

OPTIONS	ISSUES	OPTIONS
<p><b>1. TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS</b></p>	<p>The Group raised a number of issues relating to transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car parking is hard to find and very difficult to get to</li> <li>• There is no ring road defined and the “inner route” is difficult to navigate</li> <li>• It is very difficult to get around without a car</li> <li>• Inappropriate level of signage</li> <li>• There is conflict at the entrance to the railway with a number of different transport modes converging in a non-planned way. The vehicle is dominant. This can lead to a feeling of vulnerability.</li> <li>• There is no obvious “gateway”</li> <li>• The north-south links across the railway are poor and the two private bridges are sometimes closed</li> <li>• The canal route feels unsafe and pedestrians feel vulnerable</li> <li>• General safety issue</li> <li>• There are no bus routes on Great Western Way</li> <li>• There are no easy means of linking the town centre to other facilities north of railway</li> <li>• There are day to day access issues linked to the leisure facilities north of the railway</li> <li>• The bus station is not in the best location</li> <li>• There is no promotion of links between specialist shopping at Outlet village and the town centre.</li> </ul>	<p>The Group addressed the issues and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swindon should capitalise on ease of access</li> <li>• Safe and accessible pedestrian access should be provided in the centre, reducing vulnerability and promoting links between north and south of the railway</li> <li>• Improvements should be made to town centre access by providing an obvious “gateway” and improving signage and especially signs for car parking and perhaps availability of spaces</li> <li>• Efforts should be made to make the route between the critical mass at Great Western and the town centre seem shorter or more interesting</li> <li>• Look at innovative means of transport e.g. mono-rail</li> <li>• Relocate rail parking – suggested to north of railway</li> <li>• Promote safe walking routes</li> <li>• Provide “park and pedal” facilities – sustainable transport</li> <li>• Relocate the bus station towards Regent Street and link to Granville Street</li> <li>• Look at the various bus drop off points and appropriately locate</li> <li>• Link long route buses to the rail and separate out local routes</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. OPEN SPACE</b></p>	<p>The Group raised a number of issues under the heading open space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No quality space for general enjoyment</li> <li>• No quality space for performances</li> <li>• Problems of design discussed and generally felt that the design of the centre had neglected good open space – also query about how spaces should be designed</li> <li>• Current spaces and use of them should be looked at</li> <li>• The town centre tends to be inward facing so does not present an appealing image for those coming into the centre</li> <li>• Currently no linkages between spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for Newbridge Square development to address some of the issues</li> <li>• There is a real opportunity to provide creative solutions</li> <li>• The Exchange redevelopment should be used positively and the Group felt it should become the new “heart” of the centre</li> <li>• Linkages to existing parks should be developed and promoted</li> <li>• The opportunities arising from the university development should be explored</li> <li>• Generally felt that more could be made of the existing space by use of lighting and art</li> <li>• Suggested that the theatre should be linked to other open space activities with a link to the central area</li> </ul>

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<p><b>3.</b> SHOPPING</p>	<p>The Group raised a number of issues relating to shopping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a great divide between the central area and Great Western and no easy means of providing connectivity</li> <li>• The central area is “like any other” – nothing to make it more appealing or stand out</li> <li>• The town centre is not attractive – so “catch 22” situation – until appealing then will not attract major investors</li> <li>• There is a dependency on major retailer</li> <li>• Need to look at types of shopping and how shopping patterns have changed – “old fashioned” centre at the moment</li> <li>• There is a danger that new retail space will be provided and not taken up</li> </ul>	<p>The Group felt that some of the issues could be resolved as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop “forward-thinking” and provide a different shopping experience that will make people want to visit the centre</li> <li>• Provide specialist outlets</li> <li>• Provide the necessary links between the Outlet village and the town</li> <li>• Promote the linkages</li> <li>• Promote what Swindon can offer</li> <li>• Explore and develop opportunities for mixed use development</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b> CRIME</p>	<p>The Group felt that the perception of crime in Swindon is much worse than the actual level of crime though said that graffiti was a particular problem</p>	<p>The Group highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In reality crime is low but there are opportunities to deal with issues through design, safe access and outward thinking</li> </ul>

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<p>5. LEISURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of facilities for youths</li> <li>• Cinemas not in centre</li> <li>• Not a variety of bars and pubs</li> <li>• Lack of promotion of good leisure facilities e.g. Swindon dance is “cutting edge”</li> <li>• Links between leisure and tourism not exploited</li> <li>• Query raised – if pull people in is there hotel capacity?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to make the central area attractive at night</li> <li>• Promote a “café society”</li> <li>• Provide links to science museum</li> <li>• Use the heritage building as an example of good design – this is what people expect</li> <li>• Promote Swindon dance</li> </ul>
<p>6. HOUSING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing is critical to getting heart and soul back in the centre</li> <li>• Housing affects the character of an area</li> <li>• Consideration needs to be given to the changing demographics in the area</li> <li>• Need “right” type of housing</li> <li>• House builders are struggling to get rid of properties due to problems of image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to look beyond current needs with vision</li> <li>• Need to provide a mix of housing types</li> <li>• Need to promote mixed use development to provide a cohesive base for a new “central area”</li> </ul>

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<p>7. ART AND DESIGN</p>	<p>The Group commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is currently little design</li> <li>• What design there is lacks flair and imagination</li> <li>• Lighting not good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn form examples elsewhere</li> <li>• Provide a heritage route</li> <li>• Provide and art route</li> <li>• Provide sculpture trail</li> <li>• Look at innovative ways of providing – may not necessarily be static sculpture etc – use temporary display</li> <li>• Provide an environmentally friendly theme</li> </ul>
<p>8. IDENTITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major parts of the central area are not well signed</li> <li>• Don't know when you are actually in the centre</li> <li>• There is no heart</li> <li>• The old town and new town are divorced</li> <li>• The central area and Swindon as a whole has a very poor image</li> <li>• Not attractive</li> <li>• People have a poor perception of the town</li> <li>• The media does not always portray the town in a good light</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to make a "Swindon Experience" – make coming to Swindon enjoyable</li> <li>• Promote different aspects through signage and promote culture and leisure</li> <li>• Link into public realm</li> <li>• Promote linkages within the central area but don't forget about important links to other areas of the town</li> <li>• Link into schools to promote the town's identity through education</li> <li>• Market the image</li> <li>• Look at using the media to promote</li> </ul>

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<p>9. REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>The Group stated, "don't be afraid to knock down and start again"!</p>	
<p>10. REGENERATION OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>Not specifically discussed</p>	

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<p>11. EMPLOYMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception issue</li> <li>• Critical to have good employers in the town</li> <li>• Lacks mixed use opportunities</li> <li>• Think about what Swindon wants? Currently a distribution focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to promote</li> <li>• Market employment opportunities</li> <li>• Attract interest through positive advertising and promotion</li> <li>• Promote and encourage mixed use development</li> <li>• Take “zoning” out and build in “planning!”</li> </ul>
<p>12. UNIVERSITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning status is unclear</li> <li>• Lots of confusion</li> <li>• Finding space for the central area campus element is difficult</li> <li>• Focus is on Coate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide student accommodation</li> <li>• Provide student union and promote the central area as ‘life style’</li> <li>• Look seriously at the opportunities a larger student base brings and build upon those</li> </ul>

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<p>13. HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The canal has gone and there is no water</li> <li>• Too much reliance on heritage and conservation can be limiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for the Mechanics Institute provides a fundamental way of changing the relationship between the outlet village and the town centre</li> <li>• Don't be constrained by the heritage and conservation aspects</li> </ul>