

# AGENDA

## Extraordinary Board Meeting

**Date:** Wednesday, 9 November 2022

**Venue:** online via Teams

**Time:** 1.15pm – 2.00pm

Membership		Attendance
<b>Board Directors:</b>	Paddy Bradley (PB) Mandy Clarke (MC) – Co-Deputy Chair Richard Clewer (RC) Ramona Derbyshire Doug Gale, MBE (DG) Andrew Gudgeon, OBE (AG) Tom Harrison (TH) Paul Moorby, OBE (PJM) – Chair Carole Kitching (CK) Col Gary McDade (GMc) Mark Matthews (MM) Basit Mohammed (BM) Alison North (AN) – Co-Deputy Chair David Renard (DR) José StClair (JSC) Prof Ian White (IW) Suzanne Wigmore (SW)	✓ Tentative Tentative ✓ Apologies  ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓  ✓ ✓  Apologies
<b>Advisors to the Board:</b>		
<b>Observers to the Board:</b>		
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Debby Skellern (DS)	✓
<b>Guests:</b>		
<b>Chair:</b>	Paul Moorby (PJM)	
<b>Minutes:</b>	Deborah House (DKH)	

1.15pm		Start of Extraordinary Board Meeting			
Item	Timing	Topic	Paper No.	Lead	
1.0	1.15pm	Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest	Verbal	PJM	
2.0	1.20pm	Delivery Plan 2023-24	Paper 2.0	DS	For approval



Item	Timing	Topic	Paper No.	Lead	
3.0	1.45pm	Update on Recycling Technologies	Verbal	PB	For information
4.0	1.55pm	AOB	Verbal	PJM	
		<b>Date of next Board meeting:</b> Thursday, 24 November 2022  9am Board Directors only 9.30am Public Board Meeting			
		<b>Proposed Meeting dates for 2023:</b>  Thursday, 26 January Thursday, 30 March Thursday, 25 May Thursday, 20 July Thursday, 28 September Thursday, 23 November  All via video / telephone conference until further notice.		PJM	
	<b>2.00pm</b>	<b>End of meeting</b>			

 <b>Swindon &amp; Wiltshire</b> LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP	<b>SWLEP Extraordinary Board Meeting 9 November 2022 Paper Number 2.0</b>
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<b>Security Level:</b>	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>Meeting &amp; Date:</b>	SWLEP Extraordinary Board Meeting - 9 November 2022		
<b>Subject:</b>	Final Draft SWLEP Delivery Plan 2023-24		
<b>Attachments:</b>	Appendix I: Final Draft Delivery Plan 2023-24 (15 pages)		
<b>Author:</b>	Debby Skellern	<b>Total no of sheets:</b>	1 + 15 = 16 pages

<b>Papers are provided for:</b>	Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Information <input type="checkbox"/>
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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The final draft of the Delivery Plan 2023-24 is presented to SWLEP Board for approval.

## 2. Summary

- 2.1. Since the September Board meeting, when it was agreed that the Delivery Plan should be submitted in early to mid-November, the draft content has been finalised and has undergone design work. Key updates include the completion of the headline budget and final output target tables.
- 2.2. The Delivery Plan Working Group met on 31 October to review the final draft and to discuss arrangements for the Delivery Plan's submission. The official deadline is 25 November 2022. National guidance however on the form and content for LEP delivery plans is still awaited. Guidance is therefore being sought from the Cities and Local Growth Unit Team (CGLU) as to whether it would be advisable to wait until after the budget announcement on 17 November has been made before it is submitted to accommodate any changes required.

## 3. Recommendations

The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board is recommended to:

- 3.1. approve the Delivery Plan 2023-24; and
- 3.2. delay its submission pending the budget statement and advice from the Cities and Local Growth Unit Team.

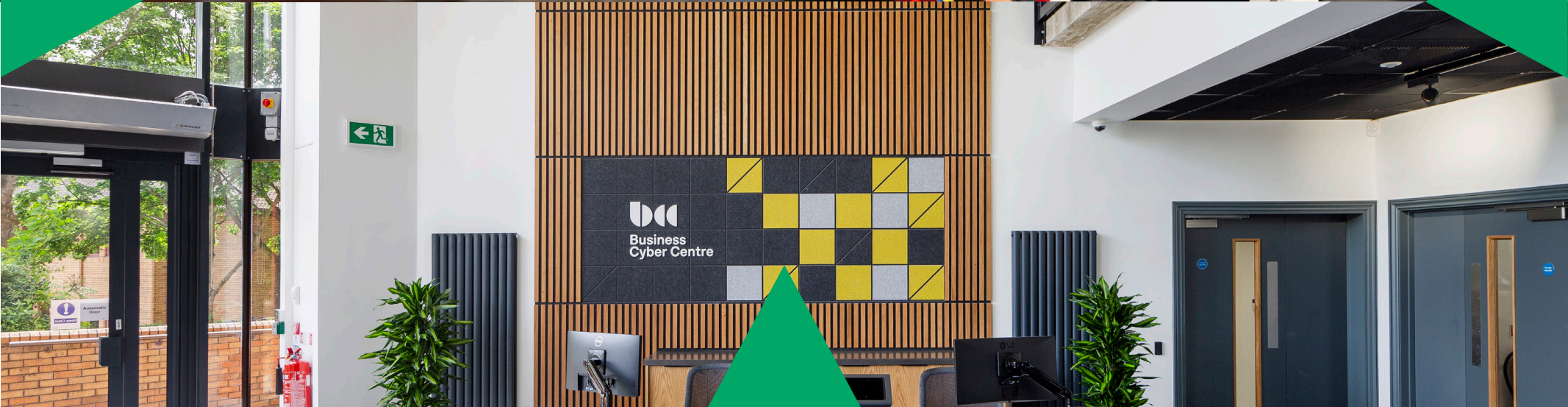


# DELIVERY PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

2023-24



Swindon & Wiltshire  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP







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# 1. Introduction

The role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) within the national framework of local growth policy is evolving following the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper in February 2022. This delivery plan has been compiled taking in to consideration SWLEP's likely future role in responding to the government's 12 levelling up missions as well as reflecting on where our company is positioned in relation to local government reform and devolution which is scheduled for completion by 2030. At the time of publication, the area does not have a clear pathway leading to a devolution deal. Accordingly, as a partnership, we will maintain business as usual where we are working together on shared ambitions set against the backdrop of our Local Industrial Strategy (March 2020) to achieve long term economic growth for Swindon and Wiltshire.

