



# SWINDON AND WILTSHIRE STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN JANUARY 2016

*Using our unique physical location in Southern England to create wealth,  
jobs and new business opportunities*

*Skills and talent* | *Transport infrastructure* | *Digital connectivity* | *Place shaping* | *Business development* |

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## INTRODUCTION

This document updates and revises the Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan which was approved by Government in April 2014. It builds on the work achieved to date in bringing forward key developments approved through rounds 1 and 2 of the Local Growth Deal as well as progress towards the delivery of the European Structural and Investment Fund, the Higher Futures Programme (our City Deal Skills Brokerage Programme) and the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub.

Five strategic objectives have been identified in this Strategic Economic Plan which extend across the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) area. In addition, we have reviewed the geographic coverage of the three Growth Zones which were originally identified in 2014. The Growth Zones remain our focus for targeted investment; these are Swindon-M4 Growth Zone, the A350 Growth Zone and the Salisbury-A303 Growth Zone. Each Growth Zone has its individual strengths, characteristics and investment needs which are reflected in our Investment Plan.

The 2015 Strategic Economic Plan therefore highlights the priorities and future opportunities for investment through to 2026. Our key priorities for investment are focussed on making Swindon and Wiltshire the best location for business across central southern England.

## SWINDON AND WILTSHIRE: OUR PLACE

We want to use our pivotal location in Southern England to create wealth, jobs and new business opportunities which are set within a spectacular landscape that provides an exceptional quality of life. We will focus on our existing strengths and our base of established business sectors to build an outstanding sustainable business environment in which our economy will thrive.

Our competitive advantage is based upon:

- A pivotal central southern location with geographic proximity to major economic centres including London, key airports, and coastal ports;
- A dynamic, knowledge based economy with nationally important clusters in Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing; Financial and Professional Services; Digital and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Land Based Industries;
- A resilient and attractive rural economy with world class landscape, heritage and visitor attractions;
- An economically significant Military presence;
- Strong small and medium sized enterprise (SME) growth with high levels of innovation and business survival; and
- A vibrant economy with a skilled workforce and low unemployment.

By 2026, we want to be world-renowned for innovation, entrepreneurialism and our great quality of life. Our population will have increased from 699,000 in 2014 to 764,000, matched by employment providing higher skilled jobs and high value economic growth.

The strength of our proposal lies in how we will accelerate economic growth by smarter use of our resources. We have a very clear idea of what we want to achieve:

- Support the Swindon-M4 Growth Zone into a new phase of growth, building on its strengths in Manufacturing and Commerce and making its urban areas attractive to investors;
- Deliver the significant growth planned for the A350 Growth Zone, exploiting the Digital cluster and Advanced Manufacturing capacity, and investing in the regeneration of the urban areas;
- Restructure the Salisbury A303 Growth Zone's economic base, leveraging the opportunities provided by the presence of the Military, Life Sciences and Defence Technologies specialisms at Porton, and build on its world class reputation as a visitor destination;
- Align the acceleration of economic growth i.e. jobs and investment with the housing growth, infrastructure and utilities needed to satisfy existing and future need;
- Get ahead of the skills deficit 'curve' so that we have a workforce that provides a competitive advantage by being fit for the future by improving access to Higher Education through our innovative Higher Futures Programme;
- Use our Military unique selling point (USP) as an enabler in achieving the economic growth we intend to deliver; and
- Ensure publicly owned land is freed for use to facilitate economic growth and increase the area's contribution to the wealth of the nation.

## Our Economic Opportunity

In 2014, we identified five SMART objectives which we aspired to achieve by 2026 in order to capitalise on our strengths and address our weaknesses through strategic investment and intervention. These were to:

- **Increase the employment rate to 80%.** This has nearly been achieved. For the year to June 2015, the employment rate stood at 78.6%;
- **Sustain the number of patents granted per 100,000 population.** Between October 2014 and October 2015, 670 patents were granted to businesses based in Swindon and Wiltshire which is 95.8 per 100,000 population<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the area has seen significant growth in employment in knowledge based businesses (an increase of 22.7% between 2011 and 2014);
- **Increase the proportion of the workforce (resident and non-resident) with a Level 4+ qualification from 33% to 52%.** We recognise that we have more to do here; by December 2014, 36.8% of the Swindon and Wiltshire workforce was qualified to this level;
- **Improve young people's attainment at 16 (including English and Maths) and 19 to beyond the national average.** GCSE attainment levels between 2011 and 2015 have remained relatively static across Swindon and Wiltshire whereas they actually fell across England<sup>2</sup>. By 2014, 85.4% of 19 years olds in England had achieved a Level 2 qualification; in Wiltshire this stood at 86.1% and 83.3% in Swindon compared to 81%, 81.8% and 75.9% respectively in 2011; and
- **Ensure 100% superfast broadband coverage across the area including all strategic sites.** Work is underway to improve access to broadband across Swindon and Wiltshire. By March 2016, phase 1 of the Wiltshire Online programme will be complete and there will be the opportunity for 91% of premises to connect to superfast broadband. The Swindon Superfast Broadband programme aims to improve current coverage (>24mbps) of 80% to 99.5% by June 2016.

