



Swindon & Wiltshire
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report **2018**





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Cover image: Stonehenge ©English Heritage

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Working for Swindon and Wiltshire's prosperity

Recovery plan for Salisbury put into action.

Investment in education to raise Swindon and Wiltshire's skills level.

Far-reaching education, transport and digital studies looking at the needs of Swindon and Wiltshire businesses to shape our strategic economic plan.

Preparation for the post-Brexit business landscape.

Foreword from the Chairman

No reflection on 2017/18 in Swindon and Wiltshire can go without mention of the ongoing ordeal suffered by the city of Salisbury and the continued response it has brought from all quarters.

In the economic emergency that has become apparent in the aftermath of the attack we were pleased to provide £100,000 of emergency funding to support the businesses that have been most affected.

Salisbury has shown tremendous resilience in the face of this crisis and its recovery is under way. We are working with others to bring forward the investment that will help the city's economy not only recover but grow stronger than ever.

In the coming months we will be collaborating on plans for a redeveloped and renewed Maltings shopping centre and we will see a £15 million investment in Wiltshire College's Salisbury campus.

The college investment is key to our goal of developing the skills base in our area. We see it as a fundamental challenge that we equip our workforce with the tools to meet the needs of employers, now and in the future. We want more jobs and better jobs with a more fully integrated education pipeline so that Swindon and Wiltshire is among the best places in the UK to live, work and prosper.

This year we have focused very firmly on delivering the commitments we have made to government in return for the £169

million it has granted us, plus the £39 million in European funding.

We have seen the completion of major work at junctions 16 and 17 of the M4 and at Greenbridge roundabout in Swindon. The dualling of the A350 at Chippenham is progressing at pace, Chippenham railway station has been improved and we are continuing the infrastructure works to support the development in Swindon's New Eastern Villages.

This year we have put in place strategic studies on higher education, digital capability and the rural economy as part of the data gathering we require to develop our Local Industrial Strategy. As part of that we will also develop a Rail Strategy.

In all of this work we have been engaging closely with businesses. It is only by listening to them and understanding their needs and ambitions that we will succeed in growing the county's economy across our extensive rural areas as well as those in the towns and city.

This direct relationship with business is vital because we anticipate playing a part in delivering the UK shared Prosperity Fund post-Brexit. Having a strong Local Enterprise Partnership where businesses are engaged can only strengthen our credentials when we pitch for future funding to benefit Swindon and Wiltshire.

I was pleased to be invited to Downing Street where the Prime Minister demonstrated how seriously she is taking



Foreword (continued)

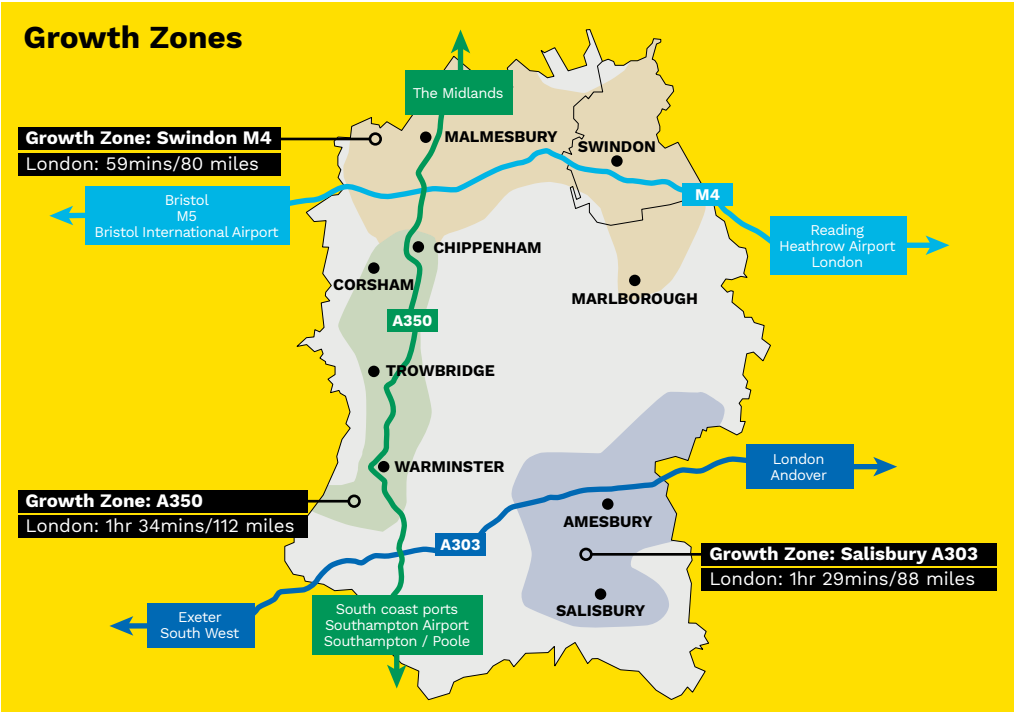
LEPs by announcing she is going to chair the council of local enterprise partnership chairs. We are expecting the results of a ministerial review into LEPs, which will cement our position as a permanent part of the economic landscape. Further to that, this year we will continue to investigate making the SWLEP a fully incorporated company.

During the year we have brought new members on to our board but we still want more diversity so that it truly reflects the business community of Swindon and Wiltshire.

I will end with a challenge to our board, our staff and our businesses. Let us all pledge to shout with one unified voice about the incredible things going on in

Swindon and Wiltshire. The more we can do that, the greater case we can make for investment in our wonderful area.

John Mortimer, Chairman
Swindon and Wiltshire
Local Enterprise Partnership, July 2018



Our vision and investment

The Swindon and Wiltshire economy continues to thrive and we are confident we can achieve our vision to be world-renowned for innovation, entrepreneurialism and our great quality of life by 2026.

The SWLEP area is predominantly rural. It includes high quality landscapes and three designated areas of outstanding natural beauty, all of which are interspersed by a number of economic centres that intersect with key transport corridors.

The area's transport and communication corridors are important economic assets. Dominated by the M4 corridor, the area provides rapid east-west connectivity to London, the West Country and Wales. It is also close to important transport








hubs such as Bristol Airport, Heathrow Airport and major ports at Avonmouth, Southampton and Poole.

To understand the impact we have in delivering our strategic objectives we monitor a range of workforce and enterprise data published by the Office for National Statistics.

We competitively bid for £169 million of public funding for capital infrastructure projects across three Local Growth Deals with Government. This has enabled us to leverage a further £354 million of match funding from private and public sectors resulting in an overall investment of £523 million for Swindon and Wiltshire to support the growth of the priority sectors of our economy.

Swindon M4 M4 Junction 16 £3,978,700  COMPLETE	Swindon M4 M4 Junction 17 £359,600  COMPLETE	Swindon M4 A429 Malmesbury  COMPLETE
Swindon M4 LGF Sustainable Transport (LSTF) £941,200  IN PROGRESS	Swindon M4 Rapid Transit £799,200  IN PROGRESS	Swindon M4 Swindon Bus Boulevard £67,100  APPROVED
Swindon M4 Swindon Museum and Art Gallery  PENDING	A350 A350 Bumpers Farm  COMPLETE	A350 Chippenham Bypass Dualling £2,863,400  IN PROGRESS

Our projects & investment in 2017/18

A350 Corsham Mansion House £373,300  IN PROGRESS	A350 Chippenham Station Hub £178,100  IN PROGRESS	A350 Wiltshire College - Lackham £237,070  APPROVED
A350 A350 West Ashton/Yarnbrook  APPROVED	Salisbury A303 Porton Science Park £2,137,800  COMPLETE	Salisbury A303 Wiltshire College - Salisbury £670,000  APPROVED
Salisbury A303 Salisbury Central Car Park £283,100  APPROVED	Salisbury A303 Royal Artillery Museum  PENDING	All Growth Zones Ultra Fast Broadband  APPROVED

Total spend in 2017/18: **£14,040,370**

Total jobs delivered to date: **2,245**

Total investment commitment: £523,000,000 by 2021



Key points from 2017/18

- Reshaping the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund to stimulate business growth.
- Focusing on completing major infrastructure projects through our Growth Deal Programme.
- Being even more open, transparent and responsive in all that we do.
- Putting the voices of Swindon and Wiltshire businesses at the centre of our future thinking.
- Revitalising the SWLEP's online presence.

A note from the Director

The last year has been one of consolidation and preparation as we head into a crucial period for the SWLEP.

One of our biggest tasks was re-shaping our £8.7 million Growing Places Infrastructure Fund. This 'revolving' loan fund supports capital projects that stimulate innovation, enterprise, growth or productivity gains in Swindon and Wiltshire through low interest loans.

We had eight applications, whittled them down to three and eventually awarded £1.23 million to Woods Group in Chippenham to enable them to build a new HQ and warehouse. Because of this investment the company has been able to expand its staff. We were pleased

to complete the entire decision process within our 13-week timescale.

Reshaping the way we deliver this fund has now left us with an efficient programme that we know works. Our Board are keen to have a portfolio of loans that draw a balance between solid, secure propositions as well as innovative projects that might find it harder to get bank loans. This fund is a real statement that we are business-led and we are getting money out there to help local businesses.

We have made good progress with our £169 million Growth Deal Programme. The programme has 18 projects, some of them quite complex, which must be completed by March 2021. Some of these projects

have been completed or are close to completion.

We commissioned an independent review of all the remaining projects, which highlighted six as being at the most risk of delay. Our mission for the years ahead is to see all of them over the line by the government's deadline.

The Growth Deal has brought more money to Swindon and Wiltshire than it has ever had before and it will continue to do so in the future if we get this programme right. When you add together the government and European funding we have been awarded to the private investment available to us, we have more than £602,000 of funding at our disposal.

This year we have been laying the foundations for our Local Industrial Strategy. We have conducted a wide-ranging and detailed study into higher education, the digital sector and others. We have spoken to students, educators and business to find out what they want to shape our future thinking.

The Digital Strategy will support the pledge in our strategic economic plan to get as close as possible to 100 per cent mobile and broadband coverage. Over the last year we have been in contact with more than 200 businesses to help us understand their needs and capabilities. They are helping us shape what our digital and higher education offers should be.



A note from the Director (continued)

LEPs have had some bad publicity nationally this year, which has increased the pressure on all LEPs to be as accountable and transparent as possible. This is quite right because we are handling public money. The government has produced governance guidelines of how LEPs must operate and I'm pleased to say that we meet all of them. We are one of a few LEPs in the country that meet in public and it is hugely important to me that we have as many members of the public at our board meetings as possible.

One of the most significant achievements of the past year has been the revamp to our online presence. Our Growth Hub, our website and our Higher

Futures programme all have the same look and feel. This is vital to our continuing work in engaging with business.

Paddy Bradley

Paddy Bradley, Director
Swindon and Wiltshire
Local Enterprise Partnership, July 2018



Case study: Appsbroker

Higher Futures brokered the relationship with the Open University to deliver Digital Technology Degree Apprenticeships into the business for the start of 2018.

“The Skills Service allowed us to develop a better understanding of the Degree Apprenticeship landscape, and help to kick start the programme at Appsbroker.”

Ben Greatorex,
L&D Manager, Appsbroker



Case study: Flick's

“Flick's Video Productions is delighted to join the Growth Hub which has a wide variety of experts offering advice, seminars and workshops, all available for small businesses in the Swindon and Wiltshire area. Being part of the Hub gives a real sense of community and is a great way to network along with giving SMEs a safety net and support to expand and grow. I am looking forward to increasing my knowledge, widening my client base and meeting many new businesses thanks to the Growth Hub in 2018.”

Flicky Harrison, Director and Founder
of Flick's Video Productions

Delivering our Growth Deal Programme



Porton Science Park, Salisbury

Phase 1 completed.

Total investment £39.6m

Junction 16, M4

- ▶ To reduce traffic congestion in Swindon.
- ▶ To deliver access to Wichelstowe development.
- ▶ Will create 31 jobs.

Total investment £12.6m

Greenbridge roundabout, Swindon

- ▶ To improve major routes into Swindon.
- ▶ Support the New Eastern Villages development.

Total investment £5.3m

Running an open call to the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF)



The Woods Group, Chippenham

- ▶ £1.27m GPIF loan awarded to help fund its new HQ at Bumpers Farm.
- ▶ Due to complete in July 2018.
- ▶ Enables the consolidation of its current 6 sites.
- ▶ 150 employees will move into the new HQ in July 2018, with room for capacity to double.

Refreshing our Governance Framework



- ▶ Revised version of our Government Framework was published in March 2018: <https://swlep.co.uk/about/governance-framework>
- ▶ Since July 2015 we have held our Board meetings in public.

Bidding to Government for an Institute of Technology



- ▶ Competition stage 1 closed in March 2018.
- ▶ We have been invited to proceed to stage 2.
- ▶ Our lead applicant is Swindon College.

Review of 2017/18

Allocating our European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF)



£6.5m EU funds invested in people & businesses

- ▶ 7 projects actively delivering intensive business support and advice to increase competitiveness, innovation, productivity and skills to 370 small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's).
- ▶ 285 people advised on how to start a business with over 50 new businesses trading.
- ▶ £2m invested in new workspaces for local SMEs.
- ▶ 1,940 employees upskilled in 500+ workplaces.
- ▶ 350+ SMEs receiving training needs assessments.
- ▶ 1,250 people helped with employability skills and back into work.

Developing strategies for Higher Education, Energy, Digital Capabilities & Rail



1,094 responses received from **Higher Education** stakeholder surveys of employers, young people and adults. Events are planned in Swindon and Devizes in April 2018 to engage and consult stakeholders on the draft Higher Education Strategy.

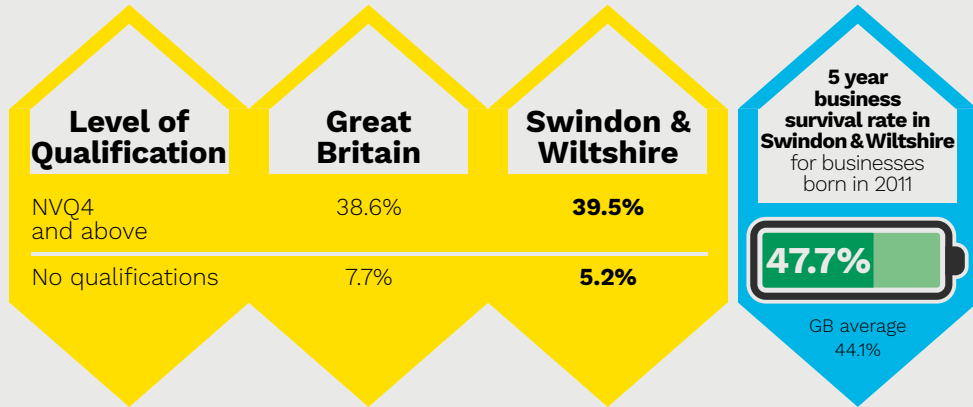
The Swindon and Wiltshire **Digital Capabilities Strategy** will be presented to the SWLEP board for approval in July 2018.