In March 2022, the role of LEPs was clearly articulated in a letter by government; in the absence of any subsequent guidance, this delivery plan presents our continued activity in relation to our role as a strong voice for business and stakeholders, carrying out strategic economic planning, maintaining a robust local evidence base alongside service delivery relating to the Growth Hub, international trade

and investment, the Careers Hub and local growth programme monitoring and assurance.

Taking this national strategic backdrop, and a continued role for LEPs where devolution deals are not already in train, this delivery plan presents the work which the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) intends to deliver directly during 2023/24 set alongside headline activity for 2024/25 as part of the wider framework of economic development activity locally and nationally. In doing so, we have assumed that core funding will be maintained at the same rate as our allocation for 2022/23 for both core LEP, Growth Hub and Careers Hub activities.

Following the recommendations of the 2017/18 LEP review, SWLEP incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and, in the absence of match funding from our local government partners, we have sought to deliver paid-for commercial services over and above publicly-funded activity in support of our Board's mission to achieve financial sustainability. We will continue to deliver and extend these commercial services which support the sustainable economic growth of Swindon and Wiltshire and which enable SWLEP Limited to operate as a going concern. These commercial services sit outside of the scope of this delivery plan.

# 2. Vision for Swindon and Wiltshire to 2036

The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) was published in March 2020 and sets out the long-term strategic priorities for the area<sup>1</sup>. It was produced following extensive consultation with local businesses, stakeholders and partners and was adopted by both local authorities.

In developing this delivery plan and its predecessor, working with our partners, we have reviewed our strategic position and consider that the LIS remains relevant as the overarching strategy for SWLEP's activities during 2023/24 and 2024/25.

## Our Vision to 2036

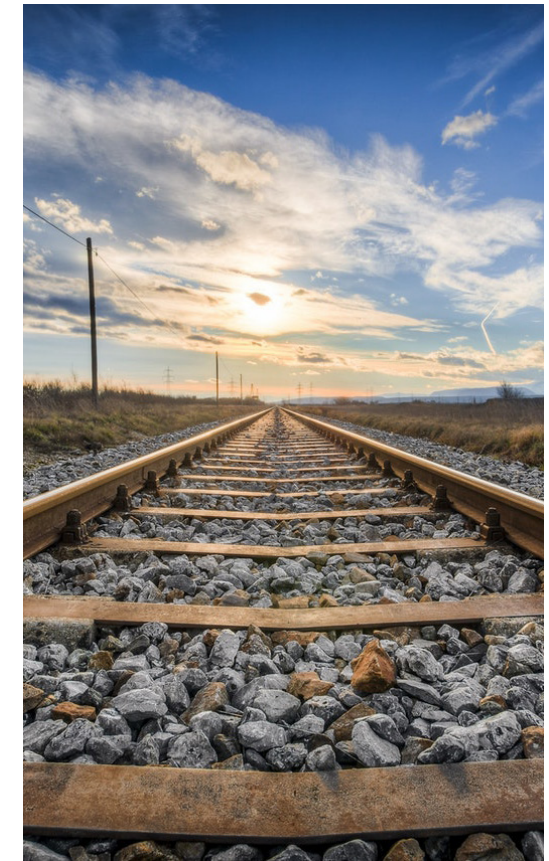
To ensure all of our communities benefit from sustainable and inclusive growth, making the Swindon and Wiltshire area world-renowned for its convergence of innovation, entrepreneurialism and great quality of life.

In pursuit of this vision we will continue to undertake activity which:

- supports innovative activity particularly in relation to our priority sectors
- develops the skills and employability

of our residents and workers;

- enables infrastructure improvements, both physical and digital
- supports the start-up, scale up and performance of our business community through our Growth Hub
- enables the regeneration of our towns and cities and develops price in place



<sup>1</sup><https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/industrial-strategy/local-industrial-strategy.pdf>



# 3. SWLEP's publicly funded role in 2023/24 and 2024/25

The future role of individual LEPs across England will differ depending on local circumstances and the negotiation of devolution deals. In Swindon and Wiltshire's case, we are one of the areas in the country where LEPs, as separate structures, will be maintained until a devolution deal is agreed.

The requirement to submit a delivery plan for activity in 2023/24 so early within the financial year has also prompted SWLEP and its partners to review and focus on, LEP's core publicly funded role. The role of LEPs in 2022/23 was defined by Government, to:

- a. embed a strong, independent and diverse local business voice into local democratic institutions
- b. carry out strategic economic planning in partnership with local leaders that clearly articulates their area's economic priorities and sectoral strengths. This should involve building and maintaining a robust local evidence base that identifies local strengths and challenges, future opportunities and the actions needed to support priority sectors, aligned to the relevant levelling up missions. LEPs should continue to use their convening power to bring together business, education and other local economic stakeholders.
- c. continue to deliver a number of

functions on behalf of government departments, shaped by the local business voice where relevant. Departments are expected to continue to engage with LEPs on the delivery of:

- Growth Hubs, on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy;
  - international trade and investment activity, provision of local business intelligence, grant funding and levelling-up focused projects, on behalf of the Department for International Trade;
  - Local Digital Skills Partnerships, on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport;
  - Careers Hubs, on behalf of the Department for Education;
  - local skills analysis via Skills Advisory Panels, on behalf of the Department for Education; and
  - monitoring and assurance pertaining to existing local growth programmes and funds for which LEPs are responsible.
- d. consider what will add most value to their local area in terms of economic development function, aligning where possible to the levelling up missions, in particular mission 1<sup>2</sup>, and
  - e. be involved in devolution negotiations which, when placed on a firm footing, are driven by a transition plan which has to

be signed off by the Chair of the LEP. Devolution deals themselves are the matter for local authorities.