We will continue to monitor these SMART objectives but given the significant progress we have made already, we aspire to do more. We have re-defined the three Growth Zones within each of the broader economic corridors which transect the SWLEP area. These Growth Zones are where we have the potential to have the greatest economic impact not only in terms of the growth of Swindon and Wiltshire but also contributing to the growth and reputation of UK PLC.

## Swindon and Wiltshire as a hub for innovation

Innovation continues to be central to our Strategic Economic Plan. It is typified by the number of global innovators who have invested and prospered in the Swindon and Wiltshire area such as Honda, Intel and Dyson as well as the presence of a number of innovation-driven sectors including Health and Life Sciences; Pharmaceuticals, Mobile Telecommunications, Digital and High Value Manufacturing. They actively continue to invest in research, design and development, create new employment and offer supply chain opportunities for smaller companies in the local area and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2009, the figure was 38.1 per 100,000. Source <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ipo-patent-data>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>. GCSE 2011: Swindon 52.4%, Wiltshire 60.5% and England 59.0%; 2015: Swindon 52.2%, Wiltshire 59.6% and England 52.8%. The way in which education data are collected changed in 2013 with the result that levels appear to have fallen for England. For attainment levels to remain static locally is therefore a reflection of improved performance.

Swindon is also home to seven national Research Councils as well as the Space Agency and the presence of the University of Bath's Sustainable Technology Centre at Wroughton all add to the innovative character of the area.

Investment by the Military over the last century has generated exceptional commercial opportunities which have driven innovation. A unique ICT infrastructure has built up around Corsham where the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the private sector have invested heavily in secure communications and data storage. Corsham is home to a growing cluster of digital industries as well as the most secure cloud data centre and electrical supply in the country. There are also strong links with the 100,000 Whole Genome Project and secure Government communications. As 'big data' and cyber security become even more important in the digital economy nationally and internationally, the economic potential of this infrastructure to create a leading digital economy cluster is evident.

The presence of the Military in south Wiltshire at Porton has led to the development of a cluster of Health and Life Sciences companies adjacent to the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and Public Health England with specialisms in microbiology, immunisation and medical care. Leading edge work is also undertaken by Dstl in cyber-security at the site. The availability of strategic sites across Swindon and Wiltshire plus the growing network of development sites across Corsham, Porton, Salisbury and Swindon therefore have the potential to draw in new investment nationally and from overseas. These investors will benefit from our unique combination of expertise with the potential to foster collaborative activity and spur further innovation and invention.

The effect of this activity is already visible with employment in Knowledge Based Industries having increased by 15% between 2012 and 2014 to 65,600, nearly twice the growth experienced nationally (8.2% across Great Britain). Continued growth in these industries will be important to underpin the development of new high value activity and job creation.

### **Our population has grown rapidly**

The population of Swindon and Wiltshire continues to grow at above the national rate and was the fourth highest rate of growth of all Local Enterprise Partnerships<sup>3</sup> at 13.9% between 2001 and 2014. The majority of this increase has been amongst people of working age attracted to the area by employment and the lifestyle on offer (11.6% Swindon and Wiltshire; 8.6% England and Wales). That said, over recent years the number of working age people in the area did fall so the Army Basing programme will be important in bringing in additional skilled people of working age to offset this as well as the attraction of additional workers on the back of economic growth. It will be important that planned housing completions are brought forward on schedule in order to sustain population growth in the future.

### **Our contribution to national housing targets**

Work will be undertaken to prepare the evidence base for housing growth and Local Plan development to 2036. The Local Plans for Swindon and Wiltshire will set out what is intended to happen across the area, when and where this will occur and how it will be delivered. Housing needs will be identified through an independent assessment including identifying key sites which are crucial to the delivery of the housing strategy and by addressing the future needs and opportunities of the area. Between 2015 and 2026 there is a residual requirement for 42,480 new homes to be built; 23,171 of which are required between 2015 and 2021 thereby contributing 2.3% of the Government's target of building 1,000,000 new homes by 2021.

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<sup>3</sup> After London LEP; Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough LEP and South East Midlands LEP.

## Strong jobs growth is forecast

There are strong prospects for employment growth in the area. According to econometric forecasts in the 2013 Economic Assessment, 30,000 additional jobs are forecast between 2010 and 2020 across Swindon and Wiltshire, twice the rate of growth predicted nationally owing to good representation in sectors predicted to perform well, such as Professional Services. This forecast is consistent with the rate of growth being planned for in Local Plans. The employment projections indicate that the occupational profile of the area is predicted to continue to shift towards higher-level occupations, with the greatest levels of growth expected among managers, professionals and associate professionals.

### Our Economic Opportunity

- Exploit our potential to attract further inward investment and support the development of SMEs in high value sectors to balance growth in the South East;
- Extend our reputation as a hub for specialist sectors in Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing; Financial and Professional Services; Digital and ICT and Land Based Industries.
- Rapid population growth; and
- Strong jobs growth forecast.

