

Swindon Local Councils Forum Minutes 18th June 2026
Meeting held at 7pm in Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Civic Offices,
Committee Room 1

Those in attendance: I Jankinson (Blunsdon), V Curtis (Covingham), N Hartley (Hannington), R Hailstone (Haydon Wick), V Manro (Haydon Wick), I Durnin-Duffy (Highworth), G Wilson (Liddington), C McEwen (South Marston), J Firmin (South Swindon), D Young (St Andrews), K Glanville (Wanborough), J Warr (Wanborough), D Archer (Wroughton & Wichelstowe), J Hewer (Wroughton & Wichelstowe), S Pajak (Wroughton & Wichelstowe)

Also in attendance: I Nockolds (WALC, County Advisor)
M Hinton (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Safety and Services)
L Cutter (Secretary, SLCF)

Annual General Meeting

1. Election of Chairman

As the outgoing Chairman, Councillor V Manro (Haydon Wick) had been re-elected as a Swindon Borough Ward Councillor. It was recognised that this could give rise to conflicts of interest in relation to certain agenda items. Accordingly, Councillor S Pajak (Wroughton & Wichelstowe) put himself forward as Chairman to the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

Proposed: Cllr V Curtis

Seconded: Cllr J Hewer

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor S Pajak as Chairman to the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

Councillor I Jankinson (Blunsdon) reconfirmed his intentions to continue as Vice Chairman to the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

Proposed: Cllr V Manro

Seconded: Cllr V Curtis

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor I Jankinson as Vice Chairman to the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

3. External Representatives

- **SBC Standards Committee Representatives:** Councillors Richard Hailstone (Haydon Wick) and I Kearsey (Chiseldon)
- **Communications & Partnership Working:** Councillors C McEwen, J Hewer, I Jankinson, V Manro and J Firmin

4. Financial Summary 25/26

The last financial report was presented at the AGM in September 2025.

As of 17 June 2026, the bank balance stands at £675.18, with £595.00 in outstanding subscriptions due from three councils (£400.00, £15.00 and £180.00). These councils have been chased. It is hoped that West Swindon will join the Forum this year,

generating an additional £200.00 in subscription income. The Chairman has been asked to provide a summary for its next meeting.

The Secretary's annual salary of £1,548.00 is paid in two instalments. The first payment of £774.00 (April–September) has been made, with the second due in September. Current funds leave a projected shortfall of £98.82 until outstanding subscriptions are received.

Once subscriptions are paid, the contingency fund is expected to increase to £397.36. Monthly bank charges of £4.25 continue and are currently met from contingency funds, although future budgets have been adjusted to cover these.

Swindon Borough Council continues to provide free meeting room hire. Banking administration remains outstanding and is a priority to resolve.

Forum Meeting

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors N Hole (South Marston), I Kearsey (Chiseldon), A Loxton (Stratton)

2. Minutes

Members noted the minutes and approved them as a true record of the meeting held on Thursday 12th March 2026.

Proposed: Cllr I Jankinson

Seconded: Cllr D Archer

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2026 are a true record.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

None, as most items are on the agenda for this meeting.

4. Partnership Working & Communications with Swindon Borough Council

M Hinton (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Safety and Services) was present to introduce himself to the Forum and provide the following updates:

- **Scheme of Delegation – Planning Changes**

Changes to the Scheme of Delegation for Planning were discussed. From 31 October, Swindon Borough Council (SBC) must comply with Government legislation to ensure planning decisions are made lawfully at a local level. The Chief Planning Officer's view will be final, even where the Planning Committee does not agree.

Engagement with local councils will continue for larger developments of over 200 homes. The current protocol will require amendment, as the existing appendix will become out of date. A new Chief Planning Officer is expected to be appointed shortly.

Opportunities will be explored to engage with SBC Officers and housing developers ahead of major planning applications, such as those relating to the New Eastern Villages. A collective consultation with parish councils will be arranged to discuss how best to move forward and work collaboratively. WALC/NALC will also be approached for local advice.

The SLCC's view was noted, stating that the changes represent "a severe erosion of local democratic decision making and associated transparency and accountability", due to the reduced opportunity for communities to participate in planning decisions that affect them.

The main concern raised was the removal of the ability to call applications into Planning Committee. A discretionary review option may need to be considered.

- **Protocol – Transfer of Administration**

The revised protocol, prepared ahead of the transfer of administration with Helena Robinson, has been circulated. Members were invited to provide any further comments.

A meeting has taken place with the new Cabinet Member for Communities, with broad agreement that the protocol is workable. The document is expected to move towards adoption, likely in October, with further meetings planned with Colin and colleagues in the interim.

The aim is to embed the protocol within SBC's culture and ensure the Forum's ambitions are reflected in future partnership working.

5. Update from Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)

Ian Nockolds (County Advisor from WALC) provided an update.

