

Launch of "This is Swindon"



Welcome to the re-launch of the Local Area Agreement newsletter "**This is Swindon**" writes Cabinet Member for Community & Neighbourhoods, Cllr Steve Wakefield.

Between September 2005 and April 2006, the fortnightly e-mail newsletter was sent to over 600 groups, organisations and individuals. With this re-launch our aim is to reach a wider audience.

The former newsletter helped scope our local area agreement. This new bi-monthly format will be used as a commercial vehicle to communicate progress on the LAA indicators and outcomes over the next three years.

Swindon's LAA is tailored to our Borough because so many of our partners have fed through comments, challenged targets and structured the aspirations. Our starting point was the Community Strategy with its four key principles (or values):

- partnership working
- creating sustainable communities
- equality, inclusion and cohesion
- citizenship, pride and identity

Our theme, the UK's best business location, has become a shared community vision. It is not a narrow commercial ambition, but a bold statement that involves all our partners working together to raise Swindon's profile. All the ingredients are there to make Swindon a place where local people enjoy a high quality of life. To achieve it we will need the cultural, educational, health, physical and local regeneration that is now within our reach.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. If you have any contributions or comments for future editions of "This is Swindon" please e-mail the LAA team at: swindonlaa@swindon.gov.uk or write to LAA, Room 1.34, Civic Offices, Swindon, SN1 2JH.

Promoting and exploring the finer side of local youth

Outcome 9—All secondary schools and 80% of primary schools to have school councils with a link to the Youth Forum by 2009.

Setting up a Youth Forum is also linked to the Borough Council's 50 promises. It was achieved in July 2006. Forum members: Mark Brown, Sam Weekes and Josh Chesterman issued this statement:

"The Youth Forum gives young people in Swindon a chance to speak their mind and made a difference. The draft consultation is in the process of being adopted. Our Forum has designed a new logo and strap line and we are growing our membership. Are we having fun yet?"

Another target in the LAA is that "looked after children and vulnerable children make up 25% of the Forum membership by 2009". Future editions of "This is Swindon" will report progress. Please call the Youth Forum office for more information on how to join. Contact: Gail Waite on 01793 463709.

It's the quality of life that counts

The main public services in the Swindon area, including the Borough Council, Wiltshire & Swindon Police, the NHS and the Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service are working with local business and not-for-profit organisations to increase the quality of life for residents, by improving the local area and the services provided.

As Swindon's local area agreement was being prepared for final approval a number of gaps in baseline data were identified on local views around crime, leisure, health and issues over anti-social behaviour. With permission from our partners at the South West Government Office, a quality of life survey was commissioned. This survey will be repeated annually throughout the life of the agreement up to 2009.

The full survey results are available at www.swindonlaa.org.uk

The November issue of "This is Swindon" will feature an article on the winner of £100 House of Fraser vouchers in the Super Survey draw.

Below are five key results from the survey, more will be covered in the next edition.

1. How safe or unsafe would you feel walking alone in your local area.....?

	Very safe	Fairly safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Fairly unsafe	Very unsafe
...during the day	34%	51%	9%	4%	1%
...after dark	4%	30%	21%	28%	14%

2. From a list of 15, which is a problem / not a problem in your local area...?

Rubbish or litter lying around & speeding traffic	Very big problem	19%
People begging at cashpoints or in other places in your local area	Not a problem at all	62%

3. Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your area?

Definitely agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't have an opinion
2%	22%	50%	16%	5%	4%

4. How do you rate your level of satisfaction with the shopping experience in Swindon town centre?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	I don't know	No reply
11%	49%	19%	17%	3%	1%

5. How do you rate your level of satisfaction with the cultural experience in Swindon town centre?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	I don't know	No reply
4%	34%	15%	15%	3%	1%

Visit our website for all our latest news at: www.swindonlaa.org.uk

Draft Swindon Economic Development Vision & Framework— A proposition

The Draft Swindon Economic Development Vision & Framework has been produced by the Swindon Economic Development and Enterprise Partnership — a group of business leaders and public agencies who initially came together to develop the Swindon Local Area Agreement.