## Our Economic Challenge

Our strategic location and connectivity is both a strength and a weakness. It is no coincidence that the peaks in our historic economic growth coincided with the arrival of the Great Western Railway in 19<sup>th</sup> century and the M4 five decades ago.

Our focus here is on the regeneration of Swindon Town Centre, the delivery of major housing developments as well as employment sites at Junctions 15 and 16 (Swindon) and 17 (Chippenham). These locations have greatest potential for growth and have the added benefit of easy links to surplus public sector land. Swindon and northern Wiltshire forms part of the wider M4 corridor that stretches from London, via Reading through to Bristol and Wales. Much of the M4 to the East and West has been fully developed. The new work on the electrification of the Great Western Main Line will significantly improve connectivity to key Towns and Cities.

The western economic corridor not only joins the area together as a key route running north to south across Wiltshire, but facilitates access to the Midlands and beyond to the north and south to the coast with its various ports and airports and Europe beyond. Our focus here is on delivering substantial growth in the Advanced Manufacturing and Design and Digital sectors; transport infrastructure developments along the A350 including rail improvements to support future economic growth, maximising the agglomeration effect of settlements along the A350; and Town Centre regeneration programmes in Chippenham and Trowbridge.

The southern corridor extends along the A303 and the West of England rail line which offer second arterial routes to London and the far South West connecting Salisbury with the southern Home Counties, Gatwick and Heathrow airports, Exeter, Plymouth and beyond. Our focus is to restructure the economic base of the area, focussing on innovation particularly in the Life Sciences, Defence Technology and Science including Cyber Security and the regeneration of Salisbury City Centre.

Throughout Swindon and Wiltshire, we face the challenge of improving provision for higher skills and education in order to enable residents to compete for the high value jobs we are seeking to bring to Swindon and Wiltshire. In capitalising on our strengths we will look to address the weaknesses in our economy.

### **Declining competitiveness**

While there is evidence of high levels of productivity and good prospects for overall economic growth in Swindon and Wiltshire, competitiveness has been in decline. Taking the period 2001-2013 England experienced growth in nominal GVA of 61.7%. In contrast Swindon and Wiltshire saw growth of just 50%. While Swindon GVA is above the national average, it is below average in Wiltshire. Investment is therefore required in setting the right infrastructure in place to improve productivity in the A350 and South Wiltshire Growth Zones and ensure that Swindon and Wiltshire attracts businesses which create value, supports and encourages existing businesses to grow and builds on its reputation as a top location for foreign-owned firms.

### **The impact of the recession**

The UK has emerged from its longest and deepest recession in the post-war era. There is evidence that the effects have been particularly marked in Swindon where the employment rate fell from 82% in March 2008 to 72% in March 2013. However, since 2013 Swindon has experienced strong economic growth, attracting new businesses and increasing employment by approximately 5% and the employment rate is now 76.4% (for the year to June 2015). In Wiltshire, the employment rate fell from 77% to 74.5% in the same period but has recovered to 79.7% (for the year to June 2015). Notwithstanding this, the GVA impact in Wiltshire is lower than Swindon. Investment is required to increase value in addition to ensuring that the economy is once again operating at, or close to, full employment to maximise wealth generation and ensure living standards continue to rise. Although there is still room for further improvement particularly in Swindon, our aspiration to reach 80% employment rate across Swindon and Wiltshire has nearly been achieved.

### **Youth unemployment**

Nationally, young people have been particularly affected by the recession and to an extent this has also been the case in Swindon and Wiltshire. In November 2013, the overall Claimant Count<sup>4</sup> was 7,880 and 28.6% of those claiming were aged 16-24. By October 2015, this figure had fallen to 4,385, 25.4% of which were aged 16-24. There has therefore been improvement locally with the claimant count falling significantly and the total number is modest at 1,115 young people which represents just 1% of all residents aged 16-64.

### **Educational attainment at 16 and 19**

Primary schools in Swindon and Wiltshire perform significantly above the English average, however after key stage 2 school performance across Swindon and Wiltshire is mixed. Generally speaking, Wiltshire schools have performed significantly above the English average since 2013 in terms of the percentage of pupils aged 16 achieving 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs; while Swindon schools have narrowed the gap with the average for England but still remain below it. At age 19, between 2009/10 and 2013/14, increasing numbers of young people at Swindon schools achieved Level 3 qualifications, however Swindon still

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<sup>4</sup> Job Seekers Allowance plus Universal Credit Claimants



underperforms nationally by 6%, whilst Wiltshire exceeds the England average<sup>5</sup>. We want to see our educational attainment rise to be significantly above the average for England in order to support the needs of the future economy and to better the economic prospects for our future working age residents.

### **Low rates of Higher Education participation in Swindon, higher rates in Wiltshire**

Local businesses have identified the lack of a ready workforce with higher level skills as a major barrier to future growth. In 2013-14, 35% of students in Swindon with A levels or a Level 3 qualification went onto Higher Education and although the figure for Wiltshire was higher at 54%, both were appreciably lower than the national average of 58%. Those students who do go on to Higher Education tend not to return to the area once they have obtained a degree, and since Swindon and Wiltshire does not have a significant higher education presence, it does not attract nearly enough people to gain a Level 4 qualification or above to replace those that leave. The aspiration for a higher education presence in the area therefore remains an important one. The number of graduate level jobs in the local economy is forecast to increase from 33.6% to 41.1%; this means that 83,000 more people with a Level 4 qualification or above will be needed by 2020. The delivery of the Higher Futures Programme, Swindon and Wiltshire's City Deal Skills Brokerage Programme, will be important in driving participation figures up locally but this issue is compounded by the lack of a significant university presence in the area, which would enable greater access to Higher Education.

