

LOCAL PLAN 2043

Appendix 3

SWINDON
MAKE IT
HERE

Swindon. 20 Year Vision.

July 2026 – Cabinet Version





FOREWORD

Foreword

The draft Local Plan sets out Swindon Borough Council's vision for how our town will grow and evolve over the next 20 years. It will shape where new homes are built, where businesses invest, how people move around the Borough, and how we protect the places that matter most to our communities. Crucially, it will ensure that growth is supported by the infrastructure needed to drive prosperity and sustain healthy, thriving communities – roads, schools, healthcare, utilities, and green and community spaces.

Swindon has always been a place that adapts and thrives. From our railway heritage to our current strengths in logistics, technology and professional services, we have consistently embraced new opportunities. We now have another opportunity to do the same – to attract investment, create skilled jobs, regenerate our town centre, support our villages, and deliver the homes local families need.

But growth must be planned and delivered properly. Residents are right to expect development that is well designed, in the right locations, supported by infrastructure, and respectful of existing communities – creating places people genuinely want to live. Too often, housing comes first, with roads, GP surgeries, schools and community facilities following later – or not at all. This Local Plan must change that by providing a clear framework for thoughtful and deliverable growth.

Swindon is open for business, committed to investment, and focused on delivery. The Council's Economic Growth Plan sets out how we will drive investment, support business growth, deliver regeneration, and create high-quality jobs over the next five years. The Local Plan must underpin that ambition by ensuring we have the right employment land, transport connections, and skills pipeline to support the industries of the future.

This draft Plan represents our vision for Swindon. The Regulation 19 Publication Period, beginning in early September, provides an important opportunity for residents, businesses, parish councils, community groups, landowners, developers and public service partners to have their say. Feedback will be shared directly with the Planning Inspector(s) appointed to carry out the independent examination of the Plan. Your comments will play an important role in helping the Inspector(s) determine the Plan's "soundness" and ensuring that it is ambitious, realistic and deliverable.

I strongly encourage everyone with an interest in Swindon's future to take part. This Plan will affect every part of the Borough, from the town centre to our villages, and from established neighbourhoods to new and emerging communities.

Swindon's best days are ahead of it. With the right plan, the right investment and the right approach, we can deliver more homes, better jobs, stronger infrastructure, a revitalised town centre, and an improved quality of life for residents across the Borough.

Cllr Gary Sumner

Leader of the Council

Lead Member for the Local Plan



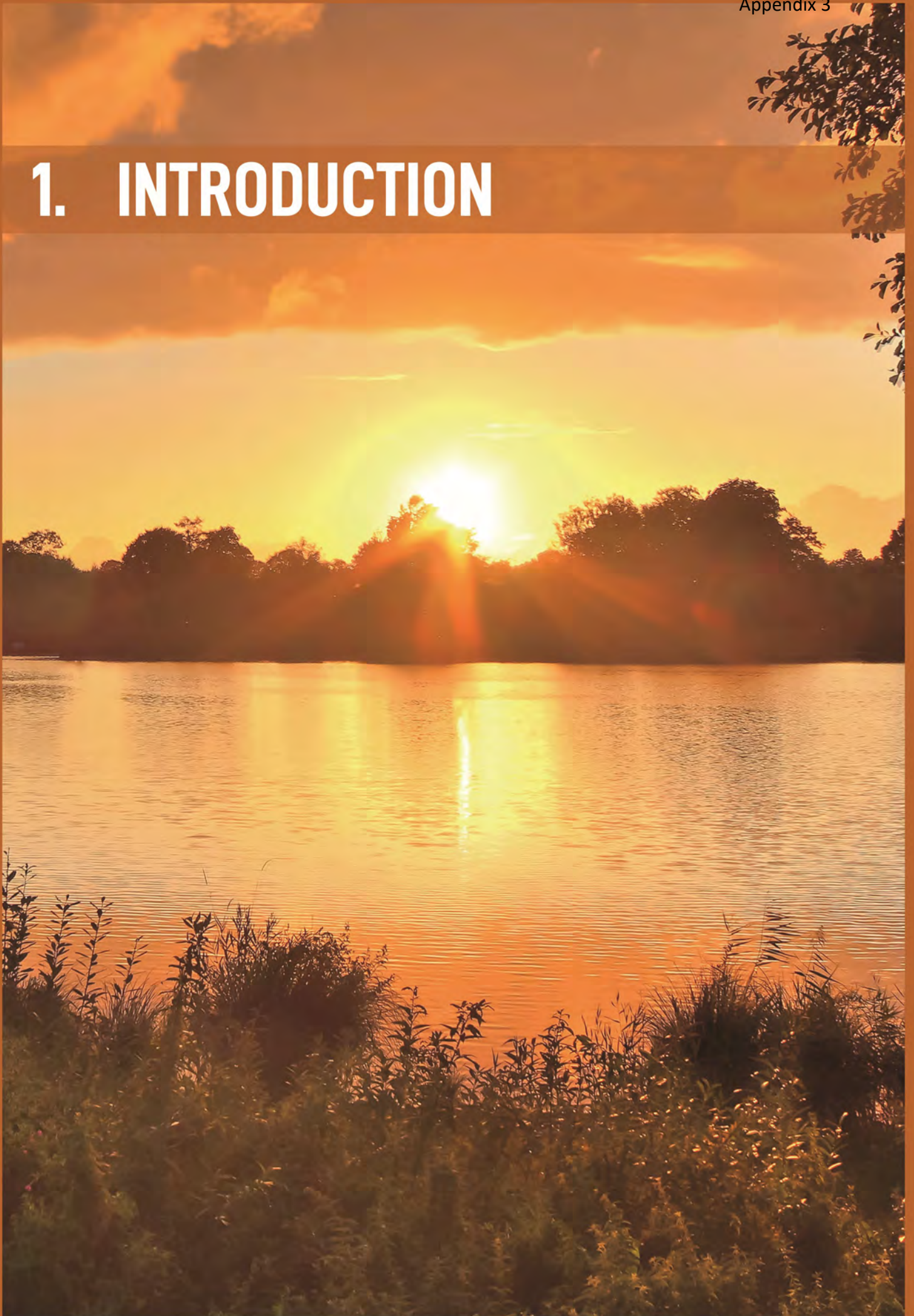
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1. INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

What is the Swindon Local Plan 2043?

- 1.1. The Swindon Local Plan 2043 will form a key part of the development plan for the Borough. It looks forward over a twenty-year period to determine a strategy and policy framework to meet the current and future needs of those living and working in our area. The Local Plan takes a holistic approach to development needs in the Borough. It sets out how much housing and employment development is required and where this should be located, alongside the necessary infrastructure and services needed to deliver truly socially, environmentally and economically sustainable development.
- 1.2. The Local Plan will help guide planning decisions in the Borough. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Plan must be read as a whole, and proposals for development will be considered against many policies depending on the type and location of the proposal.
- 1.3. An up-to-date Local Plan helps development come forward in a coordinated manner. Without up-to-date strategic policies based on current evidence of local needs, the Borough is more susceptible to unplanned development which may not best serve those living and working here. Once adopted, the Swindon Local Plan 2043 will replace the adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026. The up-to-date plan will provide more certainty for residents, developers, and all stakeholders regarding the types of development that are appropriate and supported in the Borough.
- 1.4. The contents of the Local Plan include:
 - 1.1.1. A vision and strategic objectives to positively plan for sustainable development in the Borough up to and beyond 2043.
 - 1.1.2. A spatial strategy and key diagram illustrating broad locations for development.
 - 1.1.3. Site allocation policies which allocate land for specific development uses.
 - 1.1.4. A series of strategic and non-strategic policies which provide clear guidance for the determination of planning applications, arranged into thematic chapters. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the nature of each policy.

[Appendix 1 to be updated prior to Regulation 19 Publication Stage].

- 1.1.5. A glossary explaining key terms and planning “jargon” (Appendix 2).
- 1.1.6. Indicators to monitor implementation of the Local Plan (Appendix 3).

[Appendix 3 to be updated prior to Regulation 19 Publication Stage].

- 1.5. The Local Plan is additionally accompanied by an emerging Policies Map which illustrates the geographical application of the Local Plan’s policies.

How does the Swindon Local Plan 2043 relate to other documents?

Swindon Borough Council Strategies and Policies

- 1.6. The Swindon Local Plan 2043 sits within a portfolio of corporate publications which provide key policy directions for the transformation of Swindon Borough. These include:
 - 1.1.7. The Swindon Plan (2024) with its focus on the three missions of building a better, greener and fairer Swindon.
 - 1.1.8. The Vision for the Heart of Swindon (2025) which provides a blueprint for revitalising the Town Centre.
 - 1.1.9. The Decarbonisation Framework (2025) which outlines emission reduction strategies to combat climate change.
 - 1.1.10. The Economic Growth Plan (2026) which sets out how we will support businesses, attract investment and grow Swindon’s economy over the next five years.
- 1.7. The Local Plan helps bring forward the visions and ambitions of these documents through the built environment and planning policy.

The Development Plan

- 1.8. The Local Plan must also be understood in the context of the rest of the development plan.
- 1.9. The adopted development plan is made up of a number of documents including:
 - 1.1.11. The adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026
 - 1.1.12. The Swindon Central Area Action Plan
 - 1.1.13. The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy 2006-2026
 - 1.1.14. The Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy 2006-2026
 - 1.1.15. Any 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.10. There are currently seven Made Neighbourhood Plans within the Borough, which have been prepared by the relevant Town or Parish Council and set locally specific planning policies within their designated Neighbourhood Area. The Made Neighbourhood Plans are:
- 1.1.16. Wroughton Neighbourhood Plan (14th July 2016)
 - 1.1.17. Highworth Neighbourhood Plan (13th July 2017)
 - 1.1.18. South Marston Neighbourhood Plan (9th Nov 2017)
 - 1.1.19. Hannington Neighbourhood Plan (8th Nov 2018)
 - 1.1.20. Blunsdon East Neighbourhood Plan (22nd June 2021)
 - 1.1.21. Chiseldon Neighbourhood Plan (6th November 2025)
- 1.11. Upon adoption, the Swindon Local Plan 2043 would replace the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 and the Swindon Central Area Action Plan.

Evidence Base

- 1.12. The Swindon Local Plan 2043 is supported by a range of documents which form part of its evidence base. The evidence base covers a wide range of topics including housing needs, employment, retail, flood risk, open space, transport assessments, and much more. Largely, these documents present a picture of how things currently are in the Borough, assess what needs may be arising, and recommend how to address these. The evidence base is used to inform the policies within the Plan.
- 1.13. Evidence base documents have been published alongside the draft Swindon Local Plan 2043.

What is changing in the plan-making system?

- 1.14. All local planning authorities are required to prepare and maintain an up-to-date Local Plan and the process is set out in legislation. This legislation is changing and we are currently in a period of transition where there are two plan-making systems in force. Local Plans being prepared in the “legacy plan-making system” must be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by 31 December 2026. Meanwhile, some authorities will begin to prepare Local Plans in the “new plan-making system” throughout 2026.
- 1.15. The preparation of the Swindon Local Plan 2043 began in 2023 under the legacy plan-making system. It has therefore been prepared in accordance with the relevant sections of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (“the 2012 Regulations”).

- 1.16. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance provide further direction for local authorities regarding the expected contents of a Local Plan. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consulted on a new NPPF in December 2025. Once published, the policies in the new NPPF will apply to authorities proceeding in the new plan-making system.
- 1.17. As a legacy-style plan, the Swindon Local Plan 2043 has been prepared in accordance with the December 2024 version of the NPPF and should be examined under this version of the Framework.

What is the process for making a Local Plan?

- 1.18. The legacy plan-making system includes several key stages. These are set out in the 2012 Regulations and include:
 - 1.1.22. Regulation 18 Consultation: The authority invites comments from consultees about what the contents of the Local Plan ought to cover. Consultees include the “specific” and “general” bodies identified in the Regulations, and those living and working within the plan area.
 - 1.1.23. Regulation 19 Publication Stage: Having considered the representations, the authority publishes the version of the Local Plan that they intend to submit. Consultees are invited to make representations on the draft Plan for the consideration of the Inspector(s) who will examine the Plan.
 - 1.1.24. Regulation 22 Submission: The authority submits the Local Plan to the Secretary of State, alongside supporting documents and a consultation statement summarising the representations made in the previous stages.
 - 1.1.25. Independent Examination: At least one Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate is appointed to determine if the Local Plan meets the four tests of “soundness” outlined in paragraph 36 of the NPPF (2024). The examination is carried out through written representations and through public hearing sessions.
 - 1.1.26. Main Modifications Consultation: Usually, the Inspector(s) will recommend “Main Modifications” which are changes required to make the Local Plan sound. These will be subject to public consultation before the Inspector(s) will issue their final report.
 - 1.1.27. Adoption: At the end of the independent examination, the Inspector(s) will issue a final report which should recommend the Council adopts the Local Plan.

What has happened so far?

- 1.19. A Regulation 18 Consultation for the Swindon Local Plan 2043 took place between 1 September and 15 October 2025. The Council published a draft Plan for public comment, alongside the draft Policies Map and supporting documents including a Sustainability Appraisal, Viability Assessment and Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.
- 1.20. The draft Plan and supporting documents were published on the Council's website, with hard copies provided in all Council-owned libraries in the Borough. Statutory consultees, landowners, residents and other stakeholders were notified and invited to make representations to the consultation. Additionally, the Council held three Local Plan consultation events across the Borough, and officers represented the Local Plan during October's Let's Talk Swindon public events.
- 1.21. The draft Plan received over 550 comments from consultees. The main issues have been summarised in the Regulation 18 Consultation Statement.
- 1.22. Since the close of the Regulation 18 Consultation, we have considered the issues raised by consultees and taken these into account while refining the Local Plan's policies. We have also produced further evidence to support the Local Plan and engaged further with statutory bodies, which is also reflected in the updated Local Plan's contents.

What happens next?

- 1.23. The Swindon Local Plan 2043 is now being published for its Regulation 19 Publication Stage. We are inviting representations from consultees regarding the soundness of the Plan.
- 1.24. The Swindon Local Plan and its supporting documents will subsequently be submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2026 and be subject to Independent Examination throughout 2027.

2. OUR VISION AND OBJECTIVES



2. OUR VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

- 2.1. The Local Plan must set a clear and positive vision for Swindon's future. It should provide a practical framework for growth, investment and development, while protecting the character of the places that make our Borough distinctive.
- 2.2. The UN describes sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The purpose of the planning system, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), is to support sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and the infrastructure needed to support them.
- 2.3. Achieving sustainable development entails much more than meeting housing targets. The NPPF is clear that this requires pursuing three interdependent and overarching objectives: an economic objective; a social objective; and an environmental objective. A positive vision should bring these three strands together. For Swindon, this means planning positively for new homes and employment, but doing so in a way that is realistic, infrastructure-led and locally accountable. Growth must not simply be imposed on existing communities without the roads, schools, healthcare, utilities, public transport and open spaces needed to make it work.
- 2.4. This chapter sets out a clear understanding of Swindon as it is today: its strengths, its challenges and its opportunities. That evidence informs our long-term vision for Swindon and the strategic objectives needed to deliver it.

Swindon Today: Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

- 2.5. The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2043 covers the entire administrative area of Swindon Borough Council. The Borough is approximately 230 square kilometres in area and home to 233,000 people. The Borough includes Swindon itself, as well as surrounding countryside, villages and settlements including Highworth and Wroughton.
- 2.6. Swindon occupies a strong strategic location. Sitting on the M4 corridor, with links to London, Bristol, Oxford, South Wales and the wider South West, the Borough is well placed for investment and employment growth. Its location has long been one of its greatest strengths and will remain central to its future prosperity.
- 2.7. Swindon has repeatedly reinvented itself. Its early growth was shaped by the Great Western Railway, creating an engineering heritage of national and

international importance. The historic railway works remain central to Swindon's identity and provide a major opportunity for heritage-led regeneration, visitor growth and civic pride.

- 2.8. The wider Borough also includes attractive countryside, a market town, villages, hamlets and valued landscapes, including parts of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, a nationally designated protected landscape covering parts of Wiltshire, Berkshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire.
- 2.9. Swindon's future must be built on this combination of assets: a strong economic location, an industrial and engineering heritage, established communities, valued green spaces, and a tradition of getting things done.

Strengths and Opportunities

- 2.10. Swindon has a strong business base and is home to a range of major employers and nationally significant organisations, including Catalent, Intel, Zurich, Nationwide and the UK Research Institute. Its strengths span advanced manufacturing, logistics, financial and professional services, technology, research and public sector employment - providing a solid foundation for future growth. Alongside this, Swindon has a proud history as a regional destination for retail, leisure and entertainment, once serving as a vibrant hub for shopping, nightlife and culture.
- 2.11. The redevelopment of the former Honda site as Panattoni Park Swindon is one of the most significant economic opportunities the Borough has ever known – with investment in the site exceeding £900 million. The site is planned to deliver 7.2 million square feet of employment space on a 360-acre site, with Swindon Borough Council reporting that, once fully developed, it could support around 7,000 on-site jobs and a further 11,000 jobs across the wider supply chain.
- 2.12. Swindon is also emerging as a growing location for defence, drone technology and advanced manufacturing. TEKEVER's investment in Swindon is a major endorsement of the Council's inward investment work and is part of wider defence industry interest in the town. This is exactly the kind of high-skilled, future-facing employment that Swindon should be seeking to attract.
- 2.13. The Town Centre remains one of Swindon's greatest opportunities. It has faced real challenges, particularly as shopping habits have changed and national retailers have reduced their high street presence. But Swindon town centre still has major assets: its railway station, its proximity to employment, the Designer Outlet, heritage attractions, cultural venues, and significant brownfield regeneration opportunities. Significant funding has also gone into improving connectivity to the Town Centre and providing a more pleasant, cohesive public realm through the redevelopment of Fleming Way as a public

transport interchange. The Fleming Way scheme has already improved the main gateway between the railway station and the town centre, with bus services moving to the new interchange in August 2025 and the former bus station site being released for regeneration.

- 2.14. Swindon has good strategic connections outwards, including its links to Bristol, Oxford, South Wales and London. This means it is well-located for investment, providing affordable living and working, with easy access to other key education, employment and travel hubs. Swindon plays a much wider role within the sub-region connecting people and jobs and taking advantage of our locational strengths will continue to be vital part of our growth strategy.
- 2.15. Swindon is also an affordable place to live and work. Housing in Swindon is 22% more affordable than the national average, and the most affordable among England's Economic Heartland areas (relative to local incomes). That gives the Borough a competitive edge, particularly for families, younger workers, growing businesses and employers looking for access to talent without the costs associated with larger nearby cities.
- 2.16. The Borough's parks and green spaces are also a major strength. Lydiard Park, Coate Water, Stanton Park and many local open spaces are deeply valued by residents and help support quality of life. Future growth must protect and improve access to these spaces, while ensuring new development contributes properly to parks, play areas, sports facilities and public realm.

Challenges

- 2.1. Swindon also faces serious challenges, and the Local Plan must address them honestly.
- 2.2. The town centre has declined over several years. This has been driven by national changes in retail, the growth of online shopping, competition from out-of-town retail, and a lack of confidence in parts of the central area. Vacancy rates, a poor public realm in some locations, and weak links between the railway station and the retail core have all contributed to a sense that the town centre has not fulfilled its potential.
- 2.3. The priority now must be regeneration, not managed decline. The town centre needs more residents, more workers, more visitors and more reasons for people to spend time there. That means supporting mixed-use development, bringing brownfield land back into productive use, improving public spaces, attracting private investment, and making the centre feel safer, cleaner and more welcoming.

- 2.4. Infrastructure is another major challenge. Residents are clear that they do not oppose all growth, but they do oppose development that is not properly supported. New homes must be matched by roads, public transport, school places, GP and health provision, drainage, utilities, broadband, green space and community facilities. The Local Plan must therefore be clear about what infrastructure is needed, when it will be provided, and how it will be funded.
- 2.5. Connectivity across the Borough also needs improvement. Swindon benefits from strong external connections, but journeys within the Borough are not always as easy as they should be. East-west movement, links between new communities, orbital routes, public transport reliability, walking and cycling connections, and access from villages and outer settlements all need to be considered as part of a practical transport strategy.
- 2.6. More than one in ten neighbourhoods in Swindon are among the most deprived in the UK. The Council recognises that growth must be fairer and more inclusive. Delivering this will require a coordinated approach to housing, skills and employment, alongside the right services, infrastructure and public spaces to ensure all residents can benefit from improved opportunities and a better quality of life.
- 2.7. Health is a particular concern. Local public health material highlights that Swindon has significant issues with excess weight among adults and children, with 2023–24 National Child Measurement Programme data showing that 37% of Year 6 children in Swindon were overweight or obese. Planning cannot solve these issues on its own, but it can help by supporting access to green space, sport, leisure, walking routes, cycling routes, community facilities and healthier local environments.
- 2.8. Swindon must also plan for a changing climate and more extreme weather. This should be approached in a practical way: better drainage, flood resilience, protection of important landscapes, tree planting where appropriate, energy-efficient design, and making sure new development is built to last. Environmental policy must support good growth, not become a barrier to the homes, jobs and infrastructure residents need.

Vision for Swindon in 2060

- 2.9. The Local Plan provides a long-term strategy for Swindon's development to 2043, with a wider vision to 2060. Its purpose is to help Swindon grow with confidence, attract investment, provide homes for local people, protect valued places and make sure infrastructure keeps pace with development.
- 2.10. The vision for Swindon in 2060 is:

By 2060, Swindon will be one of the South of England's most successful and well-connected towns: a place with a stronger economy, a revitalised town centre, high-quality homes, better infrastructure, protected green spaces and renewed pride in its identity.

Swindon town centre will once again be the heart of the Borough. It will be a place where people live, work, visit, shop, study and enjoy their leisure time. Its brownfield sites will be brought back into use, its public spaces improved, and its heritage better celebrated. The Railway Quarter, Fleming Way and the former bus station site will help create a stronger, more attractive and more commercially successful central area.

Swindon will be open for business and ambitious for growth. It will build on its strengths in advanced manufacturing, logistics, defence technology, professional services, finance, research and innovation. Major employment sites, including Panattoni Park, will help deliver skilled jobs, attract investment and strengthen Swindon's role in the wider regional and national economy.

New homes will be delivered in the right places and to a high standard. Growth will be planned, not speculative. Development will be expected to contribute properly to the infrastructure and services needed by residents, including roads, schools, healthcare, drainage, utilities, broadband, parks and community facilities.

Swindon's villages, countryside, heritage assets and green spaces will be protected and respected. Growth must not erase the character of existing communities. Instead, it should strengthen them, support local facilities and make sure new development is well designed and properly integrated.

The Borough's transport network will be improved so that people can move around more easily, whether by car, public transport, walking or cycling. The priority will be practical connectivity: reducing congestion where possible, improving links between communities, supporting access to jobs and services, and making the town centre easier to reach.

Swindon will be a place where residents can build a good life. That means access to decent housing, skilled employment, good schools, safe

neighbourhoods, attractive parks, strong local centres and opportunities for young people to stay, work and succeed in the Borough.

Above all, Swindon will be a Borough that is confident about its future. It will honour its railway and industrial heritage, make the most of its strategic location, back enterprise and investment, and deliver growth in a way that works for local people.

Relationship with the Swindon Plan (2024)

2.11. This vision strongly intertwines with the three missions of the Swindon Plan (2024):

Build a Fairer Swindon	Making Swindon a fairer place, reducing disadvantages and reducing big disparities in life expectancy, education levels and social justice.	The Swindon Local Plan 2043 contributes to Building a Fairer Swindon by: Setting requirements for new development to provide high-quality affordable housing and meet specific needs, such as wheelchair accessible housing. Proposing sites to help meet the Borough's Gypsy and Traveller community needs. Setting requirements on new developments for the necessary infrastructure and community facilities provision and/or contributions, including new/expanded health facilities and schools where there is identified need. Protecting, enhancing and bringing forward accessible public open space, particularly in areas where there is an existing deficiency in quality or quantity. These spaces can provide benefits to the wider community. Introducing specific policy requirements on inclusive design, including expecting new public realm improvements to
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		enhance accessibility and reduce barriers to access and use.
Build a Better Swindon	Creating a town ready for the challenges of the coming decades. Where possible, leading town centre improvement and creating more affordable housing with the private sector	The Swindon Local Plan 2043 contributes to Building a Better Swindon by: Including policies and site allocations to support reinstating the Town Centre as a Borough hub and improving connectivity to and around the Central Area. Planning for housing growth to meet local housing need, including affordable housing. Creating certainty for developers and investors through providing an up-to-date and well-evidenced planning framework. Seeking to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure to support development, benefitting new and existing residents and all those who live in, work in and visit Swindon.
Build a Greener Swindon	Fully playing our part as a council and a town in combatting climate change. Working with communities to find new ways of doing things that help, not hinder, the natural environment.	The Swindon Local Plan 2043 contributes to Building a Greener Swindon through: Introducing a spatial strategy that focusses housing growth in locations best served by sustainable transport. Moving to a vision-led transport approach which sets out clear priorities for supporting more active travel and public transport usage within the Borough. Allocating development on brownfield/previously developed land.

		Introducing policies to help with climate change mitigation and adaptation (to help communities and the environment adjust to harmful impacts), as well as improving the capacity for resilience and recovery from adverse climate activity (such as extreme heat, flooding or water scarcity). Reinforcing the need to plan for Net Zero ready development and including development policies aimed at carbon reduction. Protecting and enhancing the borough's extensive network of open space and green infrastructure, including expanding access to the Great Western Community Forest and Swindon's Country Park network. This will restore and create natural habitats to promote biodiversity and strengthen ecological connectivity.
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Strategic Objectives

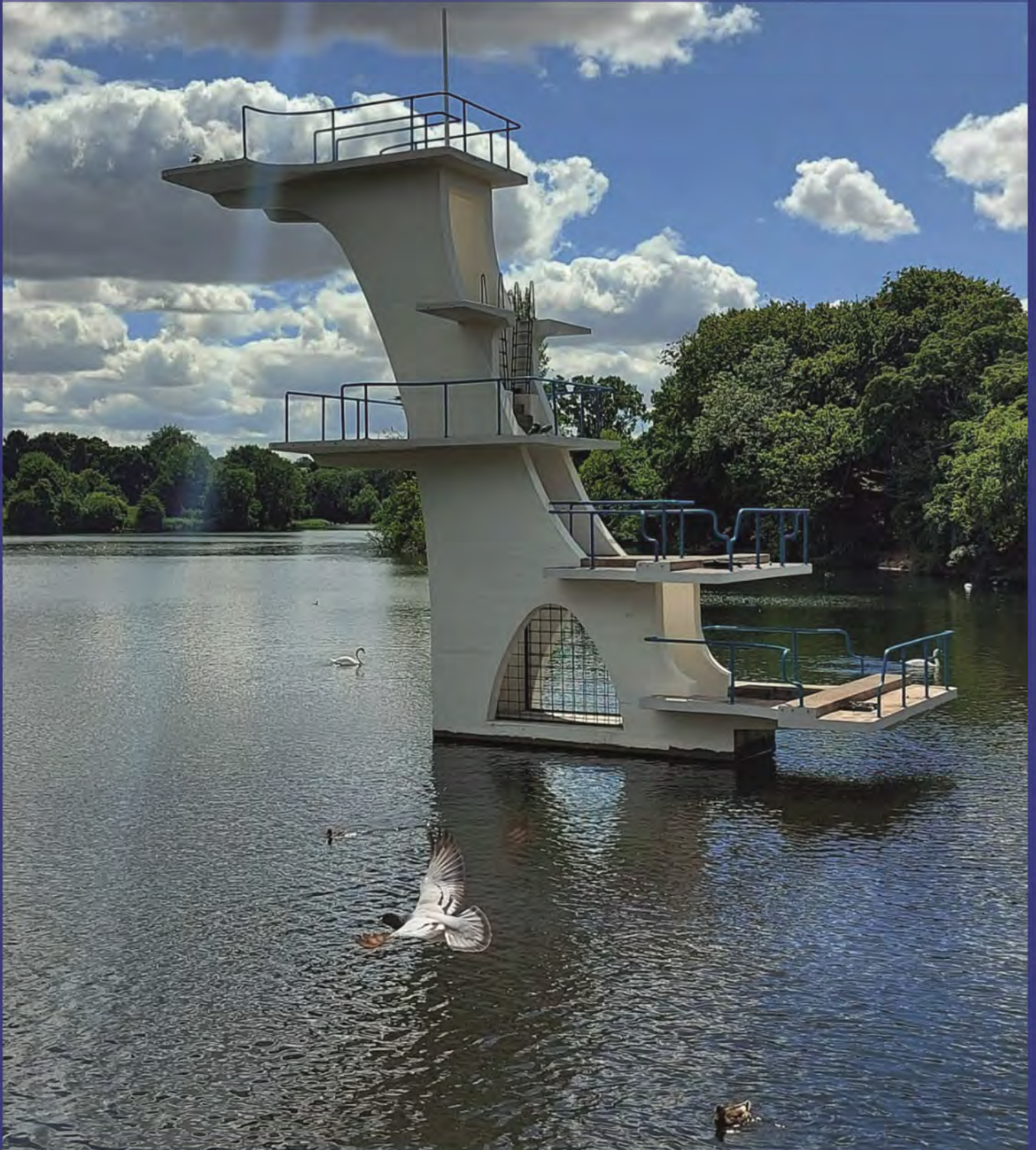
- 2.12. To achieve Swindon's development vision, and to help to deliver the missions of the Swindon Plan, this Local Plan sets out a number of strategic objectives. The strategic objectives will be delivered by all those participating in the planning system in Swindon, including the Council and applicants:

Strategic Objective	Link to Swindon Plan 2024
SO1: To regenerate Swindon Town Centre	To build a better Swindon by revitalising the Town Centre as the heart of Swindon through supporting and delivering mixed-use residential and commercial development, supported by the appropriate social and transport infrastructure.

SO2: To create a sense of place and belonging	To build a better and fairer Swindon by enhancing a sense of community belonging and wellbeing, whilst simultaneously developing and enhancing a sense of pride in the Swindon identity through supporting good place-making and conserving/enhancing Swindon's history and heritage. This includes supporting the delivery of high-quality, sustainable development with the right infrastructure that will enable or improve access to key services and social/leisure opportunities.
SO3: To provide homes for all	To build a better and fairer Swindon by ensuring the right types and tenures of housing are delivered to meet the needs of our current and future residents. This includes pushing for affordable housing, encouraging different types of housing (such as specialist housing), and making sure that new development is well-designed to meet a variety of needs.
SO4: To deliver economic prosperity	To build a better and fairer Swindon by facilitating a resilient economy that maximises on Swindon's strategic location and town centre redevelopment potential, delivering opportunities for all.
SO5: To connect communities through sustainable movement	To build a better, fairer and greener Swindon by connecting people, neighbourhoods and communities with efficient and sufficient sustainable transport choices, improving connectivity for all, reducing public transport times and, as a result, reducing car dependency.
SO6: To enhance the natural environment	To build a greener Swindon through the delivery of new and / or enhanced open spaces and green infrastructure, ensuring that new buildings are net zero carbon ready, and that appropriate climate mitigation and adaptation measures are in place.

SO7: To improve health and wellbeing	To build a better, fairer and greener Swindon, through delivering healthy, active and inclusive communities with a holistic plan-led approach that secures good quality housing, enhanced connectivity and accessibility to key services, social and leisure infrastructure, and inclusive design.
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3. THE SPATIAL STRATEGY & STRATEGIC AREA POLICIES



3. THE SPATIAL STRATEGY & STRATEGIC AREA POLICIES

Introduction

- 3.1. This chapter sets out an overarching spatial framework for Swindon Borough over the plan period, giving spatial expression to the vision and strategic objectives of this Local Plan. In outlining the spatial strategy, settlement hierarchy and site allocation policies, this chapter provides a coherent and deliverable approach to managing development across the plan period. This will ensure our needs are met through coordinated sustainable growth, rather than piecemeal development.

Policy SS1: Swindon's Spatial Approach to Growth

- 3.2. Local Plans must include strategic policies which “set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places”, specifically making specific provision for housing, employment, infrastructure and community needs (Paragraph 20, NPPF, 2024). The spatial strategy sets out how development will be distributed across the Borough to meet identified needs for homes, employment and supporting infrastructure over the plan period. It provides a clear and coordinated framework for growth, ensuring that development is focused in locations that are accessible, well-connected and capable of supporting sustainable communities.
- 3.3. The overall pattern of development is illustrated in the Key Diagram (Figure 1), which spatially represents the main locations for growth and the relationship between the different elements of the strategy.

[Figure 1 (Key Diagram) to be inserted ahead of Regulation 19 Publication – Please see Appendix 1 to this Cabinet Version of the Local Plan for the working Key Diagram and SDA maps.]

- 3.4. The strategy prioritises the regeneration and revitalisation of Swindon's Central Area, recognising its role as the principal commercial, cultural and transport hub. Directing growth to this area will support a balanced mix of homes and jobs, make effective use of previously developed land, and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 3.5. Growth is also focused within the wider Urban Area, where opportunities exist to redevelop underutilised brownfield land and make efficient use of existing infrastructure and services. This helps to reduce the need for further outward expansion.

- 3.6. To meet longer-term needs, the strategy provides for a series of comprehensively planned new communities in well-connected locations. These strategic sites will deliver significant development alongside supporting infrastructure and are intended to function as sustainable places in their own right, contributing to the overall pattern of growth shown in the Key Diagram.
- 3.7. Outside the Urban Area, the strategy supports proportionate development in Rural Service Centres and larger villages, reflecting their role in meeting local needs and supporting rural communities, whilst maintaining the character and function of smaller settlements.
- 3.8. The strategy also supports the intensification and effective use of existing employment areas, ensuring that Swindon continues to provide a strong and competitive economic base.
- 3.9. Provision is also made for limited supplementary development, where this supports the effective use of land and does not undermine the delivery of the spatial strategy.
- 3.10. All development, including strategic allocations, will be expected to comply with the policies of the development plan taken as a whole. Site-specific policies establish the principle of development in particular locations but do not override other relevant requirements, including those relating to affordable housing, infrastructure provision, design, environmental protection and community facilities.

Policy SS1: Swindon's Spatial Approach to Growth

1. Swindon's spatial strategy identifies the broad approach to delivering sustainable development across the Borough to ensure that our identified development needs, including new homes, jobs and services, are delivered in the most sustainable locations.
2. Planned development will be distributed across the plan area by:
 - a. directing growth to Swindon's Central Area, providing a mix of homes and employment, including new office floorspace, that supports the regeneration of the town centre (Policy SDA01: Swindon's Central Area, Policy E1: Economic Strategy and Meeting Employment Needs, Policy E2: New Employment Sites);
 - b. focusing development in the wider urban area, prioritising the redevelopment of underutilised brownfield land (Policy SDA02: Piper's Way, Policy SDA03: Marlowe Avenue, Policy SDA04: Windmill Hill, and Policy SDA05: Gateway North);

- c. developing comprehensively planned new communities in well-connected locations outside the existing settlement hierarchy (Policy SDA06: Wichelstowe, Policy SDA07: New Eastern Villages, Policy SDA08: Kingsdown, Policy SDA09: North Tadpole, Policy SDA10: Blunsdon St. Andrew);
 - d. supporting proportionate development in our Rural Service Centres and larger villages (Policy SDA11: Highworth, Policy SDA12: Wroughton, Policy SDA13: Broad Blunsdon);
 - e. ensuring new employment land for industrial and warehouse uses is well located in relation to the strategic road network (Policy E2: New Employment Sites); and
 - f. safeguarding and encouraging intensification of our existing employment areas proportionate to their level of access to key transit corridors (Policy E3: Designated Employment Areas).
3. Supplementary development may be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal is of an appropriate scale to the site's location in the Settlement Hierarchy, as outlined in Policy SS2, and:
- a. makes effective use of previously developed land in a sustainable and accessible location;
 - b. does not undermine the delivery of site allocations or the overall spatial strategy; and/or
 - c. is supported through a made Neighbourhood Development Plan.
4. Planning permission will only be granted where development proposals accord with the policies of the development plan taken as a whole.

Policy SS2: Settlement Hierarchy

- 3.11. The settlement hierarchy establishes the role and function of places within the Borough and supports the delivery of the spatial strategy set out in Policy SS1. It provides a framework for directing development to the most sustainable locations, taking account of the availability of services, facilities, accessibility and the overall character of settlements.
- 3.12. The hierarchy distinguishes between the Central Area and wider Urban Area, Rural Service Centres, and villages of varying scale. These tiers reflect the differing roles that settlements play in accommodating development and supporting local communities. The Central Area is identified as a key focus for regeneration and intensification, whilst the Urban Area provides the main built-up area with a wide range of services and opportunities for development. Rural Service Centres serve wider rural catchments and contain a more limited but important range of services, while villages generally provide more localised functions.

- 3.13. A number of settlements are identified as ‘emerging’ within the hierarchy, reflecting their planned growth through site allocations. These locations will perform the role assigned to them in the hierarchy once the relevant allocations are delivered.
- 3.14. Settlement boundaries define the extent of these settlements and are shown on the Policies Map. Within these boundaries, development that accords with the criteria set out in Policy SS2 will be supported. The scale and nature of development will be determined on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the role and function of the settlement, its character, and its accessibility to services and facilities.
- 3.15. Land outside defined settlement boundaries is treated as open countryside. Development in these areas will be strictly controlled in order to avoid unsustainable patterns of growth and to protect the intrinsic character of the rural area. Policy SS2 sets out a limited range of circumstances where development in the countryside may be appropriate, including where specifically supported by other policies in the development plan or national policy.
- 3.16. The Borough also contains a number of smaller clusters of development, commonly referred to as hamlets. These locations typically have very limited or no access to services, facilities or public transport and do not function as sustainable settlements. Hamlets are not identified as settlements within the hierarchy and are treated as part of the open countryside for the purposes of applying Policy SS2.
- 3.17. This approach ensures that development is directed to the most appropriate and sustainable locations, whilst protecting the character and distinct identity of the Borough’s rural areas.

Policy SS2: Settlement Hierarchy

1. The settlement hierarchy set out in Table 1 defines the role of settlements within the Borough which will be used to guide the scale and distribution of development.
2. Within settlement boundaries, proposals for development will be supported where they:
 - a. are of a scale and nature appropriate to the role and function of the settlement within the hierarchy;
 - b. respond positively to the setting, form and character of the settlement through high-quality design, layout and landscaping;
 - c. ensure good accessibility to local services and facilities; and

- d. are consistent with local and national policies relating to open space and the natural environment.
- 3. Settlement boundaries for the Urban Area, Rural Service Centres and Villages are defined on the Policies Map. These may be reviewed through the preparation of subsequent development plan documents and/or neighbourhood plans.
- 4. All areas outside of the settlements identified in the Settlement Hierarchy will be considered Open Countryside.
- 5. Development in the Open Countryside will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the development proposal:
 - a. is specifically supported by other relevant policies in the development plan or national policy, such as Policy HC7: Rural Exception Sites and Rural Workers' Dwellings;
 - b. comprises a replacement dwelling of an appropriate scale and design for its countryside location; or
 - c. meets an identified local economic or social need that cannot reasonably be accommodated within defined settlements.
- 6. Areas of Non-Coalescence, as defined in the Policies Map, will be maintained to protect the separate identity of settlements and retain the open and rural character of the land.

Table 1 Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement Type	Role and Function	Relevant Settlement(s)
Central Area	Primary commercial, cultural and transport hub at the core of Swindon, with a wide range of services, employment and facilities.	Central Area
Urban Area	Main built-up area of the Borough, comprising a range of neighbourhoods and centres with extensive services, facilities and employment.	Urban Area
Rural Service Centres	Medium-sized settlements with a range of services and facilities, serving wider rural catchments and with reasonable accessibility to the Urban Area.	Highworth; Wroughton; Great Stall East and Lotmead (emerging);

		South Marston incl. Rowborough (emerging)
Large Villages	Smaller settlements with a limited range of services and facilities, serving local catchments with lower accessibility.	Broad Blunsdon; Chiseldon; Wanborough; Foxbridge (emerging); Redlands (emerging)
Smaller Villages	Small settlements with very limited services, facilities and accessibility.	Castle Eaton; Lower Blunsdon; Hinton Parva; Hannington; Liddington; Stanton Fitzwarren; Badbury; Bishopstone

Sustainable Development Areas

- 3.18. The Spatial Strategy (Policy SS1) establishes the overall distribution of development across the Borough, whilst the Settlement Hierarchy (Policy SS2) identifies the role and function of settlements and provides a framework for assessing proposals outside allocated sites. Together, these policies provide the strategic context for the Sustainable Development Areas identified in the following section of this chapter.
- 3.19. The Sustainable Development Areas (SDAs) are the principal locations through which the spatial strategy will be delivered. Each SDA has its own opportunities, constraints and characteristics. The SDA policies identify site allocations, establish key infrastructure requirements and set out place-specific principles to guide the development of these areas.
- 3.20. The allocation of land within an SDA establishes the principle of development in that location but does not remove the need to comply with other policies in the Local Plan. All development proposals will be assessed against the development plan as a whole, including relevant policies relating to affordable housing, infrastructure, open space, community facilities, design, transport, climate change, biodiversity, flood risk and heritage. The requirements set out in the SDA policies supplement these wider policy requirements.
- 3.21. The Sustainable Development Areas are illustrated on the Key Diagram and Policies Map and together form the primary mechanism through which the Borough's housing, employment and infrastructure needs will be delivered in a

coordinated and sustainable manner.