This delivery plan presents how SWLEP will continue to fulfil this remit during 2023/24 alongside headline activity for 2024/25. Appendix 1 sets out in greater detail the breadth of activity which SWLEP performs, drawing on the core funding it receives to deliver the Government's remit for the LEP in supporting the sustainable and inclusive growth of the local economy.

Despite the fact this plan covers a relatively short time period, there are a number of uncertainties which we cannot definitively account for in this plan including:

- a. any change in economic development policy emphasis following the appointment of the new Prime Minister and Cabinet in October 2022;
- b. the lack of clarity regarding the funding settlement for core SWLEP activities, the Growth Hub and Careers Hub during 2023/24 and 2024/25;
- c. the impact of the energy crisis and rising inflation on the economy; and
- d. the appetite for a local devolution deal covering Swindon and Wiltshire and the implications for SWLEP Limited

from 2024/25 onwards.

In developing this delivery plan and its predecessor, working with our partners, we have reviewed our strategic position and consider that the LIS remains the relevant as the overarching strategy for SWLEP's activities during 2023/24 and 2024/25.

As a result we have assumed that:

- a. a maintained position in terms of the funding arrangements agreed for 2022/23 to be continued in 2023/24 enabling business as usual activity to be maintained by SWLEP supported by a stable staffing base;
- b. the levelling up priorities will be retained as an overarching national strategy document for economic development activity;
- c. the UK retains its existing Net Zero commitments to 2030 and 2050;
- d. our local authority partners retain good working relationship with us, supported by open and regular communication; and
- e. we will continue to deliver against our Local Industrial Strategy priorities.

<sup>2</sup>which falls under the objective to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging.

## 4. Delivery Priorities

SWLEP's Delivery Plan for Sustainable Economic Growth 2023/24 focusses on the strategic priorities we can deliver directly as part of the wider framework of economic development organisations locally and nationally. With continued core funding for SWLEP, its Growth Hub and Careers Hub during 2023/24, we will deliver our publicly funded activities to support the sustainable growth of Swindon and Wiltshire by continuing to mobilise our current Local Industrial Strategy. In turn we will contribute to our local authority partners' wider roles to deliver the Levelling Up White Paper's missions.

### 4.1 Skills and Talent Priorities

SWLEP's Skills and Talent Subgroup will continue to oversee the education and skills work we deliver:

**4.1.1** we will continue to lead the delivery of the Swindon and Wiltshire Apprenticeship campaign to increase the uptake and awareness of apprenticeships as an employment pathway.

**4.1.2** we will maintain our Careers Hub services alongside the delivery of our Apprenticeship Strategy as part of the wider education offer. The Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub is amongst the

best performing in the country and it will continue to operate and offer support to schools and students so that our school leavers are best prepared for the world of work and or ongoing education and training. SWLEP will continue to be the lead organisation for the Career's Hub working closely with Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council as delivery partners enabling a seamless and consistent service to be delivered across the area.

**4.1.3** our green skills and jobs plan which we have developed to ensure our area can transition to a Net Zero economy through upskilling jobs as well as preparing for new jobs. This will be facilitated through a data observatory platform focussing initially on manufacturing, motor trades, transport and logistics in the first instance with a view to extending the range of sectors covered over time;

**4.1.4** we will support the development of the Local skills Improvement Plan, working with the appointed lead organisation, to enable it to be evidence based and account for local skills demand and supply offering updated analysis based where there is continued SAP funding from the Department for Education for 2023/24 onwards;

**4.1.5** SWLEP will continue to support the Institute of Technology to develop

employer-led-education and training provision including any application it makes to secure a Royal Charter which would put the institution on the same footing as a university, extending our higher education provision for our area;

**4.1.6** finally, we will continue to work with Public Health services in our area to deliver SWLEP's programme of webinars aimed at encouraging employee health within the workplace which was launched in 2022/23.

**In such a way our work will contribute to the levelling up missions to 'spread opportunities', specifically in relation to education, skills and health.**

### 4.2 Business Environment Priorities

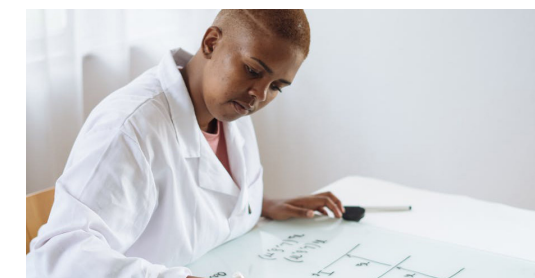
The Business Environment Subgroup oversees<sup>1</sup> our Growth Hub service, international investment and trade activity and the revolving loan scheme, which is our Growing Places Infrastructure Fund, the Business Cyber Centre and the work of the Rural Economy Sector Group. In doing so:

**4.2.1** the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub will continue to deliver free at the point of access information, advice and guidance services alongside access to the Growth Hub community portal, to

help support the start-up and scale-up of our small and medium sized businesses drawing on core Growth Hub funding from Government. We hope that this core funding will be maintained through to 2024/25 to ensure that impartial advice continues to remain available to our business community;

**4.2.2** our ERDF funded SME Competitiveness Programme continues to run through to the end of June 2023 and we expect business engagement with the programme to be maintained throughout the year and into 2024/25. To enable this to be met, we have developed and begun to deliver our value-add Growth Hub Plus offer, which will be delivered on a commercial basis. We expect the demand for these business support services to continue given the challenging economic conditions that we expect to prevail. A resilient and growing business community will support employment growth;

<sup>1</sup> The Subgroups are responsible for overseeing and providing strategic direction, advice and support to the SWLEP Board to ensure the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership's strategic objectives are delivered successfully.