Your views on this draft document are welcome. Read the full document at:

www.maketheconnection.co.uk/pdfs/a_proposition.pdf

Extract from the full document:

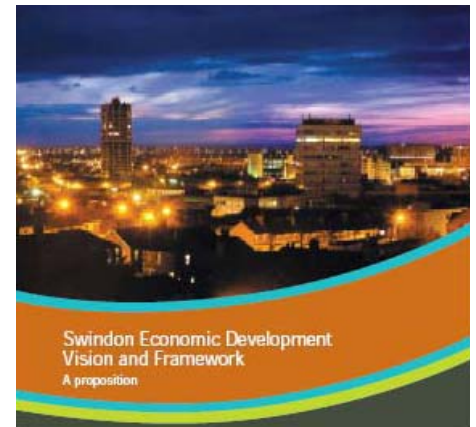
By 2026 Swindon will be a leading regional centre, offering a high quality life not just to its 250,000 residents, but also to a much wider catchment area.

Swindon will have an international reputation as a centre of innovation, science and technology. It's town centre will be dynamic and vibrant with radically improved cultural, educational and leisure facilities.

Swindon is recognised as a Strategically Significant Town within the South West Regional Spatial Strategy. With Swindon as a growth area, 32,000 jobs are forecast to boost the local economy in the next two decades.

The Economic Development Team would like your views:

- Do you agree with the overall analysis and vision?
- Are the priorities outlined in the smart growth concept the right ones?
- Are the growth targets the right ones—are they achievable?
- How can we best progress the transformational projects and stepping stones—are there any additional projects we should be promoting?
- How would you like to be involved in the development and delivery of this Economic Development Vision for Swindon?



Responses are required by the 30th September 2006 and all comments will be used to refresh the document which will ultimately include a more detailed delivery plan.

Please send your comments to: The Economic Development Directorate, Swindon Borough Council, Premier House, Station Road, Swindon, SN1 1TZ or e-mail: bcotton@swindon.gov.uk



Bill Cotton, Director
Economic Development

Outcome 1—We will establish Swindon as the leading location in the UK for new, relocating and existing business and encourage the growth and development of existing businesses

Visit our website for all our latest news at: www.swindonlaa.org.uk

Swindon Half Marathon



Outcome 15—We will improve the overall health of local people “Increase 1% year on year moderate physical activity levels (3 x 30 mins per week for adults).”

Evidence of partnership working is the 13th Swindon Half marathon which is sponsored by: Swindon Advertiser, BBC Radio Swindon, GWR FM, Nationwide, Swindon Borough Council and TriFerris Promotions.

The Half Marathon is back in Swindon again this year on Sunday 15th October 2006. Last year, 2,400 people pounded the streets, and this year we want even more people to take part in the half marathon, multi-terrain fun run, and fun run.

With all proceeds going to Prospect Hospice, you'll also be helping a great cause, so have a look at details of all the events below, choose which one you want to enter, and then print off the application form by following the link to the Advertiser website below to join in the fun.

Half Marathon starts at 11.00 am

13.1 miles through scenic countryside over the Wiltshire Downs. Participants must be at least 17 years old on the day of the run.

Multi-Terrain Fun Run starts at 11.10 am

4.3 mile course taking in Coate Water Country Park. Participants must be at least 15 years old on the day of the run.

Fun Run starts at 11.20 am

A two mile fun run for all the family. Children under 11 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

To join in the fun, please follow this link to print off your application form.:

www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/sport/swinhalfmarathon/2006entry/



Visit our website for all our latest news at: www.swindonlaa.org.uk

Swindon Job Fair



Outcome 2—We will develop a local workforce with the right skills for our economy

Now in the 13th successful year, the Swindon Advertiser will be hosting the award winning Job Fair on Thursday 14th September 2006, at the De Vere Hotel, Swindon between 10am and 8pm.

The exhibition sponsor is Nationwide Building Society, which has its UK headquarters at Pipers Way, in Swindon. Employing 3,000 people, its association with the town stretches back over 30 years.

Locally, economic activity levels are 5% above the national average in Great Britain. In 2004 the economic activity rate in Swindon was 83.6% compared to the GB average of 78.2%.

A key aim within the LAA is to assist local people find routes into full time employment. Our partners at Job Centre Plus and Sure Start will target their activity at helping economically inactive people, particularly those on Incapacity Benefit, back to work.

Did you know? The Parks & East Walcot Neighbourhood Renewal Company invested £150,000 of SWRDA funding into the Parks & East Walcot Opportunity Shop.

Jill Annal of Job Centre Plus said: "We have already worked in partnership to develop the Parks and Walcot Opportunity Shop that provides one-stop advice services on Jobsearch over recent years."

"This success is now being mirrored in Penhill and we want to work with people in other neighbourhoods too."

"We know that by helping to equip our customers with the right skills and qualifications, we can help them to be successful in getting the jobs on offer in Swindon. There are plenty of job opportunities for local people of all skills and at all levels. We intend to work with Swindon businesses to make sure that this happens."

"Our next challenge is to work with huge number of organisations already based in Swindon's neighbourhoods to ensure that we offer the right type of help to those who need it."





Outcome 4: We will increase the proportion of working age people who are economically active particularly in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

Parks & Walcot Opportunity Shop

A significant challenge in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas is to move economically inactive people into work. One team based in south east Swindon is the Opportunity Shop.

Sue Samath, the Scheme Manager for The Parks & Walcot Opportunity Shop in Cavendish Square says: "The shop includes two full-time advice workers funded through grants given by the Parks & East Walcot Neighbourhood Renewal Company. One is the European Social Fund funded Community Education Outreach Promoter (CEOP) which provides the information, advice and guidance to enable people to improve their skills and gain employment.

"The other is a South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) funded Enterprise Development Worker who works with individuals or groups to build up their knowledge and opportunities for self-employment, business start-ups and commercial enterprise. Hot desking is also provided for other partner agencies to use."

The shop has been open for business since 26th April 2005. Heather James, the Community Education Outreach Promoter added: "On average we see 35 clients per quarter and the DIY project supports 19 clients per quarter, looking for work, seeking skills and training or needing support to boost confidence in an interview and training environment."

"We have enjoyed clear success in the Parks & East Walcot areas assisting over 343 local residents during the past 3 years to change or

move their lives forward."

"As key partners, our activity is being monitored by the European Social Fund (ESF) and contributes to the LAA economic block. We are also contributors through the Prescription for Learning initiative run through the PCT which feeds into the healthy communities block."

Heather concluded: "The project aims to help individuals experiencing low level depression or any mental health issues and who are finding it difficult to return to work, education or training, by signposting, direct referral or referring clients on to appropriate services or groups."

Contact the Parks & East Walcot Neighbourhood Renewal Company for more information at 30 Cavendish Square, Park South, Swindon. Tel: 01793 535375
ceop.parksandwalcot@btconnect.com

Office hours: 9:30am -2:00pm Monday to Friday.



Heather James & Brendan Gleeson outside the Opportunity Shop.



Outcome 16: We will reduce health inequalities in the Borough.

Visit our website for all our latest news at: www.swindonlaa.org.uk

Science Museum's Lottery bid



Outcome 5—We will establish Swindon as a national destination for cultural and leisure events and ensure that more of those who work in Swindon also live, shop and socialise in the Borough

Swindon's Science Museum, located in Wroughton, is one step closer to a multi-million pound lottery grant.

The museum's National Collection Centre, along with five other projects, has beaten 346 applications to progress to the next stage of the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: The People's Millions programme.

There is now just one more elimination process to go through before the museum finds out if the project will be entered in a live public vote to get a £48m grant.

And it is now time for Swindon to get behind the project and back the bid.

Each of the chosen projects are aimed at transforming and regenerating their communities.

They will have to battle it out to win public support to get their hands on the grant.

Sally Pettipher, Head of Development at the museum, said: "We are absolutely delighted."

"This is a mark of real confidence in what is a very exciting project which will bring together a truly great science collection and one of the most innovative science education centres in the country."

"We are one of only a handful of projects in the country being considered for a £48m grant.

"The project is of great importance within the Swindon area and if we are successful will inspire a generation of future scientists."

She added: "Only one project can win. And it will win by a public vote next autumn."

"We are asking now for all of Swindon and the south west to get behind this bid," she said. "We can only win with your help."

Mike Bowden, chairman of the project's corporate campaign team and executive director of RWE npower, said: "This is great news for the National Collections Centre project."

"It provides a seductive mix of education, environment and technology, as such RWE npower and the Swindon business community are proud to back this project."

The Science Museum plans to build an £81m National Collections Centre on its 545-acre site.

It will bring together 250,000 objects from the stored collections of national museums, from Hoovers to hovercrafts, radios to rockets and telescopes to trams.

For more information on the Science Museum, follow this link:
www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/wroughton/futureplans.asp



Visit our website for all our latest news at: www.swindonlaa.org.uk



Outcome 17—We will increase Swindon’s contribution to tackling climate change and fuel poverty.

Landfill Tax Credit Scheme funding available!

There is potential funding available to voluntary and community groups in Swindon from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. Swindon Borough Council will soon be arranging an information session on the scheme, with advice on how to apply to our partner “Community First” for this money. “Community First” accesses around £500,000 of landfill tax credits each year on behalf of community projects in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Most grants are between £5,000 and £50,000 depending on the type of project, its location, proximity to a landfill site, total project cost and the proportion of matching funding, particularly local fundraising.

Examples of eligible projects might include:

- Community halls, scout and guide halls
- Play areas
- Museums
- Conservation and bio-diversity projects on public or private land
- Permanent or mobile skateboard parks or cycle tracks
- Paths (which are not a statutory responsibility)
- Sites and buildings of historical and/or architectural interest

(This is not an exhaustive list.)

What are Landfill Tax Credits?

Whenever waste is buried in the ground by a landfill site operator (LSO), a landfill tax is payable by the operator to Customs and Excise. The landfill tax credits (LTCs) scheme allows a LSO to divert up to 6.5% of this tax, as a credit, to certain types of academic, commercial or community projects. The scheme is voluntary and regulated by a Government agency called Entrust.

It is a condition of the regulations that the applicant for LTCs has to be registered with Entrust as an Environmental Body. Over the last few years a process has developed whereby Distributive Environmental Bodies (DEBs) in each county have become registered: individual projects use them as the applicant for LTCs to one or more LSOs. “Community First” is a DEB. They have a close knowledge of the criteria and procedures of several LSOs locally and nationally and give advice and support to potential applicants for LTCs.

If you would be interested in attending this free information session (date to be confirmed), please register your interest with Janet Duffield, External Funding Manager on 01793 463158 or e-mail jduffield@swindon.gov.uk



Forthcoming Events

- September 9th—Youth Festival at the Town Gardens
- September 13th—Get Active Day
- September 14th—Job Fair—De Vere Hotel
- September 20th—Swindon Car Free Day
- September 22nd—National Car Free Day
- October 15th—Swindon Half Marathon
- November 14th—Swindon Strategic Partnership Conference (University of Bath in Swindon)

Youth Festival

On September 9th 2006 the Town Gardens, Old Town will be 'rocking' with young peoples activities, as the Swindon Youth festival gets underway.

Young people, and youth organisations have planned the event, which gets underway at 1pm. Entry is free.

The Festival is primarily aimed at young people aged 13 – 19, and there should be enough on offer to cater for everybody, whether its going to the tranquillity zone, visiting the 'Big Brother' tent, having a go at the climbing wall, trying various sports, learning DJ skills, or just chilling out listening to the local live bands, the Festival should have something for everybody.

Swindon Borough Councils Youth Services Team has been leading on the Festival, and they are using this day to officially launch the new Swindon Youth Service.

Many other organisations have helped bring the event together including Youth Information Swindon, Oxfam, Swindon Music Service, Active Swindon, and Youth Action Wiltshire.

On the main stage, headline act and local band Belarus will be performing at 9pm and play out the last hour of the Festival.

For further details on the event contact Lindsay Poole on lpole@swindon.gov.uk or telephone: 01793 463429.



Everybody wins with LAAs



By the end of this year, Local Area Agreements defining the priorities in individual local authority areas will be established right across the South West.

Negotiating the LAAs can be a tough job both for the councils concerned and the GOSW team managing the process – but it has generally gone very well so far. And in one particular case, it has been a major catalyst for change.

Within the last four years, Swindon Borough Council has made a remarkable transformation. Then, it was twice marked down in the bottom category of Audit Commission Performance Assessments. Now, it has been assessed as a 'two star' authority after achieving significant improvements.

Developing the LAA has helped drive that progress. In consultation with GOSW, Swindon's Partnership Board decided that realising the town's potential as a business centre would in turn spur better public service provision and increase the quality of life generally.

Gavin Jones, the Borough Council's new Chief Executive, says: "We are very happy to have been given the opportunity to be part of the LAA process. This will give us the chance to work closely with our partners on local outcomes and local priorities which will

ultimately make Swindon the UK's best business location."

Nationally there has been a lot of debate in local government circles about the value of Local Area Agreements, and some commentators dismiss them as simply another bureaucratic burden.

However, GOSW's Assistant Director for the Swindon area, Huw Lloyd-Jones, describes the experience there as a cracking example of how LAAs can effect positive change. "This demonstrates how it can be used by a local authority to provide real community leadership. It is bold and it builds on Swindon's strengths without ignoring the town's shortcomings. The ambition that seeps from every paragraph provides the perfect vehicle for the public, private and voluntary sectors to work together to fulfil the town's potential."

He also believes that the LAA process makes his own work and that of many GOSW colleagues a lot easier, because they form a much closer relationship with the local authorities as a result of the negotiation procedure – so everybody wins.

Further information:
[HUW.LLOYD-JONES@gosw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HUU.LLOYD-JONES@gosw.gsi.gov.uk)
 0117 900 1890





Meet the LAA and Partnership Team

Matt Gott, Director Policy, Partnership & Performance
 Alison Chamberlain, Partnership Development Manager
 Matthew Pearce, LAA & Partnership Officer
 Janet Beattie, Partnership Support Officer



From left to right: Janet, Alison & Matthew

What is a LAA

Marking a radical change in central and local relations, Swindon's Local Area Agreement (LAA) brings public sector, local business and not for profit organisations together to deliver 19 priorities.

The agreement is dependent on all sectors embracing effective partnership working and placing the citizen at the heart of service delivery.

The LAA is detailed in four sections: Economic Development & Enterprise, Children & Young People, Safer & Stronger Communities, and Healthy Communities & Older People.

In Swindon we do not see partnership working simply as developing common understanding or aligning and pooling budgets. Sharing the wealth and benefits of skills, resources, knowledge and influence will be key to our progress.

The full Swindon LAA document was signed off in April 2006 with Government ministers. Read the full document on the website at www.swindonlaa.org.uk

Membership details of the four partnership blocks is also available within the Swindon Partnership pages of our website.

Contact us

E-mail the team at:
swindonlaa@swindon.gov.uk

Write to the team at:

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Telephone the team on:

01793 463883—Matthew Pearce
 01793 466301—Alison Chamberlain
 01793 463248—Janet Beattie

Visit our website at
www.swindonlaa.org.uk

Future Newsletters

What would you like to see in future editions of "This is Swindon"?

Send your comments, contributions and information on your forthcoming events to:

swindonlaa@swindon.gov.uk

Articles for the next edition to be submitted by 15th October 2006

November 2006 edition will be published on: 1st November 2006