

Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment

March 2022

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Socio-Economic Issues





Although the LEP area has a relatively strong labour market the picture varies across the population, for example, whilst females tend to have lower employment rates than males, the rate in Swindon (69.7%) is low in comparison to Wiltshire (78.7%).

In 2019/20, the average child poverty rate in Swindon and Wiltshire was below the average for both the South West and the UK, however it is still important to note that nearly one in four children in the LEP area (23%) are in poverty.

Deprivation in the Swindon and Wiltshire varies geographically, pockets of deprivation are located within urban centres, though overall, the LEP area is relatively prosperous with housing challenges being the most consistent deprivation domain.

Poor social mobility within the LEP area is a significant cause for concern in relation to the inclusive growth agenda. Wiltshire ranks as the 236th local authority out of 324 in social mobility using a wide range of indicators.

Poor social mobility within Swindon and Wiltshire is driven by challenges facing young people. These social mobility issues include school leaver destinations, GCSE attainment and progression to the most selected universities.

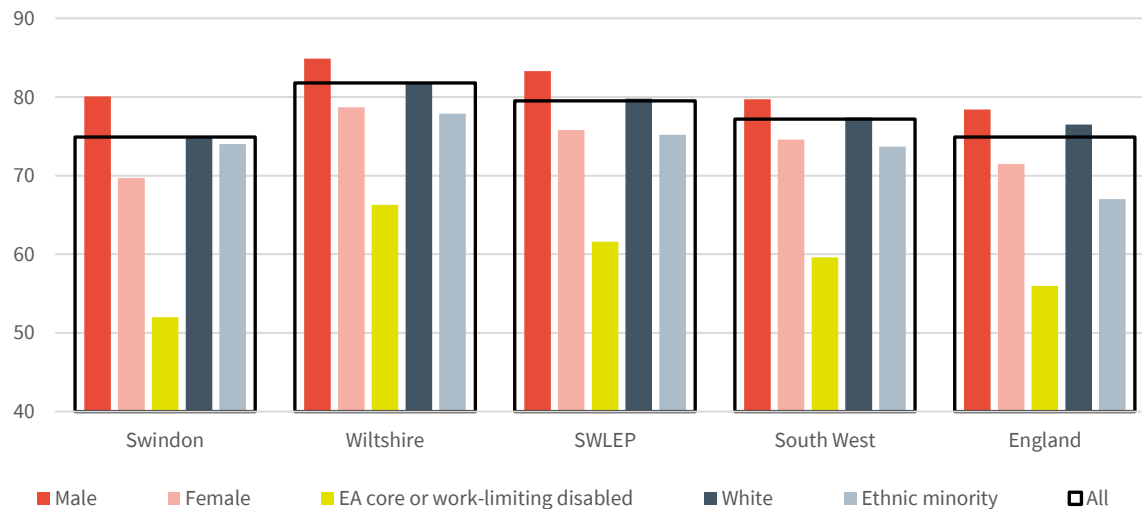
Swindon and Wiltshire's Socio-Economic Issues

Although the LEP area has a relatively strong labour market the picture varies across the population...

Whilst females tend to have lower employment rates than males, the rate in Swindon (69.7%) is low in comparison to Wiltshire (78.7%).

Similarly, disabled² people are much less likely to be employed in Swindon (52.0%) than Wiltshire (66.3%).