## 4. Delivery Priorities (cont.)

**4.2.3** access to investment funding is fundamental to unlocking productivity growth and supporting innovation. Our Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) has been very successful in supporting local businesses to expand their operations when they have been unable to access finance from traditional finance mechanisms. We will allocate another tranche of GPIF funding during the year, which has been returned to the pot through loans repayments. In addition, we will continue to work with the British Business Bank and help our businesses to secure funding from the South West Investment Fund as well as access to a range of other investment fora and new financial platforms to coordinate early stage investment funds;

**4.2.4** the Business Cyber Centre will continue to extend its reach and develop an ecosystem for the information security sector linking to the area's significant cyber assets at MOD Corsham and Universities of Bath and Bath Spa. We will facilitate the growth of the network of cyber businesses through the UK C3-funded Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster. We will continue to be active partners in the Home Office funded South West Cyber Resilience Forum;

**4.2.5** we will continue to work with Innovate UK and KTN to raise awareness

of innovation funding and competitions amongst our business community.

**4.2.6** our business engagement activities, which have been core SWLEP's function since our inception, will continue and we will bring together our business representation organisations so we can listen and respond to the emerging issues facing our business community. We will continue to convene our Business Intelligence and Networking Group and our Rural Economy Sector Group on a regular basis to ensure our services remain relevant and we can effectively represent the needs of our area to government and stakeholders. We will continue to hold our annual business conference in the autumn to showcase successes within our business community to the wider world; and

**4.2.7** we support inward investment through working with the Department for International Trade and in collaboration with local partners. This also includes raising awareness of our area at regional and national events where we can participate as part of a Western Gateway presence.

**By continuing to support our business community and delivery business support service and loans, we will contribute to the levelling up missions to boost productivity, pay, jobs and grow the private sector.**



### **4.3 Ideas, Infrastructure and Places**

The Ideas, Infrastructure and Places Subgroup has a broad remit and oversees the activity we undertake to foster innovation, progresses infrastructure improvements and the regeneration of our settlements. In doing so:

**4.2.8** we have developed ever closer links with our neighbouring universities and with the University of Bath in particular. We will continue to foster these relationships to support the adoption of research and innovation-led initiatives into commercial application especially where they support the adoption of sustainable technologies and contribute to the Net Zero agenda. We will continue to raise the profile and expansion of iCAST's Research Gateway's activities in Swindon and continue our work to support the Innovation Campus for the Circular Economy to be realised including being a member of its board. In addition, we will continue to scan for additional opportunities to extend sustainable technology projects leading to research as well as commercial products and services;

**4.2.9** we will continue to play our part

in contributing towards the delivery of Net Zero acknowledging that the agenda is predominantly led by our local authority partners and the private sector. We will focus on activity where we add value with a particular focus on the delivery of the Swindon and Wiltshire Green Hydrogen Plan, continued support for the Western Gateway's Hydrogen Workstream and opportunities for waste to energy solutions. In addition, as an organisation, we will continue our commitment to the SME Climate Hub as well as its promotion to the wider business community;

**4.2.10** we will continue to offer our support to improve the physical fabric of our communities through our involvement in settlement-based engagement groups and partnership boards including our active involvement in the Swindon Town Advisory and Engagement Group, Salisbury Partnership Board and Trowbridge Partnership Board. We will also lend our support to other settlements looking to secure funding to support pride in place initiatives which meet local strategic priorities;

**4.2.11** our support for post-graduate research on the value of natural capital, and ways in which it can be embedded into decision

## 4. Delivery Priorities (cont.)

making, will continue as the work enters its third year. This will be an important year for the study as approaches begin to be developed and tested. As co-sponsor for the research, alongside the University of Bath, we will raise awareness of the emerging findings, and where appropriate, engage other organisations to better understand practical applications which arise from the study;

**4.2.12** we will remain members of the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body's working groups on rail, road and freight. In addition, we will maintain our membership of the Board of England's Economic Heartland. We will also continue our support of the Community Rail Partnership in support of TransWilts Rail.

**4.2.13** we will continue to advocate the work of our partners including the Western Gateway and, through our social media activity and at our networking events to raise awareness of activities which align to our strategic priorities such as bids to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Although our area does not lag behind the national average, our work will contribute to delivering the levelling up missions to restore a sense of community and belonging through pride in place, local leadership and transport related activities.

### Headline activity for 2024/25

We intend to continue the delivery of these activities through 2024/25 if there is stability in public funding to do so. If this is not forthcoming, we will focus on continuing those activities of most strategic significance through the generation of additional commercial income, wherever possible.



## 5. Delivery Targets 2023/24

Our output targets for the year are related to specific programme activity for which we receive funding to deliver and against which our performance is monitored by external funding organisations. These include the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Department for Education, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Therefore, the targets presented do not include the metrics which relate to the commercial activity which SWLEP will undertake to generate income (Table 1).

**Table 1: SWLEP's output targets 2023-2024**

Key Performance Indicators	Target April 2023 to March 2024
<b>Capital programme</b>	
<i>Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (loans)</i>	
Value of new loans awarded	£1.4m
<b>Growth Hub</b>	
Number of businesses receiving light support	800
Number of businesses receiving medium support (3+hours)	290
Number of businesses receiving intensive (12+ hours)	216
Growth Hub Community membership reaches	3,000
<b>Cyber</b>	
Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster members reaches	300
<b>Skills and Talent</b>	
<b>Raspberry Pi school and college programme</b>	
Establish a regional Raspberry Pi award scheme	1
<b>Careers Hub (academic year September 23 to August 24):</b>	
Minimum Gatsby Benchmarks for each school	3
Average Gatsby Score across the network	5
School upgrades to Compass	90%
<b>Skills and Talent</b>	
Number of businesses taking on an apprentice for the first time	75
Green skills data observatory established and launched	1
Green skills business upskilling audit published Q2 2023/24	1

# 6. Resource Management

## Business Planning activities of the SWLEP Board

In addition to these publicly funded activities, SWLEP will continue to develop its commercial activities to enable the company to operate without the need for core funding by March 2025.