### **Low rates of firm formation but good survival rates**

Business start-up rates have improved from 3.9 per 1,000 of the population in 2011 to 5.1 in 2013 but they still remain below average in comparison with England and Wales (5.6 in 2013). Of those firms that do start-up however, business survival rates are strong, consistently above the national average, for example the 5 year business survival rate (i.e. businesses established in 2008 through to 2013 which were the worst years in terms of the recession) in Swindon and Wiltshire was 46.9% compared to just 41.3% for England and Wales. We need to continue to support entrepreneurialism by providing access to business advice and guidance through the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub.

### **Transport**

None of the main north-south road connections in the wider sub-region are fit for purpose and the increasing unreliability of these routes is significantly constraining business and development growth. In Salisbury, there are capacity issues on the A36 Southampton Road which is a key gateway into the City. The regeneration of Swindon Town Centre and the significant development growth planned in Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge needs to be supported by improved local transport systems to help create more sustainable settlements. In addition, improved rail connections are being compromised by a lack of key infrastructure. Further train service enhancements are hampered by the single track line through Melksham and the growth ambition for Corsham may be compromised by the lack of a rail station. Salisbury Station has growing capacity and interchange issues, and improvements are needed at Chippenham and Westbury stations to help facilitate service enhancements and support their important hub roles.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Department for Education performance tables at Key Stage 5

## Our Economic Challenge

- Declining competitiveness;
- The impact of the recession;
- Educational attainment at 16 and 19;
- Low rates of Higher Education participation in Swindon;
- Low rates of business formation; and
- Inadequate transport Infrastructure to support expansion plans.

# FROM VISION TO ACTION

We will be bold and ambitious in our plans, we will retain and capitalise upon the economic assets that exist already and we will seize new opportunities over the next decade to ensure our strategic vision for the future is achieved.

## Our Vision for Swindon and Wiltshire in 2026

Swindon and Wiltshire in 2026 is world-renowned for its innovation, entrepreneurialism and great quality of life. Its blend of vibrant urban centres, busy market Towns and outstanding rural landscape make it the best place in Britain to live, work and visit. A well-connected, attractive, vibrant place, our population continues to grow at a rate that out-strips many parts of the country, with more people choosing to live and work locally.

## Our Strategic Objectives

Based on where we are and where we want to be by 2026, we have identified five strategic objectives to stimulate public and business investment, and lever maximum return on investment. These strategic objectives apply across the whole of Swindon and Wiltshire but there will be targeted investment to address the specific priorities of each of our three Growth Zones. Skills and Talent and Business Development interventions will be available to businesses and learners across the whole of Swindon and Wiltshire. In addition, whilst the priority sectors may cluster in individual or multiple Growth Zones, businesses in these sectors are more widely located and will still be supported through sector development activity.

### Strategic Objectives

- **Strategic Objective 1: Skills and talent** - we need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions;
- **Strategic Objective 2: Transport infrastructure improvements** - we need a well connected, reliable and resilient transport system to support economic and planned development growth at key locations;
- **Strategic Objective 3: Digital capability** - we need to deliver excellence in digital connectivity and cyber transformation to achieve business growth, innovative public services and influence societal change;
- **Strategic Objective 4: Place Shaping** - we need to deliver the infrastructure required to deliver our planned growth and regenerate our City and Town Centres, and improve our visitor and cultural offer; and
- **Strategic Objective 5: Business Development** - we need to strengthen the competitiveness of small and medium sized businesses and attract a greater share of foreign and domestic investment into the area.

## **Strategic Objective 1: Skills and Talent - we need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions.**

The SWLEP has identified four themes in its Skills Plan under which action will be progressed to achieve this objective. These are:

- **Improve the skills system.** Making the education and skills system more effective and responsive to the needs of employers and learners;
- **Skills for growth.** Helping businesses develop skilled workforces that will support long term sustained growth and improved productivity within the local economy;
- **Skills for inclusion.** Supporting the development of an inclusive economy, helping people to overcome barriers to employment, to enter and stay in the workforce; and
- **Maximise the impact of skills.** Delivering the wider priorities within the Strategic Economic Plan i.e. as an enabler to achieve other SEP priorities.

### **Priority Actions**

#### **Skills system:**

- Ensure there is a robust and responsive post 16 education and skills sector operating to meet the needs of learners and employers which is financially efficient, sustainable and operates from campuses which are fit for purpose;
- Improve progression routes to employment in the post 16 education sector, with strong employer involvement in the curriculum to ensure improved employability;
- Deliver options to enhance Higher Education participation across Swindon and Wiltshire meeting the demand for higher level and degree-level qualified employees locally; and
- Ensure that the learning and skills offer reflects the needs of the area, including the priority sectors, providing effective STEM skills.

