



Fairer, Better, Greener Swindon: Councillors reflect on first year of Swindon Plan

The development of a town centre masterplan, the opening of a new youth centre and a reduction in anti-social behaviour-related crime, are among the key achievements delivered by Swindon Borough Council in the first year of its Swindon Plan.

Agreed in 2024, the Swindon Plan sets out the Council's three long-term missions to build a fairer, better and greener Swindon.

On Wednesday (9 July), Cabinet Members will review the progress made in delivering the plan during the financial year ending April 2025.

The 'build a fairer mission' has seen several successes in the first year. One key performance target is to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB)-related crime by three per cent year-on-year. In the first year, interventions such as the introduction of Community Safety Wardens helped reduce ASB incidents by more than 10 per cent.

Councillors also celebrated the opening of a new youth centre, The Base, in Park North, which is expected to support over 400 children and young people each week. Additionally, more than 1,900 young people have benefited from supervised tooth-brushing programmes in local schools, supported by the Council.

The local authority has also delivered on its commitment to increase community engagement, with its 'Let's talk Swindon' model replicated across important issues including Housing and Skills.

Work is also underway to deliver the mission to 'build a better' Swindon. The Council has showcased the Borough's investment potential as part of the 'Heart of Swindon' ambitions to reinvent the town centre with a high-profile event in the House of Lords, and has seen new partnerships formed with developers and businesses. This work will include the consideration of a business case for developing a new town centre entertainment venue later this year.

The work to build a better Swindon includes supporting children in care, and residents at risk of homelessness. In the first year of the Swindon Plan, dedicated interventions have helped ensure that children in care are increasingly likely to live closer to friends and family in Swindon. As of the start of the new financial year, more than four in five looked after children live within 20 miles of Swindon.

The Council has also opened a new Homelessness Prevention Centre on Beckhampton Street, offering face-to-face support for residents at risk of homelessness. This, along with other interventions, has helped reduce the number of families with children in nightly charged accommodation for more than six weeks, from 10 in April 2023 to zero by March 2024.

Work is also continuing to build a greener Swindon. The Council has installed more than 400 environment sensors in homes it owns across the Borough (against a target of 180), as well as committing to make more than 100 Swindon Council-owned homes in Park South more energy efficient through the rollout of retrofit improvements over the next five years. This includes installing UPVC window and door upgrades, roof replacements and upgrading gas central heating system.

Meanwhile, the Council is again providing residents with the chance to install solar panels at a discounted rate through the Solar Together scheme and planted more than 10,000 trees across Swindon in the 2024/25 planting season.

Progress is also being made to transform how the Council delivers its services, leading to better resident outcomes and value for taxpayers' money through the delivery of the Swindon 2028 programme.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Jim Robbins, said:

"I'm proud of the progress we've made in the first year of the Swindon Plan, delivering meaningful change for our residents.

"From setting out a bold vision for our town centre, to tackling anti-social behaviour and helping more people recycle, we've already achieved a great deal.

"This report highlights the real-life impact of our work, from supervised tooth-brushing schemes that support children's health, to reducing the number of families living in costly emergency accommodation.

"We know there's still more to do, and we're intending to announce more new initiatives later this year that will build on this momentum.

"Despite the financial pressures we face, our commitment remains strong: to create a fairer, better, and greener Swindon for everyone who lives here."

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Notes to editors:

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Images:

Photo 1: Children in Swindon take part in supervised tooth-brushing in a scheme supported by the Council

Photo 2: Leader of the Council, Councillor Jim Robbins, took the Vision for the Heart of Swindon to Westminster

Photo 3: Solar panels installed through the Solar Together scheme