[Please see Appendix 1 to this Cabinet Version of the Local Plan for the working Key Diagram and SDA maps.]

Policy SDA01: Swindon's Central Area

- 3.22. The Central Area Sustainable Development Area (SDA) forms a sustainable strategic growth area in the heart of Swindon. The area represents a significant regeneration opportunity which is fundamental to the Local Plan's vision and spatial strategy. As well as delivering new homes, development within the Central Area will seek to strengthen its retail core and support the delivery of new leisure and cultural facilities. Policy SDA01 further stresses that development in the Central Area must create a distinctive sense of place and the feel of a bustling town centre.
- 3.23. The Central Area SDA comprises a series of brownfield sites, including offices, shops, car parks, leisure facilities, and under-used or vacant land. The area benefits from its highly sustainable location with public transport links offered from Swindon Railway Station and the new public transport interchange on Fleming Way.
- 3.24. The Council has long supported the regeneration of the town centre. In February 2009, the Council adopted the Central Area Action Plan, a planning document which established the development framework for the Central Area's regeneration. More recently, the Council approved the Vision for the Heart of Swindon (updated March 2025), setting out Council's long-term vision and ambitions for the town centre.
- 3.25. The Central Area is expected to deliver at least 3,800 new homes over the plan period, and in doing so, significantly contributing to the Borough's housing needs while supporting the wider regeneration of the town centre.

Policy SDA01: Swindon's Central Area

1. Swindon's Central Area (as identified on the Policies Map) will play a fundamental role in the Borough's spatial strategy for delivering growth. Proposals for development in the Central Area will contribute positively towards its enhancement and regeneration as a vibrant and regionally important mixed-use cultural, commercial and leisure hub, where people enjoy living, working, shopping, and relaxing.

Site allocations

2. Sites CA01 to CA11 are allocated to deliver at least 3,800 new homes throughout the plan period.

3. Sites CA12 to CA14 are identified as aspiration sites where at least a further 1,200 new homes contribute to the longer-term aspiration of delivering around 8,000 new homes and 6,000 new jobs in this location beyond 2043.

Table SDA01.1

Ref	Name	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
CA01	North Star (including Oasis)	Swimming pool and brownfield land (vacant)	Residential, leisure, sports, industrial.	550
CA02	North Star House	Residential	Residential	420
CA03	Swindon Station Redevelopment	Car parking and station	Residential, offices, retail.	438
CA04	Bristol Street Car Park	Car parking	Residential	102
CA05	Brunel Quarter	Retail and car parking	Residential-led with town centre uses.	1016
CA06	The Parade	Retail	Residential-led with town centre uses.	245
CA07	Regent Place (including Wyvern)	Retail, theatre and car parking	Residential-led with town centre uses.	262
CA08	Spring Gardens	Car parking and offices	Residential	60

CA09	Kimmerfields	Offices and brownfield land	Residential-led with town centre uses.	450
CA10	Regent's Circus	Leisure and vacant brownfield land		250
CA11	Granville Street Car Park	Car parking	Residential-led with town centre uses.	130
CA12	Polaris House	Offices		900
CA13	Civic Campus	Civic building and offices		115
CA14	Bridge Street / Fleet Street regeneration area	Retail, residential and vacant brownfield land		200

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

4. Development proposals in Swindon's Central Area should deliver upon the ambitions of the Heart of Swindon Vision Document (2025)
5. Development proposals in Swindon's Central Area will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

Placemaking Principles

6. Development proposals within Swindon's Central Area must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. Masterplans and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity

- i. Development proposals are expected to transform the area to deliver a place that looks and functions as the urban heart of Swindon.
 - ii. Development shall conserve, and where possible, enhance the historic environment, responding positively to the area's rich industrial heritage along with its more modern heritage assets.
- b. Layout and Movement
 - i. Development proposals will be expected to provide a high-quality active frontage along key routes (as identified on the Policies Map). Buildings should be designed and arranged to attract pedestrian movement and contribute to the vitality of the street.
 - ii. Development proposals should improve permeability and legibility, including addressing severance created by the railway line and major roads, and take opportunities to repair the areas block structure to a finer grain.
 - iii. New residential development will not be expected to provide car parking.
- c. Built Form and Public Realm
 - i. Development proposals are expected to be of a form and massing, and to use materials and details, which deliver a comfortable and human-scaled street environment.
 - ii. The use of tall building elements will be supported where they work to reinforce a 'centre of gravity' for a particular use or function, such as a transport gateway, a commercial quarter, or new residential neighbourhood.
 - iii. Streets should be tree-lined and landscape-led public spaces where pedestrian movement, cycling and public transport will be supported and vehicular movement managed so that it is not the most dominant part of the street scene.
- d. Uses
 - i. Development proposals along Regent Street, The Parade and Canal Walk must strengthen these streets as key shopping streets with a variety of shops, cafés and eateries at ground floor level.
 - ii. New high-quality homes should be located above shops and around the retail core to establish a new mixed-use urban neighbourhood that will support a vibrant street environment and the vitality of the centre into the evening.
 - iii. Development proposals along Station Road, Fleet Street and Fleming Way should focus on establishing a commercial

quarter that supports the presence of regional and national headquarters as part of a wider strategy to recentralise office uses into the Borough's most accessible and connected location.

Policy SDA02: Pipers Way Urban Regeneration Area

- 3.26. The Pipers Way Urban Regeneration Area forms a strategic brownfield allocation located in the south of Swindon's Urban Area, a short distance from Old Town. The area represents a significant regeneration opportunity comprised of a cluster of three previously developed sites: the former Wroughton Park and Ride, the former Intel Campus and Wakefield House, together with Marlborough Park. Wakefield House and the Intel Campus are high-quality office developments built in the 1970s and 1980s and previously served as the homes of companies such as Intel, Nationwide and Burmah Castrol. However, they have recently become empty, and the Council are supportive of the area's regeneration with a residential-led scheme.
- 3.27. The SDA is located in close proximity to several key roads, including Pipers Way (B4006), Marlborough Road, Marlborough Lane and Queens Drive, which provide links to the wider Swindon road network.
- 3.28. Pipers Way Urban Regeneration Area will play an important role in the Borough's spatial strategy and is expected to deliver a minimum of 1,144 homes over the plan period, contributing to the borough's housing land supply.

Policy SDA02: Pipers Way Urban Regeneration Area

1. Pipers Way is a regeneration opportunity comprising a cluster of 3 previously developed sites: the former Wroughton Park and Ride, the former Intel Campus and Wakefield House, in addition to Marlborough Park. The sites total 22Ha of developable land along Pipers Way towards Marlborough Road. Pipers Way will play a key role in the Borough's spatial strategy, providing a minimum of 1,144 homes over the plan period.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA02 allocates sites for 1,144 new homes to be delivered within the plan period.

Policy SDA02.01

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
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PW01	Marlborough Park	10.00	Landscaped area	Residential	300
PW02	Wakefield House	4.00	Offices	Residential-led mixed use	228
PW03	Intel	5.00	Offices	Residential	276
PW04	Former Wroughton Park and Ride	3.00	Vacant park and ride site	Residential led-mixed use	340

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Marlowe Avenue Regeneration Area will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

Placemaking Principles

4. Development proposals within Pipers Way must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
- a. Character and identity
 - i. Proposals for development should reflect the site's urban location and draw architectural and material cues from neighbouring developments.
 - ii. Proposals should address the street with positive frontages onto Pipers Way.
 - b. Layout and Movement
 - i. Proposals are expected to contribute to ensuring the gateway to the Pipers Way SDA from the junction with Croft Road is legible, providing intuitive arrival by utilising landscape markers and material cues up to the northern end of Pipers Way.
 - c. Built Form and Public Realm
 - i. Proposals for development are expected to be of an appropriate scale and density for development within the Wider Urban Area.
 - ii. Development proposals should utilise and enhance open space and green infrastructure, including the wooded areas along Pipers Way and surrounding site parcels.

Policy SDA03: Marlowe Avenue Urban Regeneration Area

- 3.29. The Marlowe Avenue Urban Regeneration Area forms a strategic brownfield allocation located in East Swindon. It is bordered by three key roads: Drakes Way, Dorcan Way and Marlowe Avenue, with ample public transport accessibility and intermittent cycle routes. Marlowe Avenue Urban Regeneration Area is comprised of sites of various uses, including commercial and employment uses at Greenbridge Industrial Estate, some fragmented residential parcels, and significant open space and sports facilities with the allotments and Swindon Rugby Club. The area benefits from an established green corridor that runs along its eastern extent.
- 3.30. Swindon Borough Council are supportive of the area's regeneration and have led engagement sessions and public consultation events to explore options for the area. The outcome of this was the Marlowe Avenue Renewal Area Masterplan Vision and Design Guide (2024) which was approved by the Cabinet on 13th March 2024. Policy SDA03 seeks to ensure that emerging development in Marlowe Avenue is consistent with the masterplan.
- 3.31. Marlowe Avenue Urban Regeneration Area is expected to deliver 500 new homes within the plan period, contributing to the borough's housing land supply.

Policy SDA03: Marlowe Avenue Urban Regeneration Area

1. Marlowe Avenue Urban Regeneration Area will be a residential led mixed-use urban development that will benefit from its strategic location along a Key Transit Corridor, enhanced green infrastructure, a responsive and coherent built form, and improved permeability.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA03 allocates sites for 500 homes to be delivered within the plan period.

Policy SDA03.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
MA01	Marlowe Avenue Urban Regeneration Area	52.06	Employment, residential uses and open space	Residential-led mixed use, continuation of employment use, and open space	500

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Marlowe Avenue Regeneration Area will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

Placemaking Principles

4. Development proposals within Marlowe Avenue must be consistent with the Council's Marlowe Avenue Renewal Area Masterplan Vision and Design Guide (2024) or any approved update, and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. Updates to the masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. Proposals for development should reflect the site's urban location and draw architectural and material cues from neighbouring developments.
 - b. Layout and Movement
 - i. Proposals for should consider connections to the public transport network, taking advantage of the SDA's strategic position along a Key Transit Corridor.
 - c. Built Form and Public Realm
 - i. Development proposals must complement and respond to the scale and density of existing and emerging development.
 - ii. Development will be expected to be of a density between 44dph and 53dph in accordance with the Masterplan Vision and Design Guide (2024).
 - iii. Careful consideration must be paid to development edges and their treatment to support continuity between parcels.
 - iv. Development along key streets (Marlowe Avenue, Kelvin Road and Greenbridge Road) should be designed to maximise active frontages.
 - v. Development proposals should utilise and enhance open space and green infrastructure, including the retention and expansion of the allotments, strengthening landscape buffers along Marlowe Avenue, Drakes Way and Dorcan Way and introducing street trees, including tree avenue planting along Greenbridge Road.

Policy SDA04: Windmill Hill

- 3.32. The Windmill Hill Sustainable Development Area (SDA) is a strategic allocation located within Swindon's Urban Area and is approximately 4.5km from Swindon town centre. It lies north of Great Western Way, a dual carriageway located off Junction 16 of the M4, and the site's eastern edge is bordered by the B4534 dual carriageway. The site currently comprises of a business park which contains 11 buildings primarily used as office spaces, as well as a children's nursery. The office buildings date from the 1980s and are set within a purposefully designed landscape. A central feature of the site is The Windmill, a windmill built in the 1820s and originally located in Chiseldon before being moved brick by brick to its position within the business park.
- 3.33. Windmill Hill is allocated as a mixed use residential-led scheme with the retention of some of the offices and the nursery. Windmill Hill will deliver 600 new homes, contributing to the Borough's housing land supply.

Policy SDA04: Windmill Hill

1. Windmill Hill will be a high-quality development within Swindon's Urban Area. Development here will benefit from Windmill Hill's established landscaping; enhanced active travel connections; and The Windmill as a characterful focal point for the community.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA04 allocates a site for 600 homes to be delivered throughout the plan period.

Table SDA04.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
WH01	Windmill Hill	24.7	Offices, Nursery, Datacentre	Mixed use – residential, offices, nursery	600

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Gateway North will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

Placemaking Principles

4. Development proposals within Windmill Hill must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. Proposals for development should reflect the site's urban location and draw architectural and material cues from neighbouring developments.
 - ii. Development proposals should be landscape-led, responding to and integrating with the site's established planting structure.
 - iii. Development shall conserve, and where possible, enhance the historic environment, including The Windmill as a non-designated heritage asset. Development proposals should acknowledge the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed in the Heritage Impact Assessment (2026).
 - b. Layout and Movement
 - i. Development proposals should provide a permeable and integrated movement network across the area, including exploring opportunities to deliver new or enhance existing connections to Freshbrook, Shaw Ridge Retail Park and Lydiard Country Park, and to Swindon town centre.
 - c. Built Form and Public Realm
 - i. Proposals for development are expected to be of an appropriate scale and density for infill development within the Wider Urban Area.

Policy SDA05: Gateway North

- 3.34. The Gateway North Sustainable Development Area (SDA) is a strategically located urban infill development opportunity within the northern part of Swindon's Urban Area. The site occupies a highly accessible location situated between Blunsdon St Andrew to the west, Lady Lane and the A419 to the east with commercial and employment areas to the southeast, and Thamesdown Drive to the south. The site is currently comprises predominantly of employment uses, including the Vygon offices and associated buildings, parking and service areas.
- 3.35. Gateway North is allocated as a residential-led development incorporating new open and amenity spaces. The allocation will facilitate the redevelopment of an underutilised brownfield site from employment to residential use.

Gateway North will deliver approximately 500 new homes, contributing to the borough's housing land supply.

Policy SDA05: Gateway North

1. Gateway North is an urban infill development that will stitch seamlessly into the surrounding settlement of Blunsdon St. Andrew, and the commercial areas to the east. Residential development at Gateway North will come forward with a focus on permeability, and the provision of new open and amenity spaces. It will provide primarily residential development with a focus on maximising density on the under-utilised brownfield site, whilst providing cohesive neighbourhoods.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA05 allocates sites for at least 500 new homes to be delivered over the plan period.

Table SDA05.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
GN01	Vygon	11	Employment	Residential and employment	250
GN02	Land North of Latham Road	7	Employment	Residential	250

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Gateway North will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].
4. Development proposals in Gateway North must provide Strategic Access, Management and Monitoring (SAMM) contributions and may be required to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate recreational pressures on the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Special Area Conservation (SAC). SANG provision must;
 - a. Be delivered according to Natural England Compliant Green Space standards; and
 - b. Comply with the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Interim mitigation strategy Appendix 4 or any successor strategy; and

- c. Be secured and managed in perpetuity.

Placemaking Principles

5. Development proposals within Gateway North must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. Proposals for development should reflect the site's urban location and draw architectural and material cues from neighbouring developments.
 - b. Layout and Movement
 - i. Development proposals should provide a permeable and integrated movement network across the area, including exploring opportunities to deliver new or enhance existing connections to amenities east of Northern Gateway and to residential areas at Blunsdon and north towards Abbey Stadium.
 - ii. Development proposals should demonstrate how they connect to and support the public transport network, benefitting from the SDA's strategic position on a Key Transit Corridor.
 - iii. Development proposals should look to overcome severance at Gateway North by providing direct road and active travel routes to Salzgitter Drive.
 - c. Built Form and Public Realm:
 - i. Proposals for development are expected to be of an appropriate scale and density for infill development within the Wider Urban Area.

Policy SDA06: Wichelstowe

- 3.36. The Wichelstowe Sustainable Development Area (SDA) forms a strategic urban extension to the south of Swindon, covering approximately 310 hectares between the London–Bristol railway line, the former Rushey Platt–Old Town railway and the M4 motorway. The area was first identified through the Swindon Development Appraisal Study (1998), with outline planning permission originally was granted in 2005 for a comprehensively planned, mixed-use community of up to 4,500 dwellings. Development commenced in 2007 and 1,589 homes have been completed to date.

- 3.37. The ongoing delivery of Wichelstowe is supported by strategic infrastructure, including the Wichelstowe Southern Access Road, which provides improved connectivity between the urban area and land to the south of the M4, while helping to reduce pressure on Junction 16 and the wider highway network.
- 3.38. Recent development at Wichelstowe has demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainable travel and high-quality placemaking. Development at Canalside has been supported by a comprehensive Travel Plan, incorporating measures to reduce reliance on private car use such as walking and cycling infrastructure, public transport incentives and behavioural initiatives. This approach has been recognised through national accreditation (Gold Standard Modeshift STARS, 2025), reflecting the site's emphasis on sustainable transport.
- 3.39. The continued allocation of Wichelstowe through Policy SDA06 will support the delivery of a series of well-designed neighbourhoods centred around high-quality public spaces and supported by sustainable transport networks, community facilities and green infrastructure. The site is expected to deliver a further 1,620 homes over the plan period, contributing significantly to meeting the Borough's development needs.

Policy SDA06: Wichelstowe

1. Land at Wichelstowe will provide a sustainable extension to Swindon's Urban Area, creating a high-quality mixed-use development.

Site allocations

2. Land at Wichelstowe will deliver 1,620 homes within the plan period.

Policy SDA06.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
WS01	Wichelstowe	194.94	Agricultural	Residential	1,620

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Wichelstowe will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

Placemaking Principles

4. Development proposals within Wichelstowe must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. Development at Wichelstowe shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, including the Scheduled Monument of Westleaze Medieval Village;
 - ii. Development at Wichelstowe shall protect and enhance the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and views from it;
 - b. Layout and Movement
 - i. The route for the Wilts & Berks Canal, as set out on the Policies Map, shall be safeguarded and protected from development. Opportunities to restore the canal should be explored.
 - ii. Development of the remaining parcels should consider how they integrate to existing neighbourhoods.

Policy SDA07: New Eastern Villages

- 3.40. The New Eastern Villages Sustainable Development Area forms a strategic extension to the east of Swindon. It consists of approximately 724 hectares, extending from the A419 to the east to where the River Cole meets the A420 in the west, and from South Marston in the north to Foxbridge Farm in the south.
- 3.41. The NEV was first identified in the Swindon Joint Strategy (2005) and featured in previous drafts of the Local Plan, including the emerging Core Strategy as the Eastern Development Area (EDA). The NEV was later allocated in the adopted Swindon Local Plan 2026 as a strategic site allocation for up to 8,000 new homes.
- 3.42. The NEV will comprise a series of interconnected villages, namely Redlands, Lotmead, Foxbridge, Great Stall, Rowborough, and the expansion of South Marston. Much of these sites have been granted outline planning permission with some parcels benefitting from Reserved Matters approval and currently being built out.
- 3.43. Policy SDA07 allocates additional small-scale sites located between development parcels or provide minor extensions to existing development areas.

- 3.44. It is essential that the NEV is supported by substantial infrastructure, including highway schemes to enable nearby roads and junctions to cope with the extra traffic created. Some highway schemes have already been delivered since the adoption of the Swindon Local Plan 2026, including improvements to the White Hart, Gablecross, and Nythe junctions, the Piccadilly and Greenbridge roundabouts, and the delivery of a new South Marston cycle/ footbridge. The delivery of the Southern Connector Road, a major strategic project that will link the New Eastern Villages with Commonhead roundabout and the A419, is in progress.
- 3.45. The NEV will contribute significantly to the Borough's housing land supply and will be expected to deliver 8,875 new homes.

Policy SDA07: New Eastern Villages

1. The New Eastern Villages (NEV) will provide a sustainable extension to East Swindon. It will comprise a series of inter-connected 'villages' with their own distinctive local characters, as well as the expansion of South Marston. The significant growth expected within the NEV will be supported by strategic infrastructure, including highway upgrades, increased public transport provision and active travel connections.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA07 allocates sites for 8,875 homes to be delivered within the plan period.

Table SDA07.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
NEV01	Thornhill Industrial Estate and Crown Timber	7.04	Brownfield land	Residential	128
NEV02	Great Stall West	28.90	Agricultural land	Residential-led mixed use	700
NEV03	Upper Lotmead	39.83	Farm buildings + agricultural land	Residential	300
NEV04	Land at South Marston and Rowborough	164.11	Agricultural land	Residential-led mixed use	2380

NEV05	Great Stall East and Lotmead	165.31	Farm buildings + agricultural land	Residential-led mixed use	4050
NEV06	Green Land	19.19	Farm buildings + agricultural land	Residential	275
NEV07	Foxbridge Village	16.15	Agricultural land	Residential-led mixed use	540
NEV08	Redlands	37.52	Agricultural land	Residential	450
NEV09	Oxleaze Farm	1.5	Farm buildings + greenfield land	Residential	40
NEV10	Manor Farmyard		Farm buildings	Residential	6
NEV11	Land north of A420	2.78	Greenfield land	Residential	6

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in the New Eastern Villages will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

Placemaking Principles

4. Development proposals within the New Eastern Villages must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. The layout and design of development shall establish a distinctive character and identity for each 'village', while ensuring that the villages form part of an integrated and cohesive New Eastern Villages neighbourhood with strong visual and physical links between the villages and with Swindon's Urban Area.
 - ii. Development proposals shall incorporate a network of multi-functional green corridors within and between development

parcels, acting as defining landscape features and key structuring elements of the New Eastern Villages.

- iii. Development proposals shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, considering the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed in the Heritage Impact Assessment (2026).
- iv. Development shall complement and respond positively to New Eastern Village's landscape character, including the views and setting of North Wessex Downs National Landscape, considering the mitigation measures proposed in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2026).
- v. Development shall retain separation from Wanborough, Bishopstone and Bourton through retention of the Area of Non-Coalescence, as identified on the Policies Map.

b. Layout and Movement

- i. Development proposals should demonstrate a coordinated approach to movement across the SDA, delivering an integrated and connected movement network that is not constrained by individual land ownership and existing hedgerows and boundary features.
- ii. Development proposals should deliver a strategic link between the Southern Connector Road and the A420.
- iii. Development proposals should incorporate connections to the public transport network and maximise on the New Eastern Villages' strategic position on a Key Transit Corridor.
- iv. Development proposals shall deliver active travel infrastructure and connections to East Swindon and towards the town centre.
- v. The route for the Wilts & Berks Canal, as set out on the Policies Map, shall be safeguarded and protected from development. Opportunities to restore the canal should be explored.

c. Built Form and Public Realm

- i. Higher density development shall be located around local centres, the Urban District Centre, and locations with greater sustainable transport accessibility, including the Key Transit Corridor. Lower density development shall be located on the rural edges of development parcels, creating a graduated transition between the villages and the open countryside.
- ii. Development at South Marston should respond positively to its unique sense of place, its distinctly rural and historic

character, and contribute towards the creation of an integrated village.

- iii. Development proposals should ensure that large-scale land uses, including school playing fields, are integrated within the block and street structure and do not compromise the site's permeability or result in inactive frontages.
- iv. Development shall be embedded with green and blue infrastructure including through the integration of the River Cole and other waterways as key landscape features and components of the public realm, while protecting and enhancing their ecological quality and connectivity.

Policy SDA08: Kingsdown

- 3.46. The Kingsdown Sustainable Development Area (SDA) forms a strategic urban extension to the north-eastern edge of Swindon. The SDA is located to the east of the A419 and covers approximately 95 hectares, running parallel to the A419 and extending north-east to connect with Broad Blunsdon.
- 3.47. The Kingsdown SDA was first allocated in the adopted Swindon Local Plan 2026 to provide 1650 new dwellings. Due to the allocation of two additional smaller scale parcels, Policy SDA08 will now be expected to deliver 1,818 new homes, making a significant contribution towards meeting the Borough's housing needs.
- 3.48. The site benefits from existing access points from Turnpike Road (B4019) and Kingsdown Road and Highworth Road via the A419. However, substantial supporting infrastructure will be required to ensure it is well connected and served by multiple access points. This includes plans for the provision of a new bridge crossing the A419 via Arkwright Road and a new connection to the B4019 at Broad Blunsdon.
- 3.49. The Kingsdown area already provides a range of established community services and amenities, including a sports centre, retirement village, secondary school and crematorium. The continued allocation of Kingsdown through Policy SDA08 will support the delivery of a well-designed neighbourhood and aims to deliver additional infrastructure, such as a new primary school, nursery and high-quality open space.

Policy SDA08: Kingsdown

1. Kingsdown is an urban extension north of Swindon town. Kingsdown will play a key role in the Borough's spatial strategy with 1,818 new homes expected to come forward over the plan period. Proposals within Kingsdown will contribute positively towards the creation of high-quality, well-connected neighbourhoods that provide new homes, employment opportunities, community facilities, schools and green infrastructure, whilst promoting healthy lifestyles, environmental enhancement, and a strong sense of place. New neighbourhoods at Kingsdown will be connected to the urban area of Swindon via a new bridge connecting to Arkwright Road.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA08 allocates sites for at least 1,818 new homes to be delivered throughout the plan period.

Table SDA08.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
KSD01	Land North of Kingsdown Lane	3.42	Agricultural	Residential	77
KSD02	Kingsdown Nurseries	2.86	Plant nursery	Residential	64
KSD03	Kingsdown (east of the A419)	82.00	Agricultural	Residential, open space, community and educational facilities	1552
KSD04	Kingsdown (Turnpike Road Land)	7.00	Agricultural	Residential	125

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Kingsdown will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

4. Development proposals in Kingsdown must provide Strategic Access, Management and Monitoring (SAMM) contributions and may be required to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate

recreational pressures on the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Special Area Conservation (SAC). SANG provision must;

- a. be delivered according to Natural England Compliant Green Space standards;
- b. comply with the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Interim Mitigation Strategy, Appendix 4 or any successor strategy; and
- c. be secured and managed in perpetuity.

Placemaking Principles

5. Development proposals within Kingsdown must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. Development shall respect the area's landscape setting and character, considering mitigation measures proposed in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2026).
 - ii. Development must ensure that it retains separation from Broad Blunsdon, avoiding development in the Area of Non-Coalescence.
 - iii. Development proposals should establish a distinct sense of place that respects the local vernacular of nearby historic settlements, drawing architectural and material cues from the nearby village of Broad Blunsdon.
 - b. Layout and Movement
 - i. Development proposals should demonstrate how they connect to and support the public transport network, benefitting from the SDA's strategic position on a Key Transit Corridor.
 - ii. Proposals will be expected to provide active travel connections to Broad Blunsdon and, via the bridge crossing, to Swindon's Urban Area.
 - iii. Proposals should retain, enhance and extend Public Rights of Way where appropriate, including connections to Stratton Wood.
 - c. Built Form and Public Realm
 - i. Development should be landscape-led, with built form integrated into the existing landscape structure and retaining key features such as woodland, hedgerows and Bydemill Brook.
 - ii. Development should provide a sensitive transition to the open countryside through appropriate scale, density,

landscaping and open space, particularly on development edges, and the retention of key views.

- iii. Development should respond sensitively to the character of the nearby village of Broad Blunsdon and provide a sympathetic transition between the village and Swindon's urban area.

Policy SDA09: North Tadpole

- 3.50. The North Tadpole Sustainable Development Area (SDA) forms a strategic smaller-scale greenfield allocation to the north of the borough. North Tadpole is located north of Tadpole Garden Village and northwest of Broad Blunsdon. The A419, part of the Strategic Road Network, runs along the site's eastern edge and William Morris Way runs through the middle of the site.
- 3.51. There are significant educational facilities on William Morris Way and community and commercial services at Tadpole Garden Village and Broad Blunsdon. There is also an opportunity to connect North Tadpole directly with the Strategic Road Network through a new access and to strengthen pedestrian and cycling connections to Broad Blunsdon.
- 3.52. To the south of North Tadpole lies Tadpole Garden Village, an award-winning housing scheme allocated in the adopted Swindon Local Plan 2026 and granted planning permission in 2012. Development at North Tadpole should draw upon the successful approach taken at Tadpole Garden Village and utilise the principles of the 21st century garden village through high-quality design, landscape-led development, and encouraging community involvement.
- 3.53. The site is expected to deliver 513 homes over the plan period, contributing to meeting the Borough's housing need.

Policy SDA09: North Tadpole

1. North Tadpole will provide a high-quality development close to Tadpole Garden Village. It will benefit from its access to the Strategic Road Network, its closeness to existing educational and community facilities, and its rural setting.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA09 allocates sites for 513 homes to be delivered throughout the plan period.

Table SDA09.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
NT01	Lower Widhill Farm and Land off Tadpole Farm	42.15	Agricultural	Residential	513

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in North Tadpole will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

4. Development proposals at North Tadpole must provide Strategic Access, Management and Monitoring (SAMB) contributions and may be required to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate recreational pressures on the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Special Area Conservation (SAC). SANG provision must:
 - a. be delivered according to Natural England Compliant Green Space standards;
 - b. comply with the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Interim Mitigation Strategy Appendix 4 or any successor strategy; and
 - c. be secured and managed in perpetuity.

Placemaking Principles

5. Development proposals within North Tadpole must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. Development proposals should apply 21st Century Garden Village principles, informed by Tadpole Garden Village.
 - ii. Development proposals shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, particularly Lower Widhill Farm, considering the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed in the Heritage Impact Assessment (2026).
 - iii. Development shall complement and respond to North Tadpole's landscape setting and character, considering the mitigation measures proposed in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2026).

b. Layout and Movement

- i. Development proposals should incorporate safe and appropriate accesses to the A419 and William Morris Way.
- ii. Development proposals should provide a permeable and integrated movement network across the site, including exploring opportunities to deliver new or enhance existing connections to Tadpole Garden Village, Broad Blunsdon, Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew and the National Cycle Network.
- iii. Development proposals should incorporate connections to the public transport and active travel network.

c. Built Form and Public Realm

- i. Development along key streets and corner plots should provide high-quality active frontages and strong street edges, especially on William Morris Way. Development on the Tadpole Triangle site should respond positively to the prominence of the site when approaching from the east.
- ii. Development should provide a sensitive transition to the open countryside through appropriate scale, density, landscaping and open space, particularly on development edges, and the retention of views to the countryside.

Policy SDA10: Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew

- 3.54. The Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew Sustainable Development Area (SDA) forms a strategic greenfield expansion to the north of Swindon's Wider Urban Area. It sits between Tadpole Garden Village to the west, Abbey Farm to the east, and Blunsdon St. Andrew to the south-east and lies approximately six kilometres from Swindon town centre. Tadpole Lane runs along the area's southern edge and continues eastwards to join the Strategic Road Network at the A419. The adjoining settlements contain various local services, including local shops, health and educational facilities.
- 3.55. Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew will be expected to deliver 760 new homes, contributing to the borough's housing land supply.

Policy SDA10: Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew

1. Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew will be an edge-of-settlement extension to Swindon's Wider Urban Area between Tadpole Garden Village and Abbey Farm.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA10 allocates sites for 760 homes to be delivered throughout the plan period.

Table SDA10.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
BA01	Land at Grove Farm	21.88	Agricultural	Residential	410
BA02	Upper Widhill Farm		Agricultural	Residential/ commercial	350

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

4. Development proposals in Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew must provide Strategic Access, Management and Monitoring (SAMM) contributions and may be required to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate recreational pressures on the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Special Area Conservation (SAC). SANG provision must:
- be delivered according to Natural England Compliant Green Space standards;
 - comply with the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Interim Mitigation Strategy, Appendix 4 or any successor strategy; and
 - be secured and managed in perpetuity.

Placemaking Principles

5. Development proposals within Land adjoining Blunsdon St. Andrew must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
- Character and identity
 - Development proposals shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, incorporating the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed in the Heritage Impact Assessment (2026) regarding Grove

Farmhouse, Upper Widhill Farm, Blunsdon St. Andrew Conservation Area and Burcot House.

- ii. Development shall respond positively to the site's location between Abbey Farm and Tadpole Garden Village, creating a coherent transition between these distinct character areas.
- b. Layout and Movement
 - i. Development proposals should incorporate an appropriate and safe access off Tadpole Lane.
 - ii. Development proposals should provide a permeable and integrated movement network across the site, including exploring opportunities to deliver new or enhance existing connections to Tadpole Garden Village, North Tadpole and the National Cycle Network.
 - iii. Development proposals should incorporate connections to the public transport and active travel network.
- c. Built Form and Public Realm
 - i. Proposals for development are expected to be of an appropriate scale and density for an extension to Swindon's Wider Urban Area. Density should transition gradually from the built-up area towards the countryside, using retained and new hedgerows, planting and other green buffers, to create a sensitive edge to the countryside.

Policy SDA11: Land at Highworth

- 3.56. The Highworth Sustainable Development Area (SDA) forms an extension to the northern boundary of Highworth, as well as an infill development within Highworth itself. Highworth is a Rural Service Centre located approximately 10km northeast of Swindon town centre. It lies close to the Oxfordshire border to the east and forms a gateway to the Cotswolds to the north. The A361 runs through the centre of Highworth, forming the east-west route to Swindon and onwards to the Cotswolds and the Upper Thames Valley. The B4019 begins at the southern edge of Highworth, providing a direct route to Faringdon and onward connections to Oxford.
- 3.57. The SDA will benefit from access to the range of existing services available within Highworth. The High Street provides amenities such as independent cafes and restaurants, convenience stores, several hotels and a library. There are numerous pubs dispersed throughout and leisure facilities, including a golf club and recreation centre.
- 3.58. Land at Highworth is allocated as residential use and will be expected to deliver 803 new homes within the plan period.

Policy SDA11: Land at Highworth

1. Land at Highworth will provide a sustainable cluster within the settlement of Highworth, a Rural Service Centre, where it will benefit from existing services and facilities, a distinctive landscape setting, and a cohesive and characterful built form. The Sustainable Development Area will comprise of edge-of-settlement extensions and an infill site, delivering in total 803 new homes.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA11 allocates sites for 803 homes to be delivered within the plan period.

Table SDA11.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
HW01	Land at Pentylands Lane / Crane Furlong	2.34	Agricultural	Residential	53
HW02	Roundhills	10.29	Agricultural	Residential	250
HW03	12 Oaks Golf Course	31.32	Former Golf Course	Residential	500

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Highworth will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

Placemaking Principles

4. Development proposals within Land at Highworth must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. Development should be well integrated with the existing settlement, reflecting Highworth's historic settlement pattern, vernacular architecture and landscape setting.
 - ii. Development on extension sites should take a landscape-led approach that reads as a natural continuation of Highworth.
 - iii. Development proposals shall conserve and, where possible, enhance Highworth's historic environment.

b. Layout and Movement

- i. Development proposals should provide a permeable and integrated movement network across the area, including exploring opportunities to deliver new or enhance existing connections to the local schools, leisure facilities and Westrop Surgery.
- ii. Development proposals should demonstrate how they connect to and support the public transport network, benefitting from the SDA's strategic position on a Key Transit Corridor.

c. Built Form and Public Realm

- i. Proposals for development on the extension sites are expected to be of an appropriate scale and density for a Rural Service Centre extension. Density should transition gradually from the built-up area towards the countryside, using retained and new hedgerows, planting and other green buffers, to create a sensitive edge to the countryside.
- ii. Infill development will be expected to optimise density within the settlement boundary while being sensitive to the neighbouring built form.

Policy SDA12: Land at Wroughton

- 3.59. The Wroughton Sustainable Development Area (SDA) consists of smaller-scale development around the existing settlement of Wroughton, a Rural Service Centre. Wroughton lies in the south of the borough and is surrounded by open countryside to its west, south and east, while to the north lies the M4 and Swindon. Wroughton is connected to Swindon via the Croft Road bridge and to Wichelstowe via Mill Lane.
- 3.60. Wroughton is a Rural Service Centre with a strong local character and identity influenced by its rural setting, key views out to the countryside and its heritage. Policy SDA12 emphasises the need for development at Wroughton to successfully integrate into the existing village and embody the local character.
- 3.61. Wroughton will be expected to deliver 595 new homes through three interconnected development parcels: two extensions on Wroughton's eastern extent and one parcel located west of Swindon Road.

Policy SDA12: Land at Wroughton

1. Land at Wroughton will deliver sustainable extensions to the Rural Service Centre of Wroughton. Development should build upon Wroughton's strong rural identity, distinctive landscape character, and established educational, health, leisure, and open space facilities. Proposals must respond positively to this unique sense of place, whilst delivering new homes and supporting infrastructure that integrate successfully with the existing village.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA12 allocates sites for 595 homes to be delivered within the plan period.

Table SDA12.01

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
WR01	Land east of Swindon Road (south)	9.11	Agricultural land	Residential	191
WR02	Akers Land (western side)	13.37	Hospice + agricultural land	Residential	300
WR03	Land off Swindon Road	11.69	Grassland	Residential	104

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Land at Wroughton will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

Placemaking Principles

4. Development proposals within Land at Wroughton must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and identity
 - i. Development should be well integrated with the existing settlement and reflect Wroughton's historic settlement pattern, vernacular architecture and landscape setting, taking

- a landscape-led approach that reads as a natural continuation of Wroughton.
 - ii. Development must ensure that it retains separation between Wroughton and the M4 to retain Wroughton's identity as a distinct settlement from Swindon, avoiding development in the Area of Non-Coalescence.
 - iii. Development shall protect and where possible enhance Wroughton's landscape setting and responding positively to the landscape character and the views and setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, having regard of the mitigation measures proposed in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2026).
 - iv. Development proposals shall conserve and, where possible, enhance Wroughton's historic environment.
- b. Layout and Movement
 - i. Development proposals should provide a permeable and integrated movement network across the site, including exploring opportunities to deliver new or enhance existing connections to The Ridgeway School, Wroughton Junior School, and Ridgeway Leisure Centre.
 - ii. Development proposals should deliver active travel connections to Swindon Town Centre and Wichelstowe.
 - iii. Development proposals should demonstrate how they connect to and support the public transport network, benefitting from the SDA's strategic position on a Key Transit Corridor.
- c. Built Form and Public Realm
 - i. Proposals for development are expected to be of an appropriate scale and density for a Rural Service Centre extension. Density should transition gradually from the built-up area towards the countryside, using retained and new hedgerows, planting and other green buffers, to create a sensitive edge to the countryside.

Policy SDA13: Land at Broad Blunsdon

- 3.62. The Broad Blunsdon Sustainable Development Area (SDA) comprises an extension to the southern edge of Broad Blunsdon and development land on the eastern side of the village.
- 3.63. The large village of Broad Blunsdon is located outside of Swindon's Urban Area but on the northern edge of Swindon, approximately 6km north of the town centre. The settlement sits between the Rural Service Centre of Highworth to the northeast and the expanding suburban areas of North Swindon, including North Tadpole and Blunsdon St Andrew to the west. The A419, part of the Strategic Road Network, runs along the western edge of the SDA. The area is accessed directly from Turnpike Road, which runs adjacent to the A419, while the B4019, providing a key route to Highworth, passes through the centre of the allocation.
- 3.64. Broad Blunsdon benefits from a range of local facilities and community assets, including a community shop, village hall, sports pavilion with football and cricket pitches, and a four-star hotel with leisure facilities. Residents also have access to the wider range of services and amenities available in North Swindon.
- 3.65. The land at Broad Blunsdon will deliver 345 homes over the plan period, contributing to meeting Swindon's housing needs.

Policy SDA13: Land at Broad Blunsdon

1. Land at Broad Blunsdon forms an edge-of-settlement village extension of a sustainable and accessible rural location in the north of the borough. In combination, the parcels will provide a minimum of 345 new homes over the plan period. Development at Broad Blunsdon will contribute towards meeting the borough's housing need and the provision of essential infrastructure and additional amenity value in Broad Blunsdon whilst preserving its rural Cotswolds border village character.

Site allocations

2. Policy SDA13 allocates sites for at least 345 new homes to be delivered throughout the plan period.

Table SDA13.1

Ref	Name	Area (Ha)	Existing use(s)	Allocated use(s)	Indicative capacity
BB01	Land at Sams Lane (southern part)	5.00	Agricultural	Residential	115
BB02	Land South of Highworth Road Blunsdon	6.00	Agricultural	Residential	89

BB03	Land at 12 Turnpike Road Blunsdon	2.00	Residential curtilage, gardens, grazing land	Residential	48
BB04	Land at Turnpike Road Blunsdon	4.00	Agricultural	Residential	93

Strategy Context and Infrastructure Requirements

3. Development proposals in Broad Blunsdon will be supported where they deliver or contribute towards community facilities and infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

[Detailed infrastructure requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period].