The Board will continue to support the LEP Network, including continued participation on working groups associated with the different local government devolution pathways.

## Board recruitment and retention

As part of its annual round of Board Director recruitment and induction, SWLEP will maintain a 50:50 gender balance. Further rounds of recruitment will take place to support this balance and to replace directors who have reached the end of their term on the board.

## Staffing

SWLEP will seek to maintain its staffing base. In 2023/24 this will depend on public funding being maintained at its 2022/23 level whilst the company increases its commercial income generation.

## Marketing and Communications

We will continue to improve our co-ordination and collaboration in delivering effective marketing and communications to promote our work and that of our partners. The focus of our activity will be our social media channels which include Linked-In and Twitter and increasing the accessibility and reach of our websites. In addition, we will produce content for e-books, newsletters, business intelligence reports and press statements.

## Budget

On the presumption of the core funding being maintained at the 2022/23 level, the indicative budget is presented in Table 2.



Table 2: Headline Budget 2023/24

Budget Headline	Income £ 2023/24					Expenditure £ 2023/24					Difference
	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sep	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar	Year 2023/24	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sep	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar	Year 2023/24	
SWLEP Core Funding	£93,750	£93,750	£93,750	£93,750	£375,000	£93,750	£93,750	£93,750	£93,750	£375,000	0
Growth Hub Core	£57,550	£57,550	£57,550	£57,550	£231,000	£57,550	£57,550	£57,550	£57,550	£231,000	0
Growth Hub SME Competitiveness	£90,000	0	0	0	£90,000	£90,000	0	0	0	£90,000	0
Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster	£13,750	£13,750	£13,750	£13,750	£55,000	£13,750	£13,750	£13,750	£13,750	£55,000	0
GPIF Interest	£125,000	£125,000	£125,000	£125,000	£500,000	£10,538	£10,538	£10,538	£10,538	£42,153	£457,847
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£380,050</b>	<b>£290,050</b>	<b>£290,050</b>	<b>£290,050</b>	<b>£1,251,000</b>	<b>£175,588</b>	<b>£175,588</b>	<b>£175,588</b>	<b>£175,588</b>	<b>£793,153</b>	<b>£457,847</b>





## 7. Governance and Operation

Activity undertaken by SWLEP to deliver publicly funded services will comply with our Governance Framework under the oversight of the three Board subgroups which meet every two months and report directly to the SWLEP Board (Figure 1). In addition, task and finish working groups will continue to operate to develop and oversee the day-to-day delivery of SWLEP's projects and programmes according to business need.

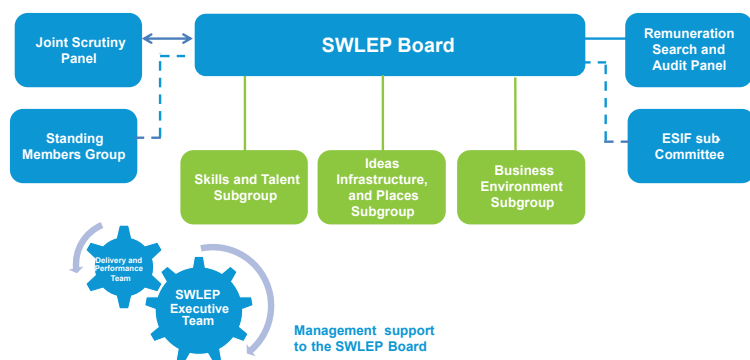
We will also continue to run our two business reference groups: the Business Intelligence and Networking Group and the Rural Economy Sector Group.

Unless joint activity is directly funded, or programme managed, by SWLEP, the work of our partners sits outside our governance structure and is subject to the arrangements in place within their respective organisations.

During the year, the Governance Framework will be refreshed in line with any updated guidance issued by government. Our activities will be reviewed by the Cities and Local Growth Unit team to ensure we meet national requirements against governance, delivery and strategy for the delivery of our publicly funded activity at our mid-term and end of year annual performance reviews. SWLEP Limited also works within the Company Law Act 2006. As the business extends its commercial activities, legal advice will be sought in year to review SWLEP's articles of association.

SWLEP's financial accounts will be audited and published on Companies House and headline information will be included in our Annual Report 2022/23 which will be published by the end of July 2023. We will also hold our Annual General Meeting in the fourth quarter of the financial year.

Figure 1: SWLEP's Governance Structure, July 2021 (Latest)



## 8. Monitoring, Risk Management and Evaluation

### Monitoring

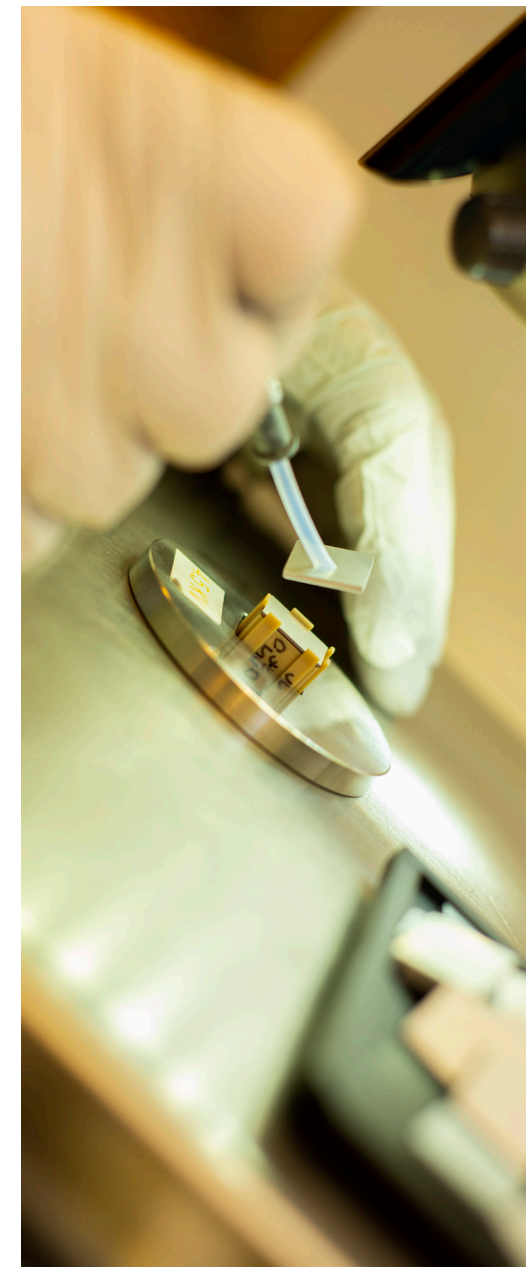
Where financial resources have been allocated by, or awarded to, SWLEP, a highlight report will be completed in line with the performance management arrangements. Performance reports will be presented to the Board after the end of each financial quarter (Appendix 2).

