

Themes the SBC Should Take to Ensure Recovery

The Labour Recovery Plan will be delivered through a Business Dashboard review process. The Recovery Plan needs to be visibly led and named Decision Makers held accountable for daily progress. It will be critical to produce agreed metrics to hold Decision Makers to account and progress to be monitored whilst ensuring the focus is on recovery being delivered at pace.

1. Securing the Council's Finances

- Closely monitor and update budget impact analysis and regularly update Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet.
- Lobby government to ensure that Swindon Borough Council- and local government more widely - is fully compensated for the financial impacts of C19.
- Conduct a corporate review of all 2020-21 revenue budgets to identify areas for immediately reducing in-year expenditure through additional controls on nonessential spend and recruitment.
- Review the capital programme to ensure that the schemes still reflect the council's current priorities and that these are affordable in the new financial landscape.
- Update the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy, to understand the short to medium implications for savings requirements and use of reserves.
- Commence the process for setting the budget for 2021/22 and provide further detail to Cabinet in July on the approach and timeline.

2. Modernising the Council; Reimagining Local Services

- Implement changes to the internal layout and other safety measures within the Civic Campus to support social distancing as more staff return to the office when it is appropriate to do so, with a risk assessment of the building carried out and unions engaged.
- Continue to allow staff to work from home where possible, striking a balance between home and office-based working and allowing flexibility for staff.
- Take forward an organisation wide review of service delivery, to look at reimagining how services are delivered in future.
- Recast its service transformation plans in light of this service review, to be taken forward as part of the 2021/22 budget and business planning cycle.
- Develop the IT and technology strategy looking at how technology can further enable organisational and service transformation – unlocking efficiency savings and providing a better experience for service users.
- Review the decisions that have been taken as part of the crisis response to stop, start or amend service delivery (and the experience of working in different ways) to consider lessons learned and apply them to services over the longer-term.
- Use the principles of recovery engagement to recalibrate the compact between the council and residents, communities, businesses and other civic stakeholders.

3. Supporting the Most Vulnerable

- Work proactively with partners to develop a sustainable approach to tackling homelessness in the borough.
- Over the longer-term, work with the voluntary and community sector to look at pathways out of poverty for the most vulnerable. This will include training and skills opportunities and measures to move people closer to the labour market and into employment.
- Work with domestic abuse support providers to signpost victims of DA to the support on offer and to work with front line teams within the council to train staff to spot signs of DA.
- Hold virtual internal and engagement event(s) to gather evidence and lessons from the council's long-term approach to reducing inequalities and crisis support.
- Use these principles and lessons learnt to build on existing collaborative and asset-based approach to tackling pre-existing and emerging financial and digital exclusion in the town, as part of tackling wider inequality.

4. Business and the Local Economy

- Use SBCs licensing powers to support businesses, particularly those in the hospitality sector, where appropriate to vary the use of outside space, whilst ensuring that people with disabilities can move around the town safely.
- Continue to identify opportunities to promote sustainable travel in the town centre – with a focus on walking, cycling and other forms of sustainable travel, such as public transport, as appropriate.
- Work with private and public providers to deliver a full fibre broadband network in Swindon's urban and rural areas.
- Where there is evidence of malpractice, assess whether action can be taken against employers who fail to provide a safe working environment.
- Continue to deliver grants and wider support to businesses.
- Engage with the small scale Independent, Community and Cooperative business sector to seek to fill gaps in the restaurant and hospitality market left by national chains particularly in the town centre.
- Engage with business, representative groups and relevant public authorities, and monitor relevant data sources and emerging national and local analysis, to understand the challenges facing businesses and the wider economic impact.
- Work in partnership to develop appropriate solutions to the challenges identified, including through our planning, licensing and enforcement functions and by working with partners on issues including skills and pathways to work.
- Consider how the council's role as an anchor institution can support an inclusive economy through the use of council assets, contractual, recruitment and procurement levers.
- Review the Swindon's Economic Strategy 2019-24 to identify any new actions required to respond to C19.
- Develop and deliver a Town Investment Plan to get access to £25m funding for investment in the town. Also, proactively investigate all other possible sources of grant funding?
- Engage in wider recovery plans with partners including the Wiltshire and Swindon LEP, Wiltshire County Council and the local Resilience Forum to manage C19 and broader economic downturn.

5. Housing, Regeneration and Development

- Restart council house repairs and maintenance programmes and work to ensure the backlog is cleared.
- Support people in private sector rented accommodation, including implementing a private renters charter and taking action against sub-standard accommodation.
- Prepare, submit and implement the Town Investment Plan to maximise up to £25m of investment in the regeneration of Swindon.
- Make progress on the Local Plan to put in place a framework to guide development in the area and encourage it to be well designed and genuinely sustainable.
- Ensure that infrastructure to support growth is delivered in a timely manner, with delivery of affordable housing maximised, and planning powers used effectively to ensure delivery of priorities.
- Make the most of its own land holdings and financial capability to maximise rates of housing delivery through exemplary homes that meet the needs of the people of Swindon and develop a pipeline of sites that can be delivered over the medium to long-term.
- Build additional houses for both sale and rent that meets community needs through its wholly owned housing company, Swindon Housing Company.
- Begin an ambitious council house building programme to increase affordable housing provision in Swindon.
- Continue to support build out at pace in both Wichelstowe and NEV.

6. Arts, Culture, and Heritage

- Work with the arts, heritage, and culture sector to enable the town's institutions and events to re- open in a safe way when it is appropriate to do so.
- Engage closely with the sector to understand the issues facing them and seek solutions together, including working with national arts and culture organisations as required.
- At the appropriate time, work to deliver council run events, including to celebrate the hard work of the town over this period, in line with social distancing requirements.
- Work with partners to develop a culture strategy for Swindon which places the importance of arts, culture, and heritage at the centre of the town's recovery.

7. Climate Change and The Green Economy

- Ensure that the council's Environment Strategy and Action Plan (with input from stakeholders) includes reference to opportunities emerging from the crisis and articulates environmental objectives during the recovery phase.
- Industry leaders agree that a green recovery will be the best source of new jobs. SBC should support the local growth of research and development, recycling technologies, hydrogen technologies, battery technologies, building renovation, sustainable construction, off-site construction, electricity generation and transmission, zero emission transport, green finance and other sectors of the sustainable economy.
- Work with local education and training providers to equip young people and those looking to change career to take advantage of the jobs provided by the move to a low carbon economy. Support the Institute of Technology in Upskilling for the Green Economy.
- Identify opportunities for reducing carbon emissions across council assets and operations.
- Undertake an 'opportunity audit' across the council's place-making activities to identify and prioritise specific opportunities to delivery quantifiable environmental benefits, to supplement the Environment Strategy.
- Further promote sustainable travel in the borough.
- Work with Partners to create a sustainable retrofitting fitting business sector including the creation of Centre for Excellence in the required skills.
- Create a framework to maximise the opportunities for off-site construction in the Swindon and surrounding area.
- Support the Institute of Technology in Upskilling for the Green Economy.

8. Harnessing Social Capital

- Develop a Community Participation Strategy which looks at how the council can work with communities across the borough to enable them to realise the opportunities and respond to the challenges ahead.
- Work with residents to understand the level of support needed from the council without imposing unnecessary process and allowing communities to define their own local priorities and responses to local challenges.
- Adopt an asset-based community development approach which empowers residents and allows for community-led decision making in neighbourhoods, acknowledging that organic social capital building will vary by neighbourhood and adapt approaches accordingly.
- Remain part of national and global think tank groups to monitor and pilot new ideas and identify best practice.
- Support the voluntary and community sector in adapting and use its procurement powers and grants based on gaps and need.
- Develop communications strategies which both amplify inspiring stories and create two-way conversations to inform council decision making.