4. Development proposals at Broad Blunsdon must provide Strategic Access, Management and Monitoring (SAMM) contributions and may be required to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate recreational pressures on the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Special Area Conservation (SAC). SANG provision must;
 - a. be delivered according to Natural England Compliant Green Space standards; and
 - b. comply with the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm Interim mitigation strategy Appendix 4 or any successor strategy; and
 - c. be secured and managed in perpetuity.

Placemaking Principles

5. Development proposals within Land at Broad Blunsdon must be consistent with an approved masterplan and site-specific design codes prepared in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design. The masterplan and design codes should be informed by the following placemaking principles:
 - a. Character and Identity:
 - i. Development should be well integrated with the existing settlement and reflect Broad Blunsdon's historic settlement pattern, vernacular architecture and agricultural setting, taking a landscape-led approach that reads as a natural continuation of Broad Blunsdon.
 - ii. Development should frame key views towards the surrounding countryside and maintain visual connections to the rural landscape.
 - iii. Development should ensure that it retains separation between the village of Broad Blunsdon and north Swindon's urban area and land allocated to the east at Kingsdown.
 - iv. Development proposals shall conserve and, where possible, enhance Broad Blunsdon's historic environment.

d. Built Form and Public Realm:

- i. Proposals for development are expected to be of an appropriate scale and density for a Village extension. Density should transition gradually from the built-up area towards the countryside, using retained and new hedgerows, planting and other green buffers, to create a sensitive edge to the countryside.

4. HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT & PLACEMAKING



4. HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT & PLACEMAKING

Introduction

- 4.1. Good placemaking is an integral part of sustainable development. High-quality design is fundamental to creating attractive, inclusive and sustainable places, enhancing both their appearance and functionality. It ensures that new buildings, streets and spaces function socially, economically and environmentally, helping to create feelings of belonging and community cohesion.
- 4.2. The council is committed to securing high-quality design across all development in Swindon and recognises the key role that heritage, landscape and the natural environment play in shaping Swindon's identity and contributing to high-quality placemaking. This chapter sets out the design and placemaking principles that will guide how all forms of development are planned, managed and delivered to a high standard.

Policy SD1: High-Quality Design

- 4.3. High-quality design is expected to emerge from a clear understanding of the site and its surroundings, ensuring that development responds positively to local context while contributing to a distinct and coherent sense of place. This can be achieved through careful consideration of layout, scale, height, massing, and architectural approach, alongside the use of materials and detailing that reinforce local character where appropriate.
- 4.4. Proposals should also prioritise movement and connectivity, with layouts that are easy to navigate and that encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Streets and routes should be safe, legible and well-integrated with existing networks. The integration of nature is equally important, with development expected to retain and enhance existing green and blue infrastructure, incorporate new planting and landscaping, and deliver biodiversity improvements where possible.
- 4.5. High-quality public and communal spaces are a key component of well-designed places. These should be attractive, functional, safe and inclusive, supporting social interaction and contributing to a strong sense of community.
- 4.6. This policy seeks to ensure that all new residential development provides sufficient, high-quality, usable and safe amenity space for future occupants. The policy applies to all forms of residential development, including apartments that share a common access, as well as duplexes and maisonettes arranged over single or split levels, whether they have private entrances or are accessed via communal areas.
- 4.7. Private amenity space should be designed to be functional, accessible and proportionate to the size and type of dwelling. Where it can be robustly demonstrated that the provision of individual private amenity space is not

feasible, well-designed communal gardens, shared courtyards and roof terraces may be provided as an alternative. Such communal spaces should be conveniently located, accessible to all residents, safe, and capable of accommodating a range of activities, including recreation, relaxation and opportunities for social interaction.

- 4.8. Development should also support an appropriate mix of uses, particularly in accessible locations, to create active, vibrant places with natural surveillance and day-to-day vitality.
- 4.9. In terms of buildings, proposals are expected to deliver high standards of amenity, functionality and adaptability, ensuring that spaces are fit for purpose over the long term. This includes considerations such as daylight, privacy, accessibility, and environmental performance, alongside measures to improve energy efficiency and support climate resilience.
- 4.10. Applicants should demonstrate how these elements have been addressed through proportionate design statements or similar supporting information, clearly explaining the design rationale and how the proposal aligns with the characteristics of well-designed places. This will ensure that design quality is integral to the development process rather than applied retrospectively.
- 4.11. Recent challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have emphasised the importance of adequate internal and outdoor space. Combined with the continued rise in home working, sufficient living space is crucial to support the health and wellbeing of the occupants.
- 4.12. In March 2015, the Government introduced the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS), which sets out the requirements for the gross internal floor area of new dwellings, at a defined level of occupancy. The standards apply to all tenures and establish baselines for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height. Details of the space standards can be found within the Technical Housing Standards Statutory guidance on the Government website.
- 4.13. As such, all new homes will be expected to meet, at a minimum, the requirements defined in the NDSS. In addition, closely connected outdoor space, whether in the form of a balcony or communal garden, should be provided by new residential development.

Masterplans and Design Codes

- 4.14. Masterplans and design codes are important tools for ensuring that large-scale development is planned and delivered comprehensively. A masterplan establishes the overall framework for an area, including land uses, movement networks, green infrastructure, public spaces and infrastructure. It provides a shared vision for how a place will develop over time and helps coordinate delivery across different phases, parcels and land ownerships.
- 4.15. Large-scale developments are often delivered over many years and by multiple developers. Without a coordinated approach, there is a risk of fragmented development, poor connectivity and places that lack a coherent

identity. Masterplans should therefore be capable of evolving over time in response to changing circumstances.

- 4.16. Design codes provide more detailed guidance for securing high-quality design outcomes. They translate the principles established through the development plan and, where relevant, masterplans into specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site. Design codes may be prepared at a variety of scales, including individual developments, parcels, phases or character areas.
- 4.17. The preparation and review of masterplans and design codes should be informed by engagement with local communities, Town and Parish Councils and other stakeholders. Together, these tools help ensure development delivers well-designed, distinctive and sustainable places.

Policy SD1: High-Quality Design

1. All development proposals must demonstrate how they have responded positively to the ten characteristics of well-designed places through design components including layout, scale, landscape, form material and appearance, as set out in the National Design Guide. In particular, proposals will be expected to:
 - a. context: respond positively to the site and its surroundings, including local character, history, landscape, and built form;
 - b. identity: create or reinforce a distinctive sense of place through architecture, materials, and detailing;
 - c. built form: incorporate an appropriate layout, scale, height, density, and massing that integrates with its context;
 - d. movement: prioritise walking, cycling, and public transport, and provide safe, legible, and well-connected routes;
 - e. nature: protect, enhance, and integrate green and blue infrastructure, delivering measurable biodiversity gains where appropriate;
 - f. public spaces: provide high-quality, safe, inclusive, and accessible public and communal spaces;
 - g. uses: support a mix of compatible uses that promote active frontages and contribute to vitality and viability;
 - h. homes and buildings: deliver functional, adaptable, and resource-efficient buildings that provide a high standard of amenity for all users.
 - i. resources: conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and material, and respond to the impacts of climate change by ensuring energy efficient and minimising carbon emissions, in accordance with the policies set out in chapter 8 of the Local Plan.

- j. Lifespan: ensure long term management, adaptation to changing needs and evolving technologies.
- 2. Proposals must demonstrate compliance with these principles through a proportionate Design and Access Statement or equivalent supporting information.
- 3. All development proposals must provide for ancillary services such as bin storage, with careful consideration of negative impact on streetscape or overall character of the area.
- 4. Apartments must:
 - a. avoid single-aspect units. If it is justified that there are no other options available, single aspect units should not face north; must only comprise a limited number of the overall units; and must include additional mitigating amenity measures such as generous balconies;
 - b. achieve natural light and ventilation, and mitigate the potential for excessive solar gain or moisture retention;
 - c. avoid runs of double banked internal corridors with no natural light;
 - d. Provide communal areas designed to encourage interaction between neighbours.

Space Standards and Amenity Space

- 5. All residential development including new build, conversions, sub-divisions and extensions, across all tenures, is required to meet, as a minimum, internal space standards set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards.
- 6. Development proposals must provide private amenity space proportionate to the size, type and occupancy of the dwelling. As a minimum:
 - a. apartments must provide at least 10sqm of private external amenity space per dwelling. Within the Central Area, a reduced provision of 5sqm may be accepted where justified by the site's context and accessibility to high-quality public spaces; and
 - b. houses must provide private amenity space at least equivalent to the footprint of the dwelling.
- 7. Where individual private amenity space cannot be provided in full, communal gardens, roof terraces or other shared amenity spaces may be accepted where they deliver an equivalent or improved amenity outcome.

Masterplans and Design Codes

- 8. Development proposals for land allocated through the Strategic Development Area policies, and any other large-scale development, must be brought forward in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan agreed by the Council.

9. Masterplans must, at a level of detail proportionate to the scale, nature and complexity of the masterplan area:
 - a. establish a coordinated framework for land uses, infrastructure, movement networks, green infrastructure and public spaces;
 - b. demonstrate how development will be integrated across different phases, parcels and land ownerships;
 - c. identify the broad phasing of development and infrastructure delivery; and
 - d. where relevant, respond positively to the Strategic Development Area placemaking principles.
10. Development proposals within a Strategic Development Area must accord with a Design Code agreed by the Council. Design Codes must be consistent with the agreed masterplan and may apply to individual development parcels, phases or character areas.
11. The preparation and review of masterplans and Design Codes must be informed by early and proportionate engagement with the Local Planning Authority, local communities, Town and Parish Councils, and other relevant stakeholders.
12. Development proposals will only be supported where they:
 - a. do not prejudice the comprehensive development of the wider area or adjoining land; and
 - b. contribute towards a coherent, well-connected and integrated pattern of development.

Policy SD2: Effective Use of Land

- 4.18. Effective use of land is a vital component of sustainable development. The NPPF (2024) states that planning policies and decisions should encourage effective use of land by giving substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land.
- 4.19. Meanwhile uses refer to the temporary use of sites or buildings, often on vacant and underutilised land, prior to their long-term redevelopment or permanent use. They can play an important role in supporting place-making by activating sites, creating interest, and contributing to the vitality of an area during the early phases of development.

Policy SD2: Effective Use of Land

1. Development proposals must optimise densities to make an efficient use of land. This should be achieved through:

- a. taking a design-led approach to ensure an appropriate layout, built form and site-specific design; and
 - b. ensuring that the proposal is complementary to the surrounding environment.
2. Proposals for employment uses should demonstrate how they have sought to intensify floorspace capacity.
3. Temporary/'meanwhile' uses will be supported in principle, particularly where they will benefit the vitality and viability of Swindon's Central Area, Pipers Way Urban Regeneration Area, Marlowe Avenue Urban Regeneration Area, or the Borough' retail centres and designated employment areas.
4. Proposals for temporary/meanwhile uses of vacant buildings and sites must contribute positively to the local area, meet community needs and enhance the attractiveness of the environment for residents and visitors.
5. The redevelopment / reuse of brownfield or previously developed land and buildings will be encouraged.

Policy SD3: Mixed-use Developments

- 4.20. A diverse mix of uses can enhance vitality, character and activity within an area. While a degree of interaction between different uses is both inevitable and often desirable, well-designed places demonstrate that potential conflicts can be effectively managed through careful design and layout. The coexistence of a variety of uses can contribute positively to a place's identity, creating interest and vibrancy through a mix of activity, movement and experience.
- 4.21. However, not all uses are compatible, and the appropriateness of mixing uses will depend on their nature, scale and relationship to surrounding development. Careful consideration should be given to the compatibility of proposed uses with each other and with neighbouring uses, ensuring that potential conflicts—such as noise, disturbance, or servicing requirements—are minimised through design, layout and positioning. In some cases, certain uses may be more appropriately located in single-use areas where their operational requirements cannot be satisfactorily integrated.
- 4.22. In exploring opportunities for mixed-use development, proposals should be informed by an assessment of economic feasibility and deliverability, alongside an evaluation of the suitability and compatibility of uses. This should ensure that development remains viable while supporting a balanced and functional mix of uses. Uses with specific locational or operational requirements, particularly those generating high levels of traffic or servicing activity, should be directed to locations where their impacts can be appropriately accommodated, such as areas with good access to strategic transport networks.

Policy SD3: Mixed Use Developments

1. Mixed-use developments must be designed to ensure that different uses can coexist effectively and harmoniously. Proposals will be expected to contribute to:
 - a. the delivery of walkable and self-sustaining neighbourhoods;
 - b. the reduction of travel demand and associated congestion;
 - c. increased opportunities for social interaction and community activity;
 - d. the efficient use of land, buildings and energy; and
 - e. the creation of vibrant environments that support both daytime and evening activity.
2. All mixed-use developments must come forward using a masterplan approach and are expected to contribute towards strengthening the neighbourhood through compatible variation of uses with the aim to maximise synergy and minimise the conflict between uses.
3. Proposals should be informed, where appropriate, by proportionate evidence of economic feasibility and market demand to guide the selection and distribution of uses, ensuring a viable and vibrant mix that can be sustained over the long term.
4. Development proposals must demonstrate how any potential nuisance that may create a conflict between the two or more different uses would be managed.
5. Mixed-use development proposals, particularly on larger or strategic sites, must be brought forward through a comprehensive masterplan approach to ensure coordinated, efficient and integrated development.

Policy SD4: Inclusive Design

- 4.23. The NPPF requires policies and decisions to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible to all. For design to be inclusive, individuals must be placed at the heart of the design process to respond to the specific physical, sensory, cognitive and social needs of people protected by current equality legislation. This approach can remove any potential barriers and create environments where all members of society can benefit and participate equally.
- 4.24. Developers should adopt the principles of inclusive design from the earliest stages of the development planning process and meet the latest inclusive design and access standards.
- 4.25. Inclusivity in the built environment will be an important contributor to the Council's 'Fairer Swindon' mission, in which all people in the borough have equal, easy and dignified access to Swindon's buildings, places and spaces.

Therefore, this policy applies to all planning and development schemes, both residential and non-residents, including internal layouts and design.

Policy SD4: Inclusive Design

1. Development proposals must achieve high standards of inclusive design and includes following:
 - a. meet a range of specific individual needs, including those of the young, elderly and those with a disability;
 - b. provide a suitable assortment of house types and tenures including affordable housing that is tenure-blind in design (in accordance with policies HC1 and HC2); and
 - c. be inclusive, accessible and safe incorporating design attributes that reduce the likelihood of crime, antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime itself.
2. New and enhanced public realm and other public spaces must:
 - a. be fully accessible to everyone and can be entered, exited, used and navigated independently, safely and easily.
 - b. have no disabling barriers that create inaccessible areas for those with impaired mobility, or require them to seek separate routes; and
 - c. ensure street and transport infrastructure is designed to be inclusive and enhance safety (aspects to be considered include width of routes/paths/access points, enhanced lighting, safe travel routes, seating provision and tactile paving).

Policy SD5: Tall Buildings

- 4.26. Taller buildings can play an important role in supporting sustainable growth in Swindon by making efficient use of land in the most accessible locations. Within the town centre and other well-connected areas, they can help to accommodate higher densities, support a mix of uses, and reinforce vitality and economic activity. When carefully located and well designed, taller buildings can also contribute to legibility and identity by acting as landmarks, while reducing pressure for outward expansion.
- 4.27. Definition of taller buildings vary according to the context of local area and overall borough's urban fabric.
- 4.28. Despite of all benefits, it can provide to support improvement of existing urban fabric and help the regeneration of neighbourhood, the taller buildings should be allocated where the infrastructure is available or can be delivered. Because of multiple uses and increased density resulted by such developments, the area should be well connected through all modes of transport. Community Facilities and Infrastructure such as shops, pubs, community centres, schools, healthcare facilities

- 4.29. A lot of Swindon's residential development is relatively low-rise, particularly in the outer parts of Swindon, reflecting their more sensitive natural environments. That said, Swindon does have a need not only for a substantial number of new homes, but also to rejuvenate an underutilised Town Centre.
- 4.30. The handful of examples of buildings significantly taller than prevailing heights in Swindon are already located in the Town Centre (e.g., the DMJ), but buildings of 6-8 storeys are not uncommon. Based on an assessment of the urban townscape, Tall Buildings in Swindon Borough are considered to be over six storeys in height. Proposals for such buildings are proposed to be directed to the Centre where they would be most in character with their surroundings, and where increased density is brought forward in a sustainable, well-connected location. Swindon Town Centre has the widest range of facilities, public transport options and it functions as the epicentre of Swindon's economic and cultural activities.

Policy SD5: Tall Buildings

1. All development above 6 storeys will be considered as tall buildings. The proposal within Central Swindon area will be considered most suitable where it can:
 - a. where there is a high-level of accessibility to a variety of transport modes, including existing or Planned infrastructure and facilities are available;
 - b. make a positive contribution to the visual experience of the local townscape and Swindon's skyline, particularly when located within or adjacent to key view locations, by considering design framework mentioned under this policy;
 - c. positively contribute to the attractiveness of the area and incorporate clear and intuitive wayfinding to aid navigation. (e.g., through distinctive architecture);
 - d. be justified by townscape and visual impact assessments (which should include the use of 3D modelling);
 - e. make a visually seamless connection with the ground plane and integrate with the street scene, public realm and urban block structure with celebrated entrances that are proportionate, attractive and welcoming;
 - f. be well-designed in a way that is also sensitive to the character and heritage of the area, ensuring that any potentially unacceptable amenity impacts are mitigated through design;
 - g. demonstrate how they respond to and, where possible, enhance identified strategic view corridors and townscape opportunities as set out in the Building Height Strategy;

- h. create comfortable and attractive public realm surroundings, protect important views, avoid dominant overshadowing of public spaces, and negative impact of other harmful micro-climate effects;
 - i. provide access to outdoor space as part of the development in the form of balconies, pocket parks and other public space provision;
 - j. incorporate mitigation measures such as anti-climb methods, fences, barriers and rails to help prevent falls; and
 - k. meet the regulatory requirements for higher risk buildings, including any regulatory fire safety requirements, to ensure building safety.
2. The development proposals will be expected to consider design framework mentioned below to deliver high quality, well-designed and environmentally responsible spaces.
 3. Architectural Quality: The development should be coherent from all directions taking account of a building scale, form, massing, proportion, silhouette, facade material and detailed surface design.
 4. Functional Design: Consideration to facade treatment and finished, external lighting, placement of plant, and servicing and use of advertising screens.
 5. Sustainable Design and Construction: Consideration may include different massing options, to avoid negative impact of harmful micro-climate effects such as wind tunnel, canyon effect, glare, etc.

Policy SD6: Residential Extensions and Alterations

- 4.31. Residential extensions and alterations are among the most common types of development across the borough. They play an important role in allowing households to adapt their homes to changing needs, reduce the need for complete redevelopment and support the efficient use of existing buildings and materials.
- 4.32. While planning permission is not always required for this type of development, the purpose of this policy is to ensure that residential extensions and alterations are designed to a high standard, respect the size, scale and architectural character of the original dwelling and contribute positively to the appearance of the wider street scene. The council is committed to ensuring that residential extensions deliver high-quality design in line with Policy SD3: High-Quality Design.

Policy SD6: Residential Extensions and Alterations

1. Proposals for extensions and alterations to residential properties and outbuildings within their curtilage, will be permitted where they comply with the following criteria:

- a. the size, scale, massing and design of the extension or outbuilding is clearly subservient to the original dwelling and appropriate to the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- b. the proposal is not overbearing and does not result in harm to the amenity of nearby residents by virtue of loss of outlook, daylight, sunlight or privacy;
- c. the design achieves a high-quality outcome and is sensitive to the local character, in accordance with Policy SD1: High-Quality Design;
- d. the proposal does not harm the significance and/ or setting of heritage assets;
- e. materials, detailing and roof forms are appropriate to the local architectural context and complement the character of the original dwelling;
- f. there is no adverse impact on trees, particularly those of recognised value, in accordance with Policy CSE9;
- g. biodiversity is conserved and enhanced, in accordance with Policy CSE11; and
- h. development proposals should have regard to the Swindon Borough Council Parking Standards, unless specific evidence is provided to justify an alternative approach.

Policy SD7: Historic Environment

- 4.33. Policy SD7 supports the continued conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of Swindon's rich heritage. It establishes how designated and non-designated heritage assets should be considered in decision-making in accordance with national policy and guidance.
- 4.34. The historic environment is an irreplaceable resource which contributes to Swindon's unique identity and distinct sense of place. Swindon has a wide range of heritage assets. As of May 2026, the Borough contains over 1,000 listed buildings, 27 Conservation Areas, and 3 Registered Parks and Gardens. Swindon also has a rich archaeological heritage with 53 Scheduled Monuments and over 3000 records of archaeological remains on the Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 4.35. In addition to these assets recognised as nationally important, the Borough possesses a number of non-designated heritage assets. These include both built heritage and archaeological remains which are identified as of 'local significance'. The Council encourages non-designated heritage assets to be identified through made neighbourhood plans, Conservation Area Appraisals, the planning application process and the plan-making process.
- 4.36. Policy SD7 further looks to establish a positive strategy for heritage through encouraging the reuse of vacant, under-used, or 'at risk' with a use consistent with their conservation. Historic England's 2025 Heritage At Risk Register

identified 10 heritage assets within the Borough as 'at risk'. One such asset is the Mechanics Institute, a landmark building of the Railway Village, which has stood empty since 1986. The Council will support schemes that will revitalise these assets and provide them with a long-term future.

- 4.37. A significant piece of Swindon's heritage lies in the former Great Western Railway works and railway village, an exceptionally intact example of a Victorian planned railway development. The historic railway area formed the basis of Swindon's Heritage Action Zone (HAZ). Begun in 2019 and supported by Historic England, the HAZ sought to support economic growth through revitalising Swindon's historic railway area. The HAZ enabled the refurbishment of some landmark buildings, notably the Carriage Works and the Health Hydro. The Council is committed to building upon the legacy of the HAZ and making the historic railway area a key element of Swindon town centre's regeneration.
- 4.38. Policy SD7 also considers how the historic environment can play a part in enabling greater energy efficiency and delivering renewable energy to respond to climate change.

Policy SD7: Historic Environment

1. All new development must conserve and where possible enhance the Borough's heritage assets. These include Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Non-designated Heritage Assets (including Significant Unscheduled Archaeological Features and archaeological remains).
2. Development proposals that would affect the significance of heritage assets and their setting should be accompanied and informed by a heritage statement. Where technical expertise and knowledge is required, applicants should engage appropriately qualified heritage specialists. Heritage statements should:
 - a. demonstrate compliance with:
 - i. national policy;
 - ii. the advice and guidance set out by Historic England; and
 - iii. published Council guidance, such as adopted Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.
 - iv. assess and describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution that their setting makes to that significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' significance; and
 - v. provide clear and convincing justification for the acceptability of proposals that would result in harm to, or loss of, significance of heritage assets, considering any public

benefits that may arise from the proposal, including heritage benefits.

3. Where development proposals would affect heritage assets of archaeological significance, a desk-based assessment, and where necessary, a field evaluation should be carried out. Proposals that would harm or contribute to the loss of such assets will not be supported unless appropriate mitigation measures are secured. Appropriate mitigation may include the preservation, excavation, monitoring, and recording of archaeological remains. Where appropriate, provisions should be made for the on-site interpretation at the asset itself.
4. Non-designated heritage assets identified through made Neighbourhood Development Plans, Conservation Area Appraisals, through the planning application process and the plan-making process will be recognised as heritage assets in accordance with national guidance and any local criteria. Where proposals would directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, applications will be determined having regard of the scale of any harm or loss to the significance of a non-designated heritage asset.
5. Proposals that help to secure the long-term future of vacant, under-used, or otherwise 'at risk' heritage assets with a use appropriate to their conservation will be supported.
6. Proposals that build upon the legacy of the Swindon Heritage Action Zone in the historic railway area and within its vicinity will be supported where schemes adhere to 2. a. i - iii.
7. Alterations to historic buildings to improve energy efficiency and the delivery of renewable energy in line with Policy CSE2 and Policy CSE5 will be supported where:
 - a. interventions in the historic fabric follow best practice and advice set out by Historic England. The use of traditional and/or reversible techniques should be considered first and foremost;
 - b. interventions are proportionate and effective and avoid the risk of maladaptation; and
 - c. harm to the significance and setting of built heritage assets is minimised or avoided.

Policy SD8: Heritage Transport

- 4.39. A significant element of Swindon's heritage is its transport heritage. This includes the Wiltshire and Berkshire (Wilts and Berks) Canal and the Swindon and Cricklade Railway, both of which contribute to Swindon's unique sense of place and need safeguarding to preserve them for future generations.

Wilts and Berks Canal

- 4.40. Within the Borough there are the remains of two canals: the Wilts & Berks Canal which connected the Kennet and Avon Canal at Semington to the River

Thames at Abingdon, and the North Wilts Canal which connected the Wilts & Berks Canal at Swindon to the Thames and Severn Canal at Latton, near Cricklade. This route subsequently became part of the Wilts & Berks Canal. Although much of the canal line and associated artefacts remain, particularly in the rural parts of the Borough, within the urban area of Swindon, parts of the original route have been developed.

- 4.41. Restored sections of the canal have been delivered successfully within the Wichelstowe development. The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust seek to eventually link Swindon to Royal Wootton Bassett with a navigable route and to extend the restored canal in Swindon. Policy SD9 therefore seeks to safeguard the Wilts and Berks canal route within the Borough, as shown indicatively on the Policies Map.

Swindon and Cricklade Railway

- 4.42. The Swindon and Cricklade Railway currently operate a heritage railway from Blunsdon Station north to Hayes Knoll in Wiltshire and south to Swindon Mouldon Hill Station, a station that has recently opened and is located in Mouldon Hill Country Park. The Swindon and Cricklade Railway have a long-term ambition to extend the line all the way to Cricklade. Heritage railways provide a valuable historic resource and help to generate tourism in the local area. It is therefore important for the Local Plan to support the use of the existing historic railway line and proposals for new routes where feasible.

Policy SD8: Heritage Transport

Wilts and Berks Canal

1. Existing and aspirational canal alignments, as shown indicatively on the Policies Map, shall be safeguarded to maintain the possibility of the long-term re-establishment of the Wilts & Berks Canal and North Wilts Canal as navigable waterways. This will be achieved by ensuring:
 - a. that the integrity of those existing stretches of canal (and its remaining associated structures) is not harmed by development proposals except where works are essential to enable the restoration of the canal for navigation; and
 - b. that stretches proposed for restoration, including existing and new stretches, are protected from development (including by infrastructure), unless an effective alternative alignment is proposed.
2. Existing stretches of the old line of the canal and its infrastructure that are not required for future navigation shall be safeguarded as heritage. Proposals that are designed to develop the canal's recreational and nature conservation potential will be supported; in particular, the use of the old line for walking, cycling and interpretation.

Swindon and Cricklade Railway

3. Proposals for development should not adversely impact Swindon and Cricklade Railway's existing line and its ability to operate as a heritage railway.

Proposals for new routes

4. Proposals for new or restored stretches of canal and for routes of the heritage railway will be permitted where all following criteria are met. The proposal must:
 - a. ensure land necessary to the proper function of the canal / railway route and-associated development, including for maintenance requirements, is secured for these purposes. Associated development for the canal may include footpaths, bridges, locks, ponds, basins; and
 - b. ensure that its environmental impacts have been fully assessed and where appropriate any mitigation forms part of the scheme, so there is no unacceptable risk or harm to:
 - c. ecology, flood risk, water resources and water quality; and
 - d. landscape character and significance of heritage assets (including archaeology).

5. HOMES FOR THE COMMUNITY



5. HOMES FOR THE COMMUNITY

Introduction

- 5.1. Housing is fundamental for Swindon's continued growth. With an increasing population, the Borough must deliver sufficient new homes to meet the needs of both existing and future residents.
- 5.2. An essential element of housing delivery is ensuring an appropriate balance of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet identified local needs. This chapter sets out how we plan to provide affordable housing, accessible and specialist accommodation, housing for older people and provision to meet the needs of the Borough's Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities.
- 5.3. This chapter identifies the Borough's housing requirement, informed by an up-to-date Local Housing Needs Assessment, ensuring sufficient land is brought forward. The policies in this chapter ensure that new homes are high-quality creating inclusive and sustainable places to live.

Policy HC1: Meeting Local Housing Needs

- 5.4. Local Plans must make sufficient provision for housing over the plan period. This should be informed by an assessment of local housing need undertaken using the Government's standard method. The Local Housing Need Assessment (2026) identifies that Swindon's local housing need is 1,203 homes per year.
- 5.5. Policy HC1: Meeting Local Needs establishes the Borough's housing requirement. This is the minimum number of homes that the Plan seeks to provide for over the plan period. The housing requirement has been informed by the Local Housing Need Assessment and the wider plan evidence base, including the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), which assesses the availability and suitability of land for development.
- 5.6. The housing requirement will be delivered through the Spatial Strategy (Policy SS1) and the Sustainable Development Area policies outlined in Chapter 3. Together, these policies provide sufficient capacity to meet the Borough's housing requirement over the plan period. Further detail on the expected delivery of housing is set out in the Housing Delivery Topic Paper and accompanying housing trajectory.
- 5.7. The Council will continue to monitor housing completions and future housing supply throughout the plan period.

Policy HC1: Meeting Local Housing Needs

1. The housing requirement for the plan area is to provide for at least 1,203 dwellings per annum, or 24,060 dwellings across the 20-year plan period.

Policy HC2: Housing Tenures and Sizes

- 5.8. Delivering mixed tenure and sizes of housing allows to improve social cohesion and inclusion within the community. It provides opportunity to comprise different economic groups and can resolve social problems associated with single tenure.
- 5.9. It also increases social and economic mobility through access to better resources, job networks and essential community infrastructure and facility with the focus to create sustainable community.
- 5.10. Swindon Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) indicates change in the household types that will occur between 2026 to 2043. It reflects that the largest growth will be in single person household accounting around 35% of overall household followed by couple households with no children, accounting around 23% of overall household.
- 5.11. The LHNA also reflects that 57.4% of new housing in Swindon should be owner-occupied, 11.6% private rented, 3.6% First Homes, 7.3% should be Shared Ownership, 8.1% Affordable Rent and 12.0% Social Rent.
- 5.12. Tenures can be mixed to varying degrees, described as either integrated, segmented or segregated.
- 5.13. Integrated tenure is where properties of different tenure types are side-by-side, and the tenure type is not visually distinguishable from the style of building.
- 5.14. Segmented tenure is a less closely mixed classification, where different types are split, perhaps into separate blocks and/or hold different visual characteristics.
- 5.15. Segregated tenure is where different tenures are kept geographically apart, and such developments can also be referred to as mono tenure.

Policy HC2: Housing Tenures and Sizes

1. All residential developments will only be permitted if it encourages a balanced mixed-communities with tenures, types, and house sizes that reflect local housing need in accordance with the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment and in consultation with the Council's Housing department based on the most up to date evidence of need at the time of application.

2. Major residential developments within Swindon urban area should:
 - a. deliver a balanced approach to housing delivery and include 1- and 2-bedroom properties within schemes where this is practical; and
 - b. facilitate choice in the marketplace increasing the range of housing types.
3. Accommodation requirement as detailed in the latest Local Housing Need Assessment will be used to help inform which house sizes and mix should be delivered in key locations in urban and rural areas to meet the objectively assessed needs of Swindon as detailed in the latest evidence.
4. In relation to affordable housing, the council will require developers to provide details of how this evidence has been used to justify the proposed mix. The developer should also take into account the needs of households on Council's housing register and discuss affordable housing requirements with Council's Housing Department at pre-application stage of the planning process.

Policy HC3: Affordable Housing

- 5.16. Affordable housing refers to homes for sale or rent that are available to those whose housing needs are not met by the open market. Affordable housing plays a vital role in creating mixed and balanced communities and can help address affordability challenges, support economic growth and enable people to remain within their local communities. A lack of affordable housing can have a detrimental impact on the economy, the environment, and the social wellbeing of communities, particularly as cost-of-living pressures continue to rise.
- 5.17. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (2026) prepared to support this Plan identifies a continuing need for affordable housing across the Borough. Policy HC2: Affordable Housing therefore requires affordable housing to be delivered as part of major residential developments to help meet the needs of current and future residents.
- 5.18. Affordable housing is defined in Annex 2: Glossary to the NPPF (2024). It covers a variety of types and tenures including:

Table 2: Types of Affordable Housing

Social Rent	Affordable Rent	Intermediate Products
Social Rent housing is owned by local authorities or other registered providers. This is the most affordable form, with the rent set in	Affordable rent housing is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Affordable Rent or is at least 20% below market rents. The	Intermediate products cover a variety of housing types which help people purchase affordable housing, including:

accordable with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent.	landlord will be a registered provider, except in a Build to Rent scheme.	• Shared ownership • Discount market sales housing • First Homes
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- 5.19. The mix of affordable housing secured through new development should respond to the Council's most up-to-date evidence of housing need and reflect local circumstances. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (2026) indicates that 30% of major development should constitute affordable housing. Of this 30%, approximately 40% should be delivered as Social Rent, 25% as Affordable Rent, and 35% as an intermediate product.
- 5.20. The Council recognises that some groups may experience particular difficulties in accessing suitable housing, including members of the Armed Forces community, veterans and their families, and key workers who provide essential public services. Development proposals should have regard to the needs of these groups alongside other households with identified housing needs. The Council will work with Registered Providers, public sector organisations, and other partners to support the delivery of appropriate housing opportunities are available where a need is identified.
- 5.21. Where First Homes are delivered, priority will be given to purchasers with a local connection to Swindon Borough. A local connection will normally be demonstrated where the purchaser is ordinarily a resident of Swindon Borough and has been for a continuous period of at least 6 months prior to exchange of contracts, has been in permanent employment within Swindon Borough for a continuous period of at least 12 months prior to exchange of contracts, or has a close family association within Swindon Borough through a parent or child who is ordinarily a resident within the Borough.
- 5.22. Affordable housing should not be viewed as a standalone component of development, but as an integral part of creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. The Council will work proactively with landowners, developers, Registered Providers and other partners to maximise the delivery of affordable housing across the Borough.

Policy HC3: Affordable Housing

1. Major residential development must provide at least 30% affordable housing, of which at least 40% shall be provided as Social Rent housing.
2. The mix of affordable housing by size, type and tenure should reflect the Council's most up-to-date evidence of housing need, including the Local

Housing Needs Assessment or, where relevant, evidence supporting made Neighbourhood Development Plans.

3. Affordable housing should be delivered on-site and integrated throughout the development in a manner that is tenure blind and indistinguishable from market housing in appearance and quality.
4. Provision of affordable housing off-site, either in part or in whole, will only be supported in exceptional circumstances where robust evidence demonstrates that:
 - a. on-site provision is not feasible due to the nature of the development or site-specific circumstances; and
 - b. off-site provision would better meet identified housing needs.
5. Where off-site contributions are agreed, this should enable affordable housing to be provided elsewhere in the Borough. The contribution will be based on the difference between the open market value of a dwelling and the price a Registered Provider would pay if affordable housing were provided on-site.
6. Affordable housing will be secured through a planning obligation and must remain affordable in perpetuity, or for the period required by national policy.
7. Where First Homes are provided, they will be delivered in accordance with national policy and the Council's local connection criteria.
8. This policy applies to any self-contained residential accommodation provided within a residential institution (Use Class C2).

Policy HC4: Accessible Housing

- 5.23. Accessible and adaptable housing supports independent living, improves quality of life and can help reduce future health and social care costs. The PPG (2019) states that local planning authorities can require new developments to meet additional optional technical standards regarding accessibility where it is evidenced the need exists and is viable. These standards would operate alongside the mandatory requirements of Building Regulations M4(1) (Category 1: Visitable dwellings), M4(2) (Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings) and M4(3) (Wheelchair user dwellings), as further defined in the glossary.
- 5.24. Within Swindon, the LHNA identifies 8,469 accessible and adaptable homes are required in 2043, of which 6,236 homes should fall within general housing stock and 2,233 within supported accommodation. The report also specifies a requirement for 1,907 wheelchair use dwellings in 2043 meeting the M4(3) Category 3 standard, with 1,163 in the general housing stock and 744 in supported accommodation.
- 5.25. This policy sets out requirements for M4(3) (Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings). These homes should be delivered to M4(3)(2)(a) wheelchair acceptable standards.

Policy HC4: Accessible Housing

1. New homes should be designed to be adaptable to the changing needs of households during their lifetime, including ageing, and meet the needs of groups with specific housing requirements.
2. All new homes should meet, as a minimum, Requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' of the Building Regulations.
3. Proposals for major development must demonstrate that a minimum 10% of all dwellings meet Requirement M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings' of the Building Regulations.

Policy HC5: Specialist Housing including Housing for Older People

- 5.26. The NPPF (2024) promotes the importance of supplying homes where they are needed that meets the needs of groups with specific accommodation requirements. This includes homes for older and vulnerable people, people with disabilities and looked after children.
- 5.27. Specialist housing can be delivered through a range of models intended to support people with differing levels of need. Older people with no or minor care needs may benefit from housing with support, such as sheltered and retirement housing. Extra care accommodation, where services can be provided on site, should be provided for those with additional care needs. All specialist accommodations are expected to be designed appropriately for residents and to meet the accessibility requirements of M4(2), in accordance with Policy HC3. The Council will also encourage units to be delivered to M4(3) standards where appropriate.
- 5.28. The LHNA (2026) identifies a rapid ageing population within the borough, with the number of residents aged 75 and over projected to increase from 20,078 to 32,332 by 2043. To meet this forecasted demand, Swindon requires an additional 2,114 specialist housing units for older people by 2043, comprising of 1,584 sheltered and retirement units and 530 extra care and supported living units. This constitutes 10.3% of the total projected household growth. In addition, the report outlines the need for an additional 296 registered care spaces over the plan period.

Policy HC5: Specialist Housing including housing for older people

1. Proposals for specialist housing, such as housing for older people, looked after children, and other groups requiring specifically designed accommodation, will be supported where:
 - a. they meet an identified local need as outlined in the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment or housing assessment supporting a made Neighbourhood Plan;

- b. they are in a sustainable location supported by Policy SS1: Swindon's Spatial Approach to Growth;
- c. the proposal demonstrates that the development is designed to provide the most appropriate type of support for the target resident; and
- d. the proposal demonstrates how the development would contribute positively to the surrounding area, to encourage interaction and connection between new residents and local communities, where appropriate pre-application discussions with Swindon Borough Council's Adult Social Care Team and/or the Integrated Care Board are encouraged.

Housing for Older People

2. Proposals for specialist housing for older people must:
 - a. ensure that all dwellings meet, as a minimum, Requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' of the Building Regulations, as required by Policy HC3: Accessible Housing;
 - b. ensure that at least 35% of dwellings meet Requirement M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings' of the Building Regulations; and
 - c. ensure there is safe, secure and appropriate provision for the storage of mobility scooters and wheelchairs.
3. Proposals for major development of market-led C2 specialist housing for older people should provide a minimum of 30% affordable housing on-site.

Policy HC6: Houses in Multiple Occupation and Sub-Division

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

- 5.29. A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a property inhabited by three or more unrelated individuals who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. HMOs represent an affordable option for many people who cannot afford to rent individually or buy a property and are an important element of the Borough's overall housing stock.
- 5.30. However, high concentrations of HMOs can adversely impact the amenities of neighbouring properties, leading to excessive parking demands, traffic, noise, and issues with bin storage. Cumulatively, conversions of dwellings into HMOs can harm the character of an area. The Council has found that there are particularly high concentrations of HMOs in the wards of Central Swindon South and Central Swindon North and has therefore decided to take a stricter approach to HMOs. This policy seeks to prevent there being unacceptable concentrations of HMOs on any one street.
- 5.31. The policy further looks to locate HMOs particularly in areas of high sustainable transport accessibility. These areas include the Sustainable Development Areas and areas along Key Transit Corridors as displayed on the Policies Map.

Sub-division of dwellings

- 5.32. Policy HC6 sets out the criteria that proposals for the sub-division of existing dwellings must meet to be permitted.
- 5.33. Dividing existing homes or plots into two or more dwellings can help deliver smaller, more affordable housing while making more effective use of land. Nevertheless, as with HMOs, the sub-division of houses can negatively impact the amenity and character of the surrounding area.
- 5.34. Proposals for HMOs and sub-divisions must also ensure that the health and wellbeing of existing and future occupants is prioritised. HMOs and sub-divided dwellings and plots should adhere to the design and space standards in Policy SD1, and the parking requirements set out in Policy ST8.

Policy HC6: Houses in Multiple Occupation and Sub-Division

1. Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), for new purpose-built HMOs, and for the subdivision of existing dwellings will only be supported where they:
 - a. do not result in the loss of character or amenity to the area as a consequence of increased traffic, noise or general disturbance;
 - b. do not contribute to excessive parking demands by adhering to the Council's Parking Standards for New Development (2021), or any subsequent standards;
 - c. provide for a suitable level of amenity for future occupants by complying with the relevant standards and design requirements set out in Policy SD1; and
 - d. make appropriate provision for the storage of bins and cycles.
2. Proposals for HMOs must:
 - a. not cause the proportion of registered HMOs to exceed 20% of homes in 100 metres of street frontage measured in either direction from the property; and
 - b. be located in areas of high sustainable transport accessibility.
3. Proposals for the sub-division of dwellings will only be supported where each then functions as a self-contained unit.

Policy HC7: Rural Exceptions Sites and Rural Workers Dwellings

- 5.35. Residential development in the open countryside is generally restricted in order to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, promote sustainable patterns of development, and focus growth within existing settlements. However, in limited circumstances there may be a need to

support development that meets identified local needs which cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

- 5.36. Rural exception sites provide an important mechanism for delivering affordable housing to meet the needs of local communities. They enable small-scale affordable housing schemes to come forward on land that would not normally be released for housing development, helping to support the long-term sustainability of rural settlements and allowing people with a local connection to remain within their community.
- 5.37. The Council recognises that some rural businesses, particularly in agriculture and forestry, require workers to live at or near their place of work in order to meet essential operational needs. In such circumstances, a rural workers' dwelling may be justified where there is a clear functional need, and the enterprise can demonstrate long-term viability.
- 5.38. National policy also supports community-led exception sites. These can play an important role in meeting local housing needs through community-led organisations such as Community Land Trusts and housing co-operatives. Proposals for community-led exception sites will be considered positively where they accord with national policy and the development plan as a whole.

Policy HC7: Rural Exceptions Sites and Rural Workers Dwellings

1. Residential development in the countryside will only be supported where it provides affordable housing on a rural exception site or an essential rural workers' dwelling, and:
 - a. accords with the relevant design, housing and construction standards of this Plan; and
 - b. is sensitive to the landscape character and setting of the area.

Rural Exception Sites

2. Proposals for rural exception sites providing affordable housing will be supported where:
 - a. the proposal is supported by an up-to-date housing needs assessment that demonstrates an identified local need for the proposed development;
 - b. the scale of the proposal is proportionate to the settlement it serves; and
 - c. arrangements are in place to ensure that the affordable housing will be owned or managed by an appropriate body and remain affordable in perpetuity.

3. Where housing is delivered as intermediate tenure (shared ownership or First Homes) this must be secured through a Section 106 agreement or appropriately worded condition.
4. Occupiers of rural exception sites must demonstrate a local connection, as defined in the lettings plan and secured through a legal agreement. For single dwelling schemes a strong residency or employment connection to the local area must be evidenced.
5. In exceptional circumstances, a small element of market housing may be supported where it is demonstrated through a viability assessment that it is necessary to enable the delivery of the affordable housing scheme. Any market housing must be the minimum necessary to secure delivery of the scheme.

Rural Workers' Dwellings

6. Proposals for permanent dwellings in the countryside to support full-time workers in farming, including those taking control of a farm business, forestry or other business with an essential rural location will be permitted where:
 - a. an independent appraisal demonstrates that there is a clear and essential functional need for the proposed dwelling which cannot be met by existing suitable accommodation available in the area, or through alternative staffing arrangements;
 - b. robust evidence demonstrates that the enterprise is economically viable and capable of supporting the proposed dwelling;
 - c. the size and scale of the proposed dwelling is proportionate to the functional needs of the rural enterprise; and
 - d. the dwelling is provided through the conversion of existing buildings, where possible. Where a new dwelling is justified, it should be located in close proximity to existing buildings associated with the enterprise.
7. Occupancy of a rural workers' dwelling will be restricted through a planning condition or planning obligation to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture, forestry or another rural enterprise with an essential rural location, together with any resident dependants or surviving partner.

Policy HC8: Self and Custom Build Housing

- 5.39. Self- and custom-build houses represent an important element of the Borough's overall housing stock. They can be a more affordable option for homeowners, and they are an important source of delivering a mix of homes for the Borough. The self-build approach generally involves the owner being directly involved in the design and construction of their home, while the custom-build approach allows for the owner to commission others to build their home though they remain involved in the design process.

- 5.40. The NPPF (2024) requires local planning authorities to consider people wishing to commission or build their own homes as part of assessing local housing needs. To identify and provide for those wishing to build their own homes, the Council maintains the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register where local people can register their interest in self- and custom-build serviced plots. As of 30th October 2025, 138 individuals and two groups were on the register. The Local Housing Needs Assessment Update (2026) further identified that there is a demand of 43.7 self-build dwellings per 100,000 residents.
- 5.41. Policy HC8 supports the delivery of serviced plots to meet identified demand for self-build and custom-build housing. A serviced plot is a parcel of land with access to a public highway and connections, or the ability to connect, to essential utility infrastructure including water, electricity and wastewater services. Residential developments of 100 or more dwellings are required to provide serviced plots equivalent to 2% of the total number of dwellings. The provision of serviced plots within larger developments can diversify housing delivery and support smaller builders and individual households. Self- and custom-build housing is generally most suited to developments comprising individual dwellings. Predominantly flatted developments are therefore excluded from this requirement.
- 5.42. While Policy HC8 supports the delivery of self- and custom-build housing, it includes a caveat in the case that some plots may not receive interest from buyers. It is important that land does not go unused and that we ensure that we are making 'effective use of land' in accordance with Policy SD1. The Council has therefore set a benchmark for marketing of serviced plots of 12 months before such plots can be released back into the market.

Policy HC8: Self and Custom Build Housing

1. The Council will support proposals for self-build and custom-build housing in principle provided that they:
 - a. are delivered in accordance with policies in the development plan;
 - b. allow for safe and appropriate access to a highway;
 - c. allow for sufficient opportunities to provide electricity, water and waste water connections, or make adequate alternative arrangements; and
 - d. demonstrate that the primary occupant has had, or will have, meaningful input into the design of the home to the satisfaction of the Council that this meets the requirements under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015).
2. Large-scale major residential developments of 100 dwellings or more are expected to provide no less than 2% of residential units as serviced plots

for self-build and custom-build. This requirement does not apply to predominantly flatted developments.

3. The provision of self-build and custom-housing plots will be secured through Section 106 legal agreement.
4. In large-scale major residential developments, self- and custom-build serviced plots should be:
 - a. generally clustered and not pepper-potted throughout the site;
 - b. located where suitable adopted or adoptable road access can be delivered at an early stage in the development i.e. prior to 25% completion of the development or development phase; and
 - c. provided and serviced at the earliest stage possible.
5. Proposals for major self- and custom-build housing developments (10+ units) will be expected to:
 - a. deliver affordable self-build and custom-build plots in accordance with Policy HC3; and
 - b. deliver a suitable mix of plot sizes in accordance with Policy HC2.
6. Neighbourhood Development Plans should consider the local need for this type of development and where appropriate identify specific sites to allocate for self-build and custom-build housing.
7. Where permission is granted for self- and custom-build serviced plot(s), the plot(s) for sale must be marketed as serviced plot(s) for a minimum of 12 months (including to those on the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register). Following this period, and subject to agreement by the Council that adequate marketing has been undertaken and there is demonstrably insufficient demand, the plots may be developed for market housing.

Policy HC9: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's Accommodation

- 5.43. NPPF emphasise that development plans should address the housing needs of different groups under HO1 which includes suitable sites for gypsy and travellers. It also demonstrates that plans should consider suitable sites for mixed residential and business uses, having regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants and neighbouring residents. Sites identified for travelling showpeople should have regard to their need for mixed-use yards with both residential accommodation and space for storage of equipment.
- 5.44. The Borough currently has 44 authorised gypsy and traveller pitches and 4 plots for travelling showpeople.

- 5.45. The Swindon Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (2024) establishes a need for 35 new pitches (in line with the updated Planning Policy for Traveller Sites definition), and 19 travelling showpeople plots over the Plan period and as shown in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3: Gypsy and Traveller Permanent Accommodation

Period	Pitch Needs
2024-29	17
2029-34	6
2034-39	6
2039-43	6
Total	35

Table 4: Travelling Showpeople Permanent Accommodation Needs

Period	Plot Needs
2024-29	16
2029-34	1
2034-39	1
2039-43	1
Total	19

- 5.46. The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper sets out the site selection criteria based on sites promoted and known to the Council. *(Paper to be published at Reg 19)*
- 5.47. The council's Transit site at Chiseldon Firs has recently received grant funding for improve facilities. It is anticipated this will remain a transit site for the immediate future with the option as a permanent site in the later part of the plan period if the need still arises so is included in the policies below.

Policy HC9: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's Accommodation

1. Swindon's existing provision of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites, listed below, will be protected, while demand exists.

Table HC9.1

Site	Ownership	Authorised pitches
Existing Gypsy and Traveller Sites		

Hay Lane Caravan Site	SBC	37
Land at High View	SBC	2
Front Lane	Private	3
Double Oak Farm	Private	2
Existing Travelling Showpeople Plots		
Furndale Road	Private	4

2. Swindon Borough Council has a need for 35 new permanent pitches for Gypsy and Travellers and 19 new plots for Travelling Showpeople across the Plan period. To contribute towards meeting these needs, the following sites are allocated:

Policy HC9.2: Gypsy and Travellers Pitches Allocation

Site	Ownership	Potential pitches
Little Rose Lane	Private	Capacity to be confirmed before Regulation 19
Land at Quebec Road	Private	Capacity to be confirmed before Regulation 19
Chiseldon Firs Transit Site	SBC	12 pitches, potentially available for permanent use in the late plan period

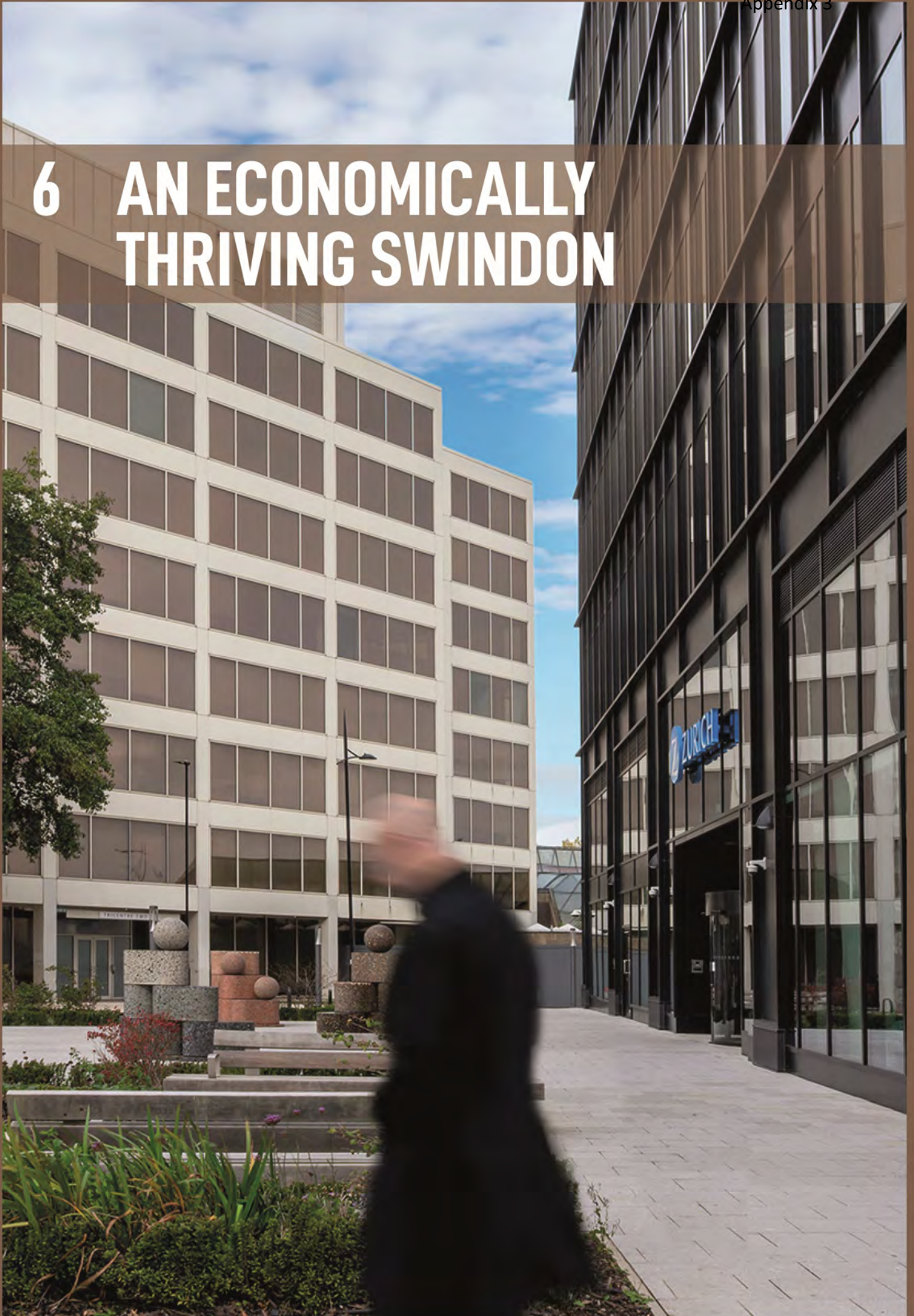
Policy HC9.3: Travelling Showpeople Allocation

Site	Ownership	Potential Plots
Land at Rivermead	SBC	Capacity to be confirmed before Regulation 19
Land at Chapel Farm	SBC	Capacity to be confirmed before Regulation 19

3. If unmet need can be demonstrated, the Council is supportive of short-term and long-term sites coming forward where:
 - a. a safe convenient access to the highway network for cars, pedestrian and vehicles and turning space within the site is available or provided;
 - b. There is an overall good quality of design which respects the setting of the site and local landscape character;
 - c. a good quality of amenity blocks, where included, to provide a decent standard for washing and cooking facilities;
 - d. any biodiversity assets and designated and undesignated heritage assets are conserved and where appropriate enhanced. Any unacceptable adverse impact on landscape or local nature conservation designation, ecology, biodiversity or heritage assets should be satisfactorily mitigated;
 - e. The site is accessible to community facilities and infrastructure including local shops, healthcare, education and employment through sustainable modes of transport;
 - f. suitable arrangement for clean water supply, foul sewerage disposal and surface water drainage, and where opportunities for Sustainable Drainage Systems are maximised;
 - g. It is not located in an area of high flood risk, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans; and
 - h. It complies with other relevant policies, including those policies that seek to protect designated areas, such as areas of non-coalescence.
4. Any proposals for a new site, or intensification or extension of an existing site, should:

- a. support the health and wellbeing of the occupiers of the site by providing appropriate facilities, layout and design quality and is supported by a Health Impact Assessment; and
 - b. not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of other site occupants and the occupiers of neighbouring sites.
5. Arrangements must be put in place at the planning application stage to ensure the proper management of the site.
6. Allocated Gypsy and Traveller sites, including approved extensions to existing lawful sites, will be safeguarded from redevelopment or changes of use that would result in the loss of accommodation.
7. Development proposals that would lead to the net loss of authorised permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites, or a reduction in the number of authorised pitches or plots, will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that:
 - a. there is no longer an identified need for the site, pitches or plots; or
 - b. equivalent or improved replacement provision has been secured in an alternative location within the city to meet identified needs.
8. Any replacement provision must be available and operational prior to the loss of the existing site and must be suitable in terms of location, accessibility, capacity, and access to services and infrastructure.

6 AN ECONOMICALLY THRIVING SWINDON



6. AN ECONOMICALLY THRIVING SWINDON

Introduction

- 6.1. Throughout its history, Swindon has been a place defined by its ability to reinvent itself. From its origins as a modest market town, the Industrial Revolution propelled it into prominence as a major railway hub. In the present day, Swindon has transformed once again—this time into a post-industrial centre of knowledge-based industries, advanced manufacturing, logistics, defence, and professional services. This modern economic landscape is underpinned by the strength of financial and insurance services, which alone account for 26% of the Borough's total output¹. As a result, Swindon now ranks as the 12th most productive local authority in England, with productivity rising 12% between 2019 and 2022.
- 6.2. Whilst the creation of new homes and infrastructure has gone hand in hand with economic growth and new jobs, the outward expansion of the urban area—and the dispersal of retail, employment and services—has also challenged the role and function of Swindon Town Centre, established a number of lower-density employment sites and has often been reliant on more car-dependent travel.
- 6.3. It is within a far broader context that economic growth must be pursued. Indeed, the Economic Growth Plan is clear that economic growth pursued alone is not enough; it must actively contribute to building a Fairer, Better and Greener Swindon, aligning economic ambition with the town's wider corporate missions. This means ensuring prosperity is shared more widely, and life chances improve, revitalising the Town Centre and wider Central Area, and leading the shift to sustainable, low-carbon innovation that creates high-value jobs while tackling climate change.
- 6.4. The policies in this chapter support the delivery of the Economic Growth Plan through providing a strategy to meet our local employment needs for office and industrial floorspace, as well as establishing the role and hierarchy of the Borough's retail centres.

Policy E1: Economic Strategy and Meeting Employment Needs

- 6.5. The Employment Needs and Land Supply Study (ENLSS) (2025) established an economic baseline for the Borough and reviewed the current commercial market before considering different economic growth scenarios which would create the need for additional floorspace for office and industrial uses. The ENLSS identified that it would be sensible to plan for a net increase of 72,000 sqm of office and 640,000 sqm of industrial floorspace over the 20-year period 2023 to 2043 (before any reprovision of floorspace due to be lost to other uses during the plan period has been factored in).

¹ Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment, Mark 2025

- 6.6. Swindon's economic strategy therefore aims to deliver sustainable growth whilst ensuring the borough can meet its identified employment needs. Important is also that the Local Plan supports the development of priority sectors including knowledge-based industries, creative and professional services, advanced manufacturing, defence, low-carbon technologies and life sciences recognising their role in helping to grow the local economy and attract inward investment.
- 6.7. A key focus of the strategy is the recentralisation of office development, directing new office floorspace back into Swindon's Town Centre. This approach strengthens the town centre's economic role, supports regeneration initiatives and promotes sustainable travel patterns by locating employment opportunities in the most accessible areas of the borough.

Policy E1: Economic Strategy and Meeting Employment Needs

Inward investment and priority sectors

1. The Council is committed to supporting sustainable economic growth. To achieve this, the Council will:
 - a. encourage and support the growth of a range of priority sectors including knowledge, creative and professional business services, advanced component manufacturing, defence, low-carbon technologies and life sciences;
 - b. work with developers, businesses and education establishments to enhance the local employment and skills offer and create a more robust local skills pipeline; and
 - c. emphasise the level of growth opportunity that exists throughout the Borough to external/inward investors.

Meeting employment needs

2. Provision will be made to meet the Borough's objectively assessed employment needs for a net increase of 72,000 sqm of office floorspace and 640,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace over the plan period, along with further replacement provision to cover floorspace lost since the start of the plan period or programmed for release to non-employment uses as part of the Plan, to support sustainable economic growth and the priority sectors identified in criteria 1 of this policy.
3. This requirement will be met through:
 - a. the redevelopment and/or intensification of sites within Designated Employment Areas.
 - b. new employment land allocations (as shown on the Policies Map) and identified in Table E2.1;
 - c. sites completed since the start of the plan period or within the development pipeline; and

- d. positive planning for office uses through criteria 4-6 of this policy.

Spatial sequential approach to new office development

- 4. Proposals for new office floorspace will be directed towards Swindon Town Centre first, in line with Policies SS1: Spatial Strategy and SDA01: Swindon's Central Area and the sequential approach set out through criteria 5 and 6 of this policy, to reinforce its economic role and support the successful regeneration of the wider Central Area.

Larger-scale office development

- 5. Proposals for the development of new office floorspace exceeding 1,000 sqm gross floorspace will be supported where they:
 - a. do not harm or undermine the regeneration of Swindon Town Centre; and
 - b. demonstrate a sequential approach to site selection in order of preference and priority as follows:
 - i. Swindon Town Centre;
 - ii. Swindon's Central Area;
 - iii. Swindon's Wider Urban Area along key public transport corridors; and
 - iv. peripheral sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of transport modes.

Smaller-scale office development

- 6. Proposals for the development of new office floorspace under 1,000 sqm gross floorspace will be supported in the following locations:
 - a. Swindon's Retail Centres, as described in Policy E5; and
 - b. designated employment areas, where they are ancillary to other uses and functions of the area.

Policy E2: New Employment Sites

- 6.8. The Local Plan identifies a number of new employment sites across Swindon to ensure that sufficient and accessible land is available to meet the borough's employment needs over the plan period. These allocations support the redevelopment and intensification of existing employment areas and form a key part of the economic strategy for delivering the total amount of floorspace required under Policy E1: Meeting Employment Needs.
- 6.9. The new sites have been chosen following a review of existing employment areas across the borough and an assessment of future land and floorspace needs. They provide opportunities for business, industrial and logistics uses and their accessible locations offer good connectivity, encouraging sustainable travel.

Policy E2: New Employment Sites

1. New employment sites in Swindon, as shown on the Policies Map and set out in Table E2.1, will be allocated to meet the needs set out in Policy E1: Meeting Employment Needs.

Table E2.1

Reference	Name	Indicative floorspace	Encouraged Uses
E2.A	Kimmerfields	20,000 sqm	Office
E2.B	Station Quarter	44,000 sqm	Office and R&D
E2.C	Fleet Street	10,000 sqm	Offices
E2.D	NEV South Marston Centre	1,000 sqm	Offices
E2.E	NEV Great Stall West 1	8,000 sqm	Offices
E2.F	Hawksworth Way (Old Clares Factory site)	Capacity to be confirmed before Regulation 19	Industrial and Warehousing or Data Centre
E2.G	NEV Great Stall West 2	Capacity to be confirmed before Regulation 19	Industrial and Warehousing

Policy E3: Designated Employment Areas

- 6.10. Designated Employment Areas are some of the borough's most important locations for business activity and form a significant part of Swindon's long-term supply of employment land for business, industry, distribution and storage uses. Making the best use of these existing areas, through their retention, intensification and modernisation is central to meeting the residual employment need identified in Policy E2, particularly given the limited opportunities for new industrial allocations. Therefore, ensuring these areas continue to function effectively is essential to supporting sustainable economic growth.

- 6.11. This policy applies to all Designated Employment Areas shown on the Policies Map setting out which uses are acceptable, how these areas may evolve in the future and the limited circumstances in which employment land may be released providing reassurance and clarity for landowners and investors.
- 6.12. The Council has reviewed and assessed the performance and future potential of these employment areas through its Employment Needs and Land Supply Study.

Policy E3: Designated Employment Areas

1. Designated Employment Areas (as shown on the Policies Map) will be protected for employment uses and related functions, including auxiliary facilities that are in keeping with the scale and intended function of the area.

Acceptable uses

2. Planning permission will typically be granted for Uses B2, B8, E(g)(ii), E(g)(iii) and Sui Generis uses pertaining to employment.
3. Permission for E(g)(i) Offices will be granted where it meets the criteria of Policy E1: Economic Strategy and Meeting Employment Needs.
4. The intensification, redevelopment and modernisation of premises for employment uses within Designated Employment Areas will particularly be supported where the proposal is accessible by a choice of transport modes.

Specialist safeguarded sites

5. The following Designated Employment Areas are safeguarded for their specific specialist uses:
 - a. Swindon Sewage Treatment Works and Swindon Household Waste Recycling Centre are safeguarded for their strategic utilities' infrastructure.
 - b. the Hawksworth Depot and Swindon Sidings are safeguarded as railway sidings important for freight movement capabilities.
 - c. Wroughton Airfield is safeguarded for warehousing related to the Science Museum.
 - d. Firefly Avenue is safeguarded for its office focus.
 - e. Thermo Fisher on Dorcan Way is safeguarded as a specialist Research and Development facility.

Loss of employment land

6. Where planning permission is required, proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of employment land in Designated Employment Areas to other uses will only be supported where:

- a. the applicant can demonstrate that employment use is no longer viable;
 - b. there is clear evidence that there is no market interest in the site following 12 months of active marketing at reasonable market rates; and
 - c. the development proposal will not adversely impact upon the regeneration of Swindon's Central Area.
7. Where criteria 6 applies, the proposal should demonstrate at least one of the following criteria:
- a. the development proposal will generate the same number, or more permanent jobs than could be expected from the existing, or any potential employment use;
 - b. the site is no longer capable of meeting modern business needs; or
 - c. the change of use is to secure the continued occupation of a heritage asset or landmark building.

Policy E4: Employment, Skills and Training

- 6.13. 10% of employers identified skills shortages in Swindon as the reason behind vacancies. Whilst Swindon does not fair as badly as some places on employment measures, it is essential we maintain a strong workforce to support our growth. New development should play a key role in this through Employment and Skills Plans (LESPs), and seeking, where possible, to employ local workers. The detail of LESP's will be set out through s.106 agreements.

Policy E4: Employment, Skills and Training

1. To support the development of employment, skills and training within the Borough the Council will seek a Local Employment and Skills Plans (LESP) on all major housing developments above 100 units and commercial developments above 1,000 sqm metres as part of development proposals.
2. The LESP should include the construction phase of developments to help tackle new entrant or other recognised skills deficits within the construction and built environment sector and, where relevant, should also provide a commitment to delivering sustainable jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities for the occupancy stage of commercial developments.

Policy E5: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

Supporting our retail centres

- 6.14. Swindon Town Centre is in significant need of regeneration. The Retail and Leisure Study (2024) identified that vacancy rates are significantly above the UK average for all centres, and that vacant floorspace more than doubled in the Town Centre since 2015. A positive policy approach is therefore needed to ensure that a greater mix of uses is encouraged including residential.
- 6.15. The Retail and Leisure Study also recommend the continued use of a 600sqm threshold for the retail sequential test to ensure that new development proposals for main town centre uses are directed into designated town centre boundaries first.

Policy E5: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

1. Planning decisions should sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of a network and hierarchy of centres in the Borough by ensuring that new retail, leisure and office development of an appropriate scale is encouraged in locations and that reflect the role, function, and character of each centre in the retail hierarchy.
2. The hierarchy of centres is identified below and defined on the Policies Map:
 - a. Principal Centre: Swindon Town Centre
 - b. Urban District Centre: Swindon Old Town, West Swindon District Centre, Gorse Hill District Centre, Orbital District Centre and New Eastern Villages District Centre (emerging); Wichelstowe District Centre Primary Rural Centres: Highworth Town Centre, Wroughton Village Centre;
 - c. Local Centres as identified in Table 5.
 - d. Proposals for development outside of these centres must demonstrate that there would be no adverse impact upon the vitality and viability of this hierarchy.

Sequential Tests

3. Proposals for Main Town Centre uses on sites which lie outside of Swindon Town Centre, Urban District Centres and Primary Rural Centres (as defined on the Policies Map) must be accompanied by a sequential test. This requires applications for Main Town Centre uses to be located primarily in town centres and secondarily at edge of centre locations. Only in cases where suitable sites are not available, should out of centre sites be considered. In all circumstances, applicants are required to demonstrate flexibility in terms of the scale and format of their proposed development and in the consideration of alternative sites.
4. Proposals for retail or leisure uses, including extensions, of 600 square metres (gross) or more outside of Swindon town centre, Urban District Centres and Primary Rural Centres will be required to satisfy the retail

impact test. As part of such an assessment, proposals must demonstrate that:

- a. there will be no adverse impact upon the vitality and viability of these existing centres including local consumer choice and trade in these centres and wider area; and a cumulative assessment of the proposal together with committed and recently completed developments, plus developments under construction;
- b. there will be no adverse impact on any committed, planned or proposed public or private investment in Swindon town centre, Urban District Centres and Primary Rural Centres including that in relation to the regeneration of Swindon Town Centre; and
- c. the cumulative impact of the development in combination with committed development proposals where relevant has no material adverse impact on Swindon Town Centre, Urban District Centres and Primary Rural Centres.

The following Local Centres have been identified through a 2023 Council audit:

Table 5: Local Centres List

Manchester Road	Peatmoor Centre	Ferndale Road	Taw Hill
Rodbourne Road	Shaw	Freshbrook	Lawn
Clive Parade	Thames Avenue	St Andrews	Liden
Moredon	Covingham Square	Abbey Meads	Westcott Place/Park Lane
Queen's Drive	Beechcroft Road	Ermin Street	Marlowe Avenue
St John Road	Hannington Close	Eldene Local Centre	Newburgh Place
The Circle Pinehurst	Wingate Parade	Purton Road	Nythe Road
Windbrook Meadow	Sherborne Place	Redhouse	Grange Drive

Wichelstowe	Braydon Court		
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Policy E6: Development in Town Centres, District/Rural Centres and Local Shopping Parades

- 6.16. Town Centres are places where a wide range of uses help to support vibrancy and vitality. A strategy approach that plans positively for the structural changes taking place in retail and leisure demand will also ensure that over the plan change is managed well. To ensure a healthy balance of uses is also maintained, the council will manage the concentration of some uses through the planning system, including betting shops and pay-day loan shops. The management of such uses, particularly near schools and where they will have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity, will contribute towards reducing health inequalities.

Policy E6: Development in Town Centres, District/Rural Centres and Local Shopping Parades

1. Swindon Town Centre, Urban District Centres, Primary Rural Centres and shopping arcades should demonstrate a suitable mix of appropriate uses to respond to changing demands and support and boost their continued vitality and viability.
2. Any significant new development in these centres will be expected to provide a mix of unit sizes, avoid an inward-looking layout, maintain the street frontage and provide suitable and convenient linkages for shoppers to access other nearby uses.
3. In accordance with the Agent of Change principle, development that has significant adverse impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties will be resisted.
4. Development that has significant adverse impact on traffic flow or road safety will be resisted.
5. The use of vacant sites or buildings for occupation by meanwhile uses that would make a positive contribution to a centre's viability and vitality will be supported in line with Policy SD1.
6. Markets in these centres will normally be supported, in particular where they contribute to greater retail choice, affordability and support for small enterprises.

Policy E7: Evening, Night-time and Cultural Economy

- 6.17. Swindon Town Centre lacks much of a night-time economy, and this is something that was picked up in the Retail and Leisure Study. The study

therefore recommended that opportunities be sought to improve the leisure offer within Swindon, including food and beverage, and also to diversity and strengthen the town centre offer through encouraging cultural and entertainment facilities. Whilst there are some planning limitations to managing food and beverage following the introduction of Use Class E, the Council is supportive of increasing the offer in the Town Centre, particularly around Regent Street/Regent Close.

Policy E7: Evening, Night-time and Cultural Economy

1. Within Swindon Town Centre, proposals for hospitality, evening and night-time economy, culture and leisure uses will be supported where they make a positive contribution to the vitality and vibrancy of the centre.
2. Proposals which enhance the evening economy of Urban District Centres and Primary Rural Centres will be supported with where:
 - a. the scale and type of use reflects the role and function of the centre; and
 - b. a positive contribution is made to the vitality and vibrancy of the centre.
3. New evening and night-time economy uses must be neighbourly, having regard to the character of the centre where they are proposed.
4. New evening and night-time economy uses will be encouraged at the Regents Close/Regents Street intersection.
5. Proposals for residential development that could put at risk the continued use of existing evening and night-time uses, including music venues and clubs, will be subject to the 'Agent of Change' principle and will be resisted.

7. WELL-CONNECTED, SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



7. WELL-CONNECTED, SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

[Draft pending Transport Impact Assessment and Modelling Report].

Introduction

- 7.1. Transport is key to ensuring a well-connected, healthy Swindon supporting a high quality of life and travel experience for people also facilitating more homes, a vibrant local economy and connections to a greener environment.
- 7.2. The Local Plan promotes a vision-led approach building on Swindon's excellent regional rail and road transport connections while encouraging a shift to public transport and active travel modes in line with the recent NPPF, the DoT's Better Connected policy paper and Active Travel England guidance.
- 7.3. Transport is key to achieving the Swindon 2055 vision, with a rejuvenated town centre surrounded by high-quality urban neighbourhoods, villages and access to green space that makes Swindon a great place to live and work.
- 7.4. Swindon's inward and outward connectivity will be improved and supported via key transit corridors, opening up opportunities for sustainable growth, capitalising on Swindon's excellent location, and improving access to the Town Centre for outer parts of Swindon and the surrounding urban centres.
- 7.5. In summary, this Plan describes a future transport network improved so that people can move around more easily, whether by car, public transport, walking or cycling. The priority will be practical connectivity: reducing congestion where possible, improving links between communities, supporting access to jobs and services, and making the town centre easier to reach.

Context and Challenges

- 7.6. To achieve this vision the Council, recognise there are several challenges:
 - 7.6.1. An over-reliance on the car as a mode of transport in the Borough. The number of annual miles completed in motor vehicles has increased year on year over the past two decades in the Borough. For residents who travel to work, driving remains the predominant mode of transport with an average of 78% of Borough residents travelling by private vehicle to work.²
 - 7.6.2. Issues with congestion and over capacity currently tend to restrict development and necessary housing growth around the edge of Swindon. This needs a more cohesive and holistic highways plan to unlock key sites and essential infrastructure funding.
 - 7.6.3. Since 2018, Active Travel (cycling and walking) in Swindon has fallen to levels significantly lower than the rest of the South West. Active

² Swindon Borough Council Joint Needs Assessment 2024

Travel to school has also fallen by 6% between 2014 and 2022 and has been replaced by car journeys (*SBC Joint Needs Assessment*).

- 7.6.4. Health and wellbeing - The Borough suffers from high levels of adult and childhood obesity, both of which are higher than the national average. An increase in driving has been shown to be associated with reduced physical activity and obesity, while Active Travel has been linked to lower levels of heart disease and diabetes.
- 7.6.5. Air quality – In 2020, 6% of deaths in the Borough for people aged 30+ were attributed to air pollution, a proportion marginally higher than found in the South West and in England.
- 7.6.6. Carbon emissions – Transport emissions account for 43% of the Borough's CO₂ emissions, making it the largest emitter of greenhouses gases across the Borough.³
- 7.7. However, much has already been achieved. The council has produced an updated Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan setting out high quality infrastructure schemes to improve and increase usage of the strategic network in the borough including.
- 7.8. Increasing connectivity in the town centre for cyclists and pedestrians to follow the new bus gate infrastructure introduced on Fleming Way which has formed a catalyst for new development setting standards for placemaking.
- 7.9. Extending the Wichelstowe to Wroughton (Inverary Road) scheme to cover the full Wharf Road corridor.
- 7.10. In North Swindon, upgrading links between Blunsdon and the Tadpole Garden Village and Abbey Farm developments.
- 7.11. Enhancements to public transport are set out the 2025 SBC Bus Service Improvement Delivery plan providing greater connectivity and additional services accessing the town centre and surrounding settlements including Wichelstowe, South Marston, Tadpole Garden Village, Wroughton, Kingsdown and Highworth. Plans also include new bus gates, park & ride and signalling changes to improve bus priority.
- 7.12. The Council is also working closely with National Highways and developers to unlock development sites along the A419 by seeking funding for new junction improvements and potential future bridges at Coldharbour to ease access into Blunsdon, Highworth and the New Eastern Villages sites. The IDP and the policy sections below presents these in more detail.
- 7.13. The council's overall vision for transport is set out below followed by policy Sections which set out our key transport policies and evidence supporting the council's vision for sustainable growth.

³ Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment (2025)

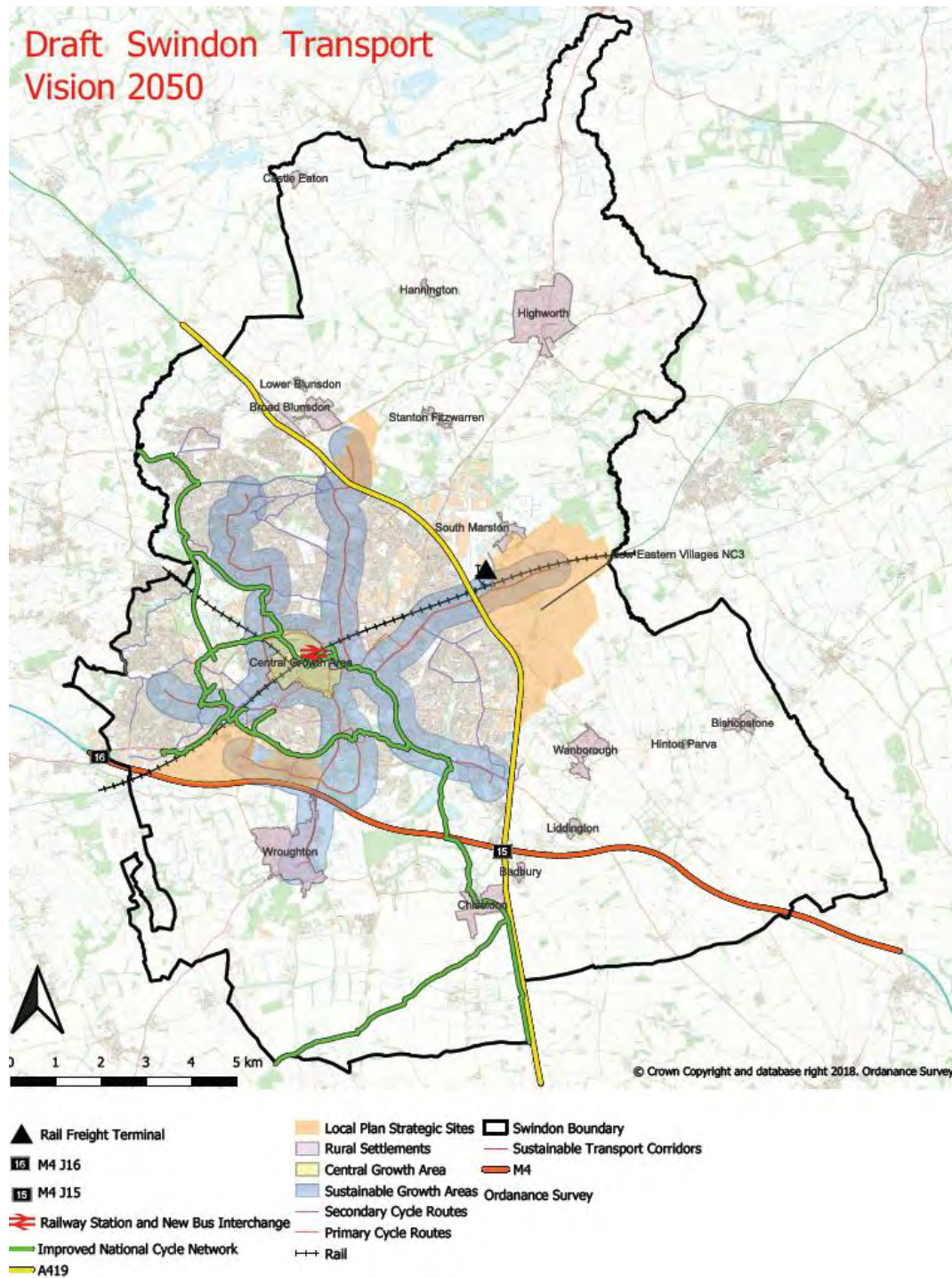
Policy ST1: Spatial Vision: A Well-Connected Swindon



- 7.14. A sustainable, well connected and reliable transport system is vital to achieve the Council's objectives for economic growth, housing growth and address climate issues and improve air quality.
- 7.15. Our Spatial Vision relies on improved transport connections with a greater choice of public transport and active travel offer, key points raised in the Reg 18 consultation responses and throughout the plan making process.
- 7.16. In particular the need to provide alternatives to car travel. A review of consented Travel Plans in the borough secured a reduction of car trips averaged around 8.6%. The policies and vision below aim to improve this reduction to 10% over the next five years targeting 15% over the plan period.⁴
- 7.17. Figure 2 below shows Swindon's transport vision and some of initiatives described above need to achieve our Transport vision. The vision and ambitions illustrate how Swindon could change over the next 20 years. This vision requires help and co-operation and funding from partners including transport operators, developers and Government. Local residents and businesses also play a key role in supporting and delivering the vision.

Figure 2 Swindon Transport Vision 2050 (Draft Pending Transport Impact Assessment)

⁴ Technical Note TN6, Arcitrans Consulting, SBC Local Plan Transport Impact Assessment May 2026



Policy ST1 Spatial Vision: A Well-Connected Swindon

1. Development proposals should demonstrate how they support and enhance a sustainable and well-connected transport system for Swindon with the following key priorities:
 - a. achieve modal split and support sustainable transport through appropriate infrastructure, and provision of direct, safe and time-efficient routes;
 - b. support provision of essential public transport routes and supporting infrastructure in line with Policy ST 5 to ensure development is located in accessible and sustainable locations
 - c. achieve an accessible low-traffic town centre that is easy to move around in and supports economic growth;
 - d. actively influence changing travel behaviour towards prioritising sustainable transport modes with the focus on promoting active travel as the first choice for shorter journeys;
 - e. promoting easier access to community Infrastructure and facilities;
 - f. establishing Swindon Station as a stand-out gateway to an integrated multi-mode transport network .
 - g. incorporate any required upgrades to the road network to unlock development and free up road space for other modes as summarised in Policy ST6 *(to be confirmed following TIA/Modelling and discussions with National Highways)*.
 - h. incorporate guidance published by DoT Better Connected, A Strategy for Integrated Transport⁵

Policy ST2: Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 7.18. A strong focus on promoting the use of public transport, walking & cycling, low emission and smarter travel is a key part of the transport vision. It builds on the council's sustainable plans for enhancing city centre bus and rail transport hubs and walking, cycling and bus links between them. Developing strong bus, cycling and walking links on key radial corridors, park and ride enhancements including electrified buses, and smart travel initiatives including integrated digital ticketing
- 7.19. The plan also encourages a necessary shift towards clean low emission vehicles alongside a change to more sustainable transport modes will support climate change, air quality, and health objectives.

⁵ Better Connected, A Strategy for Integrated Transport , Dept of Transport, April 2026

Policy ST2: Promoting Sustainable Transport

1. All development proposals must plan for and support the delivery of an integrated multi-modal transport network, applying the sustainable transport hierarchy to prioritise movement as follows:
 - a. first, prioritising active travel modes, including walking, cycling, wheeling and scooting;
 - b. then, maximising access to and use of public transport; and
 - c. finally, accommodating other modes, including private motor vehicles.
2. Development will be supported in suitable locations which prioritise:
 - a. walking, cycling, bus and rail access, and are fully integrated with relevant networks and new infrastructure being developed for these transport modes;
 - b. access to transport interchanges including Swindon Station and other key bus and cycle hubs accessible to new residents and employees;
 - c. micromobility options, car clubs, e-bike and bike sharing arrangements;
 - d. the safety of all highway users, including those with limited mobility and the elderly; and
 - e. creating high quality places via inclusive streetscape and public realm design,
3. The development proposal must not compromise the delivery of;
 - a. an existing or planned active travel route including public rights of the adequate, acceptable alternative provision or diversions are arranged;
 - b. an existing or planned bus improvements corridor, enhanced bus route or mobility hub;
 - c. existing or planned rail infrastructure including stations, sidings and related freight infrastructure;
4. All proposals which help to minimise transport related carbon emissions by supporting low and zero emission transport strategy and technologies will be prioritised.

Policy ST3: Accessibility and Development

- 7.20. Swindon's transport strategy seeks to improve the use of existing and developing new infrastructure to support sustainable travel between existing neighbourhoods, in the city centre, adjacent regeneration areas, and the surrounding urban centres and villages. Many Regulation 18 responses raised concerns over developments planned before transport provision is in place. The Local Plan therefore, has a key role to play in supporting the rebalancing of transport modes and the promotion of clean low emission transport, by

ensuring that new development is well located and integrated with sustainable transport modes, that it promotes mode shift and low emission travel and contributes towards achieving efficient and effective sustainable transport networks, as well as being accessible for those that need to use cars.

Policy ST3: Accessibility and Development

1. New Development will be permitted where it takes into account the need for accessibility by all modes and supports the council's transport objectives, by ensuring that:
 - a. development proposals are located and designed in accordance with accessibility by all modes, prioritising growth in areas well-served by public transport and key services;
 - b. developments demonstrate plans to support the delivery of an integrated multi-modal transport network prioritising active travel modes, including walking and cycling via supporting promotional initiatives;
 - c. demonstrating capacity and providing appropriate mitigations for other modes as necessary, including motor vehicles which will remain the main mode of transport for many people in Swindon;
 - d. developers work with the council to investigate opportunities for new transport technologies supporting sustainable transport and better optimisation of the road network;
 - e. create secure and safe cycle storage including e-cycles; and
 - f. establish mobility hubs (strategic and local) to provide bus, cycle and e-travel facilities, allowing interconnected and widened travel choices.

Policy ST4: Transport Infrastructure Design

- 7.21. Through the Swindon Plan, Heart of Swindon and responses to the Reg 18 consultation the council will promote high quality street design necessary to revitalise the town centre and contribute to creating healthy connected places. These policies are framed to look at how the needs of residents are taken into account, including the requirements for the promoting of walking, cycling and other forms of sustainable transport to help Swindon meet its sustainable and net zero objectives and create better places to live and work.
- 7.22. The council is committed to design which promote safe and innovative travel solutions for all users with an emphasis on pedestrian movement

Policy ST4: Transport Infrastructure Design

1. Infrastructure proposals will be supported with integrated facilities to allow for movement by all modes of travel including cycling and walking.
2. Infrastructure proposals should be designed to support safe and inclusive access use for all members of the community, through:
 - a. using natural and passive surveillance;
 - b. an applied lighting strategy which creates a feeling of place and safety;
 - c. an understanding of future users and avoidance of likely barriers to use;
 - d. adaptations and retrofitting infrastructure to widen take-up and community reach and;
 - e. meeting or exceeding the requirements of Inclusive Design Policy SD4.
3. To mitigate the negative impacts of traffic on active travel users and encourage higher levels of participation, the Council would support following community engagement traffic management measures, to be delivered through the planning process, to advance a safer active travel environment. These include:
 - a. traffic calming measures;
 - b. speed indicators;
 - c. entry treatments and raised tables;
 - d. mini roundabouts;
 - e. enhanced pedestrian crossings;
 - f. one-way schemes;
 - g. pedestrianisation schemes;
 - h. single surface schemes;
 - i. further cycle lanes and contra-flow cycling;
 - j. simplified bus infrastructure; and
 - k. parking restrictions and spaces.
4. Proposals for walking and cycling routes should be adopted and promoted using the following broad principles where practical:
 - a. Green Infrastructure Network Integration: Supporting the development of an integrated green network that combines walking and cycling paths with green spaces and green infrastructure, creating continuous, accessible, and environmentally friendly routes across the Borough.

- b. Active Travel Corridors: Link key urban areas, parks, and recreational spaces, enhancing accessibility and promoting sustainable transport.
 - c. Provide connectivity to Open Spaces: Easy and direct access to nearby parks and open spaces to promote active lifestyles and community well-being.
 - d. Have general regard to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as part of strategic site allocations.
5. Proposals will be supported and routes safeguarded on the Policies Map as detailed in the Swindon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) together with active travel Improvements to include new routes. The Council will look to explore opportunities to extend cycling infrastructure to improve connectivity between different parts of Swindon.

Policy ST5: Improving Public Transport

- 7.23. The Bus Service Improvement Plan represents a crucial strategic and directional step change to support the next stages of Borough wide regeneration and growth.
- 7.24. The Swindon Borough bus service network, commercially operated up to March 2020, serves the main urban area quite comprehensively. There are very few neighbourhoods entirely unserved.
- 7.25. However, some gaps do exist, of which the most notable are the village of South Marston, and a major development at the east side of the town referred to originally as the New Eastern Villages, undergoing development.
- 7.26. Swindon town services each have a daytime frequency that ranges from 2 to 6 buses per hour (bph), depending upon demand arising within the corridor concerned. By virtue of size and proximity, Wroughton and Highworth within the Borough, and Royal Wootton Bassett in Wiltshire, benefit from at least 2 to 4 bph into Swindon. Frequency is linked to demand and where demand increases, this has been reflected by timetable improvements. This has been particularly evident on inter-urban service 55 (Royal Wootton Bassett-Calne-Chippenham) and S6 (Faringdon-Oxford) which has seen strong growth for some years.
- 7.27. However, extensive areas of the town, while served commercially, suffer from relatively low frequencies (generally every 30 minutes), poorly served in the evening and Sundays, and extended journey times. Much of which arises from the fact that most are large mono-tenure owner-occupied suburban expansions built after 1985. These include areas such as Tadpole Garden Village, Wichelstowe, and Badbury Park.
- 7.28. Public transport will have a significant role to play as we seek to build a plan with our partners that encourages people to return to a network that remains reliable, clean, convenient and affordable.

- 7.29. With the expected rapid expansion of housing and employment opportunities on the peripheries of the town, coupled with bold transformational plans for the town centre, the importance of a cohesive and compelling public transport infrastructure that matches these aspirations is key.
- 7.30. The Bus Service Improvement Plan presents a viable and cohesive public transport system. Key components of the bus plan include:
- 7.30.1. more frequent, with turn-up and go services on major routes and feeder or demand-responsive services to lower density places
 - 7.30.2. faster and more reliable, with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room.
 - 7.30.3. cheaper, with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.
 - 7.30.4. more comprehensive, with over provision on a few corridors reduced to boost provision elsewhere and better services in the evenings and weekends, not necessarily with conventional buses.
 - 7.30.5. Easier to understand, with simpler routes, common numbering, co-ordinated timetable change dates where feasible, good publicity, and comprehensive, accurate information online.
 - 7.30.6. better integrated with other modes and each other, including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers.
- 7.31. The Local Plan presents an opportunity alongside a clear policy frame for working with our operating partners, residents and development stakeholders in building a network that is universally accessible to all people in all corners of the Borough, linking core routes with Demand Response Transport strategies with accessibility at its heart.

Policy ST5: Improving Public Transport

Bus

1. Priority will be given to the implementation of the major proposals identified in the Bus Improvement Plan over the period 2024-2035 to include:
 - a. Installation of new bus lane infrastructure, bus gates and traffic signal prioritisation including enhanced network coverage and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)
 - b. Where demand is justified, provision of new Mobility Hubs serving Swindon to reduce car dependency and alleviate congestion within Swindon urban area and encourage use of more sustainable modes such as public transport, cycling, and or micro mobility for all or part of journeys.
 - c. Key locations include:

- i. Orbital Shopping Park Mobility Hub;
 - ii. Great Western Hospital Mobility Hub or M4 Junction 15 (Marlborough Road) Mobility Hub;
 - iii. Old Town Mobility Hub;
 - iv. A420 corridor through New Eastern Villages; and
 - v. Swindon West (M4 Junction 16) Mobility Hub
2. Supporting Park and Ride infrastructure and strategic interchange junctions including at Junction 16 M4 or Wichelstowe.
 3. Provision of accessible and inclusively designed infrastructure and services including wheelchair accessibility and integrated audible and visual information.

Rail

4. Developments in the central area should promote access to the rail network through:
 - a. Improved bus integration with the Swindon Railway Station and any new rail stations to maximise public transport integration;
 - b. travel plans and access strategies ensuring that the proposed development is able to maximise the use of Swindon Railway Station; and
 - c. Working in close collaboration with GWR, Network Rail and other partners with a focus on reinforcing the role of the station as a mobility hub and wider connections through Central Swindon and proposed Swindon Gateway regeneration area.

Policy ST6: Highway Improvements

- 7.32. Swindon has excellent road access to the M4 and A419 connecting to London and Bristol as well to the north via the Cotswolds, Oxfordshire and Midlands. Many people travel to the Swindon area daily for work and pleasure. Congestion particularly during peak hours is worsening the area grows.
- 7.33. Locally targeted highway improvements alongside planned modal shift, and the promotion of active travel are required to ensure the resilience of the road network. Targeted measures for the highway being explored include safer road and junction improvements, smarter signalling and bus prioritisation all to relieve congestion and make buses work better.
- 7.34. To support this plan the Council has undertaken a Transport Impact Assessment in conjunction with National Highways which established initially a base model (2021) of the current network and then modelled the growth scenarios and sites presented in this plan.

- 7.35. The work identified a series of required highway measures (presented above) to unlock key developments and relieve existing pressures on key hot spots along the M4 and A419 junctions.
- 7.36. Delivering these improvements requires careful planning and phasing of developments coordination between the council, National Highways, development groups and local parish groups to ensure pooling of funds and priorities.

Policy ST6: Highway Improvements

1. The following are key highway improvements derived from the Transport Impact Assessment and associated modelling required to support development across the borough which developers are required to support and contribute to:
 - d. Kingsdown Improvement Package/A419 Cold Harbour junction;
 - e. Kingsdown Bridge over A419;
 - f. South Marsdon Underpass Bridge Works;
 - g. Old Vicarage Lane /A420 junction widening;
 - h. Wichelstowe Southern Access Rd M4/J16;
 - i. Swindon Railway Station North Star/Great Western Way northern access;
 - j. New Eastern Villages – A420 Eastern Access;
 - k. William Morris Way – Tadpole Link Road;
 - l. Redposts Drive/Wotton Bassett Road – Junction improvement and Bus gate and;
 - m. Cricklade Road Junction Capacity Improvements relating to Kingsdown Bridge.

[This Section will be updated following the TIA, modelling and discussions with National Highways]

Policy ST7: Freight and Logistics

- 7.37. Swindon experiences a high volume of goods vehicle movement, serving warehousing and distribution centres across the Borough as well as supporting local deliveries. Predominantly road based, this can cause significant pressures on transport networks, contributing to congestion and increased emissions, with associated impacts on air quality and the local environment.
- 7.38. In line with the UK Government's 'Decarbonising Transport' strategy, the Council seeks to promote a more sustainable approach to freight, using lower and zero emission modes. This includes increased use of electric vans, cargo

cycles and utilising rail where feasible to support the transition to a zero-emission freight sector.

- 7.39. The Council are also supportive of the implementation of a logistics partnership in conjunction with neighbouring authorities and encourages the opportunities that freight and micro-freight present. This will enable the identification of areas for innovation, link to wider economic and skill benefits and facilitate more sustainable approaches to deliveries.

Policy ST7: Freight and Logistics

1. Proposals for new, major development should (where applicable):
 - a. encourage future pipeline developments where these provide opportunities to reduce freight movements by surface modes of transport;
 - b. encourage the location of storage/distribution development with high levels of freight and commercial traffic close to intermodal freight facilities, or roads designed and managed as traffic distributors;
 - c. avoid the development of rail sidings where these may impact on future operational requirements, in conjunction with Policy ST2;
 - d. maximise the use of rail for freight movements to and from new and existing developments and significant changes of use;
 - e. encourage the protection of rail connected land for future uses that require rail freight access and encourage the development of intermodal interchanges and improvements to multi-modal transfer facilities;
 - f. encourage capacity enhancements, appropriate standards of maintenance and gauge improvements on key rail freight routes; and
 - g. encourage the sustainable movement of freight through alternative delivery and servicing practices, including last mile delivery opportunities such as freight consolidation, electric and low and zero emission vehicles.

Policy ST8: Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans

- 7.40. New developments can generate detrimental impacts on the highway network. The NPPF (2024) requires all developments that will produce significant amounts of movement to provide a travel plan, supported by a transport statement or transport assessment to assess and monitor any likely negative effects.
- 7.41. Travel Plans are long term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable transport into the planning process. They are based on

evidence of the anticipated transport impacts of development and set measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel (such as promoting walking and cycling, or facilities for electric vehicles). Travel plans should address all journeys resulting from a proposed development and should seek to fit in with wider strategies for transport in the area.

- 7.42. Transport Assessments and Statements are supporting evidence-based reports which assess the impacts of development and provide recommending mitigations which form part of the travel plan. A Transport Assessment is typically required to support a planning application for larger developments when a Transport Statement is a lighter touch evaluation in the case of developments with limited transport impacts, typically for smaller developments of up to 60 dwellings as set out in the Council's Travel Plan SPD.
- 7.43. A key principle in preparing any transport plan or assessment is early engagement with the council and relevant transport authority.
- 7.44. Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements are important to positively contribute to:
 - 7.44.1. encouraging sustainable travel;
 - 7.44.2. reducing traffic generation and its detrimental impacts;
 - 7.44.3. reducing carbon emissions;
 - 7.44.4. creating accessible, connected and inclusive communities;
 - 7.44.5. improving quality of life and health outcomes;
 - 7.44.6. improving road safety;
 - 7.44.7. reducing the need for development to increase existing road capacity or provide new roads
- 7.45. The Council has adopted the Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2020) to provide a consistent and flexible framework for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of travel plans across the Borough. It provides guidance to developers on the different types of travel plans, when they are required and the different methodologies.
- 7.46. The SPD outlines that travel plans will be negotiated for all qualifying development and other planning applications that are likely to have negative implications on the highway network. Thresholds for when a travel plan is required vary according to land use and can be found in Table 1 of the SPD.
- 7.47. Travel plans will be secured through a Section 106, which requires the legal binding of a Section 106 agreement. Developers have the option of retaining responsibility for managing and implementing the travel plan or, alternatively, can choose to transfer these responsibilities to Swindon Borough Council. More information is provided in the SPD.

Policy ST8: Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans

1. Proposals for development must provide appropriate mitigating measures to offset adverse impacts on the transport network at both the construction and operational stages.
2. Development shall not result in a significant impact on air quality with relevance to developments within or near an existing Air Quality Management Area.
3. Proposals for development which will likely create significant transport movement and related environmental impacts (in accordance with Department for Transport guidance) will be required to submit a Transport Assessment, and where relevant a Travel Plan (in accordance with the threshold set out in supporting text or subsequent revisions of Travel Plans and the Councils Travel Plan SPD).
4. The Transport Assessment or Transport Statement should assess and mitigate the impact of development and promote sustainable travel choices, informed by an assessment or the following information, where relevant:
 - a. the accessibility of the site by all modes of transport;
 - b. the likely modal split of travel to and from the site;
 - c. how access to the site via public transport, cycling, and walking is proposed to be improved to reduce dependency on car travel;
 - d. assess the impact on the highway network and of any proposed mitigation measures where required;
 - e. a Travel Plan and an approach to parking provision;
 - f. encourage the delivery of goods by vehicles and low and zero emission sustainable active travel modes including cargo bikes;
 - g. encourage the construction of and operation of Consolidation Centres serving urban locations where these facilitate the consolidation of freight flows and economies of energy;
 - h. encourage the development, delivery and maintenance of an integrated strategic HGV routing network, Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC), and a consistent cross boundary approach to HGV management and potential freight priority lanes in appropriate locations;
 - i. encourage the development of sites for new secure HGV parking facilities particularly close to major freight generators and improve signing from major lorry routes; and
 - j. support innovation in the delivery of micro freight hubs and zero carbon last mile delivery infrastructure including cargo bikes.

Policy ST9: Parking and EVs

- 7.48. Minimising the opportunities for parking will reduce car use over time and encourage the shift towards more sustainable modes of travel. This is essential for alleviating congestion, improving air quality and reducing Swindon's CO2 emissions. The town centre is a key area (as defined in Swindon's Transport Vision Paper 2025) where parking supply should be controlled. This will encourage behavioural change and support a healthier, greener environment.
- 7.49. Swindon Borough Council published technical guidance on parking standards in 2021 which sets out the minimum requirements for vehicle parking provision, including cycle parking and the Council's standards for electric vehicles for new development. This guidance aims to balance the need to reduce reliance on fossil fuel-based travel without compromising the overall quality of development. Parking provision in new developments should be informed by the standards in this document.
- 7.50. As of June 2022, Part S (Infrastructure for electric charging vehicles) of the Building Regulations 2010 requires all new residential and commercial development, and those undergoing major renovation, to include electric vehicle charging points. Where provided, electric vehicle charging points should allow for convenient access and positioned so that it can be maintained as required. The Council supports the uptake of electric vehicles and will seek opportunities for funding to enable growth.
- 7.51. The provision of high quality and accessible cycle parking will encourage cycling as a viable method of transport, resulting in more people travelling actively for everyday journeys. This supports the UK Government's Gear Change strategy, which aims to make cycling and walking the natural first choice for many journeys. The increased uptake of cycling will reduce carbon emissions and provide physical and mental health benefits for individuals and communities.
- 7.52. Swindon's Cycle Parking Standards defines the key principles and best practice for the design and provision of cycle parking. Applying these standards will ensure cycle parking is integrated into development from the outset, delivering well designed structures that are secure against cycle theft and accessible to all users. Further guidance is provided in Local Transport Note 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design'. The Council will support development proposals that adhere to both Swindon's Cycle Parking Standards and Local Transport Note 1/20.

Policy ST9: Parking and EVs

1. All developments will be required to demonstrate how they contribute to promoting active, efficient and sustainable modes of travel and comply with the standards set out in Swindon's Parking Standards for New Developments (2021) or updated equivalent.

2. New residential development in the Town Centre is encouraged to be car free (excluding blue-badge parking). Where a proposal demonstrates car parking would be necessary, early engagement with the Council is recommended to discuss appropriate parking space numbers that reflects policy.
3. Where parking is provided in a development it must:
 - a. provide a parking design and management plan, detailing mechanisms for leasing spaces, providing disabled parking to meet future demand, and activating passive electric charge points;
 - b. plan car parking sensibly, ensuring that opportunities to informally park are minimised through effective street layouts that ensure pedestrian pavements remain usable at all times; and
 - c. identify and measure local parking stress, and if deemed necessary contribute to a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) Programme where existing residents' parking would be significantly impacted by the additional cars from a development, and this cannot be appropriately mitigated.
4. At a minimum, electric vehicle charging points will be required to be installed for all development in line with the relevant Building Regulations.
5. All developments are required to ensure that provision of on-street parking does not obstruct walking and cycling routes.

Cycle Parking

6. All developments must adopt the minimum cycle parking requirements outlined in Swindon's Parking Standards for New Developments. Proposals that exceed the minimum standards will be supported and are encouraged.
7. Where cycle parking is provided, proposals should:
 - a. demonstrate secure, covered, conveniently located, accessible and inclusively designed cycle parking, particularly when located in Sustainable Development Areas or near transport hubs; and
 - b. accord with the design and layout set out in Swindon Cycle Parking Standards (2023) or updated equivalent.

8. AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE SWINDON



8. AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE SWINDON

Introduction

- 8.1. Swindon's Local Plan plays a key role in contributing towards achieving sustainable development and climate stability through a sustainable framework that plans for growth and for our future communities. The Council's Decarbonisation Framework (2025) sets out goals and objectives to reduce emissions across both the Council and the wider borough, helping us make steady progress towards our net zero goal.
- 8.2. The framework sets out that planning has a vital role to play in enabling and encouraging the transition to a competitive and resilient low-carbon society that also supports the environment and human health and wellbeing. The Council recognises that a holistic approach combining sustainable transport, building design, and protecting and enhancing green spaces and natural habitats is needed.
- 8.3. Swindon's environment is also at the heart of our new Local Plan. Swindon is incredibly rich and diverse in its landscapes, habitats and wildlife. We have areas of national importance for nature and landscape, alongside networks of greenspaces which are valued by residents and provide important habitats for wildlife. Supported by the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy, a key aim of the plan is to conserve and enhance these important features.
- 8.4. This chapter of the Local Plan addresses the approach to both climate mitigation (primarily through carbon reduction policies) and adaptation (to help our communities and environment adjust to the harmful impacts), as well as protecting natural assets and supporting the role of green infrastructure in increasing resilience and improving the health of communities. These policies apply local solutions to the challenges that the Borough is expected to face and will positively contribute to the 'Greener Swindon' mission of the Swindon Plan.

Policy CSE1: Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change

- 8.5. The climate and ecological emergency represent one of the greatest challenges to address over the coming years. The Plan has a role in making meaningful changes through the Plan period. It will be vital to the long-term sustainability of Swindon Borough, and the health, safety and quality of life of its residents, that new development is planned and designed to adapt to changes in the climate.
- 8.6. The NPPF (2024) suggests that plans take a proactive approach to mitigation and adapting climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, water supply, biodiversity and landscape, and the risk of

overheating from rising temperature. It also requires planning new development in a way that avoids increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and to ensure risk needs to be managed through suitable adaptation measures.

- 8.7. This policy ensures that new development considers all climate risks which are relevant to the wider context of a site and incorporates adaptation and mitigation strategies with the aim to create a more healthy, sustainable and resilient Swindon built for future generations. All long-term climate risks should be considered and mitigation measures incorporated to make sure that development does not cause negative impacts on the surrounding built environment.
- 8.8. Four areas of climate risk have been at the centre of adaptation efforts. These are related to risks of flooding, coastal erosion, heatwave and drought. In the case of Swindon, flooding and heatwaves are the most relevant issues which should be considered while planning for development. Development proposals can consider various ways to adapt and mitigate the impact of these risks, such as:
 - 8.8.1. locating new development away from areas of risk;
 - 8.8.2. ensuring the design and layout of buildings and urban areas are resilient to potential adverse events; and
 - 8.8.3. promoting sustainable water management in new development (see Policy CSE12 and CSE15).
- 8.9. Heatwaves can be particularly severe in urban areas, and reducing overheating risks can improve resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change. Materials commonly used in buildings and hard surfaces can absorb and re-radiate heat, contributing to the Urban Heat Island Effect (UHI). This can increase overheating, affect health and wellbeing, increase energy demand and adversely affect air quality.
- 8.10. Overheating and urban heat island effects can be reduced through passive design measures, including the integration of green infrastructure, the careful selection of surface materials and the design of streets and buildings to maximise natural airflow.
- 8.11. National guidance from DEFRA and the Environment Agency requires planning applications in areas at risk of flooding to be supported by proportionate flood risk assessments, taking account of climate change and ensuring development remains safe over its lifetime (see Policy CSE12).

Policy CSE1: Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change

1. Development proposals are required to provide a Sustainability Statement, proportionate to the scale, nature and complexity of the proposal, to

identify potential climate change issues based on site context including site-specific climate impacts, and propose mitigation and adaptation measures aiming to:

- a. support the transition to net zero, future proof development against climate risks, and minimise carbon emissions arising from the development; and
 - b. reduce operational and embodied carbon emissions and overall energy consumption through energy efficient measures (See Policy CSE2).
2. Development proposals should incorporate climate adaptation measures that improve resilience and support thermal comfort through:
 - a. addressing urban heat island effects and overheating risk through passive design measures;
 - b. considering block design, massing, building orientation, street layout and material selection to maintain comfortable temperatures and mitigate overheating;
 - c. avoiding canyon effects and poor ventilation in dense areas; and
 - d. maximising opportunities for natural ventilation and airflow through the design and layout of development.
3. Development proposals must demonstrate how future climate uncertainty has been considered through adaptable and resilient design, including through flexibility in layout, infrastructure and built form to enable adaptation over the lifetime of the development.

Policy CSE2: Carbon Reduction and Sustainable Design

- 8.12. This Plan will contribute to the UK's legally binding target of net zero carbon by 2050. To achieve this, it is critical that energy performance in new and existing, residential and non-domestic buildings is maximised, and residual energy use is met through low carbon and renewable sources.
- 8.13. The NPPF outlines that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and should help to shape places in ways that contribute to a radical reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and that supports renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. New development can reduce greenhouse gas emissions through location, orientation and design, as well as through utilising renewable and low carbon energy.
- 8.14. The Planning Practice Guidance states that by providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies, decentralised energy and heating; and promoting local carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in building, such as passive solar design, Local Plans can address the challenges of climate change and mitigate against the impacts of climate risks by reducing emissions.

- 8.15. According to the Swindon Carbon Pathway (2025), more than 50% of the total Swindon's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are contributed by energy use and supply in buildings. Residential buildings account for 25% of overall GHG emissions.
- 8.16. Buildings Regulations are the primary framework for setting energy efficiency requirements for new buildings. It is expected that any new development is required to meet energy efficiency requirements set out within any subsequent amendments to Building Regulations. Therefore, the intention behind Policy CSE2: Carbon Reduction and Sustainable Design in new development is not to duplicate any energy efficiency measures required by Building Regulations.
- 8.17. The Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard includes the use of passive measures first to address overheating risk and thermal comfort. This includes orientation, shading, natural ventilation and thermal mass. In general, new development must be resilient to the anticipated impacts of climate change including flood resilience, climate resilient landscaping, heat mitigation and water efficiency measures.

Policy CSE2: Carbon Reduction and Sustainable Design

1. All new development should seek to minimise operational and embodied carbon emissions through sustainable design and construction.

Sustainable Design and Construction

2. Developments will be expected to:
 - a. minimise energy consumption and maximise on-site renewable energy generation;
 - b. apply the energy hierarchy to maximise reduction in GHG emissions;
 - c. reduce energy consumption by incorporating passive design measures to reduce the impact of overheating and mitigate heat traps within the development;
 - d. reduce operational and embodied carbon emissions of the development (See Policy CSE3); and
 - e. maximise the use of local, low-carbon and sustainably sourced materials where practicable.

Sustainable Design Standards

3. Development is encouraged to demonstrate alignment with the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard, where applicable.
4. All large-scale residential mixed-use developments will be expected to demonstrate alignment with BREEAM – Community standards or any other relevant building efficiency standards, where applicable.

Energy Efficiency

5. All developments are required to demonstrate the hierarchical approach to reducing energy demand and associated carbon emissions, as detailed below:
 - a. Be Lean: reduce energy demand through energy efficient design and fabric performance;
 - b. Be Clean: prioritise efficient energy supply, including district heating, communal heat networks, waste heat recovery and heat pumps where appropriate; and
 - c. Be Green: maximise opportunities to decentralise energy system by producing, storing and using renewable and low-carbon energy.
6. As part of reducing energy consumption, development should mitigate mechanical cooling needs through minimisation of heat penetration during warm months by considering passive design measures including orientation, form, shading, solar non-reflective surfaces, glazing design and insulation.
7. All development above 100 residential homes or 1,000 sqm employment floorspace should consider provision of new heat network.

Policy CSE3: Whole Life Carbon Assessments (WLCA)

- 8.18. 18 % of the UK's carbon footprint is from operational emissions, or the energy needed to heat, cool and power our buildings. It is estimated that 80% of our current stock will still be in use in 2050, which makes retrofitting current stock essential to meet our climate targets.
- 8.19. Whole life carbon refers to the total carbon emissions produced over the entire lifecycle of a built asset. This includes operational carbon, which is associated with the energy and water use during occupation, and embodied carbon, which are the emissions associated with materials and the construction process.
- 8.20. To date, the built environment has primarily focused on reducing operational carbon emissions through energy reduction targets in building regulations and sustainability assessment rating schemes. However, embodied carbon assessments have received comparatively less attention within national planning policy and regulation. According to the UK Green Building Council, embodied carbon can account for up to 50% of a building's total emissions, particularly as operational energy efficiency improves. Therefore, this policy seeks to ensure both operational and embodied carbon are considered and reduced within development to address this policy gap and support the transition to net zero.
- 8.21. Whole Life Carbon Assessment (WLCA) is a framework which calculates and reports the quantity of carbon impacts expected throughout all lifecycle stages of a development proposal. WLCAs are typically structured using modules which cover preconstruction, product, construction, in use and end of life

stages, with additional consideration given to the potential benefits of material reuse and recycling. WLCAs support decision making across the design, procurement, construction and use stages to compare options and prioritise approaches that achieve the lowest carbon emissions possible.

- 8.22. The RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment for the Built Environment Professional Standard provides a methodology and templates, aligned with internationally recognised lifecycle assessment standards, for developers to submit with their proposals.

Policy CSE3: Whole Life Carbon Assessments (WLCA)

1. Major development proposals over 49 units, or 4,999 m² of floorspace are required to undertake Whole Life Cycle Carbon assessments to support their proposals.
2. Whole Life Cycle Carbon Assessments (WLCA) should be undertaken in accordance with the RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment for the Built Environment Professional Standard (or any successor document) in force at the time of application and using any locally or nationally prescribed assessment templates where applicable.

Policy CSE4: Adaptive Reuse and Retrofit

- 8.23. 18% of the UK's carbon footprint is from operational emissions, or the energy needed to heat, cool and power our buildings. It is estimated that 80% of our current stock will still be in use in 2050, which makes retrofitting current stock essential to meet our climate targets.
- 8.24. Reusing built assets helps preserve resources from the initial construction and reduces embodied carbon – the emissions from raw material extraction, manufacturing, construction, maintenance, demolition, transport, waste and end-of-life impacts. By reducing the need for new materials, energy and water, Adaptive Reuse and Retrofit Projects can conserve resources and improve local air quality by diverting demolition waste from landfills. Overall, adapting existing buildings rather than demolishing them can significantly reduce the environmental footprint of the building sector.
- 8.25. While working towards reducing the overall carbon emissions of Swindon, the Council supports the reuse of existing built assets and retrofitting to ensure our existing housing stocks are fit for purpose, improving their energy efficiency, and reducing overall embodied carbon emissions caused by constructing new developments with the focus to tackle energy poverty.
- 8.26. Proposals should take account of LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide for the best practice advice.

Policy CSE4: Adaptive Reuse and Retrofit

1. Development proposals are encouraged to consider adaptive reuse and retrofitting of existing assets if viable and in accordance with Policy CSE 1, CSE 2 and CSE3.
2. A whole building Retrofit and Reuse approach should be considered, including any heritage assets, and planning applications should demonstrate how following principles are embedded:
 - a. development should prioritise existing assets and favour reuse of vacant, underutilised buildings over new construction to optimise use of exist built environment and reduce embodied carbon emissions;
 - b. the proposal should provide an Energy Assessment through the Sustainability Statement between the existing and proposed building;
 - c. it should demonstrate social, environmental, or economic benefits can be delivered for the wider local community; and
 - d. where assets have historic or cultural significance, proposals should retain their heritage value, prioritise long-term durability where feasible and mitigate the harm to heritage significance in line with Policy SD1 to SD8.

Policy CSE5: Renewable Energy

- 8.27. Increasing the development of renewable and low carbon energy is essential to reducing carbon emissions and supporting the transition away from fossil fuels. This will enable Swindon Borough Council to reach both local and national net zero targets. Generating and storing renewable energy will also support the transition away from carbon intensive grid electricity, building energy security and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The UK decarbonisation strategy relies on the electrification of sectors currently powered by fossil fuels, including heat, transportation and industry, along with substituting electricity generation from fossil fuels with renewable energy sources.
- 8.28. The NPPF states that planning systems should support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Swindon already benefits from a range of renewable energy generation sources, including solar photovoltaics, anaerobic digestion and battery storage, with 43 renewable sites either operational or in development across the borough. The Council aims to continue expanding renewable energy generation at all scales, with significant potential for rooftop photovoltaics and heat pump installation evidenced in the Swindon Carbon Inventory (2025).

- 8.29. CSE5: Renewable Energy applies to all types of renewable energy, including solar photovoltaic arrays (PV), wind turbines, hydropower, biomass generators, anaerobic digestion plants and appropriate energy from waste type technologies. The Council will be particularly supportive of community led renewable energy projects where the wider social benefits are presented, such as reductions in local fuel poverty and community access to the financial benefits of renewables, as outlined in the Swindon Decarbonisation Framework (2025).
- 8.30. The NPPF requires development to ensure any adverse impacts are addressed appropriately. The Council will carefully consider the potential visual and landscape impacts associated with renewable and low carbon energy development. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Renewable Energy Technologies (2025) (LSA) informs the locations of renewable energy development through evaluating the sensitivity of eight landscape character areas to wind turbines, land-based solar PV installations and biomass plants. The LSA should be used to guide development away from the most sensitive landscapes and proposals will more likely be supported when situated in areas of lower sensitivity. In addition, planning applications may be required to submit an environmental impact assessment (EIA) or landscape assessment, in accordance with Policy CSE10, to meet the environmental and landscape impact requirements of the policy.
- 8.31. Grid capacity will be an important consideration for large-scale renewables, major development sites, and potentially for smaller scale generation where there are already grid constraints. The grid is managed by the local District Systems Operator (DSO), which for Swindon is Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), and they are a key organisation to facilitate the required changes to the grid along with other national organisations such as OFGEM and central government.

Policy CSE5: Renewable Energy

1. Proposals for the generation of renewable and low-carbon energy and associated infrastructure will be strongly encouraged to ensure a transition towards net zero. Any proposals will need to demonstrate that they do not cause unacceptable impact on:
 - a. the landscape including landscape character and visual amenity;
 - b. biodiversity and ecological assets;
 - c. the historic environment and the setting of heritage assets;
 - d. residential amenity including noise, light, visual amenity and safety; and
 - e. the highway network and local roads.
2. Development proposals must have regard to the Borough's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Renewable Energy Technologies (2025).

3. Development proposals must seek to minimise and mitigate any adverse impacts and plan for the decommissioning of the site at the end of its operational life, including the restoration of the site to its former condition.

Community led renewable energy projects

4. Support will be given to community led renewable energy projects where wider social benefits are demonstrated.

Policy CSE6: Green Infrastructure in New Developments

- 8.32. Proposals for major development are required to provide well-planned Green Infrastructure (GI). How this is achieved must be detailed in a Green Infrastructure Statement to be submitted as part of the application. Natural England defines well-planned GI as GI, which is multifunctional, varied and connected into the existing green infrastructure network, that is accessible and responds to the character of the area. It is recommended that GI is provided in line with framework guidance produced by Natural England or any successor document.
- 8.33. Valid GI contributions of multi-functional land uses will be recognised as such if it can be demonstrated that they provide co-benefits for biodiversity, climate resilience and health. These can include Open Space, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), natural and semi natural assets and new priority habitat creation as part of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) obligations. Proposals will need to demonstrate through the GI Statement how these elements contribute towards enhancing the GI network, how they use NE GI framework standards and where applicable meet Urban Greening Factor and canopy cover targets.
- 8.34. New GI must be accompanied by a plan for the long-term sustainable maintenance and management of these assets, outlined in the GI Statement. Discussions with town and parish councils on a first-refusal basis are encouraged where the maintenance and management of recreational GI is concerned.
- 8.35. Natural England has established the Urban Greening Factor (UGF) for England as one of five Headline Green Infrastructure Standards within the broader Green Infrastructure Framework. Applicants are encouraged to utilise the UGF. As a planning tool, the UGF is designed to:
 - 8.35.1. Improve the provision of Green Infrastructure (GI), specifically with urban environments.
 - 8.35.2. Increase urban greening through a voluntary framework.
 - 8.35.3. Contribute effectively to Biodiversity Net Gain targets.
- 8.36. The Council has prepared a draft Green Infrastructure Strategy which will help to inform the delivery of this Policy. The Green Infrastructure Strategy sets priorities for protecting key areas of the network and addressing deficiencies in green infrastructure. It outlines how the Council will work with partners to

plan, protect, promote, enhance and extend the network and to embrace opportunities provided by development.

Policy CSE6: Green Infrastructure in New Developments

1. Proposals for Major Development will be required to incorporate high quality, accessible, multifunctional green (and blue) infrastructure (GI) in accordance with the latest adopted version of the Swindon Borough Council Green Infrastructure Strategy. All such applications must be accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement to demonstrate compliance. This means proposals should:
 - a. integrate green infrastructure including nature-rich landscape treatment into the design of new development. Any green/blue features should be tailored to the specific context of the site and surrounding area;
 - b. retain and incorporate existing green infrastructure where practical, particularly mature/valuable trees (Policy CSE9), hedgerows and water features;
 - c. ensure green infrastructure contributes positively to the adaptation to the impacts of climate change such as flooding and heating;
 - d. improve linkages and strengthen connections with the wider green infrastructure network as defined on the Policies Map and deliver priorities within the Green Infrastructure Strategy;
 - e. connect to and enhance the integrity of the Nature Recovery Network and wider ecological networks;
 - f. provide for accessible recreational access and use in line with the Open Space Standards in Policy HL3; and,
 - g. maintain and enhance the quality and connectivity of access networks, including connecting to Public Rights of Way and integrating active travel routes (linking workplaces, schools, community facilities and public transport hubs).
2. Proposals including provision for Green Infrastructure must set out clearly how the green infrastructure has been designed to secure multi-functional benefits which contribute to the following:
 - a. health and wellbeing, including facilitating recreation and play for people of all ages and abilities
 - b. habitat creation and ecological connectivity;
 - c. mitigating climate change (including carbon sequestration, reducing flood risk, reducing urban heating and promoting urban cooling);
 - d. enhancing the appearance and character/sense of place; and
 - e. edible planting or community food growing.

3. Where green infrastructure is provided, arrangements must be made and agreed for its long-term 'in perpetuity' management, maintenance and funding prior to the development commencing (see also Policy HL3).
4. Major development proposals should¹ ensure that green infrastructure is designed in accordance with the Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide or any comparable successor document. Proposals that demonstrate exemplary green infrastructure provision by striving to achieve nationally recognised accreditation schemes such as 'Building with Nature' will be supported and encouraged.

Urban Greening Factor

5. Major development proposals are encouraged to achieve target scores against the Urban Greening Factor for England:
 - a. 0.4 for predominantly residential development, and
 - b. 0.3 for predominantly non-residential development.

Policy CSE7: The Green and Blue Infrastructure Network

- 8.37. Swindon's growth over the 20th century and into the 21st is typified by low density outward spread of residential suburban development. Many of these areas embody the Garden City movement's ideas around the prevention of urban sprawl, utilising green wedges to provide separation. As a result, the borough not only has an extensive network of high-quality parks and gardens, but also a lot of opportunity 'amenity' greenspace integrated into the urban fabric, either already part of the Green Infrastructure network or waiting to be tied in.
- 8.38. Green Infrastructure (GI), including blue infrastructure refers to the integrated web of natural and semi-natural environments, aquatic features, and managed landscapes that form a versatile system across rural, semi-rural and urban settings. Swindon's GI network comprises a multitude of feature including parks and gardens, woodlands, cemeteries, canals, active travel routes, pedestrian links, green roofs, verges and other marginal green spaces across public and private land.
- 8.39. Across built-up areas Green Infrastructure can include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), green roofs, living walls, bioswales and trees. In combination these features all contribute to ecological connectivity, climate change resiliency, public health and social wellbeing.
- 8.40. Natural England's 'Why' or five benefit principles set out the importance of good quality and well managed green infrastructure. There are:
 - 8.40.1. Nature rich beautiful place
 - 8.40.2. Active and healthy places
 - 8.40.3. Thriving and prosperous places
 - 8.40.4. Improved water management

8.40.5. Resilient and climate positive places

- 8.41. The benefits of Green Infrastructure to Swindon are significantly greater when they are joined up. As such CSE7 and the Policies Map define the existing Green Infrastructure Network to protect existing green infrastructure from development, and to highlight opportunities where the network may be enhanced. The most recent Green Infrastructure Strategy provides a vision and framework for the Green Infrastructure Network.

Policy CSE7: The Green and Blue Infrastructure Network

1. The Borough's Green Infrastructure Network, as defined on the Policies Map and set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, will be protected, maintained and enhanced.
2. Development that would sever or diminish the value (which can include Placemaking / Ecological and Landscape value) of a Green Infrastructure corridor will not be permitted.
3. Proposals for development, including in all proposals for major development must:
 - a. identify opportunities to link areas of green infrastructure together, in line with the priorities set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, to fill gaps within the existing Green and Blue Infrastructure network;
 - b. provide new connections and enhancements to the existing Green and Blue Infrastructure network where this is practicable and, where the development falls adjacent to the network, ensure that the network is not severed by putting in place measures to maintain its functionality and connectivity;
 - c. pursue opportunities for the creation of new Green Infrastructure and its integration (in line with Policy CSE6);
 - d. not result in the loss or harm to any visually or ecologically important habitats or features; and
 - e. protect, enhance and secure net gains in biodiversity (in line with Policy CSE11).

Policy CSE8: Great Western Community Forest

- 8.42. The Great Western Community Forest (GWCF), founded in 1994, comprises a diverse mosaic of urban and rural landscapes, blending Swindon's green spaces with the rolling North Wessex Downs and the River Thames valleys.
- 8.43. The whole of Swindon Borough is within the Great Western Community Forest. It is one of the nine community forests set up around England to provide the benefits of being close to woodlands and forests to large urban population centres. The GWCF sits within the Western Forest. This National Forest spans Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Bristol and Somerset. The Western

Forest aims to support a greener and more connected landscape, with the vision to deliver a resilient future that will benefit the economy, nature and both rural and urban communities. The Western Forest includes several priority areas, of which “Upper Avon” and “Cotswolds to North Wessex Downs” fall within GWCF.

- 8.44. Development proposals are required to be consistent with the vision and objectives of the GWCF Plan 2025 or any successor documents, and policy CSE9 Trees. The overarching aims of the GWCF Plan are to:
- 8.44.1. Enhance: actively monitoring and managing woodland;
 - 8.44.2. Expand: tree planting and greening; and
 - 8.44.3. Engage: raising the Forest’s profile and educating people about its benefits.

Policy CSE8: Great Western Community Forest

1. Major development proposals must:
 - a. be consistent with the objectives of the Great Western Community Forest (GWCF) Plan. These objectives seek to ensure that GWCF:
 - b. maintains and increases canopy cover over all areas through woodland creation, maintenance and restoration;
 - c. enhances biodiversity through wildlife and landscape conservation and preservation;
 - d. supports the health and wellbeing of local communities;
 - e. supports education and sustainable employment; and,
 - f. contribute to green infrastructure solutions that address environmental challenges.
2. Ensure that there is a net increase in tree cover (in line with Policy CSE9) through an appropriate contribution to the planting of a meaningful quantum of new woodland and trees of landscape significance and, where appropriate, provide and contribute to cohesive canopy cover in the right locations, , considering relevant landscape, amenity, inclusivity, historic environment and biodiversity matters.
3. Ensure there is access to local woodlands and that there are opportunities for communities and businesses to benefit from GWCF.
4. Ensure they align with Green Infrastructure Policy CSE6.

Policy CSE9: Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

- 8.45. Trees provide essential services within the urban environment, including:
- 8.45.1. Mitigating urban heat island effect and improving air quality;

- 8.45.2. Positive benefits in relation to physical and mental health of those nearby;
 - 8.45.3. Promoting traffic-calming;
 - 8.45.4. Mitigating flooding events through the role they play in drainage;
 - 8.45.5. The positive correlation of trees with community cohesion; and
 - 8.45.6. Enhancement to the appearance and character of the local and wider landscape
- 8.46. Swindon Borough Council supports the planting of new trees, woodland and hedgerows as part of new developments as well as part of the overall increase in tree canopy across Swindon. Tree cover is currently around 14% with woodland cover at 8% for the whole of Wiltshire⁶.
- 8.47. Proposals are required to follow closely the guidance outlined in the Swindon Borough Council Tree Protection on Development Sites Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 8.48. The Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out the 'Right Tree, Right Place' principle, to which new planting and woodland creation should adhere. It ensures trees are suited to the site's conditions, landscape character, and intended purpose, maximising benefits while avoiding harm.

CSE9: Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

1. Development should protect and enhance visually or ecologically important habitats or features including trees, hedges and woodlands having regard to the guidance of the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: Tree Protection on Development Sites (or any successor strategy).
2. Existing habitats, trees, hedgerows, and woodland of value should be sympathetically integrated into the design of new development.
3. If planning permission is granted for a development which necessitates the removal of trees, their loss should be mitigated by new tree planting within the development at a ratio of at least 2:1, unless this is not feasible due to site constraints. Where site constraints do not allow the required number of replacement trees, off site planting sites should be considered.
4. Proposals for major development must meet a future canopy cover of at least 25% of the site through retention of existing trees/hedges and new

⁶ The whole of Swindon Borough is within the Great Western Community Forest which aims for 22% tree canopy cover by 2050

planting in line with the objectives of the Great Western Community Forest Plan.

5. Every effort should be made to meet the canopy cover requirement through retained and new trees on site but, where the provision of the requisite proportion of future canopy cover is determined by the Local Planning Authority not to be possible or desirable, contributions to off-site provision will be in line with Policy CSE8 Great Western Community Forest.
6. Ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and trees of local/landscape value are irreplaceable and should be retained. Development resulting in loss or deterioration must be justified by wholly exceptional reasons and be supported by a suitable compensation strategy.

Policy CSE10: Landscape

- 8.49. National Character Area (NCA) Profiles are published by Natural England and divide England in 159 distinct natural areas based on their landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic, cultural and economic characteristics. NCAs follow natural features in the landscape and describe the features which shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character. Swindon Borough has a varied landscape, spanning three National Character Areas ranging from the low-lying upper Thames clay vale in the north to the Midvale Ridge from the north east and the escarpment of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape in the south.
- 8.50. The Council is committed to ensuring that the intrinsic character and valued features of this landscape are protected and enhanced whilst enabling the sustainable growth necessary for communities and the economy to thrive. The policy aims to protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character of Swindon Borough, including the setting of settlements.
- 8.51. The Swindon Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2025) identifies a number of landscape character areas which are formed by the nature and geology of the area. The Assessment describes the key characteristics that define these landscapes and identifies valued features and characteristics. The Landscape Character Assessment will be used to assess the impact of relevant development proposals on the character of landscape, ensuring that landscape character and sensitivity are fully considered. It will need to be demonstrated how development proposals take into account and respond positively to the character of their surroundings. Particular regard must be had to the landscape's valued features and characteristics and to the landscape strategy for the local character area as set out in the Landscape Character Assessment.

National Landscape

- 8.52. The North Wessex Downs was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1972 under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949. Following the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Government confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent. Therefore, reflecting their national importance, in 2023 all AONBs became National Landscapes. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape is the third largest National Landscape in the country. It encompasses a diverse topography of chalk uplands and rolling vales that provide a critical rural setting for over 1.2 million residents in nearby urban centres, including Swindon. Across the National Landscape there are eight recognised Landscape Character types. These include Open Downland, Downland with Woodland, Wooded Plateau, High Chalk Plain, Downs Plain and Scarp, Vales, River Valleys and Lowland Mosaic. The Landscape Character Assessment (2025) provides further details on the landscape.
- 8.53. A Landscape Management Plan⁷ was produced for the North Wessex Downs National Landscape in November 2025. The Management Plan presents the vision and long-term ambitions for North Wessex Downs. The plan also presents the key issues facing the National Landscape and priorities for the plan and policies to guide and inform delivery of the Plan and the purpose of designation. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape Partnership has identified Partnership Goals and Strategic Objectives that support delivery of the Management Plan.

CSE10: Landscape

Development and Landscape

1. Development proposals must demonstrate that they conserve, and where possible, enhance the Borough's landscape character. Proposals should demonstrate:
 - a. how they have taken into account the most recent Landscape Character Assessment for the Borough, and any other adopted Landscape Studies including those informing made Neighbourhood Plans;
 - b. how any landscape harm has been avoided or mitigated through considering potential impacts on:
 - i. the intrinsic character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape, including form, features and topography;

⁷ North Wessex Downs National Landscape Partnership (2025) North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 [online] Available at: www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/NWDNL-Management-Plan-2025-30-FINAL-low-res-251110.pdf

- ii. views, visual amenity and the landscape setting, including views both in and out, visually sensitive skyline, geological and topographical features; and
 - iii. environmental amenity, including as tranquillity, noise, pollution and light pollution.
- 2. Where a proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on the landscape character or visual amenity of an area, a Landscape Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) will be required. LVIAs are encouraged to be informed by an appropriately detailed Environmental Colour Study.

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

- 3. Great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.
- 4. Planning permission for major development within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape will be refused unless, in exceptional circumstances, it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration should be given to:
 - a. the need for the development;
 - b. the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the National Landscape, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
 - c. any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities.
- 5. Proposals within or which affect the setting of North Wessex Downs National Landscape must complement the special qualities and the character of the landscape and must demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the most recent North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan. Any development in or affecting the NWDNL including its setting must:
 - a. provide a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment with reference to the National Landscape Areas most recent Management Plan and Landscape Character Assessment;
 - b. protect and safeguard the surrounding landscape of the NWDNL to avoid negative impacts on the designated area and its setting;
 - c. provide details of the colour palette and materials to be used, and explain how these have been informed by The North Wessex Downs “Colour guide 2021” or any subsequent update published; and
 - d. preserve the ‘Dark Skies’ character of the landscape through preventing or minimising light pollution. All proposals will be expected to demonstrate clear regard to the guidance set out in Dark Skies of the North Wessex Downs – A Guide to Good External Lighting (2021).

Policy CSE11: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 8.54. Sustainable development provides opportunities to enhance the natural environment for wildlife and Swindon's communities. The government's 25 Year Environment Plan⁸ recognises that to leave the environment in a better condition for the next generation, we need to restore and create wildlife habitats, looking beyond existing designated sites to the wider environment. The Local Plan seeks to respond to this challenge through a comprehensive range of measures aimed at ensuring that Swindon's biodiversity resources are protected and enhanced. The overarching aim is to deliver a significant net gain in the Borough's overall biodiversity value, and to enhance the ability of ecological networks to adapt to climate change. Other policies in the plan will support biodiversity improvements, particularly those relating to green infrastructure (Policy CSE6 and CSE7) and the quality of water bodies (policy CSE15).
- 8.55. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that seeks to ensure that habitats for wildlife are left in a better state than they were before the development as measured by using the Statutory Metric. A mandatory scheme of BNG for new development came into force in 2024. Qualifying developments must provide a mandatory minimum 10% gain in biodiversity under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). To help Swindon to achieve biodiversity gain from development, the council expects required development to achieve the statutory minimum biodiversity uplift in line with the latest Natural England's most recent biodiversity metric or any other successor.
- 8.56. Delivery of BNG must follow the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy and prioritise:
- a. Onsite delivery: where delivering habitat restoration, enhancement or creation on-site this should provide ecological connectivity with the wider habitat network, where possible contributing to local priorities as identified within the LNRS (to achieve the BNG Strategic Significance multiplier).
 - b. Offsite delivery: on an alternative suitable site, off-site delivery should prioritise strategic delivery of local nature recovery priorities identified in the LNRS within the Strategy area (to achieve the BNG Strategic Significance multiplier).
 - c. Statutory Biodiversity Credits: as a last resort, and where it is agreed by the local planning authority no suitable alternatives exist, through

⁸ [1] Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2018) *A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*

the purchase of an appropriate number of credits to compensate for the loss of biodiversity units on-site.

Nature Recovery

- 8.57. Landscape scale nature recovery requires a collaborative effort across communities, landowners and farmers, local government and business sectors. Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) are a new system of spatial strategies for nature, established by the Environment Act 2021. The Wiltshire and Swindon LNRS identifies areas of high biodiversity value (termed Areas of Particular Importance to Biodiversity (APIB)), and areas of local biodiversity priority, where it is considered most important and feasible to target habitat creation, extension and restoration (termed Areas that Could Become of importance for biodiversity (ACB)). Collectively with the mapped measures, the APIB and ACB form the Local Habitat Map. Proposals should take account of the LNRS and use this as a tool in spatial planning to address local challenges and pressures and identify opportunities for delivering the actions for nature recovery set out within the LNRS.
- 8.58. The LNRS should be used to inform the following:
 - 8.58.1. Application of Strategic Significance (using the layer within the Interactive Local Habitat Map) to inform BNG proposals
 - 8.58.2. green and blue infrastructure, nature-based solutions and ecological enhancements, which are aligned with the priorities and measures of the LNRS; and
 - 8.58.3. compensating for ecological and wider environmental impacts using actions defined within the LNRS.
- 8.59. The Council will seek opportunities to develop ecological networks, incorporating biodiversity in and around new developments through thoughtful design approaches, and will specifically support proposals which seek directly to contribute to nature recovery.
- 8.60. In many cases simple measures embedded within the built environment can ensure that growth provides an opportunity for nature recovery, offering a vital lifeline to some of the UK's most threatened species (e.g., priority bird species, bats, reptiles and hedgehogs). Such measures are of increasing importance with many new homes and associated land offering little value to wildlife, facilitating declines in some species. The incorporation of swift bricks is particularly important in this context because swifts rely on urban cavities for nesting, and the national loss of suitable nesting sites through building renovation has been part of the reason for the species' decline. Developments should include integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks). Nest boxes can provide important habitat for other species as well as swifts, such as starlings and sparrows.
- 8.61. National policy makes it clear that plans should promote the recovery of protected species. This policy seeks to ensure measures are put in place to optimise the opportunity development can represent to the natural world and

priority species. Development must demonstrate how opportunities have been maximised to integrate nature recovery into the built environment.

- 8.62. As such, developments will be required to incorporate measures to achieve this which could include (but is not limited to):
- a. integral bird nesting bricks (such as swift bricks) and boxes in accordance with BS 42021:2022 British Standard for integral nest boxes, located on a north or east elevation. Where possible, with the general aim across a development of a minimum of one nest box per unit;
 - b. integral bat boxes. The number and type of alternative bat roost features required should be informed by an ecological survey;
 - c. provision of overhanging eaves suitable for nesting house martins in all major development, supplemented by the provision of nest cups;
 - d. hedgehog highways integrated throughout developments, with suitable gaps in all fences between gardens and the wider ecological network to facilitate movement of protected species; and
 - e. integrating naturalised surface level SuDS as nature-based solutions within housing development as part of green infrastructure provision, which supports biodiversity.
- 8.63. All external lighting in developments should be in accordance with 'Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night', Guidance Note 08/23, (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2023), or as superseded, and a Guide to good External Lighting (North Wessex Downs AONB, 2021) in the National Landscape, for light-sensitive wildlife.

Table 6: Site Designation Types

Designation Type	Site data
Internationally/ European designated sites	Although there are no international/European sites within the Borough, potential cross-boundary and in-combination impacts of plans and projects, including proposed development, upon European sites outside of the Borough must be assessed via Habitats Regulations Assessment. These sites include Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar sites (and potential sites); and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on internationally designated sites. <u>North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC</u>

	The Interim North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Mitigation Strategy sets out the strategic approach to mitigate recreational impacts associated with new development on the North Meadow part of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation. The following types of development are likely to cause detrimental impacts on the SAC if they occur within one of the Zones of Interest: a. All residential units (i.e. C3 Use Class); b. Residential/holiday/guest annexes; c. Houses in Multiple Occupation (sui generis); d. Residential institutions within the C2 Use Class where the residents are not severely restricted by illness or mobility; e. Student accommodation; f. Sites for Gypsy, Roma, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople; g. Tourist accommodation, including hotels, self-catering, caravan and touring holiday accommodation; and h. Any other type of development that may lead to an increase in visitors to the SAC.
Nationally designated sites	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) of which there are several across Swindon, and National Nature Reserves of which the nearest lies in the neighbouring borough of Wiltshire.
Irreplaceable habitats ¹⁰	Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees , hedgerows derived from ancient woodland, species-rich grassland, lowland fens and other habitats defined, in line with Government guidance ^[1] .
Locally designated sites	Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, County Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites.
Protected and priority species and habitats	European protected species and habitats, and UK protected and/or priority species and habitats.

- 8.64. Where protected species are likely to occur, development proposals should be accompanied by a protected species survey undertaken by a competent and suitably qualified ecologist and submitted with an application.

Policy CSE11: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

1. Opportunities to conserve, protect, enhance and recover biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitats connectivity will be undertaken, including the preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations. Regard will be had to the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Network Map to inform opportunities for nature recovery.
2. Development proposals should demonstrate how the mitigation hierarchy has been sequentially applied. If harm resulting from development cannot be avoided (through locating development on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for, then development will not be supported.
3. Development proposals affecting sites identified in Table 6 must demonstrate that they will be protected commensurate with their designation or status. Applicants will need to obtain advice from a qualified ecologist who is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

Biodiversity Net Gain

4. Proposals for development (except where exemptions, modifications or exclusions have been made by legislation) must demonstrate how they will achieve at least the statutory minimum 10% uplift as calculated by Natural England's most recent Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Additionally, where statutory net gain is required, proposals should demonstrate that habitat management and monitoring has been secured in perpetuity (minimum of 30 years).
5. Planning applications should include a proposed strategy for delivering biodiversity net gain which demonstrates how the following hierarchy for delivery will be applied:
 - a. on-site delivery (within red line boundary of development), and/or;
 - b. off-site (through delivery of biodiversity net gain off-site outside the red line boundary but within the blue line boundary, or through purchasing biodiversity units from a new or existing registered net gain site), and/or;
 - c. contribution in-lieu (purchase of Statutory Biodiversity Credits where this has been agreed by the Council as no alternatives exist). In all cases, the proposed strategy for delivering biodiversity net gain must align with the LNRS.

6. To utilise a lesser priority location for delivery, appropriate evidence shall be provided that demonstrates all higher priority locations have been utilised to the maximum extent practicable. Higher cost alone shall not be a reason to utilise lower priority locations; In all cases the delivery route must align with the LNRS.
7. In cases where statutory net gain does not apply, development must protect and enhance biodiversity and provide net local biodiversity gain. Where this is demonstrably not achievable, mitigation and compensation measures will be agreed.

North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC

8. Within the defined Zone of Influence as shown on the Policies Map, development that results in a net increase in residential dwellings, tourist accommodation, student accommodation, Gypsy and Traveller sites, or other development which may generate recreational impact on the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (SAC), must make the appropriate mitigation contribution as set out in the Interim North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Mitigation Strategy⁹ or any subsequent update. Mitigation measures include:
 - a. Financial contributions toward Strategic Access Management Measures (SAMM);
 - b. Within the 4.2km of the North Meadow SAC, proposals of 50 units or above will normally be expected to provide sufficient natural recreational greenspace on site to ensure that residents do not impact upon the SAC. For proposals of below 50 units, or where on-site mitigation is not possible, then financial contributions will be made toward strategic alternative green space infrastructure projects; and
 - c. Within the Outer Zone of Influence (4.2 – 9.4 km) larger development that triggers EIA regulations may also be required to deliver SANG/make strategic alternative green space infrastructure project contributions. This will be decided on a case-by case basis in consultation with Natural England.
9. Proposals located beyond the defined Zone of Influence that trigger EIA regulations will require consultation with Natural England to determine mitigation required on a case-by-case basis.

River Lambourne SSSI/SAC

10. Proposals for development where there is a net increase in overnight accommodation; new agricultural development that will lead to an increase in intensity and provide additional nutrients to wastewater; development there is likely to create a large amount of wastewater; or which are located within the hydrological catchments of the River Lambourn SSSI/SAC are required to demonstrate 'nutrient neutrality'.
11. A Habitats Regulation Assessment will be required to demonstrate that appropriate mitigation is secured to ensure that the project will not lead to a negative impact on the ecological integrity of the SAC.
12. Where proposals for development are close to the boundary of a catchment, consideration will need to be given to whether the wastewater drains into or outside of the catchment.

Ecological Assessments and species enhancements

13. Proposals for development must, in addition to Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, assess the ecological impact of the development to ensure that adequate mitigation, compensation and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are incorporated. Where protected species may occur, development proposals should be accompanied by a protected species survey undertaken by a competent and suitably qualified ecologist and submitted as part of an ecological assessment.
14. Enhancements must be targeted to relevant local receptors and species priority measures identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This may include the provision of suitable habitat features such as nest and roost boxes for nesting birds, bats, insects such as bees and other pollinators and allows movement of species such as by incorporating hedgehog highways.

Policy CSE12: Managing Flood Risk

- 8.65. As part of the transition to net zero, all potential climate impacts need to be accounted for including flood risk.
- 8.66. New development must be designed to avoid and minimise flood risk from all sources, including fluvial, tidal, surface water, and groundwater flooding. It is essential that development does not increase flood risk to surrounding areas, particularly in urban environments where impermeable surfaces can exacerbate surface water runoff. All developments are therefore required to incorporate measures that reduce the risk of surface water flooding, it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.
- 8.67. Development in Swindon Borough must be guided by a robust understanding of flood risk, informed by the borough's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The SFRA provides a detailed analysis of flood hazards across the

Borough and supports the application of the sequential and exception tests as set out in the NPPF and its technical guidance. These tests ensure that development is directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding and that, where development in such areas is necessary, it is safe, resilient, and does not exacerbate flood risk elsewhere.

- 8.68. The NPPF classifies the vulnerability of development to flooding into five categories. Of these, particularly highly vulnerable and more vulnerable development should be steered towards areas of lower flood risk. Where development does come forward in areas of higher flood risk, this should only be following an exceptions test demonstrating that the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk and that the development would be safe for its lifetime.
- 8.69. Where the exceptions test is followed, the following relevant mitigation measures are required:
 - 8.69.1. Set finished floor levels 300mm above the known or modelled 1 in 100 annual probability (1% AEP) flood level including the appropriate allowance for climate change. Other management and mitigation measures must be implemented as appropriate and be in accordance with the most up to date CIRIA guidance (or its comparable successor) and the latest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Levels 1 and 2).
 - 8.69.2. Where a potential risk of groundwater is identified, manage the risk through suitable waterproof sealing of any low level/basement areas in accordance with CIRIA guidance, appropriate drainage and/or the raising of entry thresholds to mitigate possible damage. The adopted design will need to ensure that it does not result in any worsening to the risk posed to adjoining properties.
 - 8.69.3. Implement appropriate safety measures in accordance with the SFRA Level 1 and 2 specifically in relation to finished floor levels, access/escape routes, places of safety and emergency planning.
- 8.70. Further guidance on the available measures and their application in new development is detailed in the guidance document 'Improving the Flood Performance of New Buildings – Flood Resilient Construction' (published in 2007, updated in 2021) jointly produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the EA and DEFRA.
- 8.71. Where a development site encroaches within the modelled 1 in 100 (1%) annual 'probability plus' allowance for climate change floodplain, a floodplain storage analysis must be undertaken as part of any site-specific FRA to compare the floodplain capacity pre- and post- development and must demonstrate that no detrimental impact and ideally an improvement over the existing situation.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- 8.72. A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) is a sequence of water management components put together to help to absorb excess rainfall, minimise the pollution of urban run-off and improve water quality. It provides a more sustainable approach to managing rainfall by mimicking the way water moves naturally through a site.
- 8.73. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) play a vital role in managing surface water runoff and reducing flood risk. All major developments and non-major developments involving new buildings, (excluding extensions and change of use applications) are required to incorporate SuDS. The council's Green Infrastructure Strategy should be applied to make use of opportunities which could alleviate water runoff whilst achieving other benefits such as temperature regulation, improving health and wellbeing and improving biodiversity.
- 8.74. The updated National Standards published by DEFRA (2025) emphasise a natural approach to water management, encouraging the use of surface based and vegetated features. These features not only manage water effectively but also contribute to biodiversity, amenity, and climate resilience. Developments should aim to achieve greenfield runoff rates and demonstrate that all opportunities to minimise site runoff have been explored. Land used for SUDs, particularly with a flood water capture function, will not be included within calculation for open space developer contribution.
- 8.75. The National Standards also make active rainwater harvesting (RWH) a top priority for new developments, aimed at managing the "first flush" of rainfall (first 5mm) to reduce flood risk and improve water quality. RWH is ranked highest in the discharge hierarchy—above infiltration—meaning water must be collected for non-potable use where feasible.

Policy CSE12: Managing Flood Risk

1. Proposals for development must:
 - a. be informed by the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and apply the sequential and if necessary, the exceptions tests as detailed in the NPPF and accompanying Technical Guidance, taking into account the potential impacts of climate change;
 - b. avoid and minimise the risk of flooding from all sources and not increase flood risk elsewhere;
 - c. use opportunities provided by new development and infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding;
 - d. maximise the use of natural flood management techniques;
 - e. be safe over the lifetime of the development, taking into account the increased risk of flooding due to climate change; and
 - f. be accompanied by a drainage strategy that demonstrates the safe discharge of surface from a development, taking in its effect on

groundwater, which must be managed in a sustainable and co-ordinated way that mimics the natural drainage network.

2. Developments which fall into the following categories must be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment:
 - a. Any developments in Flood Zones 2 and 3
 - b. Greater than 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1
 - c. Land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems
 - d. Land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future
 - e. Land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use.
3. Certain areas are, as required by the Environment Agency, to be safeguarded for the implementation of flood risk management measures. The detailed boundaries of these are identified on the Policies Map. Proposals for development affecting this land will require consultation with the Environment Agency.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

4. All major developments and non-major developments involving new buildings must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which must follow the National Standards. The design must follow the hierarchy for sustainable drainage as set out in the National Standards by prioritising water re-use measures such as rainwater harvesting. These should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible by enhancing amenity, water quality and biodiversity. Proposals for SuDS should include arrangements for their long-term maintenance and incorporate nature-based solutions where possible, as informed by the LNRS. In all relevant cases, on-site surface water is to be managed as close to source as possible.

Policy CSE13: Protection and Enhancement of the Water Environment

- 8.76. Watercourses are vital to biodiversity, provide a unique range of habitats, act as wildlife corridors, and form an important element of Swindon Borough's ecological network. They make a significant contribution towards the character of our landscape and form an important part of Green Infrastructure. They provide vital ecosystem services, help improve water quality, provide drainage and flood management and provide green space for informal recreation. It is essential that watercourses are positively integrated into the design of new development from the outset to protect their ecological importance and retain and enhance biodiversity.

- 8.77. Watercourse buffer zones are required to avoid disturbance associated with development. Proposals should include long term management plans for any buffer zones required, which will set out how ecological benefits will be sustained. Only native species should be planted within the buffer zone. The buffer zone should be appropriately managed under a scheme agreed (in writing) by the council. This scheme will detail how the buffer zone is to be managed during and following construction, as well as detailing the responsible party(s).
- 8.78. Lighting within or adjacent to river corridors should be directional and shielded using cowls (or equivalent) to prevent light spill into the watercourse and buffer zone. In line with the 2023 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night guidance, light levels in these areas should not exceed 2 lux to reflect natural nighttime conditions and prevent disruption to nocturnal species and fragmentation of wildlife corridors.
- 8.79. Policy CSE13 identifies that development proposals adjacent to or containing a watercourse should pursue opportunities to enhance the physical habitat of the watercourse. Examples may include:
- 8.79.1. restoring floodplain connectivity to improve natural flood storage and reduce flood risk;
 - 8.79.2. introducing in-channel features like riffles, pools, and woody debris to promote flow diversity and habitat complexity;
 - 8.79.3. in areas where applicable, development initiatives should proactively seek to remove barriers (i.e., weirs) within the river channel or associated riparian corridor. The removal of these obstacles will alleviate threats to fish passage, to enhance the connectivity of the watercourse and ultimately support the movement and proliferation of aquatic life; and
 - 8.79.4. new crossings over a watercourse should be clear span bridges, ensuring minimal disturbance to the natural flow and ecological network of the watercourse. Additionally, developments should strive to minimize the number of crossings proposed.
- 8.80. Proposals for hard engineering approaches to riverbank protection, such as sheet piling, will be discouraged. Soft engineering approaches should be used wherever possible.

CSE13: Protection and Enhancement of the Water Environment

1. River corridors will continue to be protected and enhanced to ensure local water bodies meet good ecological status through the following measures:
 - a. planning permission will only be granted for development proposals which would not have an adverse impact on the functions and conditions of any watercourse and its associated corridor;

- b. development should conserve and enhance the biodiversity, landscape and recreational value of the watercourse and its corridor through good design, and where there are opportunities to deliver Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives these should be incorporated;
 - c. enhancements to river corridors and floodplains, including river restoration and natural flood management measures, should be informed by the LNRS and catchment management plans;
 - d. development proposals adjacent to or containing watercourse must provide or retain a buffer zone with a minimum width of 10 metres along both sides of the watercourse between the top of the riverbank and the proposed built development (excluding domestic gardens and formal landscaping). The buffer zone should be appropriately managed under a scheme agreed with the Local Planning Authority and Environment Agency as appropriate;
 - e. where existing development encroaches into the 10-metre buffer zone, proposals for redevelopment or land use change should seek to re-establish an appropriately vegetated and ecologically functional 10-metre buffer. Opportunities to restore natural form and connectivity should be prioritised in line with the principles of biodiversity net gain (Policy CSE11: Biodiversity, geodiversity and Nature recovery) and climate adaptation (Policy CSE1: Adaptation to Climate Change);
 - f. all proposed artificial lighting within or adjacent to river corridors must be designed to avoid ecological harm; and
 - g. development proposals adjacent to or containing a watercourse should pursue opportunities to enhance the physical habitat of the watercourse.
2. New development should actively pursue opportunities for de-culverting of watercourses. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals which do not involve the culverting of watercourses, and which do not prejudice future opportunities for de-culverting (i.e., building over existing culverts).

Policy CSE14: Unstable Land

- 8.81. In certain parts of the plan area difficulties may be experienced in developing land due to instability of the ground, and in these areas, it will normally be necessary to take full account of the ground conditions prior to the determination of planning applications and/or the commencement of development.
- 8.82. The effects of ground instability vary considerably in their nature, scale and extent. Most commonly they are of a minor nature and occur very infrequently. However, in the most extreme circumstances they may threaten health and safety or cause severe damage to unprotected buildings and structures. In

many instances the proposed development may itself exacerbate any existing or potential instability, for example, by increased loading, excavation or changes to local groundwater conditions.

- 8.83. When planning permission is applied for it is the developer and/or landowner who is responsible for ensuring that the land is physically suitable for development or can be made so. Therefore, in appropriate cases the Council may require planning applications to be supported by a ground stability report describing and analysing the issues relevant to ground instability and indicating how any foreseeable problems would be overcome.
- 8.84. The nature of potential land instability is that, in most instances, it should be possible to overcome any difficulties, or at least reduce them to an acceptable level, through appropriate investigation and mitigation measures and/or through the careful design and placing of development.

Policy CSE14: Unstable Land

1. Development of land that is either known to be unstable, or is strongly suspected of instability because of its previously history or geology, will only be permitted when:
 - a. the extent of any proposed remedial measure required to achieve a level of land stability suitable for the proposed use, capable of supporting future development loads has been identified; and
 - b. the nature of the land stability has been assessed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, and the land stability evaluation report has been provided and agreed with the Council prior to the determination of an application.
2. Where planning permission is granted, conditions may be imposed requiring the execution of any necessary remedial works.

Policy CSE15: Contaminated Land

- 8.85. Land may be affected by contamination if substances present in, on or under the land are actually or potentially hazardous to people or the environment. The presence of contamination does not necessarily present an unacceptable risk. Risk exists when a source (a contaminant) and a receptor (e.g. people, groundwater, wildlife) both exist at a site with a pathway linking the two. Contamination may be present in various forms, including chemical, biological or radioactive. Current and former landfill sites are also classed as contaminated land. Development can create risk by introducing new pathways and by introducing new receptors.
- 8.86. The role of the planning process is to ensure that land is made suitable for its proposed future use. The NPPF aims to encourage sustainable development and the reuse of previously developed land but also states that the effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, the natural environment

or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution, should be taken into account.

- 8.87. In April 2000, Part 2a of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 came into force introducing a regime for the regulation of contaminated land in England. The main purpose of Part 2a is to provide a system for the identification of land that is posing unacceptable risks to health or the environment, and for securing remediation where unacceptable risks cannot be controlled by other means. It imposes a duty on local authorities to identify and record on a register the location of contaminated land within their area. The methodology behind this is set out in the Swindon Borough Council Contaminated Land Strategy (2023). In assessing whether land contamination or stability is an issue to be taken into account when a planning application is submitted, the Council will have regard to a range of information sources including its database of potentially contaminated sites.
- 8.88. Where there is evidence of contamination, remedial measures to overcome any unacceptable risks to health or the environment, taking into account the actual or intended use of the site, must be identified and satisfactorily implemented. Additionally, after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Policy CSE15: Contaminated Land

1. Proposals for development on land that is either contaminated, or is strongly suspected of being contaminated, shall only be permitted when:
 - a. a contaminated land site evaluation, investigation and risk assessment, completed in accordance with best practice guidelines has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This will identify and evaluate all contamination sources, pathways, receptors and plausible contaminant linkages;
 - b. a remediation strategy and verification plan has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This will outline all the remedial measures required to achieve an approved standard of land and water quality suitable for the proposed end uses;
 - c. A construction environment management plan (CEMP) has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This will detail the steps and methods used to prevent any contaminants from being released and/or polluting any receptors, during and after construction; and
 - d. appropriate measures are taken to ensure that migrating gas is safely dealt with where development is proposed on land adjacent to an uncontrolled 'gassing' landfill site.
2. It must be demonstrated that the completed development will not expose people, property, the environment, or any other receptors to contamination

which would give rise to unacceptable risks or harm to health or other adverse impacts to receptors.

3. Where planning permission is granted, conditions may be imposed requiring the submission and approval of the reports outlined above, and the execution of any necessary remedial works.

Policy CSE16: Pollution

- 8.89. Pollution erodes the quality of the natural environment and can negatively impact on human health and local economic growth. The quality of the built environment is one of the primary factors that can influence the wider determinants of physical and mental health. Pollution can be a significant consideration in new development, whether it is pollution that may arise from the proposed development, or development which is sensitive to pollution. The consequences of pollution in these scenarios are that harm to human health or quality of life may arise if there is exposure to it.
- 8.90. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that where pollution is a foreseeable consideration, the approach to investigating these concerns is consistent. Where there is likely to be some pollution related impact, quantifying this is vital to determining whether proposed development could be acceptable or not, or how it may impact the design of the scheme.
- 8.91. Development should not give rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life such as through artificial light, odour or noise and areas of tranquillity should be protected. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information, including the latest legislation and any successors. In assessing and considering the acceptability of proposed development, and where pollution would be caused by the development, or where the development would be sensitive to pollution, all information relating to the likely impacts should accompany any application for development. The absence of sufficient supporting information may lead to an application being refused.

Noise and Nuisance

- 8.92. Noise sources that are often relevant to development proposals and subsequent impact may include, traffic (road, rail and air), the use of mechanical (fixed or mobile) plant associated with industrial, commercial activities and premises, or other miscellaneous noise sources e.g. associated with an industrial activity. Should development give rise to, or be sensitive to, noise from one or more of the examples noted above, its impact must be assessed in line with current recognised methods and guidance. This could be where noise would be caused by the proposed development, or the proposed development would be exposed to existing noise sources.
- 8.93. A noise and vibration assessment and a Construction Environmental Management Plan will be required to support major development applications.

- 8.94. Tranquil areas (such as areas defined with the North Wessex Downs National Landscape) which have remained relatively undisturbed from noise and are recognised for their recreational and amenity value should be protected from developments which would significantly adversely impact on their tranquillity.

Air Quality

- 8.95. Concerns surrounding air quality and its potential impact on health primarily stem from situations where proposed development would be located near busy and congested roads. However, it also relates to situations where odour is associated with particular commercial, industrial, agricultural or sewage related activities which may affect quality of life.
- 8.96. Design measures to reduce the impact of air quality may include altering the siting, orientation and/or massing of buildings to avoid trapping air pollution in canyons; and be designed to minimise the potential for air pollution to become trapped close to the ground. requiring the creation of landscape buffers between air pollution sources and receptors, including on routes that pedestrians and cyclists would be expected to use.
- 8.97. Building layout should locate habitable accommodation away from busy roads; requiring roadside habitable room windows to be non-openable and alternative means of ventilation to be provided; ensuring point sources of air pollution are suitably ventilated away from receptors. Design solutions should not undermine the
- 8.98. With regard to reduction measures, this may include the provision of on-site electric vehicle charging points and car club spaces; enhancements to bicycle infrastructure; enhanced walking routes, site travel plans (including public transport); the planting of street trees.
- 8.99. Cumulative impacts of development on air quality, including Air Quality Management Areas and areas at risk of exceeding relevant limit values for air pollution, will be considered in determining planning applications. Major development proposals which would impact upon areas identified at being at risk of non-compliance with limit values, as evidenced by data and trends in the Council's Air Quality Annual Status Reports or may create other areas of non-compliance will need to be supported by an air quality assessment. The assessment must consider any potential cumulative impacts as a result of known proposals in the vicinity of the proposed development site and should consider pollutant emissions generated by the development.

Water Quality

- 8.100. This policy aims to ensure the protection of groundwater and surface water quality. Our water resources provide drinking water, sustain crucial habitats for many different types of wildlife, and are an important resource for industry and recreation. Protecting and improving the water environment is an important part of achieving sustainable development and is vital for the long-term health, wellbeing and prosperity of everyone.

- 8.101. The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) became part of UK law in 2003 with the primary objectives of achieving good ecological status in water bodies and providing protection for drinking water sources and protected sites (Natura 200 sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest). These requirements are reflected in the Environment Agency's river basin management plans, with the Thames River Basin Management Plan covering Swindon Borough.
- 8.102. The Water Cycle Study Scoping Report (2025) identified that of the 16 surface water bodies assessed through the WFD, 5 are currently considered as having 'Poor' overall ecological status. For groundwater bodies, of the 4 groundwater bodies intersecting the Borough, 3 are currently classified as having 'Poor' overall ecological status.
- 8.103. The Council, in conjunction with the Environment Agency, will resist development that threatens water quality, and will encourage initiatives that result in an improvement of water quality and the capacity of surface waters to support wildlife.

Policy CSE16: Pollution

1. All proposals for development must:
 - a. minimise nuisance resulting from development;
 - b. manage and mitigate the impacts of any nuisance generated through the operation of the development (such as noise, vibrations, odour, fumes and dust pollution) on people and the built and natural environment over the life of the development; and
 - c. ensure noise-sensitive and air quality-sensitive development is directed to appropriate locations, and that they are protected against any existing and proposed sources of noise and air pollution through careful design, layout and use of materials and adequate insulation.
2. Development proposals, alone or cumulatively, must be designed in order to reduce any significant adverse impacts from pollution, and avoid creating new significant impacts on any of the following receptors:
 - a. human health and wellbeing;
 - b. biodiversity, and Biodiversity Assets protected under the Habitats Regulations;
 - c. the water environment;
 - d. the effective operation of neighbouring land uses; and
 - e. an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) or areas at risk of exceeding relevant limit values.
3. Where a proposal could be subject to adverse impacts due to pollution or disturbance, by reason of its proximity to an existing business or community facility, the 'agent of change' principle applies. In such

circumstances the onus will be on the promoter of the new development to demonstrate that there will be suitable mitigation provided to protect the amenity of the future occupants.

Air Quality

4. Proposals within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), in a location likely to generate motor vehicle journeys through an AQMA or an area at risk of becoming an AQMA must demonstrate:
 - a. there is no adverse effect on air quality in an AQMA;
 - b. pollution levels within the AQMA will not have a significant adverse effect on the proposed use/users;
 - c. the development will not lead to the declaration of a new AQMA;
 - d. the development will not interfere with the implementation of the current Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP);
 - e. any sources of emissions to air, odours and fugitive dusts generated by the development are adequately mitigated so as not to lead to loss of amenity for existing and future occupants and land uses; and
 - f. any impacts on the proposed use from existing poor air quality, odour and emissions are appropriately monitored and mitigated by the developer.

Water Quality

5. Development proposals that would result in a deterioration in the chemical or ecological status/potential of a waterbody or prevent improvements to the chemical or ecological status/potential, will not be permitted.
6. Development proposals that contain or are in the vicinity of a waterbody are required to demonstrate that they have explored opportunities to improve its chemical and ecological status/potential. Where a waterbody is covered by the Water Environment Regulations, proposals are required to align with the objectives of the Thames river basin district River Basin Management Plan.

9. A HEALTHY & SOCIAL SWINDON



9. A HEALTHY & SOCIAL SWINDON

Introduction

- 9.1. Swindon's Local Plan plays a key role in addressing the Council's health and wellbeing priorities set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2033.
- 9.2. The Council supports a holistic approach to health and wellbeing, extending beyond the provision of health infrastructure and acknowledging the role the built environment plays in delivering healthy living. This also encompasses the need for opportunities for social connection and a high-quality environment.
- 9.3. Policies across the whole plan contribute to the creation of healthy places. This is achieved through improving active travel, including green links and walking and cycling infrastructure, and supporting the creation of an improved food environment. The Plan supports the right mix of housing tenure, delivers new jobs throughout a wide range of sectors and provides accessible new services incorporated within new development. In addition, the council endeavours to reduce air and noise pollution and deficiencies in provision of both open space quantum and quality.

Policy HL1: Health Impact Assessments

- 9.4. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) considers the potential effects of a plan or project on health and health inequalities. When evaluating these effects, a HIA focuses directly on the following areas or broad determinants of health:
 - 9.4.1. Housing (including quality and design)
 - 9.4.2. Access to public spaces, open spaces, sports and leisure
 - 9.4.3. Accessibility and active travel
 - 9.4.4. Access to healthcare services and other social infrastructure
 - 9.4.5. Access to healthy foods
 - 9.4.6. Environmental hazards
 - 9.4.7. Crime reduction and community safety
 - 9.4.8. Access to employment
 - 9.4.9. Equality and social cohesion
 - 9.4.10. Climate change
- 9.5. A HIA should ensure that the impacts of new development on health are fully understood, and identifies actions to maximise positive outcomes, and mitigate and reduce any adverse impacts. This is particularly the case for larger scale development and development associated with adverse effects to health and health inequality (hot food takeaways and uses associated with gambling and pay-day loans). Such adverse uses require careful consideration regarding their cumulative impacts.

- 9.6. Swindon is ranked as the 98th most deprived of 151 Upper Tier Local Authorities in England¹⁰, with 12 areas within the 10% most deprived in England. The Borough also suffers from higher levels of obesity than the national average¹¹. Therefore, further action is needed to address health inequalities, and Health Impact Assessments will be an important tool in supporting healthier choices for both adults and children in Swindon.
- 9.7. HIAs should form part of the material submitted to support the relevant planning application. Public Health England's 'Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning'¹² document contains guidance and information to assist with the implementation of the policy and a scoping framework for developer's reference.

Policy HL1: Health Impact Assessments

1. All major development proposals will be expected to positively design for creating healthy places with reference to the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.
2. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is required to be submitted as part of the planning application for major development proposals of over 100 dwellings, development (not involving housing) where the area exceeds 5 ha, and for developments which contain any of the following uses:
 - a. hot food takeaways/hot food outlets within 400 metres/10 minutes walking distance of where young people congregate, including primary and secondary schools;
 - b. new betting shops, gaming arcades, casinos and amusement arcades; and
 - c. public houses or retail units where the off sales of alcohol can be reasonably expected
3. The analysis within the HIA should be of a sufficient level of detail to allow the Council to assess the potential impacts of the development on the health of the Borough and its residents. As a minimum, the assessment should include the following:
 - a. a description of the physical characteristics of the proposed development site and surrounding area, including the current use;
 - b. identification of relevant population groups that could be affected by the development and associated health issues, inequalities and priorities in the area, which should be supported with appropriate evidence/data;

¹⁰ [Swindon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

¹¹ [Local Authority Health Profiles - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

¹² [Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning - GOV.UK](#)

- c. an assessment of the impacts of the proposal on the identified population groups and local health issues, inequalities and priorities, including any potential positive and negative impacts, along with any mitigation measures incorporated into the design to reduce identified negative outcomes; and
 - d. details of monitoring which will be undertaken in relation to the proposed mitigation implemented.
4. The level of detail should be proportionate to the scale of the development and agreed with the relevant case officer.

Policy HL2: Concentration of Uses

- 9.8. It is recognised that certain harmful retail uses of spaces such as betting shops and fast-food outlets, contribute negatively to public health and can have a demonstrably detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of communities. A proliferation of these uses is shown to contribute to financial distress, poor diets and to exacerbate mental health challenges and addictions which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable. This works directly against the core aims of the Swindon Health and Wellbeing Strategy to prevent ill health and reduce health inequalities.
- 9.9. Concentrations of betting shops for example, frequently occur in areas with existing high levels of deprivation, which work to compound those localised health inequalities. These uses also limit the diversity of the street-fronting retail spaces in turn reducing the available space for useful local services such as pharmacies. Uses such as betting shops are associated with localised perceptions of unsafety and with increased levels of antisocial behaviour.
- 9.10. Applications for uses such as fast food, betting shops and other uses associated with higher levels of harm will be required to submit a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and will be resisted where there is a cluster of similar and other uses deemed potentially harmful to public health.

Policy HL2: Concentration of Uses

1. To reduce health inequality, nuisance and to preserve current and future residential amenity, the Council will resist the over-concentrations of betting shops, adult gaming centres, amusement arcades, pawnbrokers, fast food outlets, hot foot vending vehicles and pay day loan shops.
2. The Council will not permit proposals for these uses that are:
 - a. not accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment;
 - b. have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity in terms of noise, vibrations, traffic disturbances and litter; or

- c. excepting hot food vending vehicles, do not provide active frontages that have a positive visual impact on the street scene.

Policy HL3: Protecting Open Spaces, Sports and Recreational Facilities

- 9.11. Swindon is characterised by an extensive and well-integrated network of high-quality green infrastructure. Open spaces including parks and gardens, allotments, outdoor pitches and amenity greenspaces enable communities to live healthy lives. The Swindon Plan identifies a need to build a fairer, better and greener Swindon and this plan recognises that the Borough's open spaces play a key role in contributing to each of these missions and the physical and mental health of Swindon's residents.
- 9.12. HL3 recognises that retaining existing open space is important to communities and their ability to lead healthy lives. HL3 ensures that open spaces are protected against development except in instances where provision will be replaced with equal or improved open space, or where provision is no longer needed or no longer serves the community.
- 9.13. Planning policies like HL3 should be based on a robust and up-to-date assessment of the need for open spaces NPPF (2024). The Borough's open spaces have been audited and assessed through the Open Space Assessment 2026. This assessment gives the council a baseline understanding of the amount and quality of open space in the Borough to ensure that new or improved open spaces are directed towards the areas most in need, and that proposals which dispose of open space are resisted where there are deficiencies.

Policy HL3: Protecting Open Spaces, Sports and Recreational Facilities

1. The Council will protect, maintain and, where possible, enhance existing open space, sports and recreational facilities.
2. The Borough's Open Spaces are identified on the Policies Map and include parks and gardens, play spaces, natural and semi-natural green spaces, amenity green spaces, outdoor sports, churchyards and cemeteries, green corridors, and allotments, orchards and community grow spaces.
3. Development proposals that result in the loss of open space, sports and recreational facilities will only be permitted where:
 - a. an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - b. the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of accessibility, quantity, and quality in a suitable location; or

- c. the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
- 4. Any replacement provision provided under criterion 3b of this policy will be subject to other relevant policies in this Plan.

Policy HL4: Open Space in New Developments

- 9.14. New residential development proposals for schemes over 25 dwellings are required to provide on-site open space, the quantity and quality of which is outlined council's most recent open space standards.
- 9.15. Where it can be justified that on-site provision isn't possible, contributions for off-site provision of deficient typologies, or quality and accessibility enhancements to existing open space will be sought. Open space proposals will need to address qualitative and quantitative deficiencies identified in the Open Space Assessment 2026 including improving accessibility metrics.
- 9.16. The amount, type to be provided should also be based on the standards outlined in the Open Space Assessment 2026, addressing typological deficiencies where they exist. In addressing typological deficiencies particular attention should be paid to deficiencies in allotments, play, parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural greenspace.
- 9.17. Developers are encouraged in the first instance to engage with town and parish councils before setting up a company to manage new public open spaces. The town or parish council should also be consulted early in the process on the type, design and layout of new public spaces.
- 9.18. All other requirements for outdoor sport and play facilities are in addition to these core Open Space standards.

Policy HL4: Open Space in New Developments

- 1. All proposals for major residential development will be required to contribute to the provision of public open space.
- 2. Development should increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space according to the standards in [Appendix X](#) as identified in Open Space Assessment (2026). [\[Detailed open space requirements to be added prior to Regulation 19 Publication Period\]](#).
- 3. New open space should be delivered on site and should:
 - a. be publicly accessible;
 - b. appropriately designed to be safe, usable, integrated into the development site and maximise green infrastructure benefits and functions; and

- c. take opportunities to connect to the Green Infrastructure Corridors defined on the Policies Map.
- 4. In exceptional circumstances where on-site provision is not possible, it is expected that development contributes to the mitigation of identified deficiencies in the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space in the areas identified in the most recent Open Space Assessment.
- 5. Provision for the future long-term maintenance, management and stewardship of new open space must be secured as part of the planning application. Developers should offer first refusal for the ongoing management of open spaces to Town and Parish Councils.

Policy HL5: Child Friendly Places and Play

- 9.19. HL4 Child Friendly Places and Play requires schemes to provide both formal provision of play, but also passive opportunities for informal recreation. Informal recreation in new development might include for example benches and other seating which provide opportunities for older children. Provision of this nature should pay particular attention to the specific needs of girls and young women, enabling socialisation in areas where there is, for example, ample passive surveillance.¹³
- 9.20. Formal provision of play space needs to take into account local need, including the requirement for inclusive play facilities based on population statistics and the need identified in documents like the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JNSA).¹⁴ The amount and type of formal play will be required against the assessed need in the Swindon Open Space Assessment 2026, which also outlines expectations for off-site provision or enhancements.
- 9.21. The design and layout of formal and informal facilities need to be bespoke, place and landscape led, maximising opportunities for carefully designed, meaningful, 'playable landscapes'. All public landscapes must be considered valuable in how they offer play opportunities. This is achieved with both natural and formal play provision, with the most engaging play spaces invariably defined by their ability to synthesise the best principles of the two.
- 9.22. This combined approach is achieved with the thoughtful integration of formal play equipment and natural features in an engaging setting, utilising topography, natural materials, loose surfaces as part of a wider integrated play experience (e.g. sand, gravel), the inclusion of mud and water play is similarly strongly encouraged, all in a setting strongly defined by structural and sensory planting of substance – all centred around the user, not a tick box design that presents itself invariably as a 'Kit, Fence, Carpet (KFC) approach.'

¹³ Please be seated: a sideways look at benches. Make Space for Girls 2022.

¹⁴ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Swindon Borough Council (2024).

Policy HL5: Child Friendly Places and Play

1. Development proposals for schemes that are likely to be used by children and young people should:
 - a. incorporate meaningful opportunities for engaging informal recreation into the design of the scheme which provides for children and young people of all abilities;
 - b. incorporate attractive, safe and accessible routes for children and young people to access existing facilities such as local play provision, schools and youth centres; and
 - c. for large scale public realm developments, incorporate an appropriate quantum of 'landscape led' incidental play space alongside provision of larger, more formal facilities.
2. Where formal play provision is required, or where a new or upgraded play provision is proposed, the design should:
 - a. be fully integrated into new residential developments and be engaging and fully accessible to children and young people of all ages and abilities;
 - b. integrate into the wider network of public open spaces and not be severed from the rest of a neighbourhood by physical barriers such as main roads;
 - c. be 'place and 'landscape led' in design, integrated into the surrounding landscape and landscape context. Integration can be supported with the inclusion of swales and ditches, mounding, level changes, boulders, logs, sensory planting and tree planting (which can also be climbable) and other elements;
 - d. incorporate views and landscape features and include additional supporting tree planting to provide shade and climate resilience, and elements that allow contact with nature;
 - e. keep sealed and artificial surfaces including wet pour and rubber crumb to a minimum, only to be used where necessary for fall protection and sensitively designed access;
 - f. include, where possible 'loose parts' such as gravel, sand and water, or play equipment that utilises these elements as part of a wider play experience;
 - g. use inclusive equipment and elements, sensitively designed and integrated into the play area, not segregated to ensure access to play experiences for less able users; and
 - h. include seating, cycle stands, space for pushchairs, bins and signage as well as the required equipment.

3. Where public space is redesigned, proposed or required, opportunities for informal play and opportunities to support public art strategies must be considered.

Policy HL6: Community Facilities

- 9.23. The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) recognises the important role that community facilities play in supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities. It defines community facilities as: “Meeting places, public houses, places of worship, cultural venues, allotments and facilities for play, sport and informal recreation.”
- 9.24. These facilities are essential to the social wellbeing, cohesion and identity of communities, contributing to everyday social interaction, cultural expression, and opportunities for recreation. These facilities differ from strategic infrastructure such as transport, education and healthcare provision which is covered under Chapter 11.
- 9.25. Community facilities are often delivered and managed outside of traditional development mechanisms. As a result, they can be particularly vulnerable to loss, fragmentation, or incremental change of use. This policy therefore seeks to ensure both the protection of existing facilities and the support of new and adaptable provision where appropriate.
- 9.26. The policy requires that where development generates a need for community facilities, provision is made in a timely manner and supported by clear arrangements for long-term management and maintenance. This reflects the importance of ensuring that new and growing communities have access to social spaces as they evolve, rather than relying on retrospective provision.
- 9.27. Locational criteria prioritise accessibility and inclusion. Directing new community facilities towards town, district and local centres supports their vitality and viability, encourages linked trips, and maximises access by walking, cycling and public transport. Co-location of facilities is encouraged to make efficient use of land, increase usage, and support shared services. Where a town centre location is not appropriate, facilities should still be well-related to existing settlements to ensure they remain accessible to the communities they serve.
- 9.28. To ensure longevity, new and existing facilities should be designed to be adaptable, inclusive and capable of responding to changing needs over time. This includes consideration of layout, accessibility, and the potential for future reconfiguration or shared use.
- 9.29. The policy also recognises that community needs and patterns of use are changing. Traditional models of single-purpose facilities are increasingly being replaced by flexible, multi-functional and hybrid spaces that can accommodate a range of activities throughout the day and week. Supporting the temporary or meanwhile use of vacant or underutilised spaces can also

provide valuable opportunities for community use, particularly in town centres and areas undergoing change.

- 9.30. Given the importance of community facilities, their loss will be resisted unless robust evidence is provided. Applicants must demonstrate that the facility is no longer needed, viable, or capable of being sustained, including through alternative management models or partial redevelopment. Evidence such as marketing, viability assessments, and engagement with the local community will be required where relevant. The policy adopts a precautionary approach, recognising that the value of community facilities extends beyond purely commercial considerations and includes social, cultural and wellbeing benefits.

Sports Provision

- 9.31. Sports facilities can be valuable assets, and the Council puts policies in place to protect these for the long-term benefit of sport, and to encourage new facilities where there is need. There is also a need to ensure new facilities meet up-to-date standards of accessibility and work towards reducing inequalities.
- 9.32. In order to support the population growth along with the current quality of strategic provision, development of facilities and the investments in the quality and access to existing sports and recreation will be required to ensure the future population has access to a high-quality leisure offer.
- 9.33. There is a current need for new sports facilities, as evidenced by the Borough's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Assessment Report. The Council will therefore be supportive in principle where new development proposes sports facilities, subject to appropriate design. Multi-use pitches (e.g., 3G football pitches) and multi-use indoor sports facilities are particularly encouraged.
- 9.34. Where a housing development is not of a size to justify on-site football provision, the Council will consider seeking contributions to improve existing sites within the locality where there is a need for this. Where new and upgraded sports facilities are provided, community use agreements will be entered into which maximise accessibility.

Policy HL6: Community Facilities

1. Development proposals that generate a need for community facilities must:
 - a. ensure that infrastructure is operational no later than the appropriate phase of development for which it is needed; and
 - b. set out how the long-term management and maintenance of infrastructure will be achieved.
2. Community facilities must be located in accessible locations that are well served by a range of sustainable transport options. Wherever possible,

proposals for new community facilities should first be directed to town, district and local centres and be co-located (or be capable of supporting co-location) with other community uses where possible. If need can be demonstrated for facilities outside of these areas, provision must be located within or adjacent to existing settlements.

3. Community facilities should be designed and delivered in a flexible and inclusive manner that reflects evolving patterns of use and community needs. Proposals will be supported where they:
 - a. provide multi-functional or hybrid spaces that accommodate a range of uses, including combinations such as community, cultural, faith, commercial activities, and others;
 - b. enable the temporary or meanwhile use of vacant or underutilised buildings and spaces for community purposes, including pop-up or short-term initiatives; and
 - c. support the delivery of small-scale and informal community spaces, recognising that community activity may take place outside traditional facility types.
4. Development should ensure that such spaces are adaptable over time to respond to changing community needs and to maximise their long-term usability.
5. Proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities must demonstrate that:
 - a. the facility is being replaced elsewhere where it is equally or better accessible by walking, cycling and public transport to better meet the needs the local people served;
 - b. there are sufficient, suitable, alternative community facilities nearby;
 - c. the community facility is no longer required by the community;
 - d. there is no longer a demand for the community facility, demonstrated by genuine marketing evidence for a period of at least one year;
 - e. the community facility is no longer economically viable for the established use;
 - f. there is no existing management and funding resources or that could be generated within the community that could secure and sustain a community facility that meets identified local needs; or
 - g. the community facility cannot be secured or sustained through the partial redevelopment of the site.

10. INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS



10. INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

Introduction

- 10.1. The delivery of new or improved infrastructure is critical to support the Swindon Plan's three missions to build a Better, Fairer and Greener Swindon. Truly sustainable development must be supported by necessary social, physical and green infrastructure including education, healthcare, transport, sports facilities, public realm, open space, emergency services and utilities. These services and facilities form core aspects of our lives, which contribute towards good growth and good placemaking.
- 10.2. While new development places demands upon existing infrastructure capacity, it also provides an opportunity for the delivery of new, improved and expanded infrastructure through developer contributions. This may entail the direct delivery of necessary infrastructure, or contributions towards off-site infrastructure.
- 10.3. Policy requirements for infrastructure are present throughout this plan, from the transport requirements in Chapter 8: A Well-Connected, Active Swindon, to open space requirements in Chapter 10: A Healthy, Socially Connected Swindon.
- 10.4. This chapter unites the infrastructure provision requirements across the rest of the plan to make the Council's expectations around developer contributions and utilities clear.

Policy INF1: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

- 10.5. Appropriate infrastructure and services must be available in the right places at the right time to support new and existing communities and achieve sustainable development. The NPPF (2024) requires strategic policies to provide an overall strategy to make sufficient provision for infrastructure of all kinds. Policy INF1: Infrastructure and Development Contributions sets clear requirements and expectations for how development should achieve this.
- 10.6. A monitoring contribution shall be to the value of 5% of the total S106 package. For large strategic developments the monitoring contribution may be calculated on a bespoke basis as necessary.
- 10.7. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has assessed the current capacity of infrastructure within the Borough and, in consultation with key service providers and operators, has identified the essential projects required to support growth throughout the plan period. The IDP is a key part of the

evidence base for the Local Plan and identifies capacity and needs across the Borough including, where possible, the costs, funding and timescales for provision.

- 10.8. The IDP is an iterative document which will be updated throughout the plan period to ensure it remains up to date in line with the latest evidence.

Infrastructure Funding and Delivery

- 10.9. Infrastructure can be funded through a mix of sources, including government funding, public and private sector investment, and developer contributions.
- 10.10. Developer contributions may entail either the direct delivery of infrastructure on-site, or financial contributions to off-site delivery where appropriate.
- 10.11. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a non-negotiable planning charge based on gross internal floorspace. Swindon Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule on 6 April 2015, which sets out the Council's standard charges and where these are applicable. CIL is distributed between Strategic CIL which is spent by the Borough Council on local infrastructure projects, Neighbourhood CIL which is passed to town and parish councils, and Administration CIL.
- 10.12. Planning obligations enter the developer into a legal commitment to undertake specific works, provide land or facilities, or provide a financial contribution towards the provision of a service or piece of infrastructure. Planning obligations can be entered into via a planning agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. They may relate to the provision of infrastructure, alongside other policy requirements. Appropriate matters may include:
- 10.12.1. Affordable housing
 - 10.12.2. Education
 - 10.12.3. Healthcare
 - 10.12.4. Emergency Services
 - 10.12.5. Community and leisure facilities
 - 10.12.6. Local and strategic transport
 - 10.12.7. Green infrastructure, recreation and open space
- 10.13. Swindon Borough Council produces an Infrastructure Funding Statement on an annual basis. This outlines how CIL and Section 106 monies have been spent and identifies infrastructure priorities.

Site-specific Viability Assessments and Reviews

- 10.14. The policy requirements in this Local Plan have been subject to a whole plan Viability Assessment, and development proposals are expected to deliver fully policy-compliant schemes. However, there may be some exceptional circumstances where a site-specific viability assessment demonstrates that a fully compliant scheme would be undeliverable. These circumstances could include where the proposed scheme is of a specific type or model which hasn't been assessed through the whole plan viability assessment, where new information about infrastructure has emerged, or where there have been significant economic changes. In these circumstances, the harm of not providing a fully compliant scheme must be weighed against the benefits of the development.
- 10.15. Sometimes the property market or construction costs may change between the determination of a planning application and its implementation or completion. The purpose of a viability review is to determine whether greater or full compliance with development plan policies can be achieved. After any outstanding policy requirements are met, any additional 'surplus' will be retained by the developer as additional profit.

Policy INF1: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

1. Development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of appropriate and sufficient infrastructure required to support it.
2. Developers shall engage early and collaboratively with the Council and infrastructure service providers to identify necessary infrastructure requirements.
3. New or improved infrastructure must be operational at the appropriate phase of development to meet needs.
4. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identifies the projects required to support the Local Plan's strategy. The IDP will be updated to ensure infrastructure information remains up to date.
5. Infrastructure identified within the IDP and/or through negotiations on individual planning applications will be delivered through on-site provision or off-site contributions secured through mechanisms such as planning conditions, Section 106, Section 278 or other appropriate agreements, and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
6. Where provided on-site, development proposals must demonstrate how new infrastructure will be managed and maintained over the longer term to secure good stewardship practices.
7. Where Section 106 agreements are entered into:

- a. a monitoring fee will be expected to form part of the agreement; and
 - b. all financial contributions secured through S106 will be index-linked from the date of the agreement to the date of the payment.
- 8. The Council will only consider the viability of development proposals at the planning application stage where it can clearly be demonstrated, through a robust site-specific Viability Assessment produced and independently verified at the applicants' expense, that development would not be financially viable and deliverable if full planning obligations were sought.
- 9. Where a non-policy compliant scheme is granted following a site-specific Viability Assessment, the Council may require viability review mechanisms as part of Section 106 agreements. Reviews may be required:
 - a. prior to the commencement of phases of development; and/or
 - b. once the completed scheme has been occupied.
- 10. If a viability review finds that a policy compliant scheme is now viable based on up-to-date costs and values, contributions will be sought up to the level required by policy.

Policy INF2: Wastewater, Sewage Infrastructure and Water Supply

Sewage Infrastructure

- 10.16. Swindon is served by nine sewage treatment works (STWs) which treat the daily flow of wastewater from the Borough's domestic and economic activities. New development will result in an increase in the volume of wastewater created. Therefore, it is essential that STWs have capacity to process wastewater to the pollutant standards permitted by the Environment Agency, before discharging it back to the environment.

Water use efficiency

- 10.17. The Borough relies on a sufficient supply of clean, fresh water. It is vital for our local people and businesses, but it is also essential to support our habitats and wildlife.
- 10.18. Swindon's water supply is operated by Thames Water Utilities Limited (TWUL). The Environment Agency classified the area served by Thames Water which includes the Borough as in 'serious water stress'. Thames Water's Water Resources Management Plan 2024 identifies a significant future shortfall in water resources in the supply area and sets out the actions needed to maintain the balance between water supply and demand.
- 10.19. Policy INF2 promotes water efficiency as a key measure for managing the increasing demand for water. It requires new development to achieve a water efficiency standard of 100 litres per person per day. Building Regulations Approved Document G establishes water efficiency standards for new development. It sets a water efficiency standard of 125l/person/day and an

optional technical standard of 110l/person/day. Document G Part G2 underwent consultation in 2025 and proposed tighter standards for new homes, revising the standard to 105l/person/day and the optional technical standard to 100l/person/day. The Council is still waiting for the results of this consultation. However, given that the Borough lies in an area of 'serious water stress', the Council has opted for the proposed optional technical standard for new development of 100l/person/day.

10.20. Policy INF2 seeks to target 'water neutrality' meaning that the total demand for water within a local authority area after development has taken place is the same (or less) than it was before development took place. If achieved, this would result in no net increase in water demand. Policy INF2 therefore looks to ensure that new homes are built to high standards of water efficiency through the use of water efficient fixtures and fittings e.g. dual-flush toilets, low-flow showerheads, and high-efficiency washing machines and dishwashers.

10.21. The Swindon Water Cycle Study Scoping Report (2025) published to support the Local Plan identifies where planned growth may exceed existing capacity. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2026) will identify where and when upgrades to this infrastructure are needed to enable the delivery of development at the scale, locations and times identified in this Local Plan, in continued engagement with Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

Policy INF2: Wastewater, Sewage Infrastructure and Water Supply

1. Proposals for development must:
 - a. demonstrate that there is adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure capacity both on and off the site to serve the development, including for any individual phases, and that developments would not lead to problems for existing or new users. This should take into account the impact of climate change on water supply; and
 - b. ensure there is separation of foul and surface water.
2. Where there is a capacity constraint, the Local Planning Authority will, where necessary, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.
3. Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which will result in the need for off-site upgrades will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupations are aligned with the delivery of the necessary infrastructure upgrades.
4. The approval of new development will be conditional on the appropriate water infrastructure being in place. Developers are encouraged to engage with Thames Water early in the planning process.

5. Any development or expansion of water supply and sewerage infrastructure must demonstrate that it is needed to meet current and future supply needs.
6. Development proposals for sensitive development, such as residential use, close to a Sewage Treatment Works must undertake a technical assessment to confirm that:
 - a. there is no adverse amenity impact on future occupiers of the proposed development; or
 - b. the development can be mitigated to ensure that any potential for adverse amenity impact is avoided.

Water use efficiency

7. New residential homes and commercial development must be built to high standards of water efficiency using a fixtures and fittings approach.
8. All new residential developments must achieve a water efficiency standard for mains supplied water/ potable water of 100 litres per person per day, or any water efficiency standard set in national policy or Building Regulations that supersedes this. To demonstrate compliance with the requirements, applications must set out the estimated water consumption of the proposal using the 'Water Efficiency Calculator' template.

Policy INF3: Digital Connectivity and Telecommunications

- 10.22. The Council will work collaboratively with providers and developers to promote fast and reliable electronic communications that provides comprehensive coverage of the Borough.
- 10.23. According to Legislative proposals to Government's address broadband rollout in leasehold flats, gigabit-capable broadband is recognised as essential for the UK's economic growth, productivity and international competitiveness.
- 10.24. The NPPF states that advanced, high-quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being and confirms that planning policies should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technologies such as 5G and full fibre broadband. It further sets out that policies should facilitate the delivery and future upgrading of high-quality digital infrastructure with access to services from a range of providers and should prioritise full fibre connections to new development as the preferred solution in most cases.
- 10.25. The evidence also shows that, while significant progress has been made in expanding coverage, the deployment of gigabit-capable broadband to flats, continues to lag behind other property types. This gap is most evident in urban and suburban areas, where coverage for flats remains lower than for other residential typologies such as houses.

10.26. The policy seeks to ensure that all new development is supported by high-quality, future-proof digital infrastructure that enables reliable access to full fibre broadband and emerging technologies such as 5G.

10.27. It addresses the need to secure resilient and future-ready digital infrastructure as an integral part of development delivery, recognising that early coordination with telecommunications providers is critical to achieving effective connectivity outcomes.

Policy INF3: Digital Connectivity and Telecommunications

1. All new development will be expected:
 - a. to ensure that appropriate telecommunications infrastructure is provided during the construction phase to enable the development to be connected to full fibre broadband;
 - b. to be ready for 5G technology and gigabit capable broadband with the appropriate infrastructure in place;
2. In the case of unavailability of the connectivity for superfast broadband or full fibre is not available:
 - a. applicants are required to demonstrate early engagement with relevant infrastructure providers;
 - b. where infrastructure providers committed to provide connectivity, development proposals should incorporate relevant design measures and supporting infrastructure to ensure that the delivery of full fibre broadband can be achieved; and
 - c. where agreement cannot be reached at the present time to provide superfast broadband or full fibre connectivity, development proposals will be required to include additional dedicated telecommunications ducting to facilitate the future provision of superfast broadband or full fibre connectivity.
3. Telecommunications infrastructure should be sited and designed to minimise the impact on the amenity of the surrounding area.

Policy INF4: Energy Networks

10.28. The Council will continue to engage with Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks on housing growth and any resultant capacity need to ensure that new development does not exceed grid capacity.

10.29. The assessment of infrastructure capacity is intended to provide a high-level understanding of whether the development can be accommodated within existing energy networks, and to identify any potential constraints at an early

stage. This is to ensure that energy infrastructure requirements are appropriately considered as part of the planning process.

- 10.30. Where existing infrastructure is insufficient, the Energy Masterplan should identify the nature and extent of any reinforcement required to enable development. This may include upgrades to substations, transformers, or distribution networks. The timing, delivery, and potential phasing of such reinforcements should be clearly set out, alongside any opportunities to reduce or defer the need for upgrades through alternative approaches such as demand management or on-site energy solutions.
- 10.31. The Energy Masterplan should set out a comprehensive strategy for energy provision that supports the transition to net zero carbon development. This should include consideration of a range of potential solutions, such as all-electric systems, heat networks, shared or communal energy systems, and the integration of on-site renewable energy generation. Proposals should adopt a coordinated, site-wide approach and demonstrate how the chosen strategy represents an efficient and viable solution over the lifetime of the development.
- 10.32. Measures to reduce peak electricity demand should be incorporated into the design and operation of development. This may include the use of smart meters, smart energy management systems, and demand-side response technologies to shift energy use away from peak periods. The provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure should be designed to enable smart charging, and consideration should be given to the role of battery storage and other technologies in balancing supply and demand and improving overall system efficiency.
- 10.33. To support the timely delivery of necessary energy infrastructure, development proposals should identify and safeguard sufficient land for required infrastructure, including substations, energy centres, and associated equipment. This may include land adjacent to existing infrastructure where expansion is anticipated. Early identification and safeguarding of such land will help ensure that infrastructure can be delivered efficiently and integrated appropriately within the development.

Policy INF4: Energy Networks

1. Proposals for development must demonstrate:
 - a. that opportunity to connect to, contribute towards, or establish decentralised energy networks, including district heating, shared

- energy systems and local renewable energy generation, have been fully explored and incorporated where feasible and viable.
- b. where connection to a decentralised energy network is not feasible or viable, that the development can connect to the electricity distribution network and other strategic energy infrastructure;
 - c. that sufficient grid capacity is available, or can be provided in a timely manner, to support the development; and
 - d. in the case of major development, that renewable and low-carbon energy generation, energy storage and other sustainable on-site energy solutions have been considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the scheme.
2. All major residential development will be expected to provide Energy Masterplans with the focus to:
- a. ensure timely and efficient delivery of energy infrastructure aligned with development phasing through infrastructure capacity assessment;
 - b. enable coordinated and carbon efficient solutions through low carbon energy infrastructure at development-wise scale; and
 - c. reduce peak electricity demand and support a more flexible and resilient energy system.

11. APPENDICES

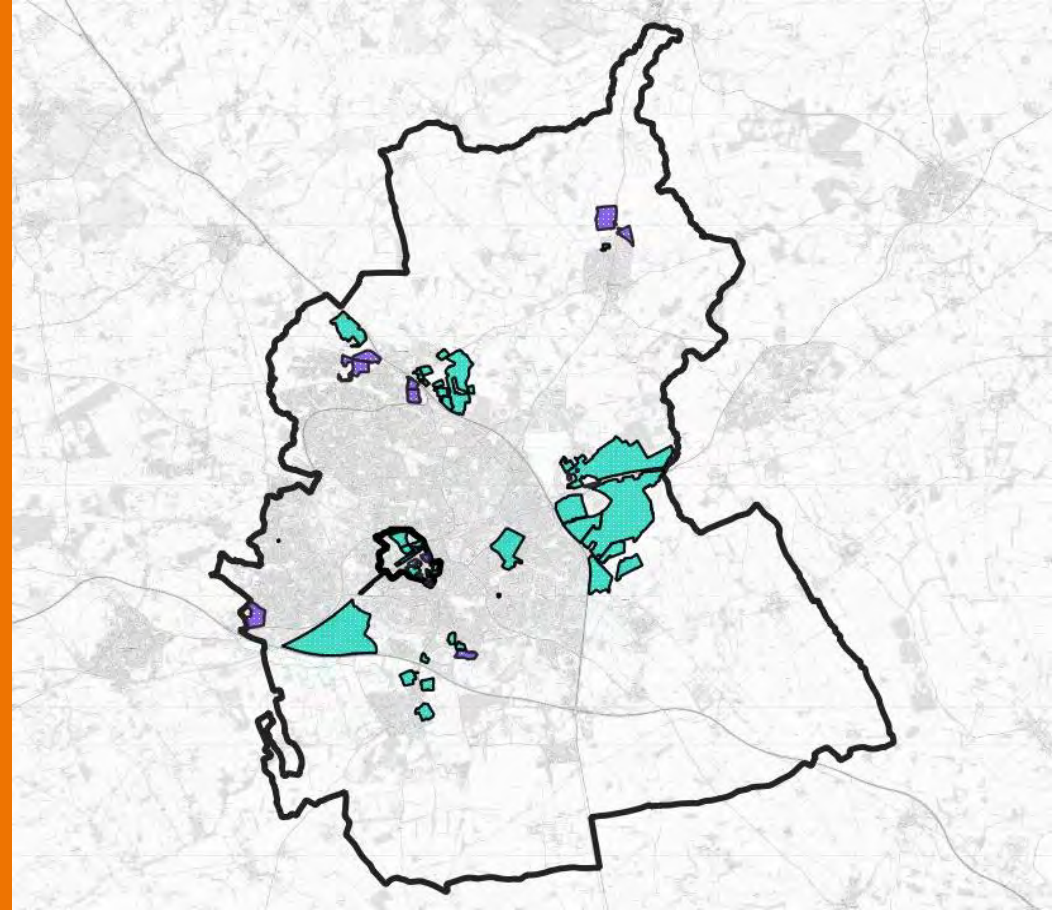


11. APPENDICES

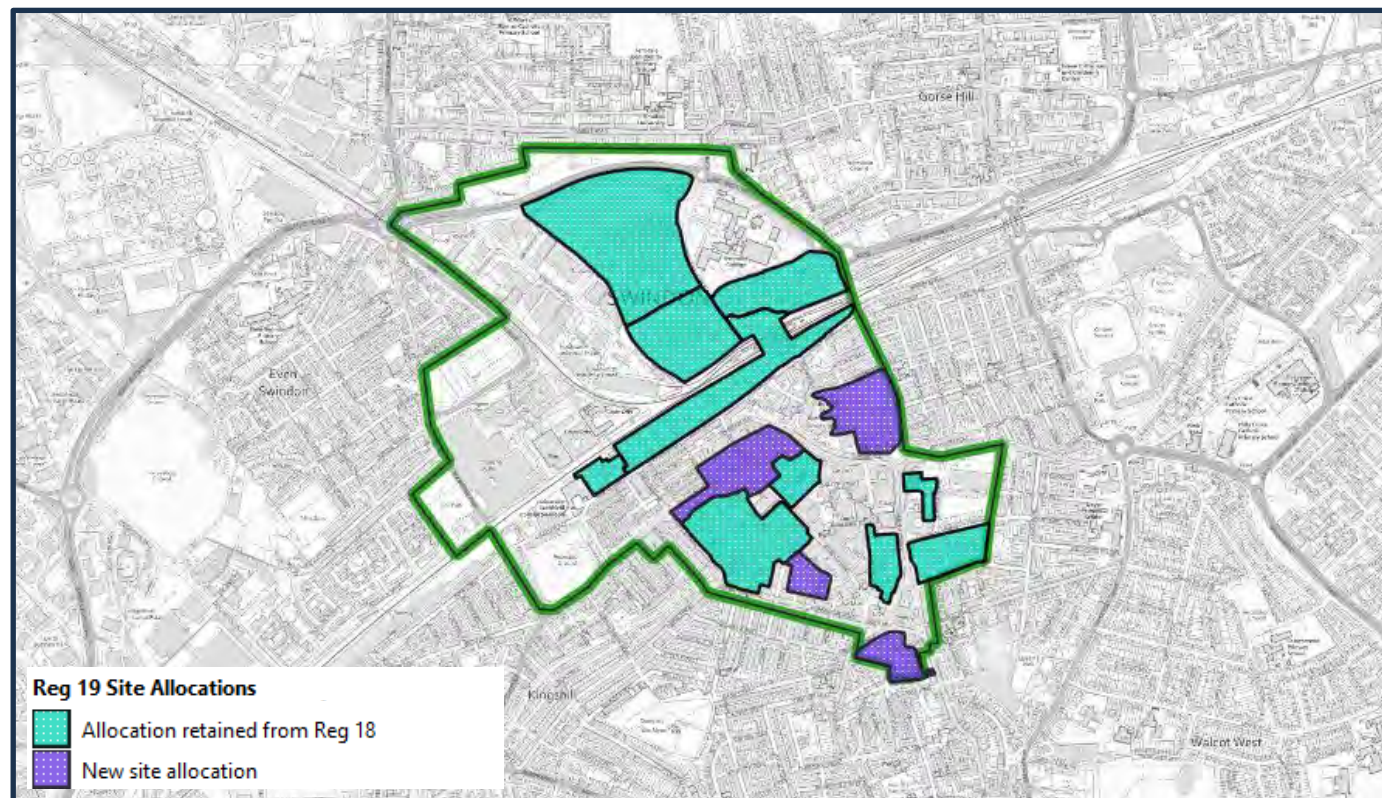
Appendix 1: Working Key Diagram and Sustainable Development Area Allocation Policies Maps

This Appendix supports the Cabinet Version of the Plan only. It will be replaced prior to Regulation 19 Publication and the diagram and maps inserted into the relevant section of the Plan.

Working Key Diagram demonstrating the Spatial Strategy (Policy SS1)



Policy SDA01: Swindon's Central Area

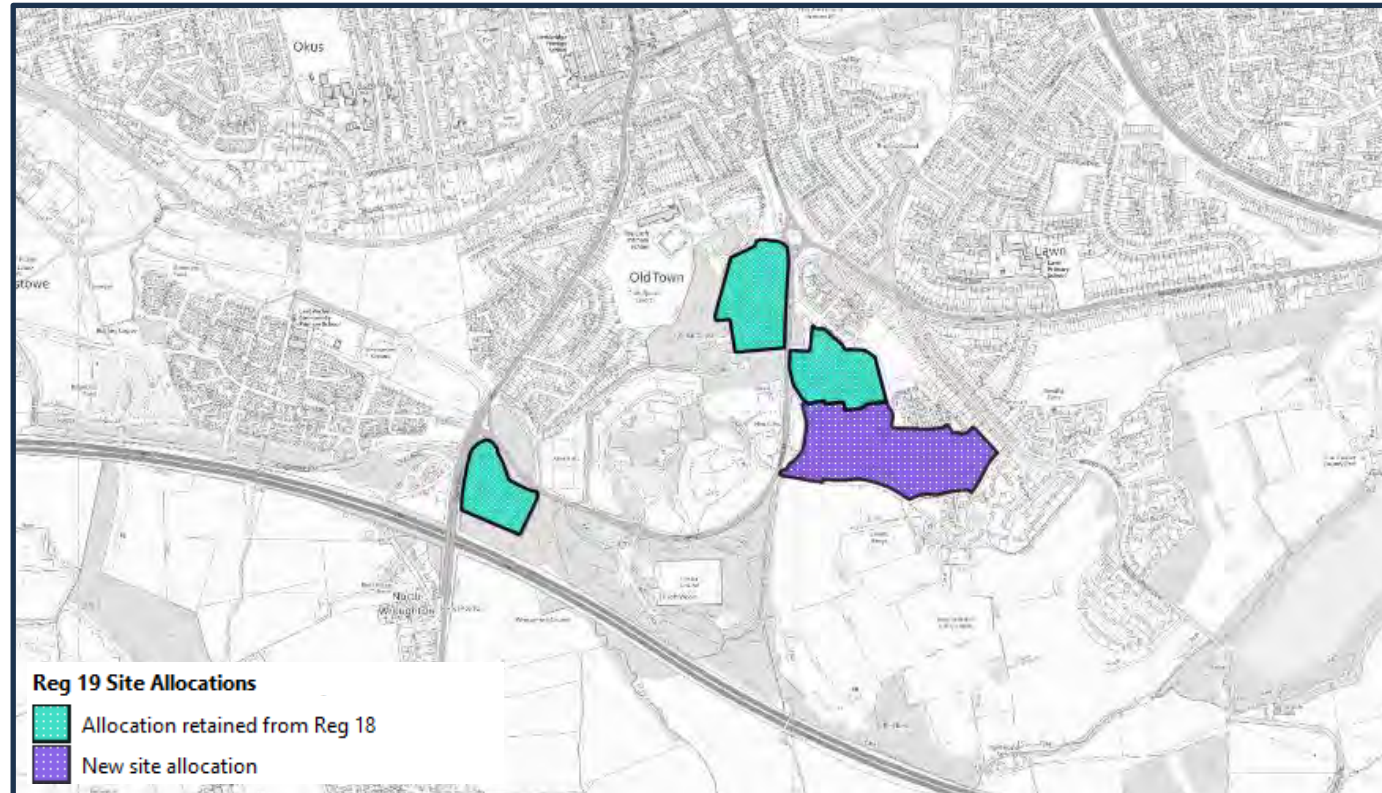


Indicative capacity

3,800 new homes in the housing trajectory, with up to 5,138 new homes over the plan period including aspirational sites.

We See. We Hear. We Care. We Act. We Learn.

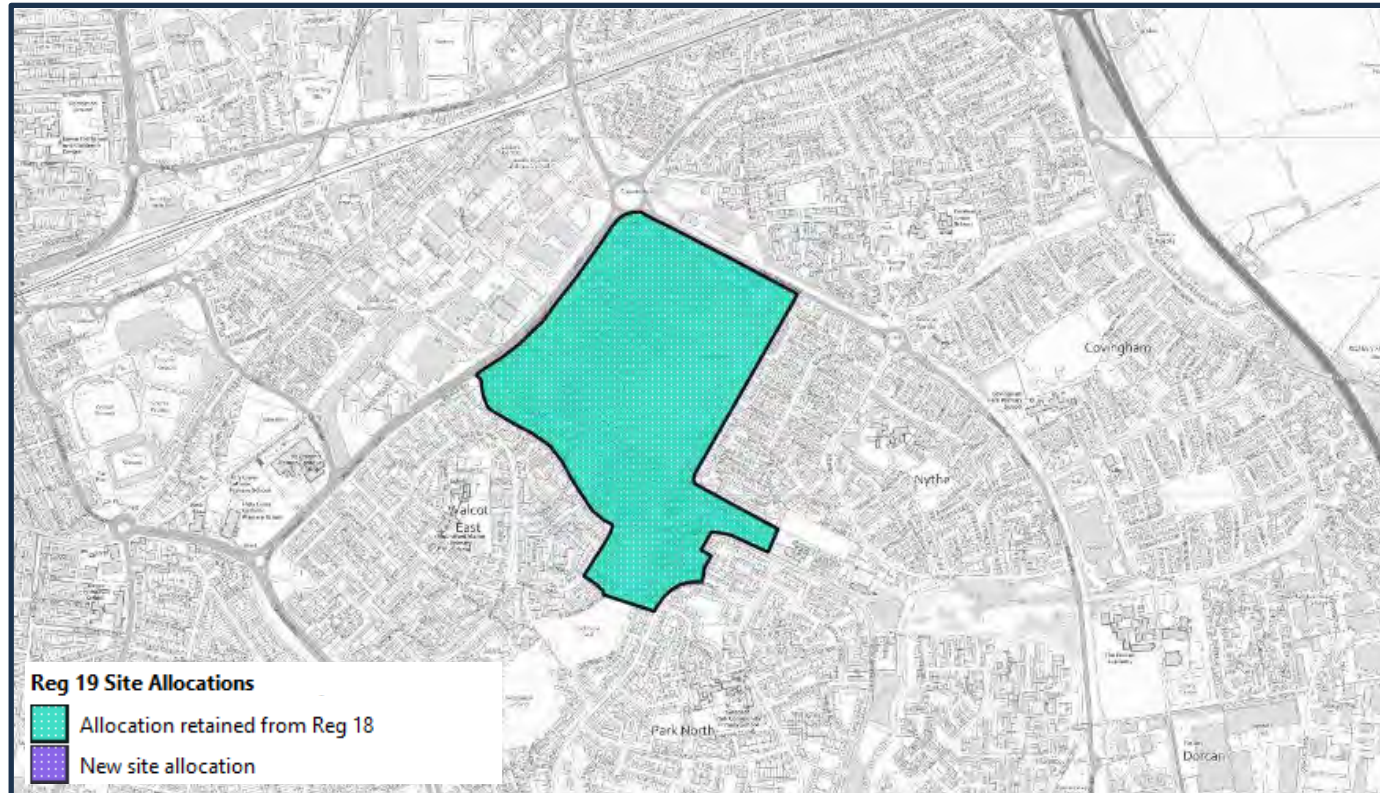
Policy SDA02: Pipers Way



Indicative capacity

1,144 homes over the plan period

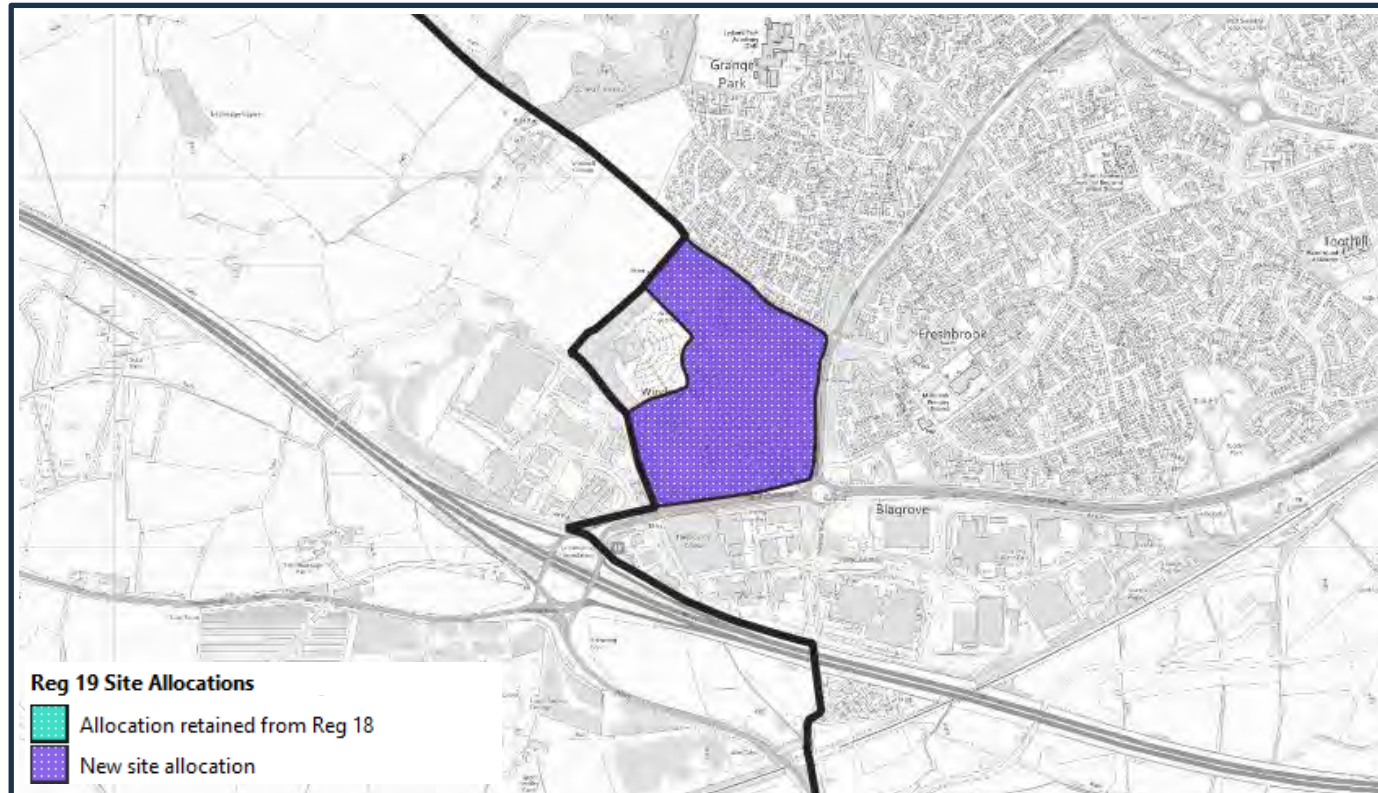
Policy SDA03: Marlowe Avenue



Indicative capacity

500 homes over the plan period

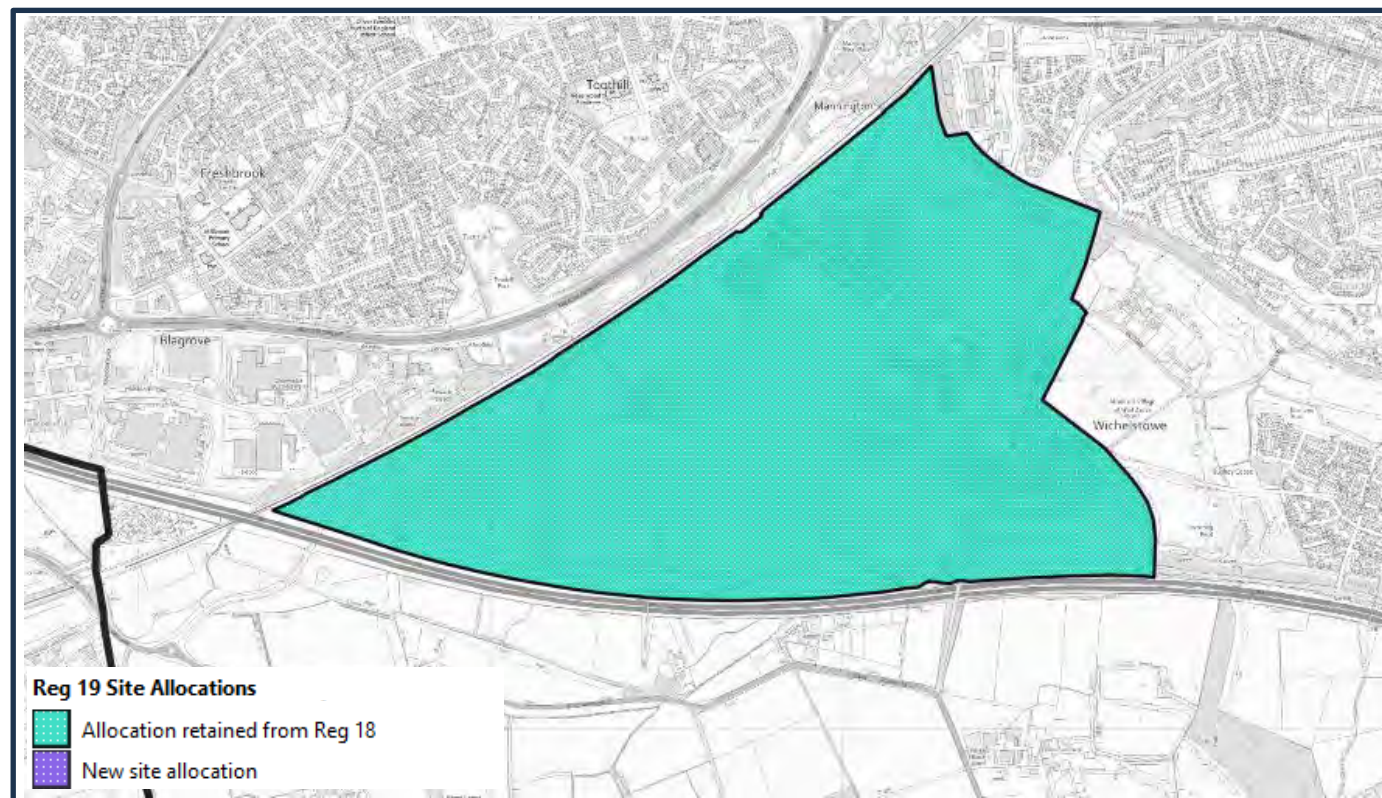
Policy SDA04: Windmill Hill



Indicative capacity

600 homes over the plan period

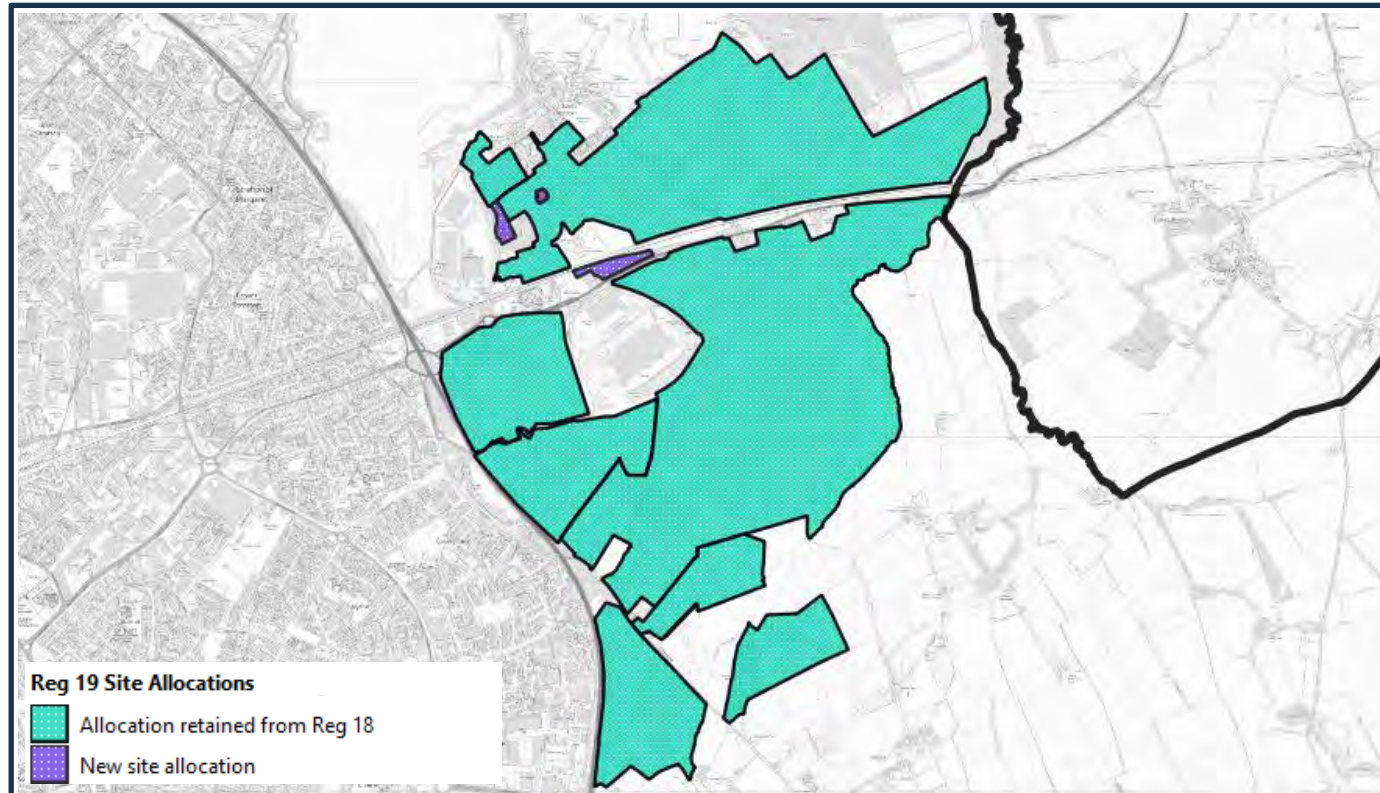
Policy SDA06: Wichelstowe



Indicative capacity

1,620 homes over the plan period

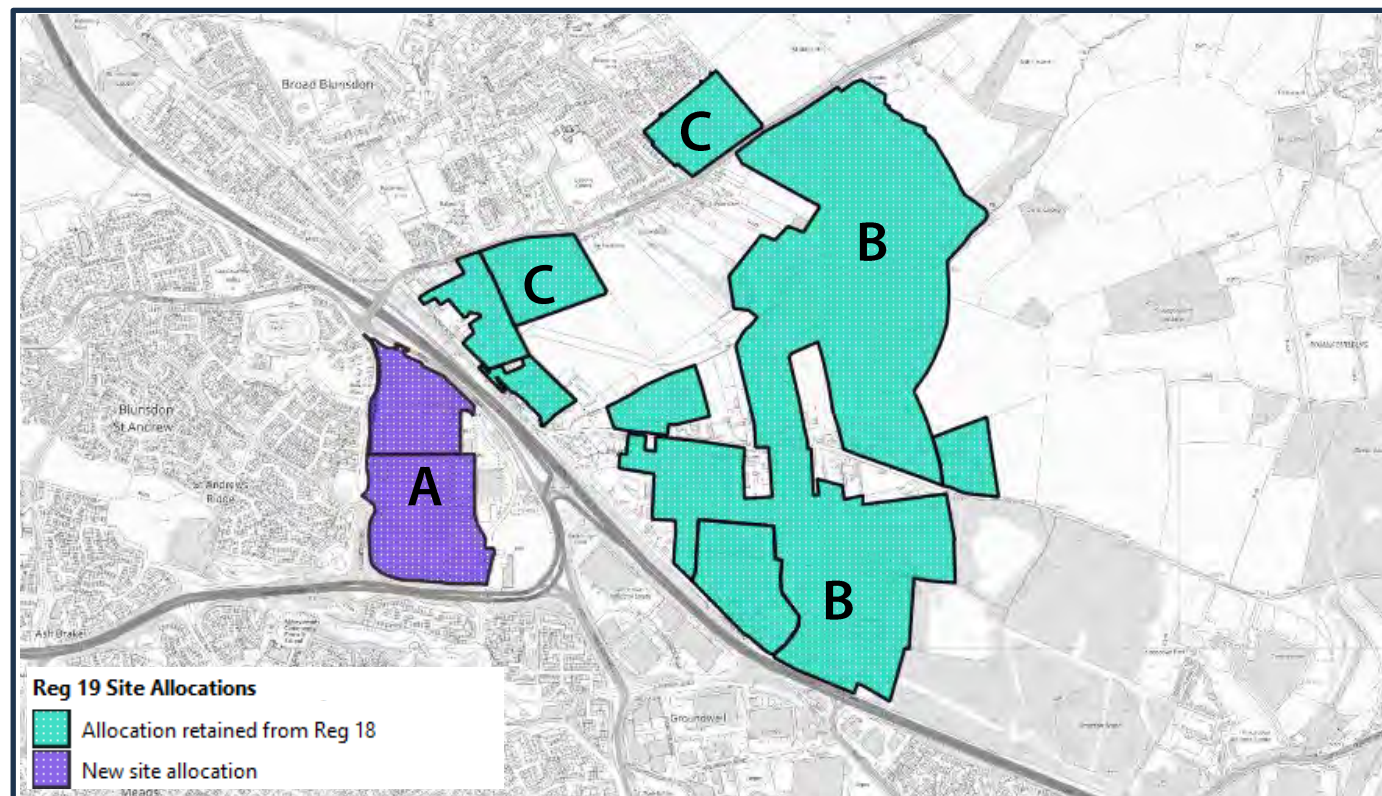
Policy SDA07: New Eastern Villages



Indicative capacity

8,875 homes over the plan period

Gateway North, Kingsdown & Broad Blunsdon



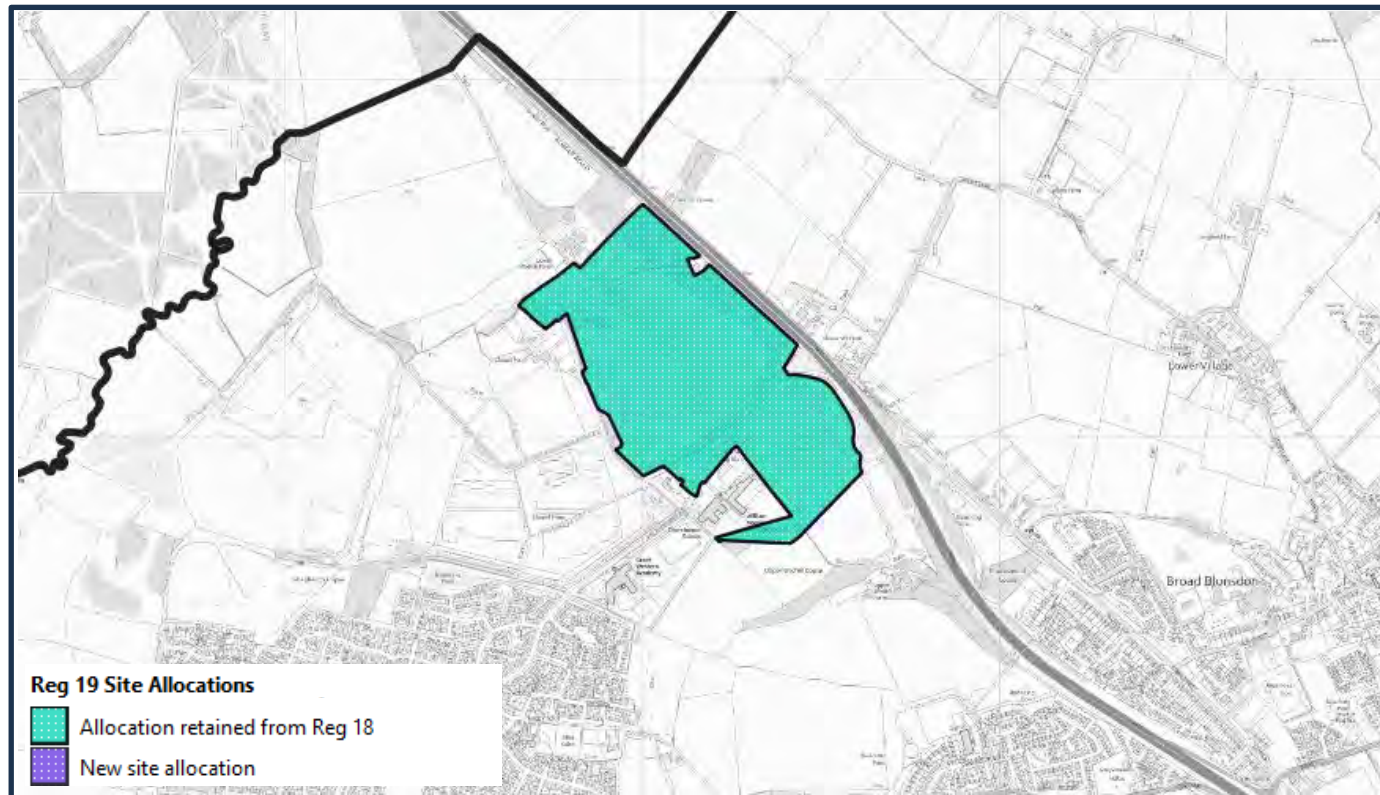
Indicative capacity

A= Gateway North
(Policy SDA05) : 500

B= Kingsdown
(Policy SDA08) : 1,818

C= Broad Blunsdon
(Policy SDA13) : 803

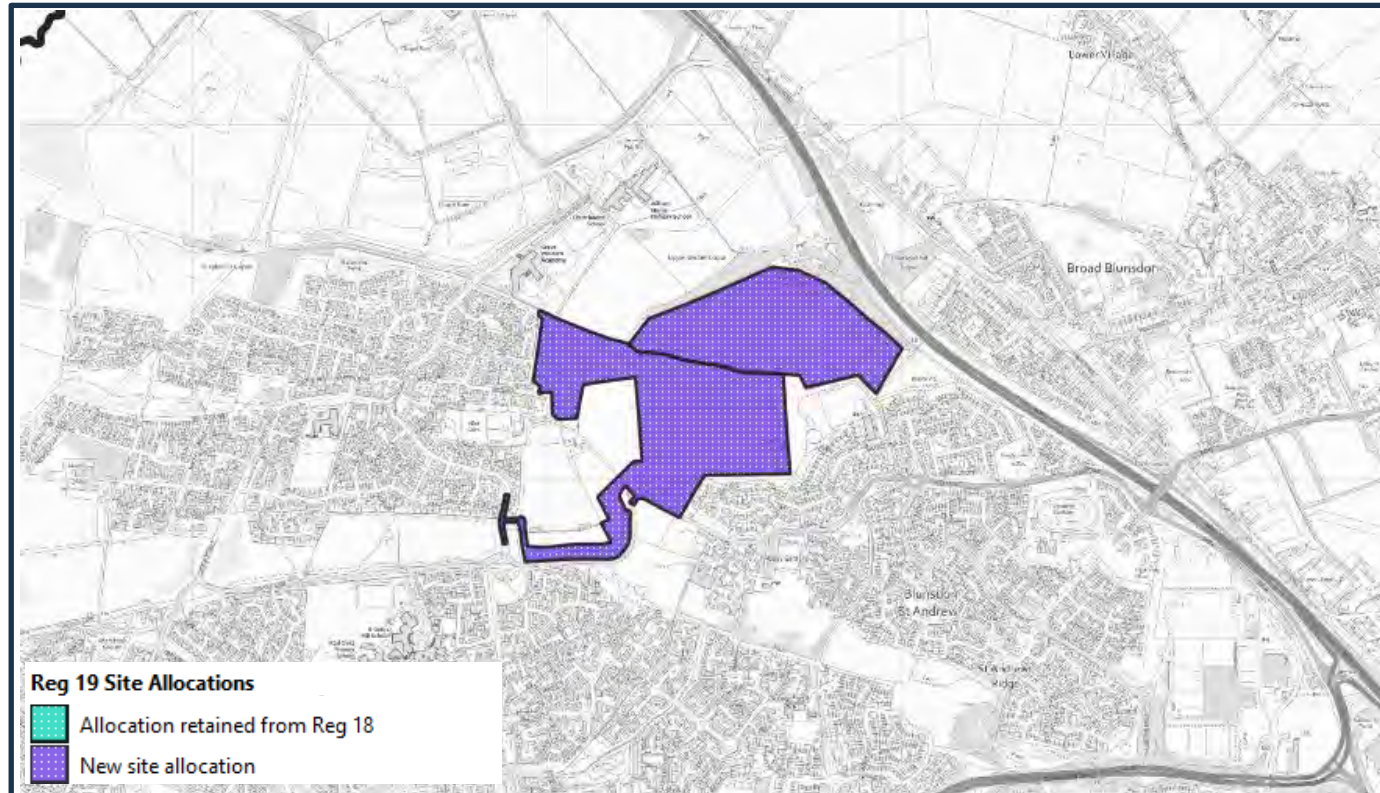
Policy SDA09: North Tadpole



Indicative capacity

513 homes over the plan period

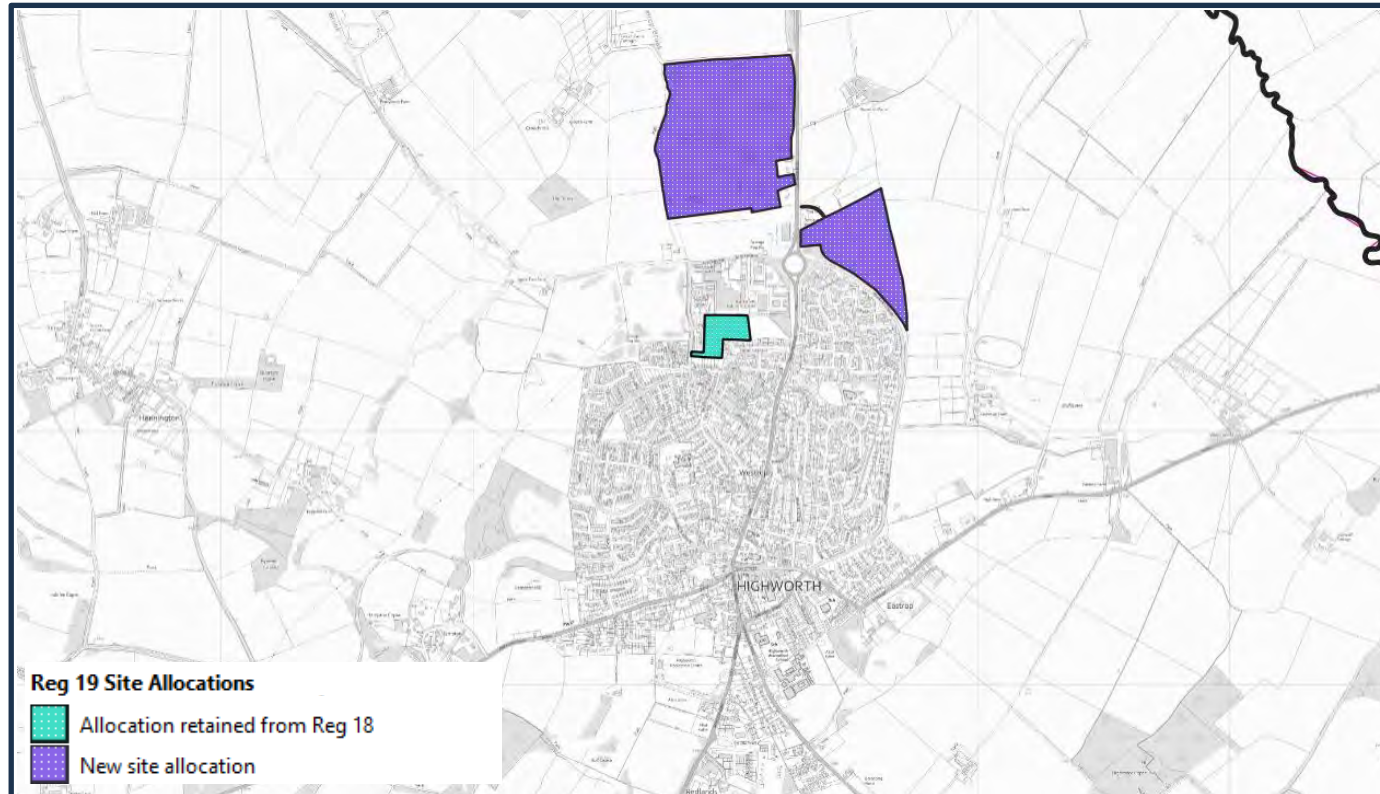
Policy SDA10: Blunsdon St. Andrew



**Indicative
capacity**

760 homes over the
plan period

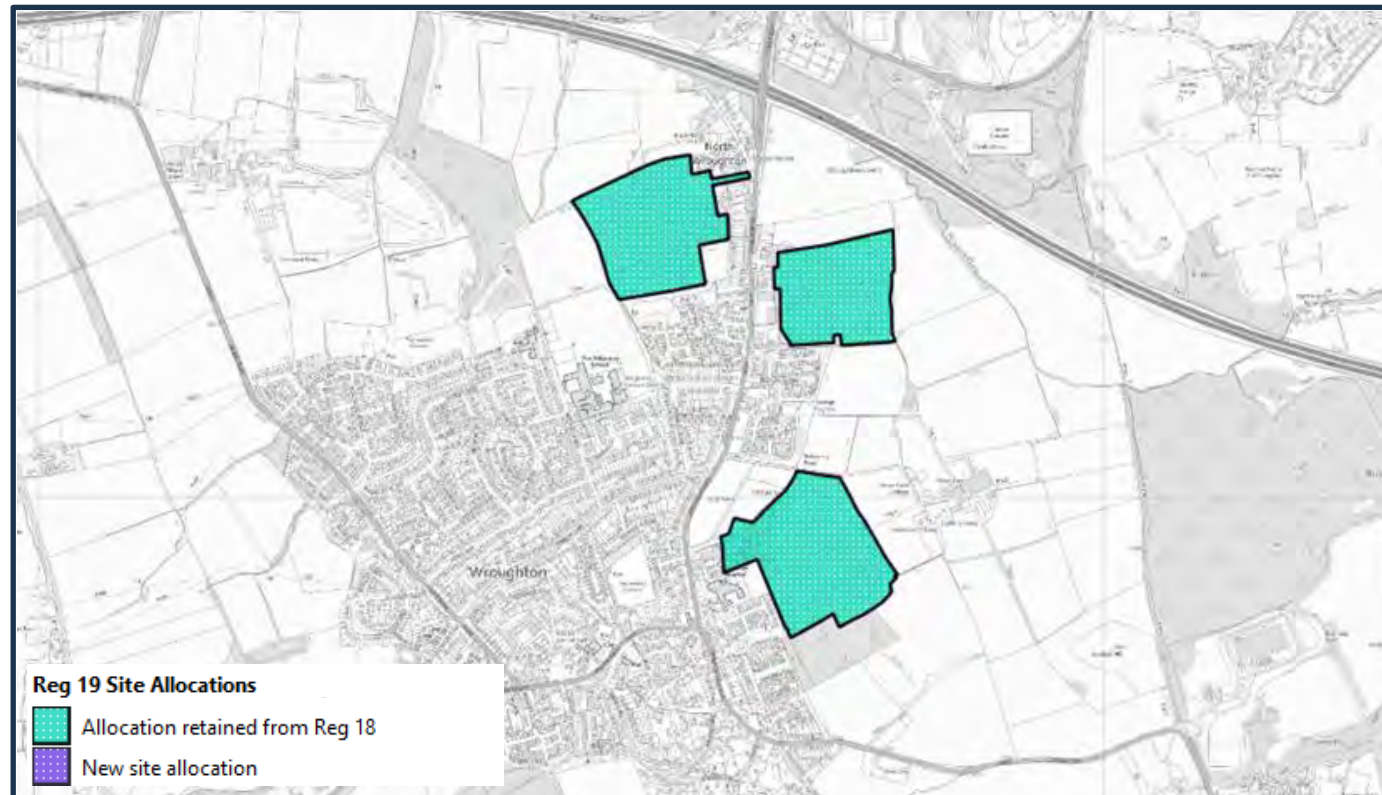
Policy SDA11: Highworth



Indicative capacity

803 homes over the plan period

Policy SDA12 : Wroughton



Indicative capacity

595 homes over the plan period

Appendix 2: Glossary

Glossary	Definition
Active Frontages	Street facing building facades that positively interact and engage with the public realm.
Active Travel	Travel that involves a mode of physical activity including walking and cycling.
Alterations and Extensions	Changes to existing buildings that do not create a new unit.
Areas of non-coalescence	Areas of land that are identified on the Policies Map which maintain the separate identity of settlements (both existing and allocated).
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	BNG is an approach to development. It makes sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. [As set out in Government Guidance]
BREEAM	A framework that measures the sustainability of buildings [What is BREEAM Sustainable Building Certification]
Brownfield Land	Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. [As per NPPF definition of previously developed land: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf]

Bus Gate	A road restricted to buses only.
Community Infrastructure	Includes public halls, including community and youth centres; church halls; Post Offices; local shops within both urban and rural areas; indoor and outdoor sports facilities; schools (including early years provision) and non-residential education and training centres; places of worship; libraries; day nurseries/crèches; health centres, clinics, consulting rooms (including GP surgeries , pharmacies dental practices); museums, art galleries; Public Houses; leisure facilities; open space; emergency services; cultural event space; and cemeteries/ burial grounds.
Contraflow Cycling	A road system whereby cyclists can ride in both directions on a street that is one way for cars.
Decarbonisation	Removing or reducing carbon emissions from a process.
Development Plan	A planning framework used to guide future growth and development, made up of several documents including the Local Plan, any 'Made' neighbourhood plans and the Waste and Minerals Plan.
Green and Blue Infrastructure	Green and Blue Infrastructure is defined as a range of multi-functional spaces, routes and assets for recreation, leisure, sustainable transport and biodiversity, and which can be classified as: Designated areas of open space Biodiversity assets including designated wildlife sites, wildlife habitat networks, priority habitats, trees and woodland Water assets including rivers, canals, lakes ponds and reservoirs. In Swindon Borough the Rivers Ray and Cole are identified as Strategic GI assets. Active travel routes including public rights of way: footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths and greenways

	Landscapes and cultural heritage assets including: the wider open countryside and North Wessex Downs National Landscape
Heritage Assets	Defined in the NPPF as 'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf
Householder Application	Proposals to alter or enlarge a single house (but not a flat), including works within the boundary/garden (source: Planning Portal)
Infiltration Strips	Vegetated strips of land to manage surface water runoff.
Industrial Locations	Sites as defined on a policies map that are designated primarily for industrial, distribution and warehousing, with some ancillary office where appropriate.
Key public transport corridors/Transit Corridors	Routes as shown on the Key Diagram which have been identified as the routes with the highest frequency bus services and the key routes proposed for improvement, linking access to strategic locations in the Borough and where further growth and enhancement is targeted.
Major development	As defined by the NPPF: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf - For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m ² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided

	in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
Micro-mobility	Smaller, lightweight vehicles such as bicycles and e-bikes.
Minor development	Development that falls below threshold for major development. For housing, development where 9 or fewer homes will be provided, or the site has an area of less than 0.5 hectares. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of under 1,000m ² , or a site of less than 1 hectare.
Mixed-Use Development	Development that is made up of more than one planning use-class on site (e.g., commercial and residential).
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework (2024) - sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how they should be applied.
Piecemeal Development	Sporadic and/or uncoordinated development that does not come forward in a comprehensive and masterplanned way.
Public Realm	Publicly accessible outdoor spaces
Settlement Hierarchy	A hierarchy setting out the level of growth expected/permitted for each settlement type identified.
Sequential Test	For Flood Risk: A test aiming to steer new developments towards areas at lowest risk of flooding. For Retail: A test aiming to steer main town centre uses towards designated town centres.
Sui-Generis	A planning use-class used to capture development that does not fall into other use classes.

Supplementary Planning Documents	Provides additional guidance and detail on specific policies within a local development plan. It's not part of the formal development plan itself, but it's a material consideration in planning decisions.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	As defined by the NPPF: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf - A sustainable drainage system controls surface water run off close to where it falls, combining a mixture of built and nature-based techniques to mimic natural drainage as closely as possible, and accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change. The type of system that would be appropriate will vary from small scale interventions such as permeable paving and soakaways that can be used in very small developments to larger integrated schemes in major developments
Tall buildings	For the purpose of the Swindon Local Plan, Tall Buildings are buildings which are over 6 storeys.
Transport Hubs	Locations where different modes of transport interact and allow passenger interchange.
Urban Area Sustainable Development Locations	Identified urban areas where a coordinated masterplan approach to regeneration is required (either because of the size of the site, or because there is more than one site).
Urban Regeneration Areas	Identified urban areas where a coordinated masterplan approach to regeneration is require (either because of the size of the site, or because there is more than one site).
Windfall	Unallocated development that comes forward.

Swindon Borough Council

Wat Tyler House
Beckhampton Street
Swindon SN1 2JG

www.swindon.gov.uk

July 2026