WALC is the membership organisation supporting town and parish councils across Wiltshire and Swindon, providing information, advice, guidance and training for both councillors and officers. Training provision has increased significantly this year.

WALC offers an advice service, with councils encouraged to seek support and resolve issues where possible. As the local equivalent of NALC, WALC also provides access to national guidance, resources and topical updates through its website.

Upcoming events include:

- A free WALC conference planned for Swindon, provisionally booked for 1 October (venue to be confirmed).
- A SLCC Wiltshire & Swindon Branch event featuring a speaker from Breakthrough Communications on the data protection implications of AI.
- A Highways event on 17 July at County Hall, Trowbridge, supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner, focusing on the relationship between policing and speeding policies.
- An event at the National Trust HQ focusing on environmental issues and partnership working.

Members were invited to suggest topics of interest for future training sessions and conferences.

Ian Nockolds also highlighted plans to spend regular time at County Hall, Trowbridge, and potentially at Swindon Borough Council to improve accessibility and strengthen working relationships.

A Shared Communications Forum is taking place next Thursday (10am–12pm), bringing together wider Swindon partners, including health services and employers, to share priorities, communications activity and opportunities for collaboration.

6. Shared Leadership Forum

At the Shared Leadership Forum in January, it was suggested to reduce attendance to the Chair of the Swindon Local Councils Forum, the Chief Executive & Leader of SBC. Upon receiving feedback from Members, the proposal was pushed back to review other options to allow all Chairs & Clerks to attend. Councillor V Manro will continue discussions as the Outgoing Chair and invite the new Chair into these discussions.

The key purpose is to reduce the number of meetings – but this model only works if Officers, Directors and Cabinet Members attend the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

Having the Partnership Working Protocol being signed off at Cabinet will be a big step in the right direction.

7. Weed Spraying and Street Sweeping Communications

A schedule of works is being developed, with SBC being chased for further details. Some parishes have existing contracts in place and weed spraying has already taken place on certain gateway routes.

SBC will provide all parishes with a list of roads included within the programme, along with an indicative timeline, to allow councils to consider any additional works they may wish to undertake.

It was noted that some parishes had concerns regarding the weed spraying service; however, the current arrangements were considered non-negotiable. Any future changes would require earlier consultation.

Clarification is required on the scope of the works, including whether footways, gullies and drainage channels are included. It was suggested that SBC completes its statutory highway responsibilities, with parishes able to undertake additional works where required.

8. Member Council Updates

- **Hannington:** A neighbourhood group is forming to improve local representation. Concerns were raised that even small developments can significantly affect the character and dynamics of rural communities.
- **Liddington:** Ongoing concerns were raised regarding road safety, traffic speeds and the village road layout. Speed Indicator Device (SID) data recorded speeds of up to 82mph in a 30mph zone. Existing SIDs and speed signs are effective for some drivers, and work is continuing with SBC to explore further measures, including ANPR enforcement. The B4192 was highlighted as a concern due to limited facilities, steep

gradients and residents needing to cross the road. The local Speed Watch scheme was noted, with enforcement activity resulting in 98 successful prosecutions.

- **Covingham:** Concerns have been raised regarding the 20mph speed restriction on Merlin Way. No formal complaints have been submitted and the scheme has not yet been officially confirmed. As the restriction is not currently enforceable, Police action cannot be taken. Vehicle speed and registration monitoring technology is being developed.
- **Wanborough:** Concerns were raised regarding a proposed development of 300 homes on greenfield land, including the proposed Swindon Science Park site by the same developer. The development was considered to conflict with local policies, although the housing shortfall argument is being used to support it. The application has been called into SBC Planning, with approximately 250–300 local objections submitted.

The possibility of recruiting a handyman/handyperson was discussed, with consideration needed around costs compared with using contractors.

- **South Swindon**
The council is progressing plans to relocate its depot to a larger site with a sub-tenant. It is also progressing a bid for the Bowl at Town Gardens through the National Heritage funding programme, with a potential £4 million project.
- **Haydon Wick:** The new Grounds Maintenance Facility has been completed, with the official opening scheduled for 28 July. Members are welcome to attend.

9. Joint Procurement

Members were asked to notify the Swindon Local Councils Forum Secretary of any upcoming projects or opportunities for joint procurement. This information can then be shared across all parishes, allowing councils to plan ahead within their budgets and identify potential cost savings.

10. Members Reports

Blunsdon

A legal query is being explored regarding the refurbishment of the pavilion. A cost estimate is required to establish a potential budget, with a request for quotation/costing exercise to be undertaken. Wroughton also has pavilion refurbishment on its project list.

It was also confirmed that funding remains available through the Trees for Climate scheme.

11. Items for the Next agenda

- Planning
- Speeding / Officer to attend and give presentations road safety

- Weed spraying – review and progress
- Footpath maintenance
- Dog fouling

The meeting ended at 20.29