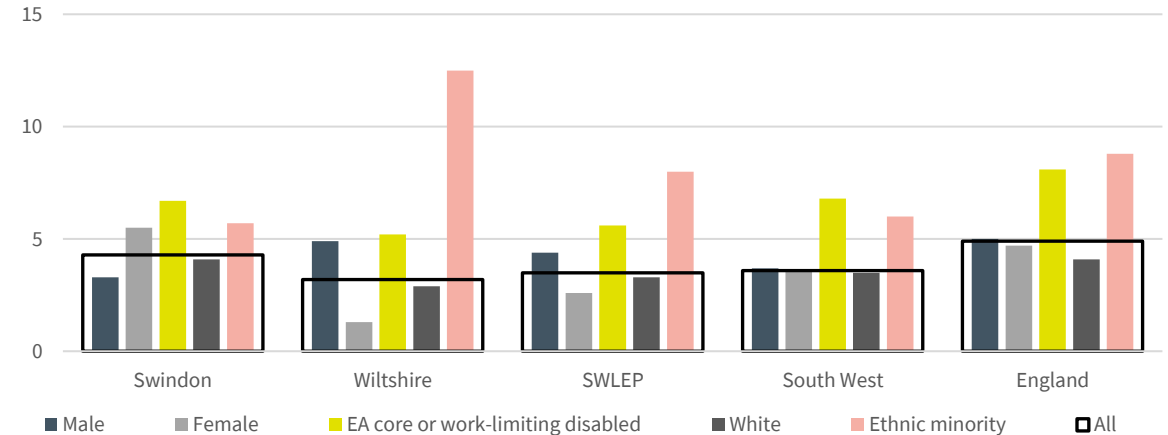
Employment rate (%), October 2020-September 2021



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey

¹ Unemployment rate for EA core or work limiting disabled is for those aged 16-64. All others are based on aged 16+, ² EA Core disabled includes those who have a long-term disability which substantially limits their day-to-day activities. Work-limiting disabled includes those who have a long-term disability which affects the kind or amount of work they might do

Unemployment rate¹ (%), October 2020-September 2021



Similarly, unemployment affects some more than others. Particularly stark is the unemployment rate for ethnic minorities in Wiltshire (12.5%).

However, Wiltshire has a low unemployment rate amongst females (1.3%) which is uniquely much lower than the male unemployment rate.



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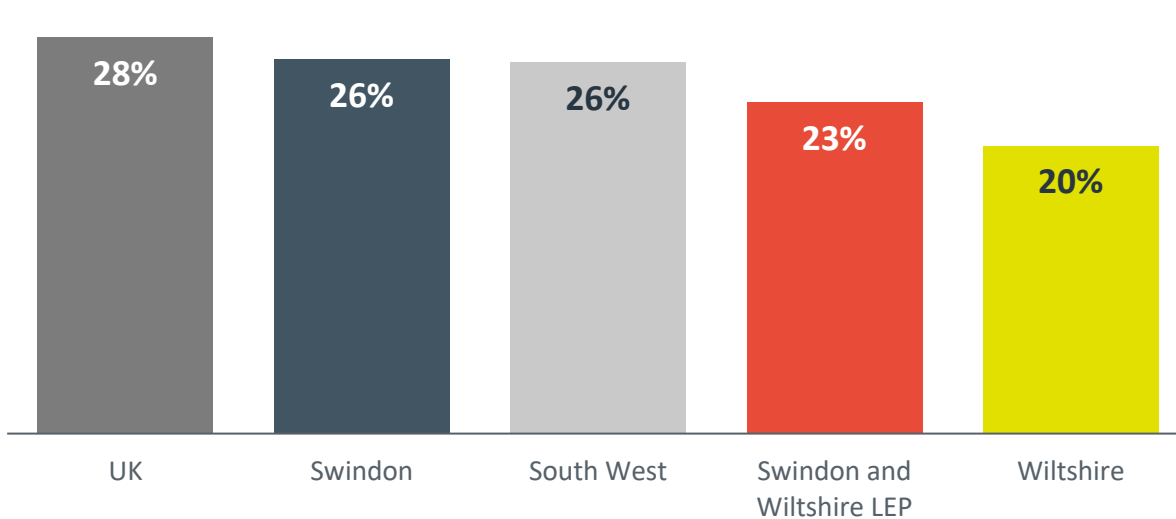
Swindon and Wiltshire's Socio-Economic Issues

In 2019/20, the average child poverty rate in Swindon and Wiltshire was below the average for both the South West and the UK...

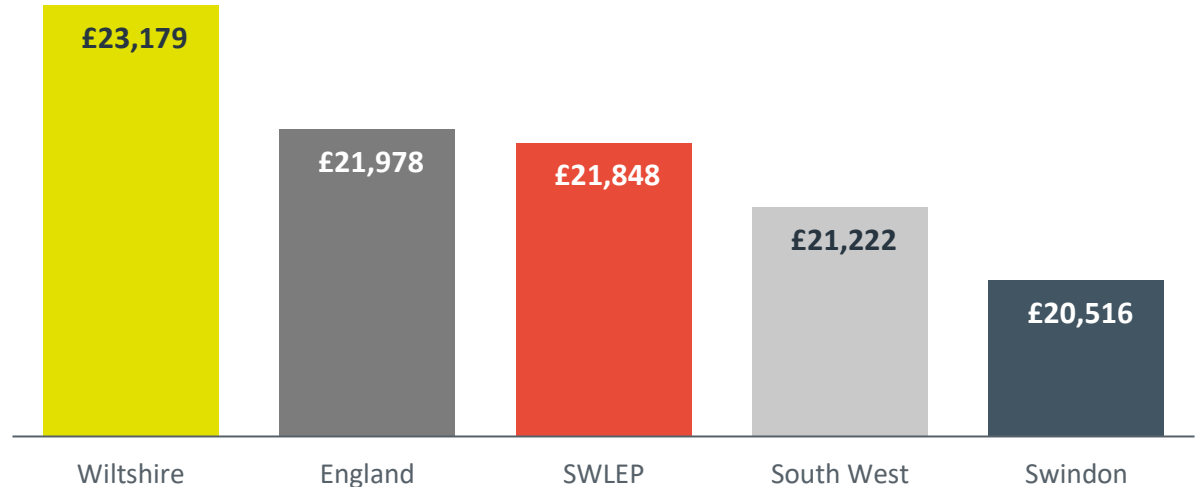
Child poverty was 23% for the LEP area compared to 28% seen nationally. Whilst in relative terms this is lower than that seen nationally this is still a significant figure in gross terms, with 32,300 children living in poverty in the LEP area. However, there are also spatial differences within the LEP area with Swindon recording a notably higher child poverty rate at 26% compared to just 20% in Wiltshire.

In Swindon and Wiltshire, the GDHI per head of population is roughly comparable to the national average and is marginally above the South West average. However, similar spatial disparities exist within the LEP area. Wiltshire has a considerably higher GDHI at approximately £23,200 to just £20,500 in Swindon.

Child Poverty Rates, 2019/20



Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI), per head of population, £s 2019



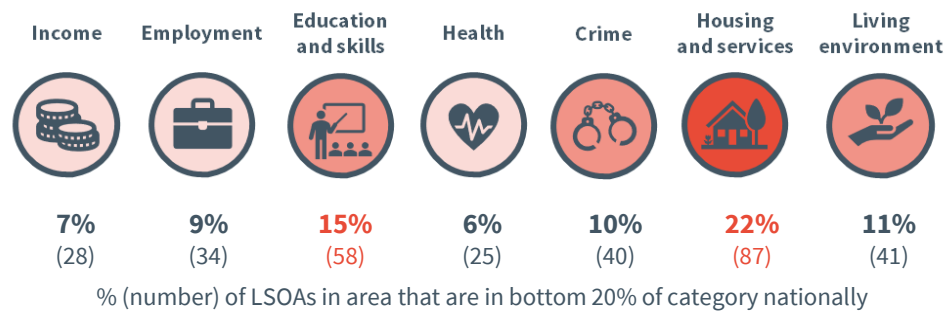
Swindon and Wiltshire's Socio-Economic Issues

Deprivation in the Swindon and Wiltshire varies geographically...

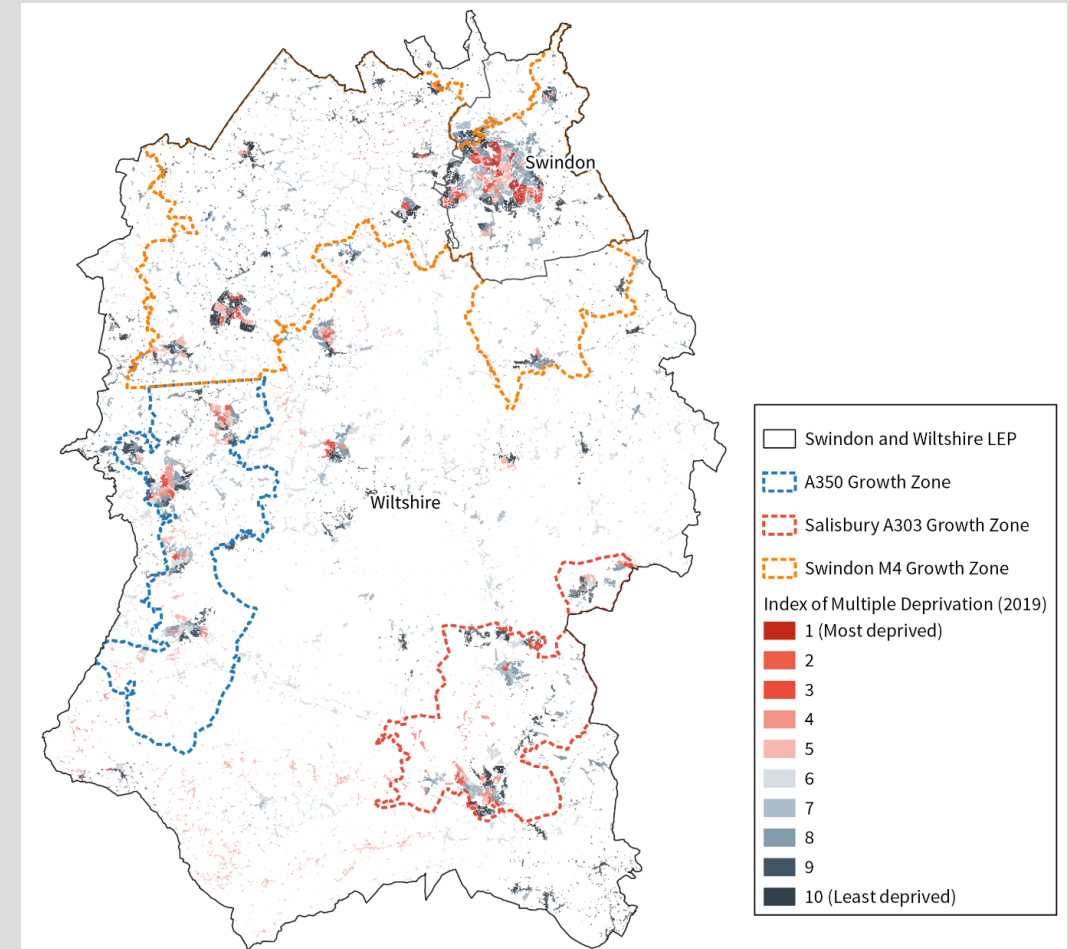
There are pockets of higher deprivation concentrated in Swindon town centre, Trowbridge, and rural areas in the south west of the region. Across the LEP area, the average IMD decile is 7, where 1 is the most deprived.

Across the LEP area deprivation is driven by relatively high levels of housing and services deprivation, with 22% of LSOAs in the LEP area ranking in the bottom 20% of LSOAs nationally. There are also relatively high levels of education and skills deprivation within the Swindon and Wiltshire.

Percentage of LSOAs in Swindon and Wiltshire ranking in the bottom 20% of LSOAs nationally, per domain of deprivation, 2019



Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), 2019



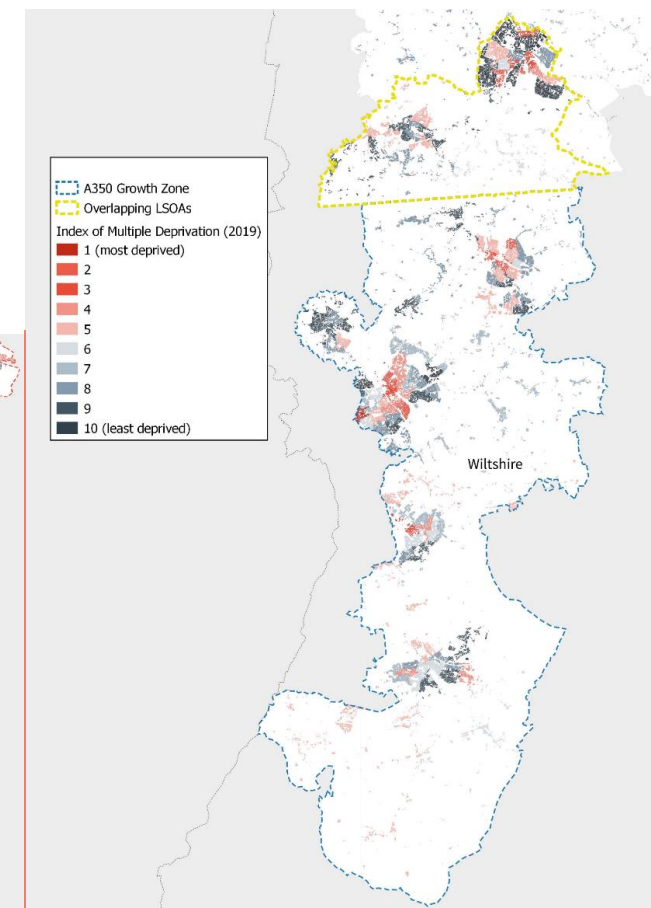
Swindon and Wiltshire's Socio-Economic Issues

Generally low levels of deprivation across the Growth Zones, with some pockets of high deprivation...

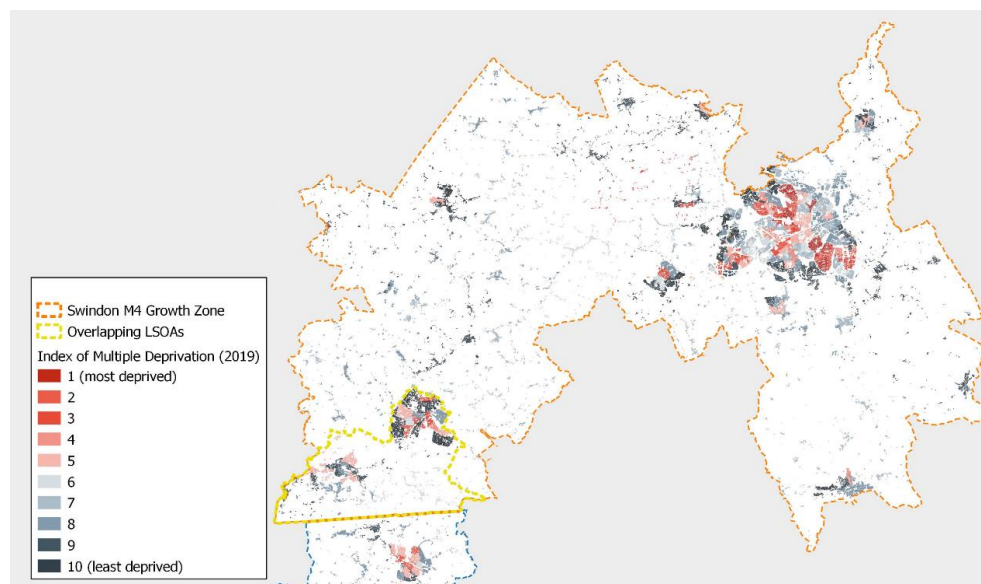
All three growth zones have an average IMD decile of 7, where 1 is the most deprived. Within the Swindon M4 growth zone high levels of deprivation are concentrated in Swindon. Within the Salisbury A303 growth zone, westerly rural areas and Salisbury experience the highest levels of deprivation. And within the A350 growth zone, the highest levels of deprivation are found in Trowbridge and Melksham.

Outside the growth zones, the non-growth zone largely falls within the top 10% least deprived. However, there are pockets of deprivation concentrated within Devizes and Calne which fall within the top 20% (see previous page 91)

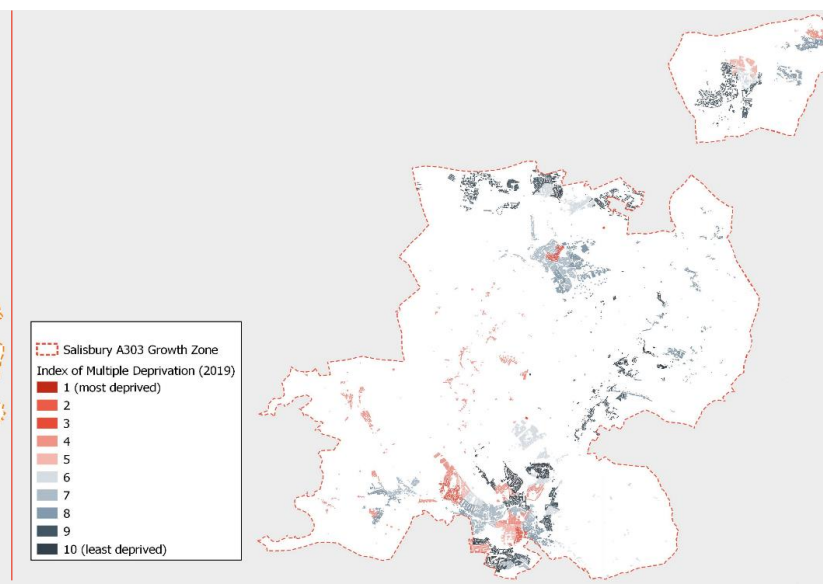
A350 Growth Zone Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019



Swindon M4 Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019



Salisbury A303 Growth Zone Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019



Swindon and Wiltshire's **Socio-Economic Issues**

To arrive at an overall ranking, the **Social Mobility Index** covers four different stages of a person's life. This is made up of:

Early years : This ranking looks at the overall quality of early years provision in an area and development outcomes achieved



School : Quality of primary and secondary schools accessed by children and the outcomes achieved at age 11 and GCSE

Youth : Assessing post-16 destinations, the proportion of poorer young people who left education after GCSEs, A-Level attainment or equivalent, progression to higher education, progression to the most selective universities



Adulthood : Measuring, labour market outcomes (including average income, low pay, and employment in highly skilled occupations) and housing market outcomes, specifically housing affordability and family home ownership rates

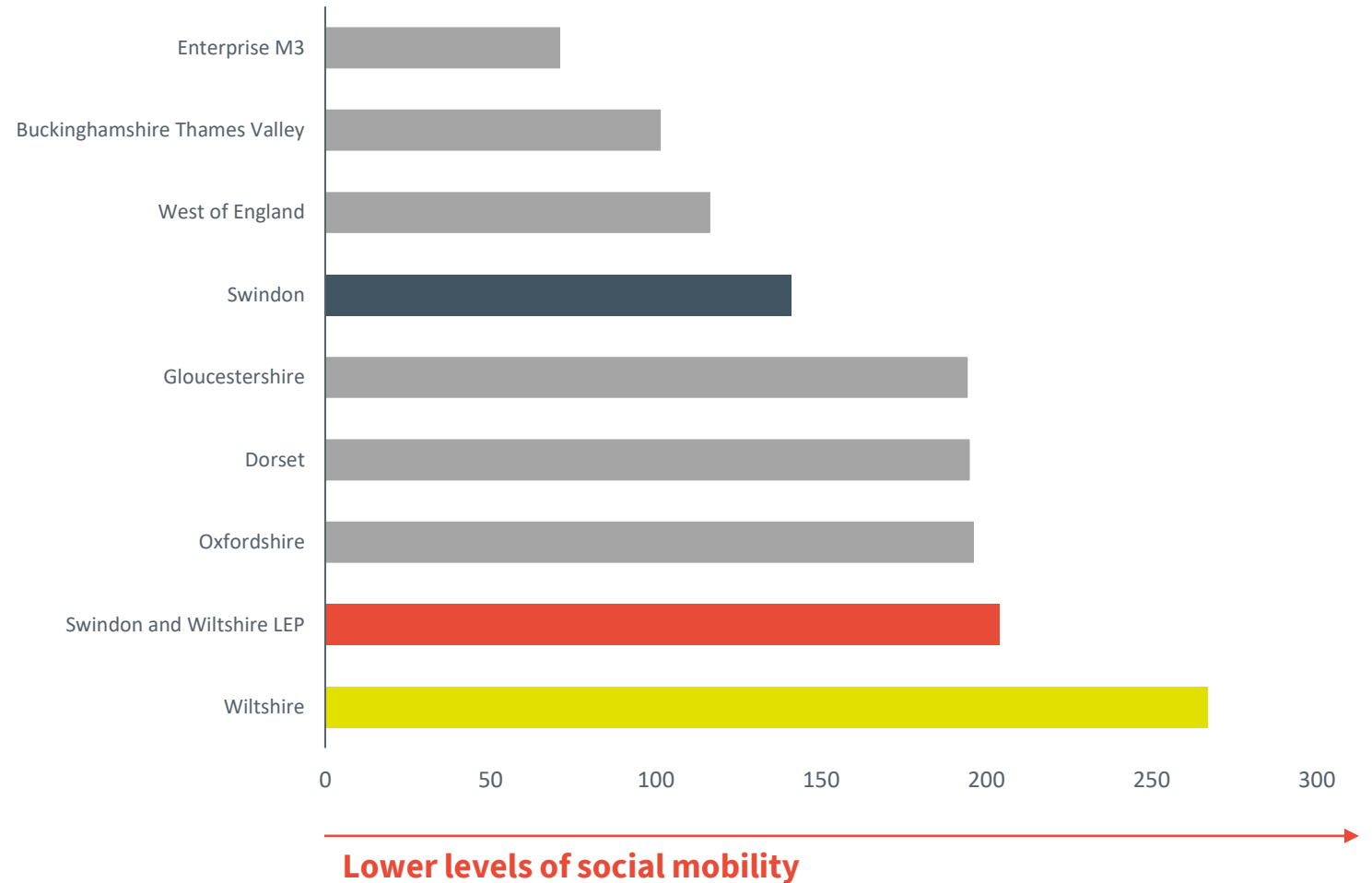
Swindon and Wiltshire's Socio-Economic Issues

Social mobility is relatively poor in Swindon and Wiltshire...

The Social Mobility Index measures the chances a child from a disadvantaged background has of performing well in life and ranks this against the other local authorities in the country. Swindon and Wiltshire* performs comparatively poorly on the Social Mobility Index, compared to the LEP comparator areas. In 2016, its overall ranking on the index was 204, where 1 is the most socially mobile, and 324 is the least socially mobile, which is higher than any other comparator LEP area.

However, within Swindon and Wiltshire there is clear geographic disparity. Wiltshire performs considerably worse than Swindon, with a ranking of 267. Swindon's overall ranking is 141, which is lower than several of the LEP comparator areas.

Social Mobility Index, 2016



Source: Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, The Social Mobility Index, 2016

*The Social Mobility Index is only available for individual local authorities. The LEP figures were calculated as an average of their constituent local authorities.



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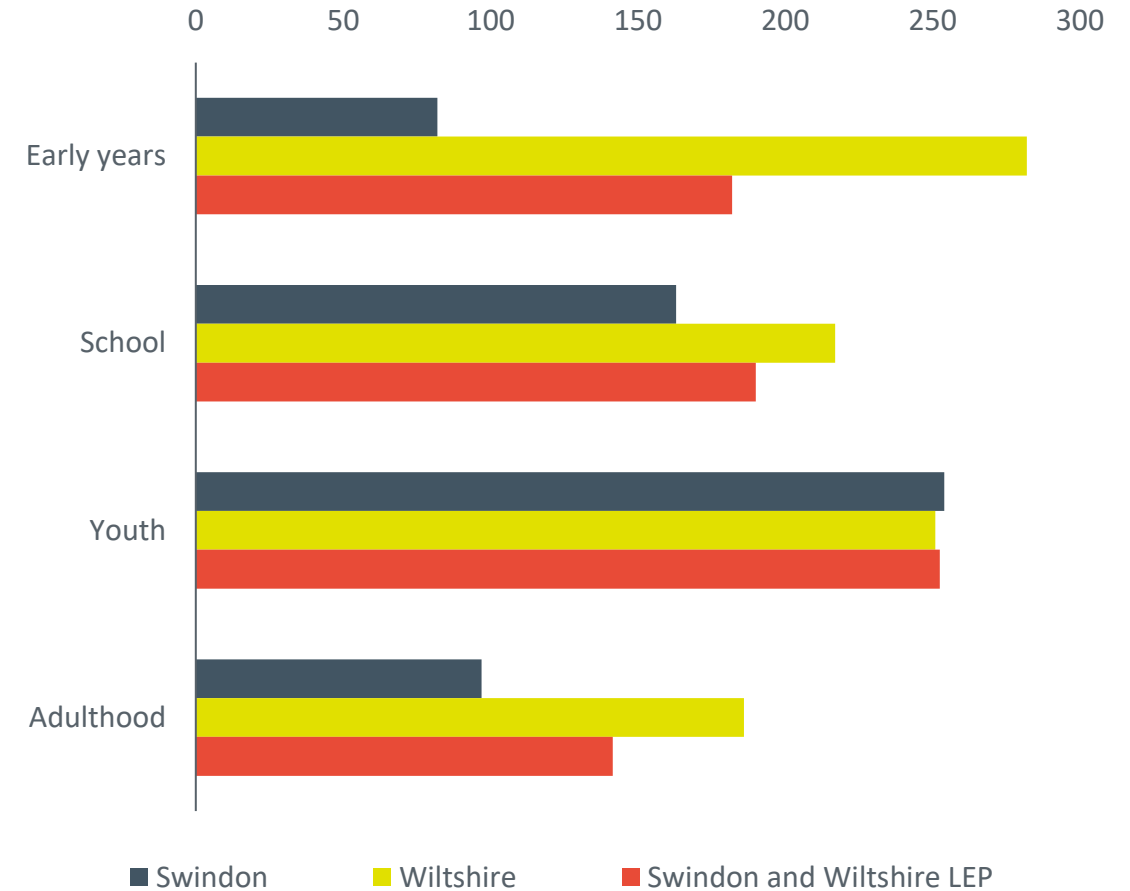
Poor social mobility within Swindon and Wiltshire is driven by particular challenges facing young people...

Within the LEP area, challenges facing the youth are driving poor social mobility, with an average ranking of 253 out of 324 local authorities in this category (where 1 is the most socially mobile). In both Swindon and Wiltshire, this category ranks particularly high at 254 and 251 respectively.

Within the youth category, the LEP area performs particularly poorly across the following indicators – the percentage of young people eligible for free school meals at age 15 entering higher education by the age 19 (average ranking of 276) and the percentage of young people eligible for free school meals at age 15 entering higher education at selective universities by the age of 19 (average ranking of 231). This suggests Swindon and Wiltshire have challenges around youth social mobility, particularly the progression of those children who are from relatively poorer socio-economic backgrounds into higher education.

Within the LEP area, Swindon and Wiltshire face different challenges. For example, Wiltshire performs particularly poorly in the early years category, some 200 ranks worse than Swindon, at 282, compared to 82. Whereas Swindon has slightly worse social mobility in the youth category with a ranking of 254 compared to 251 in Wiltshire.

Ranking of the categories of the Social Mobility Index, 2016



Lower levels of social mobility



The UK Levelling Up White Paper along with the Swindon and Wiltshire Skills Plan and Local Industrial Strategy all place equality and inclusive growth at their heart.

Although the Swindon and Wiltshire's overall labour market is strong this masks differences amongst demographics that policy will need to look to address. Supporting engagement in the labour market will be critical to ensuring everyone can benefit from future growth. It can also help ensure that the local labour supply continues to grow.

As shown in the labour market analysis, demand for skills in Swindon and Wiltshire is high, ensuring that some of the most disadvantaged, deprived and socially excluded residents of the LEP area have the skills in demand to respond to opportunities provide a mechanism to combat deprivation and meet skills needs. To do this it is important to consider the Levelling Up agenda and seek to provide some of the less economically affluent areas of Swindon and Wiltshire with the skills and abilities for jobs of the future.

As shown this levelling up of skills must begin at a young age, Swindon has some of the poorest social mobility amongst young people in the country. Ensuring all young people are equipped with the skills needed for the jobs of the future will go a long way to uplifting many from poverty and deprivation challenges.