#### **Skills for growth:**

- Develop a skilled and competitive workforce meeting the needs of employers;
- Develop higher level skills provision through smarter engagement between the Higher and Further Education sectors and business;
- Achieve a higher proportion of individuals employed in higher skilled and higher value-added roles (Level 4 and above) in priority sectors; and
- Embed apprenticeships as an established route to employment and maximise the opportunities to grow Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.

#### **Skills for inclusion:**

- Improve educational attainment, exceeding the national average, at age 16 (including English and Maths) and at age 19;
- Realise the potential of residents with barriers to employment, including young people and older workers and develop innovative approaches to providing support; and
- Ensure impartial and independent professional careers advice and guidance is operating across schools and colleges.

#### **Enabler of other priorities:**

- Ensure Military Service Leavers and existing employees have clear pathways to new skills and flexible learning.

**Strategic Objective 2: Transport infrastructure improvements - we need a well-connected, reliable and resilient transport system to support economic and planned development growth at key locations.**

Transport is one of the main constraints to growth and without significant investment in our transport infrastructure we will find it difficult to unlock future development. There are a number of transport interventions that are required, some of which can be delivered over the short-term while others will require planning, development and consultation through to 2026 at substantial resource cost. These will be crucial in terms of effectively bringing forward housing and employment land and supporting our regeneration and growth ambitions, and they will be assessed in terms of their economic efficiency.

**Priority Actions**

- Deliver key road junction and infrastructure improvements to support economic and planned development growth;
- Deliver a whole corridor approach to traffic management and maintenance on key routes to improve reliability and resilience;
- Deliver packages of integrated transport schemes to support the development and regeneration plans for Chippenham, Salisbury, Swindon and Trowbridge;
- Deliver rail capacity and connectivity improvements to support economic growth and help realise improved travel opportunities;
- Lobby Government to address the unreliability of north-south road connections in the sub-region to support development and business growth both across Swindon and Wiltshire, and in neighbouring LEP areas; and
- Lobby Government and work with Highways England, Network Rail, train operating companies and other key bodies to improve key strategic routes to the Midlands and south coast ports, Cardiff, Bristol and the Thames Valley, London and South East, and South West.

**Strategic Objective 3: Digital capability - we need to deliver excellence in digital connectivity and cyber transformation to achieve business growth, innovative public services and influence societal change.**

We will build on our unique data security and fibre capacity<sup>6</sup> to be at the forefront nationally and internationally in the development and application of digital, cyber technologies and big data applications. This will require new cross sector collaboration and will be pivotal in delivering our innovation aspirations.

We need to maximise the potential of this capacity and capability and increase the profile of the area. This will build on the ability of research organisations to manipulate big data; support the efficiency and transformation of the public sector and the way in which it interacts and supports its customers. We also need to support the productivity and competitiveness of our business base through the delivery of high speed broadband and mobile connectivity and develop the skills of the local workforce in the use and application of digital technologies.

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<sup>6</sup> 2% of worldwide email traffic travels through Corsham

### Priority Actions

- Develop and implement a Digital Technologies Strategy to support business growth, inward investment; skills development and public sector resource efficiency;
- Deliver 100% high speed broadband and mobile coverage and prepare for the delivery of ultrafast broadband; and
- Support business and residents to take up and maximise their use of additional broadband capacity to support business growth and community development.

### **Strategic Objective 4: Place Shaping - we need to deliver the infrastructure required to deliver our planned growth and regenerate our City and Town Centres, and improve our visitor and cultural offer.**

Our Towns and Cities are making the transition from heavy industry and traditional manufacturing towards more knowledge-based activities which rely on the availability of a skilled workforce. A location's success therefore is tied to its ability to attract and retain highly educated and professional employees and entrepreneurs who often have more flexibility than others in choosing where to live and work and quality of life is often a major factor in their choice of location. Our urban areas therefore need to be repurposed to meet the needs of a growing population, support new business activities and attract suitable workers. The link between the provision of quality housing and mixed used development supported by the appropriate infrastructure, including transport, energy and broadband delivery, is fundamental to this and will ensure that our towns and rural settlements are attractive and comfortable places in which to live and work. Our place shaping activity will therefore look to re-invigorate our key settlements and build on their competitive advantages making them attractive environments for residents, workers and visitors.

### Priority Actions

- Deliver the investment needed to accelerate the delivery of strategic housing and employment sites to ensure that growth is accommodated sustainably;
- Deliver infrastructure improvements to support economic growth, support higher value skilled employment and attract inward investment;
- Develop increased energy infrastructure resilience for businesses and residents;
- Deliver the master plans for the regeneration of Chippenham, Salisbury, Swindon and Trowbridge to deliver a strong economic, cultural, leisure and visitor offer;
- Support the sustainable development of market towns and rural communities to ensure the right economic, social and visitor infrastructure is in place to ensure their long term resilience and safeguard their attractiveness;
- Deliver the Army Basing Programme as an exemplar of successful military-civilian integration; and
- Develop a strong Visitor Economy resulting in new investment as well as increased trade, visitor spend and national and international staying visitors.