### Risk management

At an organisational level, a risk register is maintained and managed by the SWLEP CEO. Potential risks to delivery, such as overspend or delays to timescale are notified to the Board through the programme highlight reports. The highlight reporting will include information on how a risk which manifests will be managed.

### Evaluation

Where external funding is secured for delivery, SWLEP will follow the monitoring and evaluation requirements specified by the funder. This may extend from an informal internal evaluation or a formal, independent evaluation exercise. If no evaluation is required, this will be undertaken by SWLEP internally. As a minimum, SWLEP will publish its Annual Report and the Growth Hub Evaluation Plan by 31 July 2023.





# Appendix 1: SWLEP's publicly funded role

## Our position in relation to the LEP Review and the Levelling Up White Paper, August 2022.

**1.1.** In the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government set out its direction of travel for LEPs. In a letter to LEP Chairs, Neil O'Brien MP and Paul Scully MP, then Ministers in DLUHC and BEIS respectfully stated that the Government's guiding vision in the White Paper was of more integrated, better aligned and empowered local institutions with the tools they need to unlock economic growth and level up at a local level. The Ministers acknowledged that in some areas, LEPs already enjoy a close, collaborative relationship with combined authorities. In others, LEPs retain a high level of independence. The Government's priority in the recent LEP review was to balance the accountability of local growth institutions, Government objectives on devolution and the need to retain a local, independent, business voice. Within that context the White Paper set out the Government's expectations of even closer integration between LEPs and local democratic institutions.

**1.2.** The publication of the Levelling Up White Paper marks a turning point in Government policy from that which existed from March 2018 when it accepted the recommendations of

the Mary Ney Review into LEPs. The Government policy in 2018 anticipated the separation of LEP staffing structures from local authorities and led LEPs to incorporate as independent companies. This was the route SWLEP took and incorporated as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee in January 2019. All staff are now employed by SWLEP Ltd. The decisions taken by the Board at that time put the SWLEP totally in line with the existing government policy and direction of travel.

**1.3.** The SWLEP operates in a geographic area which is not part of the first wave of potential devolution deals. Such a deal before the next General Election, currently set for 2024, is highly unlikely. There is little prospect of a Mayoral Combined Authority or a County Deal in the SWLEP area in the medium term, which means no integration of LEP functions into reformed local government structures before 2024. This leaves the SWLEP operating as it has done since its incorporation. Most LEPs are in a similar position with the local devolution plans being implemented in a limited number of places in the country.

## 2. The Government's definition of the role of LEPs

**2.1.** The future role of individual LEPs will



differ depending on local circumstances and the status of devolution locally. In our case, we are part of the areas of the country where LEPs are maintained until a devolution deal is agreed. This is called Pathway.

**2.1.1.** The Government defines the role of LEPs in these areas in its guidance to LEPs following the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper.

**2.1.2.** Continue to embed a strong, independent and diverse local business voice into the local decision-making for they are party to.

**2.1.3.** Local authorities in England may wish to consult with LEPs, along with other local partners, as part of the development of local plans and applications to local growth funds such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) or Levelling Up Fund, where projects have an economic development purpose.

**2.1.4.** The Government encourages all local and relevant national partners to engage with LEPs where a private sector and economic perspective can add value to local decision-making and expect LEPs to readily offer advice where requested.

**2.1.5.** With regards to strategic economic planning, Government will support LEPs to develop local economic strategies and maintain business and economic intelligence for their areas.

**2.1.6.** LEPs outside of devolution areas should set how they intend to utilise their strategic economic function (alongside the other functions and roles set out in the guidance) in their delivery plans. These should be published by 30 June 2022.

**2.1.7.** In considering how to employ their strategic economic development function, LEPs should consider what will add most value to their local area, aligning where possible to the levelling up missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, in particular mission 1.

**2.1.8.** Continue to deliver functions on behalf of government departments, shaped by the local business voice where relevant. Future programme and funding decisions will be taken by each respective Government department according to their own decision-making and business planning processes, priorities and timescales. However, at the present juncture, the Government would expect departments to continue to engage with LEPs.

**2.1.9.** LEPs are expected to be involved in



in devolution negotiations which, when placed on a firm footing, are driven by a transition plan which has to be signed off by the Chair of the LEP. Devolution deals themselves are the matter for local authorities.

### 3. How does the SWLEP match up to the Government expectation of LEPs?

**3.1.** Bringing local business voice into local democratic fora

**3.1.1.** The Chair of the SWLEP is a regular and active attendee of the Wiltshire Public Service Board. The SWLEP CEO also presented the outcome of the SWLEP's recent local economic assessment, defining the economic opportunities and challenges for both public and private sector organisations and the subsequent impact on residents.