Following evidence collection and stakeholder consultation, our draft **Energy Strategy** has been published. It identifies priorities where we can have greatest impact and aligns with our existing objectives: delivering public energy infrastructure, addressing market failures and creating the enabling environment for greater clean economic growth.

Consultants appointed to develop a **Rail Strategy** for Swindon and Wiltshire.

Review of 2017/18

Qualifications (Jan – Dec 2017)



Skills & business health

Swindon and Wiltshire (S&W) sector specialism by employment

Advanced Manufacturing

England average **S&W +50%**

Manufacturing

England average **S&W +20%**

Wholesale

England average **S&W +20%**

Professional & Financial

England average **S&W +10%**

Retail

England average **S&W +10%**

Utilities & Waste

England average **S&W +10%**

The largest sectors by employment



Employment specialisms

Our area's economy in 2017

In 2016, Swindon and Wiltshire's economy was worth £18bn and it continues to grow in line with the UK average.

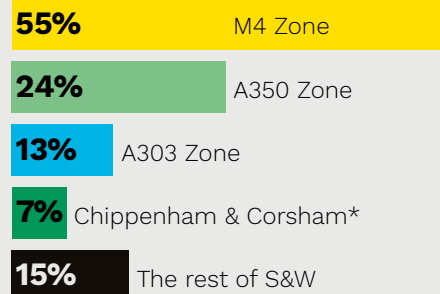
In addition, 85% of our working age population is economically active which is good news but it also means many of our businesses are having problems recruiting staff and in 2017 half of all vacancies were seen as hard to fill.

Our skills base compares favourably with Great Britain and demand for high level skills is set to grow.

Swindon and Wiltshire's population is predicted to grow to nearly 800,000 by 2039, an 11.4% increase from 2016.

However the proportion of people working is expected to fall by 5% as more people reach retirement age. In turn this

will place greater pressure on the delivery of public services.



*counted in both M4 and A350 Zones

GVA by Growth Zone



A growing dependent population

The fastest growing age group in Swindon & Wiltshire is 65+ which means there will be 14% more residents in this age group by 2039





2017/18 Financial Statement

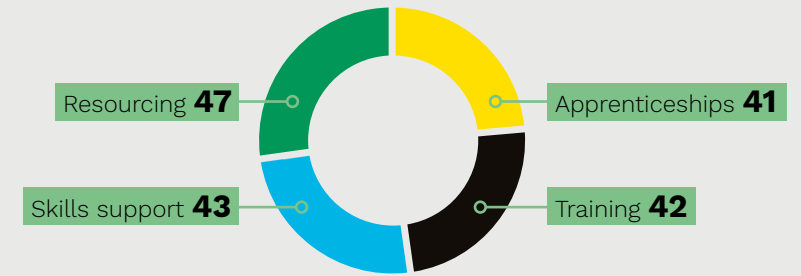
	Brought forward 2016/17	Income	Sub total	Expenditure 2017/18	Roll forward 2018/19
Core Funding	£327,200	£570,700	£897,900	£743,700	£154,200
GPIF Capital	£6,141,200	£2,535,000	£8,676,200	£1,279,200	£7,397,000
GPIF Revenue	£532,500	£0	£532,500	£52,800	£479,700
LGF	£208,100			£13,423,400	
Non LGF Capital Programme		£21,939,300	£22,147,400	£8,724,000	£0
LGF Retained	£572,000	£600,000	£1,172,000	£617,500	£554,500
Higher Futures	£698,100	£0	£698,100	£193,700	£504,400
Growth Hub	£10,000	£205,000	£215,000	£215,000	£0
Careers and Enterprise Company	£38,100	£70,200	£108,300	£108,300	£0
Total Capital	£6,921,300	£25,074,300	£31,995,600	£24,044,100	£7,951,500
Total Revenue	£1,605,900	£845,900	£2,451,800	£1,313,500	£1,138,300

In accordance with the guidance from DCLG, the total Local Growth Fund grant for non-retained schemes has been spent on capital projects in 2017/18. The SWLEP and its accountable body have the authority to manage the programme and funding across financial years providing that the grant is spent on capital projects in each financial year. To manage the full allocation in 2017/18, £8.724m was badged against the accountable body's capital programme and will be made available to the SWLEP for LGF schemes in 2018/19.

Some of our allocated grant is under the control of the Department for Transport (DfT); £57.5m of our £165m local growth deal fund has been awarded to four schemes that they are obliged by Government to retain control.



Salisbury Campus, Wiltshire College



Skills support
(Number of businesses supported)

Skills support
to business | **143**

Learning on
programme | **415** Total
275 at higher level

Outputs
(Number of businesses supported)

Higher Futures

Skills & talent

The number one priority in our Strategic Economic Plan is to develop the pool of skills and talent available to employers in Swindon and Wiltshire.

We have received the message loud and clear from employers that developing a workforce with a higher level of skill will help them stay competitive and achieve the growth they need.

Increasing opportunities

The Apprenticeship Strategy has now been agreed and in 2016/17, 8,449 young people embarked on an apprenticeship. More employers are now recruiting Higher Apprentices with 397 starts in 2016/17 compared to 210 the previous year.

A draft Higher Education Strategy has

been agreed by the Board and is available on our website. We are working hard to help create a multi-campus university here.

Also, a partnership bid for an Institute of Technology, led by employers, colleges and universities focusing on higher level technical skills in digital, high value manufacturing/engineering and life sciences, has been moved to stage two of the application process.

The Growth Deal investment of £22.03 million at Wiltshire College is on schedule for completion in 2020 and will include huge upgrades at Salisbury as well as at Lackham.

The land-based Lackham campus near Lacock will have higher level courses and apprenticeships in Life Sciences,

Advanced Engineering, Advanced Agriculture and Agricultural Engineering. It is expected to attract 1,382 new learners every year.

Higher Futures

Our Higher Futures service now provides comprehensive skills support to all businesses through the Growth Hub with support available on:

- ▶ **Apprenticeships**
- ▶ **Training**
- ▶ **Resourcing**
- ▶ **Skills support**

Enabling businesses to connect with universities and higher education providers to address skills gaps remains a priority and the team have provided skills support

to 143 individual businesses to date. Higher Futures is valued by businesses as a truly impartial service tailored to meet their individual needs. Our new website was launched in May 2018.

Enterprise Advisor Network

The Swindon and Wiltshire Enterprise Adviser Network has increased its reach this year and now has 43 volunteers in the business community, working with 55 schools and colleges.

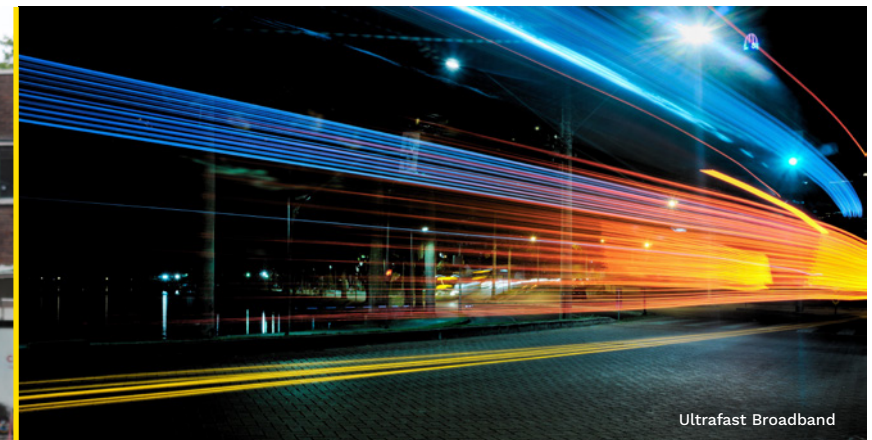
The network is focusing on supporting schools to deliver the key outcomes in the Careers Strategy and all schools are on target to have completed the Compass careers benchmark self-assessment tool by the end of July 2018.



The opening of Chippenham Station's new ticket hall and café



Cllr David Renard at the Quality Bus Corridor, Swindon



Ultrafast Broadband



Junction 16, M4



Greenbridge Roundabout

Infrastructure

During 2017/18 the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership made strong progress on its infrastructure projects with a total of £14 million spent on schemes that will have a huge benefit.

Construction on a number of our projects has been completed this year and it has been particularly satisfying to see the years of planning and hard work put into these projects come to fruition.

The work at junction 16 of the M4 will be completed in June 2018 providing improvements to the flow of traffic around the junction. The project created 31 jobs in the area but also enabled the construction of 1,400 homes at the nearby Wichelstowe development.

Travelling along the M4 to the west,

improvements will also be completed at junction 17 in May 2018. The addition of traffic lights to this junction will significantly improve the exit from the motorway and the flow around the junction in general. This work will also support the potential development of 28 hectares of employment land in the local area.

In June 2018 the first of our projects to support the New Eastern Villages development to the east of Swindon will be completed. Greenbridge Roundabout improves traffic flow, but also features a unique lighting installation to create a distinctive public space in the area. The completion of the roundabout will support the construction of 600 new houses in the New Eastern Villages development.

Supporting business growth

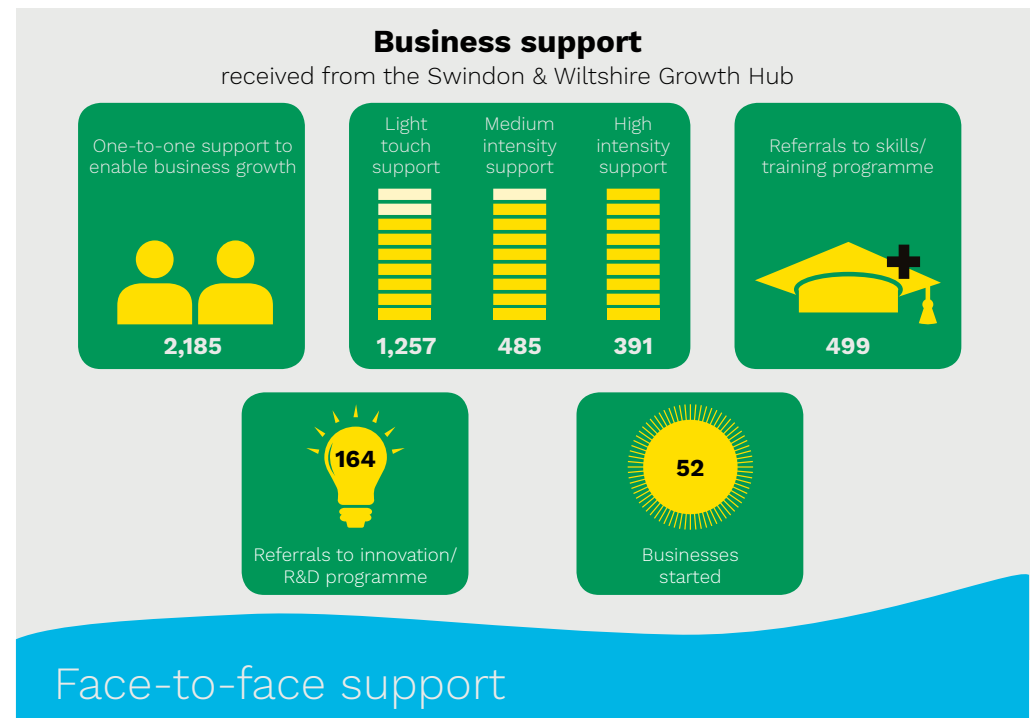
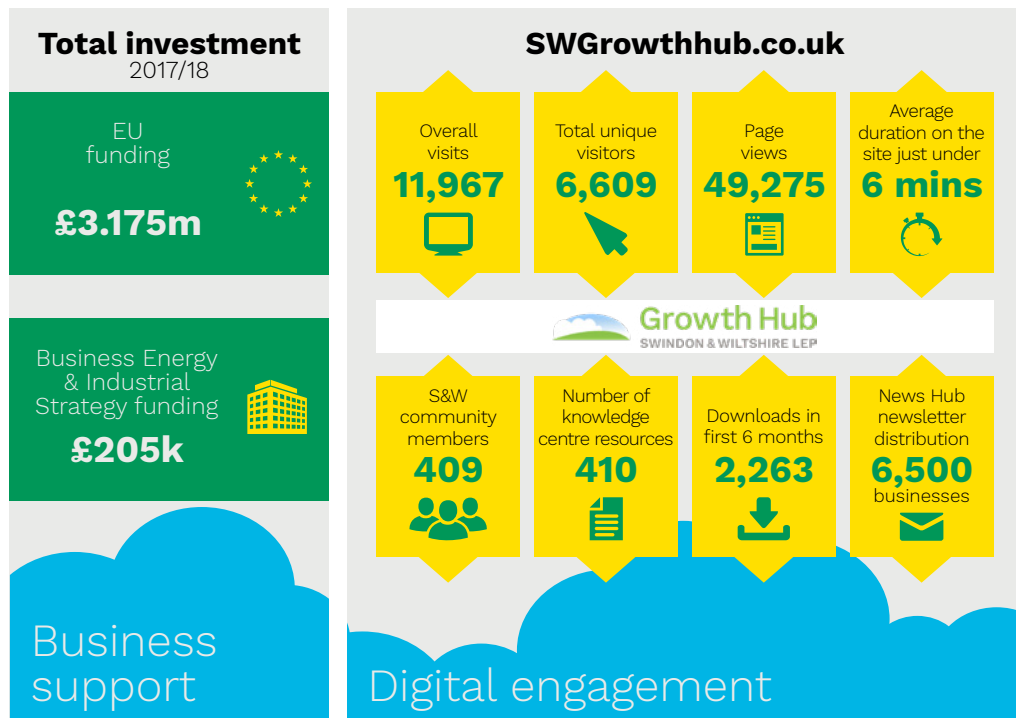
Demolition work has been completed and construction work has now begun on the Mansion House in Corsham. This work is expected to be completed at the end of 2018 with businesses being able to occupy the building from early 2019. This 1,230 sqm of unique workspace will offer digital businesses wanting to base themselves in the area a place to grow while benefiting from networking, development and business support events held in the building.

Work is also progressing on the £16 million investment to improve the area in and around Chippenham Station. The first of several phases has already seen a new ticket office open in the station building.

While implementing these projects to boost the county's economy today, we are also planning for the future.

A Digital Strategy is being developed to build on the fast-growing hi-tech businesses and infrastructure we have in the area.

Our new Energy Strategy will look at energy resilience, low carbon vehicles, hydrogen infrastructure and a clean energy economy. We are also part of a Cyber Resilience Science and Innovation audit, across our LEP area and others, that is highlighting cyber technologies.



Business development

Swindon & Wiltshire Growth Hub

Business support is an important element in achieving our desire for growth.

We understand that starting, running and growing a business can be a challenging process. Our Growth Hub has invested in the resources to give start-ups and growing businesses access to advice and guidance, as well as suitable premises to work in.

Here are some of our 2017/18 highlights of how we have helped support business growth in the area:

- **Total investment this year:** £205k plus £375,384 of private sector match.
- **Online digital portal relaunch:** our highly successful business support portal was launched at the 2017 SWLEP Annual Conference to work in

conjunction with our universal offline service via phone and face-to-face.

- **Working together with business support partners:** including ESIF/ERDF funded Programme Managers who meet quarterly to discuss best practice and challenges, as well as implementing bespoke Memorandums of Understanding, ensuring transparency whilst maximising opportunities for business.
- **Collaborating with a further 50 business support companies:** both locally and nationally, to ensure their offer is easily accessible through the Growth Hub.
- **Supporting South Wiltshire's recovery from the nerve agent attack:** our

Growth Hub digital portal was the central focus for business support in a time of national emergency in Salisbury and Amesbury through the creation of a bespoke emergency microsite.

Porton Science Park

The SWLEP has been working closely with Wiltshire Council on the first phase of the Porton Business Incubator. The official opening is planned for the autumn, with the building housing a range of technology companies in the healthcare and fast-growing sectors such as artificial intelligence. Planning for phase two is underway.

The relationship with Dstl is developing and opportunities for private sector

collaboration with world leading experts in areas around vaccine development and cyber security, utilising the unique cluster of facilities 'behind the wire', continue to be explored.

Growing places

The SWLEP has launched two rounds of calls to the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund in the last year and supported a range of private sector developments that have attracted additional investment and created new jobs. This includes a new HQ building for Woods Group in Chippenham.

In March 2018 the SWLEP Board approved a £100,000 fund to provide grants to assist businesses and support Salisbury's recovery.

“Growth Hub supports Salisbury at time of need”



Salisbury

Case study: Our support for Salisbury and Amesbury

After any major incident that receives international attention, the natural instinct is to avoid the place. Immediately in the aftermath of the Salisbury chemical attack in March, we were acutely aware of the potential impact on the local economy and the need to get as many business support mechanisms in place to offset it.

After consulting with partners it was agreed that one of these mechanisms was the creation of an online space where businesses could get the latest support information. It was agreed by the ‘Salisbury Business Recovery Group’ that a central microsite should be created on the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub. The Hub provided support in the following ways:

- ▶ Salisbury business support organisations and other agencies were involved in the creation of this one central access point.
- ▶ The site was promoted as the ‘go-to’ place for business support information.
- ▶ Up-to-date partner communications provided situational updates affecting businesses, such as road closures, events and community updates.
- ▶ The latest guidance on funding support was provided on the site.
- ▶ The economic impact was measured including through partner surveys.
- ▶ Direct one-to-one business advice sessions were offered.

“GPIF loan helps bring six sites under one roof”



Lansdowne House, Woods Group HQ

Case study: New HQ for Woods Group

The Woods Group was awarded a £1.279m Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) loan in March 2018.

The loan helped towards the construction of Lansdowne House, its new HQ building at the Bumpers Farm Trading Estate in Chippenham.

Construction is due to be completed in July 2018. The investment will allow the consolidation of their current six sites to a single 50,000 sq ft centre.

The new HQ is expected to create capacity for 200 new jobs.

Director John Lowndes said: “We are delighted to have been awarded the loan from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, without which

our construction plans would have been delayed.”





Accountability & transparency

The SWLEP is a voluntary partnership between the public and private sectors. Its board members are drawn from local businesses, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, the military and the education sector.

Operations review

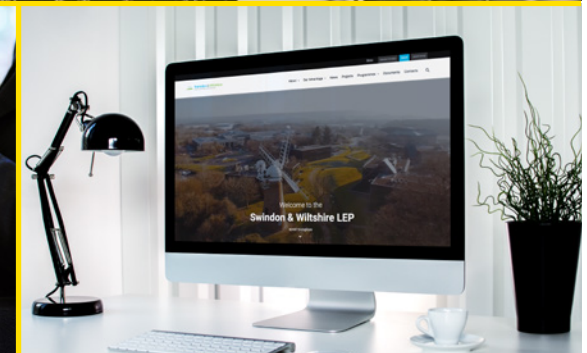
During 2017/2018, we undertook a review of our Governance Framework which we then published in March. This is the guide on how the SWLEP operates. It sets out the policies and procedures the board uses to make decisions and award funding.

The Government published extra guidance in January and we are happy we meet or exceed its requirements.

We have also redesigned our website

so that it's easier for the public and our partners to find and access information on our board and members' registers of interest; papers and publications; as well as access to information on the projects and programmes we operate.

We continue to hold our board meetings in public and over the year we met in Chippenham, Salisbury, Tidworth, Trowbridge and Swindon. Our work is scrutinised by a Joint Scrutiny Task Group involving 4 councillors from each of our unitary authorities. Over the next 12 months we will hear from Government on its recommendations on the future of LEP structures in the UK and we will need to understand how that might affect the way we operate as a partnership.





ESIF (European Structural & Investment Fund)

A busy year has seen the £39 million programme invest in new projects, ranging from Invest & Grow, a strategic investment service for the area, to a renewable energy installation for the Porton Campus to The Enterprise Network opening its Workshed in Swindon, as well as expanding its Old Fire Station centre at Salisbury.

Expertise at your fingertips

European funded projects now work with the Growth Hub to ensure the expertise and know-how needed by businesses is trusted and easy to access. Support for start-up, innovation planning, manufacturing efficiency and exporting advice sit alongside services offering workforce and leadership

skills, and all can be accessed from our single online platform.

High up on the local agenda is improving research infrastructure, and creating and filling the skilled jobs which drive our economy. European funds have established the Porton Science Incubator and we hope to see further ventures for research excellence in biogas and other sectors in the year to come.

Far-reaching support

Community First can bring about real change to people's lives. It delivers the Building Bridges project, with sensitive interventions that tackle personal, social and financial exclusion,



in partnership with an array of specialised local agencies.

More than 20 rural businesses have been given grants to support investments in farm diversification, food processing and the visitor economy. This means more than £9.5 million will have been invested in the rural economy by 2020.

The final programme phase will see energy efficiency grants for business, investment in business research infrastructure, digital adoption projects for SMEs and further support for improving productivity, exporting and innovation into the next decade.



Wavin Group, KWS & Total's sustainable, innovative plastic road



Energy Minister, Claire Perry, at Hydrogen Hub, Johnson Matthey

Working in partnership with



Looking ahead

The coming year will be an exciting one for the SWLEP in which we will be weaving together the threads of research carried out in 2017/18 to shape our thinking for the decades ahead.

The work that went into the study on higher education last year has concluded that the time is right and the need is great enough for a university in Swindon and Wiltshire. We are looking to create a multi-campus business-led university, heavily biased towards technology, across three sites in our area.

Top class education

We want a university presence that might not just appeal to Swindon and Wiltshire students but attract the best

and brightest students from elsewhere. We have looked at Northeastern University near Boston and seen that its employer-led courses result in 80 per cent of students leaving with a job already secured. That's what we want for learners in Swindon and Wiltshire.

A university is only part of the solution in equipping young people for the future. We need higher education standards in schools, a vibrant further education sector and new higher education input. We want degree masters and PhD-level qualifications being studied here. That's not being elitist, it's what employers want.

We have been closely involved in Swindon and New Colleges' £16 million bid for an institute of technology for Swindon

and Wiltshire. If successful, this will deliver top class learning that is not currently available. We were delighted to see the bid is one of 16 nationally to have passed the first application stage and the coming year should see the project moving on considerably. We are fortunate to have some great companies supporting the bid and they will lead the development of the institute.

Shaping the future

Another major challenge is tackling 'not spot' areas where there is no mobile or broadband coverage. We will be working hard trying to find companies with solutions.

Next year will see us edging into Brexit

and all the challenges that will bring. We are looking forward to helping the government shape future funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Cyber Resilience Alliance

Science and Innovation Audits (SIAs) are designed to help business communities map and analyse their research and innovation assets, with a view to identifying where the area's key strengths lie.

The SWLEP is part of The Cyber Resilience Alliance (CRA), a four LEP consortium including Worcester, GFirst and The Marches LEPs. Together we have worked to deliver a robust SIA focusing on the region's strengths in Cyber Resilience.

The report presents a broad-ranging



Looking ahead (continued)

analysis of the Cyber Resilience Alliance region's capabilities to inform the UK Government's Industrial Strategy. It provides the evidence and rationale for prioritising science and innovation investments in the area.

Bidding to win

We have demonstrated we can bid for and win almost £60 million European funding that goes on to deliver meaningful projects that make a difference to business, agriculture and young people.

We will continue to bid for European money to fund inward investment for Swindon and Wiltshire.

We have started work on our Rail Strategy study, working together with local

businesses. The study asks far-reaching questions about the rail capacity we have and what we need, where it should be and how it will be funded. We want our strategy to be driven by economic development.

All of these studies, together with an assessment of our economy carried out this year, will form the basis of our Local Industrial Strategy.

This blueprint will identify the areas of our economy that make Swindon and Wiltshire unique and, with the right planning and investment, we can use it as a springboard for real and lasting growth.

Get involved

The SWLEP is a business-led partnership and we are keen to hear the voice of local business in taking forward the work we do. There are several ways this can be done:

Joining the SWLEP: At least 70% of the SWLEP Board members come from the private sector. From time to time we advertise vacancies on the Board.

Provide feedback: We are interested in your views about the work we do as well as how your business may be affected by national policies. You can get involved by attending our events, participating in our consultations and surveys on our website, or through responding to a direct request for feedback from us.

You can also provide us with feedback via our website
www.swlep.co.uk/contacts

Business case studies: If you have received support from one of the SWLEP programmes we would love to hear about the impact this has had on the success of your business and how it has helped you to address business challenges. Your case study could be an inspiration to many other businesses which we are working with.

Business Support: Small and medium-sized businesses in need of investment can access information and advice through the SWLEP's Growth Hub.

To find out more visit:
swgrowthhub.co.uk or
contact Jo Minnaar, Growth
Hub Manager, by emailing
Jo.Minnaar@swlep.co.uk

SWLEP newsletter: Subscribing to our newsletter is a great way to hear about the latest news on the SWLEP's programmes and events which could support your business and extend your business network within the wider business community.

To subscribe and get started,
please email:
info@SWLEP.co.uk



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