**Strategic Objective 5: Business Development: we need to strengthen the competitiveness of small and medium sized businesses and attract a greater share of foreign and domestic investment into the area.**

Business support is a critical element in supporting growth and we will continue to provide a single point of entry for businesses in the area to access publically funded business support. To remain competitive we also support high growth businesses to innovate or export as well as supporting those which will benefit from access to specialist support and leadership and management training.

We need to attract new investment into the area and our inward investment activity will be undertaken mainly through working with partners such as UKTI. We will also build on the culture of innovation in Swindon and Wiltshire supporting smart specialisation<sup>7</sup> and innovation principally in our priority sectors.

### Priority Actions

#### Business support

- Deliver the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub to support the needs of SMEs;
- Address the low rates of business formation by improving access to specialist public and private business support providers;
- Support a network of incubation units meeting the needs of start-up and micro businesses; and
- Support the Government's aspiration that 25% of public sector contracts are fulfilled by SMEs.

#### Inward investment

- Build on our national reputation for innovation and world class assets to attract inward investment;
- Develop internationally recognised clusters of Digital Technologies and Life Sciences activity by building premises, capacity and linkages between research and development and manufacturing capabilities; and
- Strengthen the Advanced Manufacturing sector supply chain.

#### Smart specialisation

- Develop Swindon and Wiltshire as a nationally significant player in the UK's energy sector, with particular strengths in the low carbon energy generation sector and the application of hydrogen technologies; and
- Support smart specialisation and innovation in our priority sectors as the drivers of economic growth.

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<sup>7</sup> Priority areas for knowledge-based investment based on our strengths and comparative advantages.

## PRIORITY SECTORS

We have identified a number of key sectors and industries in the area which have good prospects for growth however the SWLEP is keen to support innovation and the creation of entrepreneurial culture in the business community across all sectors. However, there will be some specific work undertaken to support our priority sectors to exploit the potential for high-value, higher-skilled economic growth and smart specialisation in the future.

### Priority Sectors

- Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing;
- Health and Life Science;
- Financial and Professional Services;
- Digital and Information and Communications Technology; and
- Land Based Industries.

In addition, we acknowledge that there are sectors which are important to the Swindon and Wiltshire economy for example in terms of scale or service delivery but which may not be driven by innovation; experience high growth; or support higher skilled-higher value employment such as the Visitor Economy and Adult Health and Social Care. The transition to a low carbon economy is also identified as a key driver of change that will create new opportunities in many sectors, for example energy generation, innovation and sustainable construction. We will therefore develop a 'watch list' and monitor trends across all sectors and consider changes in our socio-economic structure which may require specific strategic consideration in the future.

### Sectors to Watch

- Visitor Economy;
- Adult Health and Social Care;
- Low Carbon Economy; and
- Construction.



## OUR GROWTH ZONES

We want to recognise the functional economic geography of our area and we have identified three Growth Zones where there are currently large agglomerations of economic activity with the greatest capacity for supporting sustainable growth in the future. A geographic concentration of people and business has been shown to contribute towards improved economic performance and productivity, delivering wider economic benefits as a consequence.

Transport has a key role to play in this; efficient transport networks can serve to increase the 'effective density' of a location by increasing the number of people who can access the area quickly and easily. This expands the prospective pool of talent to businesses, creates opportunities for networking and helps to attract supporting services and amenities. Transport investment can also unlock employment and housing sites, which, if in the right locations can facilitate accelerated economic growth. We will target investment in the Growth Zones to exploit these advantages.

Chippenham and Corsham are included in both the Swindon-M4 Growth Zone and the A350 Growth Zone as they are pivotal locations in the development of both the M4 and A350 economic corridors. Their inclusion in the Swindon M4 Growth Zone is important as they offer the potential to extend growth into the area that has developed out of London through to Reading and Swindon; as well as the potential to draw in investment from the west out of Bristol and Bath through the development potential at Junction 17. They are an important link in the A350 Corridor with conditions that promote business development and creating clusters of like minded businesses which extends from Malmesbury to the north and Warminster to the south.

Each of our Growth Zones has different circumstances through which opportunities for economic growth and investment exist, representing different challenges and opportunities (Appendix 1). Therefore it is necessary to identify unique target objectives within our Growth Zones that represent our Strategic Objectives at a more local level.

### Swindon-M4 Growth Zone

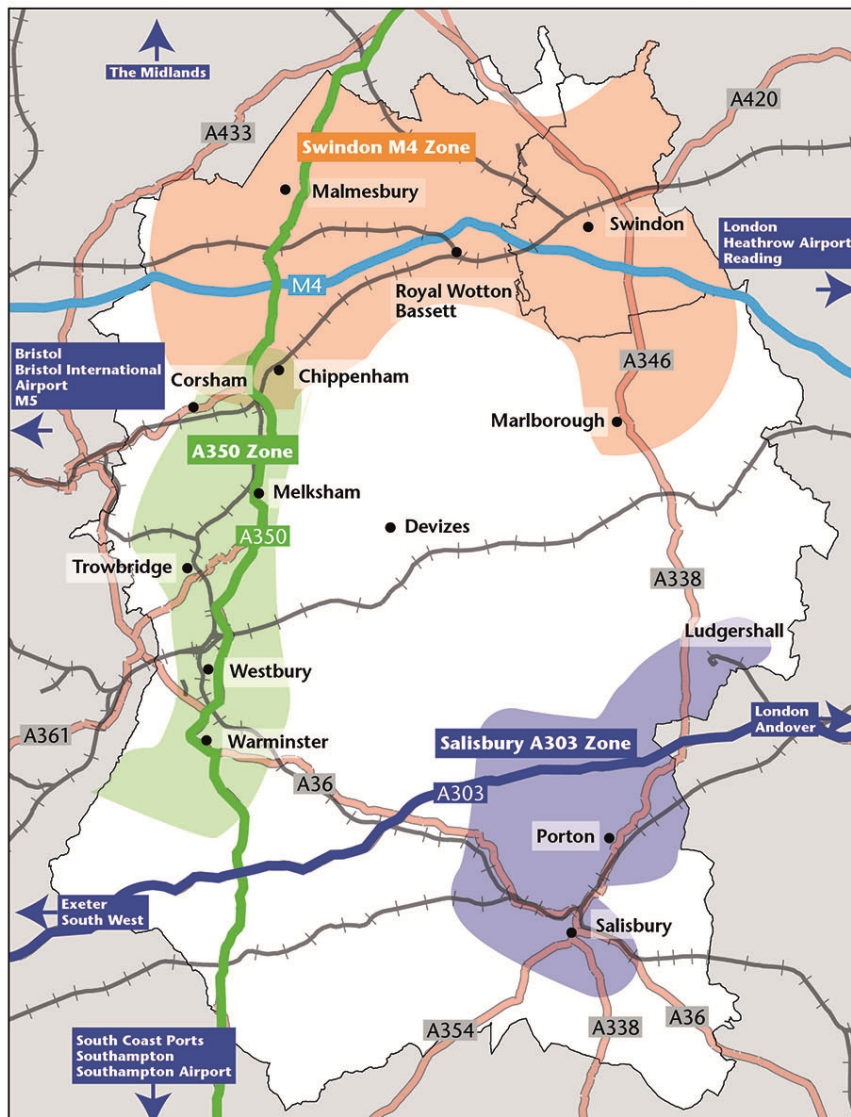
#### Strategic Objective 1: Skills and Talent

- Invest in new and existing Further and Higher Education facilities throughout the urban centre to significantly improve provision and quality of Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications throughout the area.

#### Strategic Objective 2: Transport Infrastructure Improvements

- Invest in transport packages and schemes to support housing and employment growth and the regeneration of Swindon Town Centre as well as the significant development growth planned in Chippenham to create more sustainable settlements where people want to work, live and visit;
- Invest in improving and extending our transport networks to enhance connectivity options and help reduce congestion at key pinch points;
- Strengthen the local rail infrastructure to help support economic and development growth, maximise opportunities for enhanced rail services and improve interchange within and between modes.

Figure 1: Growth Zones in Swindon and Wiltshire<sup>8</sup>



Key Statistics	Swindon-M4 Zone	A350 Zone	Salisbury-A303 Zone	Chippenham and Corsham	SWLEP
GVA per job filled as % SWLEP	50%	21%	11%	9.8%	-
Employees 2014	161,700	79,400	41,800	26,500	303,800
% Growth in Employees 2012-2014	7.2%	12.4%	6.3%	27.4%	7.4%
% Employees in Knowledge Intensive Businesses	23.2%	18.6%	26.2%	16.6%	22.7%
% Growth in Employees in Knowledge Intensive Businesses 2012-2014	11.6%	25.7%	9.7%	9.6%	14.9%
No. businesses as % SWLEP	46%	25%	15%	8.7%	-
No. SMEs (0-249 emps)	15300	8200	4900	2320	33100
No. large businesses 2015 (>250 emps)	75	35	15	10	125
Rail journey time to London Swindon, Westbury, Salisbury & Chippenham	1 hr 1m	1hr 37m	1hr 29m	1 hr 16m	-
Distance to London from Swindon, Trowbridge, Salisbury & Chippenham (miles)	80	112	88	99	-

<sup>8</sup> Data for Chippenham and Corsham are included in the data for both the Swindon-M4 and the A350 Growth Zones. Data are also separated out in the table to show their respective contribution to both Zones.

#### Strategic Objective 4: Place Shaping

- Invest in targeted urban regeneration to maximise the opportunities for inward investment in existing assets and development sites throughout the urban Town Centre; and
- Develop the cultural offer in Swindon.

### A350 Growth Zone

#### Strategic Objective 1: Skills and Talent

- Invest in local Further and Higher Education facilities to maximise opportunities to access specialised training facilities aligned to our key sector areas.

#### Strategic Objective 2: Transport Infrastructure Improvements

- Invest in transport packages and schemes to support the significant development growth planned in Chippenham and Trowbridge to create more sustainable settlements where people want to work, live and visit;
- Invest in the A350 primary route through western Wiltshire to ensure it can fulfil its north-south strategic function and support the significant economic and development growth in the A350 Zone;
- Invest in improving and extending our sustainable transport networks to enhance connectivity options and help reduce congestion at key pinch points; and
- Strengthen the local rail infrastructure to help support economic and development growth, maximise opportunities for enhanced rail services and improve interchange within and between modes.

#### Strategic Objective 4: Place Shaping

- Maximise opportunities to deliver urban development sites, improve local infrastructure and attract new investment into our Town Centres to unlock urban expansion, deliver new homes and improve the economic resilience of local High Streets;

### Salisbury-A303 Zone

#### Strategic Objective 1: Skills and Talent

- Enhance our Further and Higher Education offer in the area, ensuring providers are able to deliver the skills provision required and facilities that are attractive to students and fit for purpose.

#### Strategic Objective 2: Transport Infrastructure Improvements

- Invest in transport packages and schemes to support the significant development growth planned in Salisbury to create a more sustainable settlement where people want to work, live and visit;
- Strengthen the local rail infrastructure to help support economic and development growth, maximise opportunities for enhanced rail services and improve interchange within and between modes; and
- Work with the Highways Agency to ensure that the A36 can fulfil its strategic role and support significant economic and planned development growth in and around Salisbury.

#### Strategic Objective 4: Place Shaping

- Maximise opportunities to accelerate the delivery of strategic housing sites across the City of Salisbury through investment in infrastructure and enabling works;

- Accelerate opportunities to improve the resilience of our urban centres to ensure they are competitive regionally; to reduce leakage of market share and to attract inward investment into strategic urban development sites; and
- Invest in diversification of Visitor Economy opportunities in the area, complementing our existing assets and maximising visitor spend and stay duration.

## GOVERNANCE

Since the last Strategic Economic Plan was published in March 2014, an enormous amount of work has been undertaken by the SWLEP Board and partner Unitary Authorities to embed open, transparent and robust governance and delivery arrangements. This section sets out our ongoing commitment to:

- embedding further the structure and governance of the SWLEP;
- ensuring the Joint Strategic Economic Committee develops the shared commitments of the two Unitary Authorities;
- developing joint scrutiny arrangements to ensure public accountability;
- successfully managing the delivery of the SEP Vision and projects; and
- monitoring and reporting on our progress in a transparent manner.

Underpinning our approach are two key principles:

- the role of the SWLEP is to provide strategic leadership to enable the growth of the economy of Swindon and Wiltshire by articulating a business voice and collaboration with the Leaders and Executive Members of the two Unitary Authorities; and
- primary responsibility for delivery of the SEP will lie with the two Unitary Authorities and other local partners, thereby ensuring SWLEP remains a strategic body, holding partners to account for their delivery of priority actions.

The SWLEP has a Board of 14 Members and is constituted in such a way as to ensure that it is business-led, with its Chair and three-quarters of all Members representing the business community. Sitting alongside the business community is the active involvement of Local Government through the role of the Leaders of the two Unitary Authorities as Board Members.

### SWLEP Board Responsibilities

- the development, review and refreshing of the Strategic Economic Plan;
- the successful and effective delivery of the Higher Futures Programme, the Strategic Economic Plan, the Growth Deal and projects resourced by the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund and the European Structural and Investment Fund; and
- the approval of scheme funding on the basis of recommendations from the Commissioning Group.

The Chair of the SWLEP and all business representatives are elected by the SWLEP Board on a three year rotating basis. Further details of the SWLEP purpose, Board Membership, and Board operations can be found in the SWLEP Constitution. The SWLEP is an Unincorporated Association.

Figure 2 shows the governance structure for the SWLEP which applies to the assurance of value for money with public expenditure. It shows the relationship between the SWLEP Board, Subgroups, the Joint Strategic Economic Committee, the SWLEP Secretariat, SWLEP Commissioning Group, SWLEP Delivery and Performance Team, Accountable Body (Wiltshire Council) and Joint Scrutiny and Audit. The SWLEP Assurance Framework (approved by Government in March 2015) outlines the process by which the SWLEP Board takes investment decisions.

In order to promote further collaboration between the two Unitary Authorities and provide local democratic oversight of the implementation of the SEP, the Unitary Authorities established a Joint Strategic Economic Committee (JSEC) under sections 101(5) and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and other enabling legislation.

#### JSEC Functions

- oversee the delivery of the SEP;
- co-ordinate the local Government contribution to the delivery of the SEP and the Local Growth Deal;
- support the Accountable Body in ensuring the proper and effective use of the Single Growth Fund and other related funding;
- act as the formal link between local Government and the SWLEP; and
- facilitate and enable collaboration between the Unitary Authorities on economic development and associated activities.

#### Reporting and accountability

The Secretariat and Programme Managers will report to the SWLEP Board (via the Commissioning Group), the JSEC and Central Government on a scheduled quarterly basis, providing a RAG rating of actual against planned progress for each of the interventions in that priority. SWLEP will report publicly on our progress including an annual review; commencing at the end of year 1 of LGF funding.

**Figure 2: SWLEP Delivery and Governance Structure**

