified and experienced design professionals such as registered architects, urban designers, landscape architects and public artists are engaged at an early stage of the development proposal to ensure all aspects of design are considered.