**3.1.2.** The SWLEP is actively involved in fora concerned with place-shaping throughout Swindon and Wiltshire.

**3.1.3.** The SWLEP has played a significant role in enabling Swindon Borough Council to deliver the six business cases for its Towns Fund bid on time and on budget. All six cases have been approved by the Government, bringing £19.5m of Government funding

to Swindon. SWLEP led the management and delivery of the business cases on behalf of the Towns Fund Board, having provided the framework for procuring consultants to deliver the business cases, all produced, approved by the Towns Fund Board, SBC Cabinet and DLUHC in under 12 months. This performance is a strong contender for best in the country.

**3.1.4.** The SWLEP has led the work to transform the Towns Fund Board, now that it has completed what it was tasked to do, into a Town Advisory and Engagement Group. Business and community groups form the majority membership, which also includes MPs, councillors, youth organisations and Government departments. The aim is to bring together the voices of businesses, community groups, residents, and other interested parties to act as a consultative body to discuss ideas and proposals from the SBC leadership for potential capital and revenue programmes. In its first role, the Town Advisory and Engagement Group reviewed bids submitted to access the Council's allocation under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and provided feedback to councillors on the match of the bids to the fund's priorities.

**3.1.5.** In Salisbury and Trowbridge, the

SWLEP is an active participant in the Partnership Boards focussing on these urban areas which have also benefitted from Future High Street Fund awards from Government. Both Boards are chaired by the local MPs with a secretariat function provided by Wiltshire Council.

**3.1.6.** The SWLEP engagement in Salisbury is significant following the Novichok incident in 2018, with the SWLEP being the first organisation, local or national to commit grant funding (£100,000) to support businesses as the local economy stalled following the attack. Since then, work through the Growth Hub has supported businesses during post-Novichok and post-COVID recovery. This has involved collaboration with Salisbury BID and Salisbury Chamber of Commerce to deliver workshops for businesses on a range of subjects including digital marketing. The SWLEP was also a co-funder and stakeholder in the re-branding exercise for Salisbury. A further £2.5m of LGF was re-directed to Salisbury to support recovery programmes in addition to the existing £14.2m allocated to Wiltshire College and University Centre for the re-development of its Salisbury campus.

**3.1.7.** Engagement in Trowbridge has been more recent as the Partnership Board first convened earlier in 2022. Again, collaboration with Trowbridge Chamber of Commerce has been a crucial element of our engagement, delivering online and in person workshops on digital marketing strategies, the use of video and social media communication methods.

**3.2.** Developing local economic strategies

**3.2.1.** We produced our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) in 2020, based on our most extensive collation of evidence and tested by an independent group of academics from universities in the West of England and South Wales (Bath, Cardiff and Bath Spa University).

**3.2.2.** We have used the priorities in the LIS as the basis for our continuing economic development programme. We again test the priorities against the evidence we have gathered from our biennial local economic assessment (see para 3.3.3 below). To date, our LIS priorities have stood the test of time.

**3.2.3.** We have blended this work into the production of our annual delivery plans, overseen by a working group of Board directors and officers from both local authorities. The plans collate LIS strategies and Government priorities





priorities broadly defined in the Plan for Growth and Levelling Up White Paper.

**3.2.4.** The SWLEP is involved extensively with the Western Gateway. The SWLEP Chair leads the Hydrogen project group, which is managed by the SWLEP Director of Policy and Strategy, who is seconded part-time to the Western Gateway Secretariat. This secondment has also resulted in a significant enhancement to the governance framework of the regional partnership. We provide annual financial contribution to the Western Gateway and increasingly, the SWLEP's economic strategy is becoming more closely entwined with the Western Gateway.

**3.2.5.** We participate in the two locally relevant sub-national transport bodies: England's Economic Heartland (to the east) and the Western Gateway (to the south and west).

**3.2.6.** The SWLEP Board has established three subgroups, chaired by Board directors which maintain a broad overview of our economic priorities, activities and plans. They are: Business Environment; Ideas, infrastructure and Places; and Skills and Talent.

3.2.7. The major areas of focus of our economic strategies and plans are

to support employment growth in our area, improve productivity, particularly in Wiltshire, build greater resilience in our business base through increased cyber confidence and security and extend the opportunities of economic growth to those residents furthest away from employment. This is in line with meeting Government priorities identified in the Levelling Up Mission 1.

**3.3.** Maintain business and economic intelligence

**3.3.1.** Every two months, the SWLEP convenes a Business Intelligence and Network Group (BING), whose members include both local authorities, town councils, chambers of commerce, FSB, Business West, Inspire, trade associations, Innovate UK, institute of chartered accountants, BID companies, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Department for Work and Pension and the Countryside Landowner Association. The meeting is used to share local intelligence of the state of the business environment and seek collaboration to support each other's activities when it makes sense so to do.

**3.3.2.** In order to understand and articulate the opportunities and challenges facing businesses located in rural areas, the SWLEP convenes



a Rural Economy Sector Group, whose members include local rural businesses, the NFU, the CLA, local councils, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, bodies representing areas of outstanding natural beauty and representatives of the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise. In addition to updates on our research into Natural Capital (see para 3.3.5 below), the group is actively engaging in discussion about finance models to support carbon capture in the rural landscape and the contribution of the SWLEP as an expert witness in the recent report on Levelling up the rural economy published by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Rural Businesses and the Rural Powerhouse. The CLA provides the secretariat function to the APPG.

**3.3.3.** We produce up to 12 Business Intelligence (BI) briefing notes a year, gathering information from a trawl of local media and submissions from SWLEP staff, local authority officers and local employer representative groups. These briefing notes have developed from our BI reports sent to BEIS, which are not now required. We send them to all seven local MPs, Board directors, members of BING, SWLEP staff and local authority officers. We also offered an annual summary for MPs of business

intelligence for their constituency.

**3.3.4.** Every two years, the SWLEP engages economic analysis consultants to produce a local economic assessment of Swindon and Wiltshire, mapping changes in our economy in comparison with our neighbouring LEPs and the UK as a whole.

**3.3.5.** We are funding a student at the Department of Economics, University of Bath to study for a Ph.D into the development of economic understanding of natural capital. This is part of our commitment to understanding how we can incorporate calculations of the effect on the natural environment of choices over the use of land. We aim for this work to be gradually introduced to the LEP Network by 2023-24 and for us to hold a conference for interested parties in that year.

