

**One Swindon**

**CABINET**

**Date: 21 July 2010**

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**Author: Leader of the Council and Chief Executive**

**Parish / Wards Affected: All**

**Purpose**

- To establish the priorities that will form *One Swindon*, which when fully developed will be presented to Full Council in November for adoption to replace the Council's existing Corporate Plan, the Swindon 2010 Promises and Swindon's Local Area Agreement as the medium-term focus for partnership working in Swindon.

**Recommendation**

Cabinet is requested to -

- Approve the priorities as set out in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.10 that will form One Swindon, which when developed will replace the Council's existing Corporate Plan, 2010 Promises and Swindon's Local Area Agreement as the medium-term focus for partnership working in Swindon.
- Consider the recommendations from the Swindon Strategic Partnership Board as set out in paragraph 2.13
- Authorise the Director of Policy, Partnerships, Performance and Communications, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Policy and Performance, to develop a four year set of outcomes with elected members, local people and partners based on the One Swindon priorities by November 2010.
- Authorise the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and for Policy and Performance, to use the emerging One Swindon priorities to provide the framework for how the Council will allocate resources in its Medium Term Resource Plan.

**1. Reasons**

- 1.1 Swindon Borough Council recognises that it cannot do everything and must focus on mobilising the right voices, skills and resources, wherever they may be. The proposed One Swindon priorities are about a public sector utterly focused on working with local people, coming together as one to secure the best possible outcomes for the Borough.

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- 1.2 The central premise of One Swindon involves shifting the balance of power, responsibility and resources away from public sector bodies like the Council to local people. Local councillors and the people they represent need to be supported to make the most of the opportunities available to them, rather than rely on traditional forms of service delivery.
- 1.3 This is the first time that Swindon Borough Council has explicitly acknowledged that local people want to and have to assume greater responsibility for the place in which they live and that the public sector must know “when to get out of the way” of the people who know their areas best.
- 1.4 In light of the pressure on public sector budgets and increasing demand it has never been more important to have clarity and alignment in terms of priorities and objectives. The emerging *One Swindon* will aim to provide an effective vehicle for prioritisation, investment and where appropriate disinvestments within and across organisations. It should be the catalyst for targeted effort on the important issues in Swindon, and joint discussions about Swindon and its people.
- 1.5 One Swindon will build upon the strong partnership working foundations established by the Swindon Strategic Partnership through the Local Area Agreement. Following conversations with staff, local people and partners over the next four months, the Council and the other constituent organisations of the Swindon Strategic Partnership will be invited to adopt One Swindon as their primary medium-term decision-making and resource allocation framework. If adopted by Council and partners, *One Swindon* will be a “Contract for Swindon” which will require Swindon Borough Council, its public sector partners, the business community and above all local people to work together to achieve joint objectives and outcomes over the next four years. In doing so, and with the Local Area Agreement expiring in March 2011, One Swindon will replace the Local Area Agreement as the medium-term focus for partnership working in Swindon.

## 2. Detail

- 2.1. Based on extensive work with public sector partners and consultation and engagement with local people over the last two years, the following four areas have emerged as possible priorities for the draft *One Swindon*:
  - Regeneration, employment, skills and managed growth;
  - Cleaner, safer streets and protection of green open spaces;
  - Sports, leisure and cultural opportunities; and
  - Providing a safety net for the most vulnerable

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## **Regeneration, employment, skills and managed growth**

- 2.2. The Borough of Swindon has a strong history of economic success. It is important that we maintain that success to ensure that we bring much needed investment and jobs for the benefit of everyone in the Borough. Economic-led growth will mean more housing growth, but it is important that this is in line with jobs, brings the kinds of houses and communities we want and is supported by the necessary infrastructure.
- 2.3. The regeneration of Swindon town centre is clearly a key priority for Swindon. The Town Centre needs to offer more, and should be a place where people would choose to live, visit and shop. Swindon must continue with the visible signs of regeneration and renewal.
- 2.4. There is a need to promote a culture of innovation among companies of all sizes. Small and Medium Enterprises are as important as the large multi-nationals. More businesses of different types and sizes to set up or expand in the Borough need to be encouraged.
- 2.5. A skilled workforce with local people benefiting from and contributing to our economy is a must for Swindon. Every resident, young or old, should have access to the right training and education so they can work in the local area. Improving education attainment levels in our schools remains a focus and is essential if we are going to attract inward investment and raise the aspirations of our young people.

## **Cleaner, safer streets and protection of green open spaces**

- 2.6. Local residents should enjoy clean and tidy streets and should feel safe in their homes. The challenge we face is how to maintain and improve every street and every park in Swindon in these tough economic times.
- 2.7. This priority brings into sharp focus the underlying principle of *One Swindon* which, put simply, is the idea of joint ownership and responsibility for the place we all live in. The Council is committed to securing the outcome of cleaner, safer streets but it cannot commit to 'delivering' that with traditional services. *One Swindon* would be the vehicle for asking what it is that we are all prepared to do to make sure our streets are cleaner and safer.

## **Sports, leisure and cultural opportunities**

- 2.8. The Borough of Swindon has an enormous amount to offer local people including arts, theatres, museums, galleries, leisure, recreation and sports centres, libraries, archives, parks and open spaces and the built and

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historic environment. We want to find new ways of enhancing and protecting these opportunities.

- 2.9. The Council recognises that many of the most successful activities and events in Swindon are not run by the public sector. Swindon Borough Council will investigate every option to support independent sports, leisure and cultural activities.

## **Providing a safety net for the vulnerable**

- 2.10. Swindon needs to target its limited resources on supporting and protecting those people of all ages who are recognised as being most at risk. To make an impact now and in the future we will need to take innovative approaches to working with individuals and families with complex problems.
- 2.11. A focus will remain on always providing a safety net for the most vulnerable within our community, and for the people who are least likely or least able to access essential support and services.

## **Feedback and recommendations from partners on the priorities**

- 2.12. Working together with partner organisations and the public is a fundamental principle guiding the development and delivery of One Swindon. Accordingly both have, to varying degrees, been involved to date in the development of One Swindon. Partners continue to be very supportive of the One Swindon concept and have actively promoted it within their respective organisations, particularly at leadership level.
- 2.13. Partners have also been involved throughout in shaping the One Swindon priorities. This involvement continued most recently at the Partnership Board away day on 1 July, which was broadly supportive of the priorities and posed the following recommendations for the Council's consideration:
- To include within the priorities explicit reference to 'protecting the public from harm'
  - To include, either within the priorities or as a cross-cutting theme, explicit reference to improving the health outcomes of Swindon's people
  - To develop a clear and shared understanding of what constitutes being vulnerable in Swindon

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- To better combine and use our various strategic assessments to identify our One Swindon priorities and allocate our resources accordingly

2.14 In response a commitment was given to include partners' feedback within this report for Cabinet's consideration. Furthermore, the opportunity exists for partners to give their views on these priorities and the further detail as it is developed through the engagement process over the coming months as we lead up to the Cabinet report in November.

## How will we do it?

2.15 The possible priority areas (paras 2.2 to 2.11) describe in broad terms what it is the Council and partners believe the focus needs to be on over the next four years. More importantly, however, is how we are going to work differently in order to achieve these things. We must first accept that we do not know all of the answers to the "how" question. These are unprecedented political and economic times and that is forcing everyone in the public sector into a radical rethink of how we operate.

2.16 Inevitably in the future the Council will, of necessity and design, be a much smaller organisation, with a core purpose of commissioning and enabling services in partnership with the community. In moving to this new role, the Council will need to be innovative, bold and radical in its thinking. At the same time, it will need to remain vigorous in the pursuit of efficiencies in all its day-to-day activities.

2.17 In planning for the future, it needs to be recognised that public services are unsustainable in their current form and that a new, community based approach is urgently needed. This presents the Council with an opportunity to develop a new relationship with local people based on involving people in designing solutions and services that meet their own needs, focussed around local community support structures. Collaboration with other public agencies and the voluntary sector will be essential to secure delivery of the most essential public services to supplement what is available in local communities.

2.18 This will involve encouraging a sense of ownership within individuals and communities, empowering local people to play a more active role in securing a future they desire, jointly creating vibrant communities where all people can get involved.

2.19 Co-creation begins with developing together the outcomes, actions and objectives that would sit under the four priority areas. It would be about the Council and partners openly inviting people to contribute to developing

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and implementing the emerging *One Swindon*. The radical shift however is about local people inviting us to contribute to and participate in the things that will make a real difference in the place they live and in a way that will make a real difference.

- 2.20 This report provides a starting point for a conversation on the future of public services in the Borough of Swindon and the role that every local person has in making sure it is great place in which to live.
- 2.21 Opportunities will be provided for as many Councillors, staff, local people, and partners as possible to take part in shaping *One Swindon* over the next four months. In December, if approved by the Council, Swindon will have arrived at a clear and unambiguous statement of intent about the outcomes it wants to secure over the next four years.
- 2.22 The *Connecting People Connecting Places* initiative will be used, amongst other methods to engage in a meaningful dialogue with local people about One Swindon.

## Alternative Options

- Until its adoption by Council the *One Swindon* policy framework is open for modification, variation and amendment as part of the development process. Alternatives to the four priorities set out in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.10 may emerge and be included.
- The Council is required to adopt a new corporate plan; however, it does not have to engage with partner organisations. Given the present national fiscal climate, and the decisions of the Emergency Budget on 22 June 2010, not having a joint plan with other public sector agencies presents the risk of the Borough being able to secure fewer resources and deliver less.

## Risk Management

### *Financial and Procurement Implications*

- There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report, although the emerging *One Swindon* policy document will set the framework within which future years budgets are considered.

### *Legal / Human Rights Implications*

- Adopting policy frameworks, including the Corporate Plan, is a function reserved for the Full Council and is set out in Article 4 of the Constitution and One Swindon remains an emerging policy framework until so adopted. Other legal and Human Rights implications are dealt with in the body of the report.

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*Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)*

- The 2010 Promises and the Corporate Plan both need to be refreshed in 2010.

### **Consultees**

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

### **Background Papers and Appendices**

- None

### **Key Decision / Decision in Forward Plan**

- This is a key decision and is included in the Cabinet Forward Plan for July 2010.

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