**3.4.** Deliver functions as agreed with Government

**3.4.1.** In the main, this involves delivering functions for BEIS and DfE. In 2021-22, we also successfully delivered a Kickstart programme for the DWP placing 111 young people in employment.

**3.4.2.** The Growth Hub is our main business support service, which in 2021-22 delivered support to 2,400 businesses



## Swindon's First Creative Cowork Space.

(8% of all businesses operating in the SWLEP) with 74% of those businesses responding to a survey reporting that accessing the Growth Hub had met or exceeded their expectations and 69% felt that they were in a better position because of the support that they had received. From 2020 to 2022, Growth Hub support had safeguarded 149 jobs and generated £8.4m gross GVA. The work is supported by the EU-funded SME Competitiveness Programme which is providing support to businesses from start-up to scale up. This programme finishes in 2023. We produce annual reports on what businesses think of the Growth Hub provision and the evidence of economic, social and environmental impact of Growth Hub support to businesses.

**3.4.3.** In 2022-23, funding from BEIS for Growth Hub core activity has been reduced by 50%. We have maintained our staffing levels, using our cash reserves to subsidise Growth Hub Navigator salaries. This is to continue to deliver a free advice service to businesses in Swindon and Wiltshire, but also to develop a commercial offering which would not be limited to our geographical area.

**3.4.4.** In 2022-23 we will receive our last planned payment from DfE to support

skills development. The funding is circa 25% lower than in previous years. It enables us to continue to develop and use labour market intelligence to build our demand-led skills plans. In the latter half of 2022-23, we retained 50% of the DfE funding to work with the employer representative organisation selected to develop the local skills improvement plan for the area. In the meantime, we have continued to develop from our previous Skills Plans and Reports, four specific lines of activity:

a. work with partners to develop the provision to match the need for identified new jobs and upskilling of existing jobs within the green economy;

b. manage a campaign to enable 50 businesses to take on an apprentice for the first time;

c. work with the Institute of Coding and both local authorities to establish bootcamps to develop digital skills, included cyber-related training; and

d. continue to develop our high-achieving Careers Hub to improve further school performance against the Gatsby benchmarks, developing a wider range of online work experience placements to meet demand, and implement the outcomes of our research projects

into improving girls' attitudes to mathematics and supporting home-educated students to access careers education and guidance.

**3.4.5.** The SWLEP leads on the management and use of the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund loan fund. The operation of the fund was re-organised in 2016 and by 2022 we had issued 24 loans to 21 businesses totalling more than £16m. The loans are agreed with businesses whose products and services are aligned to our economic priorities. The loans themselves have leveraged circa £47m and created over 1000 jobs.

**3.4.6.** We successfully completed an EU-funded Inward Investment programme for which Swindon Borough Council was the Accountable Body and the SWLEP was the largest single financial contributor by far. The SWLEP continues to be the first point of contact for the Department of International Trade for Inward Investment enquiries. The SWLEP contributes to the inward investment strategy for the Western Gateway, attending events as part of the Western Gateway partnership.

**3.4.7.** We are in the last phases on feeding back information to DLUHC

on the performance of local growth programmes which have used government capital. One project in the Getting Building Fund programme has continued to be monitored through 2022-23. The SWLEP and Wiltshire Council, its Accountable Body, agreed a funding transfer under the remit of the Freedoms and Flexibilities policy to enable the project to continue beyond the scheduled completion date. A report on progress is submitted every quarter, with project due to complete within 2022-23.

**3.5.** Involvement in ongoing discussions about devolution

**3.5.1.** At a senior level, the SWLEP has engaged in talks with both local authorities about the state of discussions with each other and neighbouring authorities concerning the prospect of a local devolution deal.

**3.5.2.** The SWLEP has offered to help as required in such discussions which are managed by the local political leadership.



# Appendix 2: Board Reporting - Quarterly Template

<b>Key</b>	<b>SP: Strategic Priority</b>	<b>RAG:</b>	Proposed/ Not started	<b>Green</b>	<b>Amber-Green</b>	<b>Amber-Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Complete</b>
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Oversight by: BE: Business Environment Subgroup, IIP: Ideas, Infrastructure and Places Subgroup, S&T: Skills and Talent Subgroup

Ref	Strategic Priority	Activity summary as Q1/2/3/4 2023/24	£ source	Status	RAG
<b>Ideas and Infrastructure/ Skills and Talent/Business Environment/Places/Governance heading</b>					
BE	Activity heading	Activity to be undertaken during the year	£	Proposed Pipeline Active Completed Dormant	
IIP	Q1 Apr-June 2022				
S&T	Q2 July-September 2022				
	Q3 Oct-Dec 2022				
	Q4 Jan-Mar 2023				

RAG rating	Cost	Scope	Time
	All funding for overall scheme has been secured and is available to spend as required.	Deliverables and project scope remain unaltered.	Minor project slippage may be present but total project delivery remains on track. <30 days total slippage.
	Extra funding is required for overall project and is expected to be secured shortly (within one month).	Project is experiencing or is expected to experience small changes to scope and outputs delivered.	Project is experiencing or is expected to experience slippage. >30 days but <90days total project slippage.
	Extra funding is required for overall project. A funding plan is in place and applications have been made but there is a risk of an unsuccessful bid.	Project is experiencing or is expected to experience major changes to scope and outputs delivered.	Project is experiencing major slippage and is due to deliver the project outputs and outcomes late. >90 days slippage but <six Months total project slippage.
	Extra funding is required for overall project. No funding plan is in place or applications made in order to address funding gap.	Project is experiencing or is expected to experience significant change to scope and outputs delivered.	Project is suffering significant and major delays to delivery. >Six months total project slippage.

Please note that cost, scope and time considerations may not all apply until funding is secured.





## JOIN US IN GROWING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

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**Swindon & Wiltshire**

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP