

GROWING THE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors Emma Bushell, Malcolm Davies, Mark Dempsey, Cathy Martyn (Chair), Des Moffatt, Carol Shelley, Gary Sumner and Steve Weisinger

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wayne Crabbe.

8. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

9. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th June 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to (i) Councillors Gary Sumner and Carol Shelley's names being added to those present at the meeting, and (ii) Councillor Emma Bushell being noted as giving apologies.

10. Public Question Time

Mr Brian Cockbill, a local resident, asked a question regarding the former Regional Development Agency and the allocation of funds towards a Swindon Rapid Transport project.

The Chair thanked Mr Cockbill for his question and advised that a written response would be provided.

11. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved - That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred in Agenda Item 10 on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned (Minute 14 refers.)

12. Swindon Borough Council Response to the EU Referendum

The Committee received a report from the Interim Director of Economy, Regeneration and Skills in response to a request from Full Council for the Committee to consider the impact of the recent European Union referendum and subsequent exit of the UK from the European Union, and how this would affect the Swindon economy.

In order to fully engage with the request from Full Council, it was suggested that a Task Group be set up with the Terms of Reference as detailed in Appendix A to these minutes. It was further proposed that the Task Group should run for a period of twelve months, as the latest developments on BREXIT would be evolving over a

similar timeframe. It was agreed that the Task Group's progress could be reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That a Task Group be established to consider the impact of the recent European Union referendum and subsequent exit of the UK from the European Union, and how this would affect the Swindon economy.

(3) That the Task Group be set up for a period of 12 months, to consider the request from Full Council at (2) above, reporting to the Committee on a quarterly basis with the following membership:

- Councillor Cathy Martyn
- Councillor Des Moffatt
- Councillor Wayne Crabbe
- Councillor Steve Weisinger

(4) That the Task Group's Terms of Reference be agreed as attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

13. Request by Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chair reported that the Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 13th June 2016 had agreed to place an item on their work programme about business rates and had subsequently requested to meet with the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the matter. However, it was unclear whether the request was for a joint meeting to be convened or whether a joint Task Group might be appropriate.

The Chair reminded members that they would be considering a report from the Director of Economy, Regeneration and Skills about a sustainable approach to business rates at its meeting in November 2016 and she suggested that this item remains on the Committees work programme until there was a clearer understanding of the wishes of the Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved – That the Chairs comments regarding the request by the Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to meet with the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee about business rates be noted.

14. Work Programme 2016/17

The Committee received the report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the agreed items for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme 2016/17.

Members noted that the Committee was due to receive an update on the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) at its next meeting on 30th November 2016, and asked that the officer team attends this meeting along with the Director of the SWLEP.

Resolved – (1) That the Committee's Work Programme 2016/17 be noted.
(2) That the Director of SWLEP along with his officer team be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee in November 2016.

15. Date of Next Meeting

That the next meeting of the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee be held at 6.00pm on 30th November 2016.

16. Forward Swindon Ltd

The Committee received an oral report from the Deb Heenan, Chief Executive of Forward Swindon Ltd (FSL), about a number of regeneration projects for the town centre area of Swindon.

Members received a number of documents on the various projects that contained commercially sensitive information. The Chief Executive spoke in detail about the projects listed below and responded to questions and issues raised by the Committee:

- Kimmerfields
- Kimmerfields 'enabling works'
- Corn Exchange
- Carriage Works/Bristol Street/GWR tunnel
- Carriage Works Phase 1 (units 3 and 5)
- Aspen House and Granville Street
- North Star
- Mechanics Institute
- Public realm improvements
- 1-3 Farringdon Road

Resolved – (1) That the Chief Executive, FSL, be thanked for attending the meeting and for her full and honest responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That the Director of Law and Democratic Services make arrangements for members to visit the FSL officers to receive further updates on the various projects outlined above.

(3) That the Chief Executive, FSL, be asked to provide updates on the regeneration projects at each meeting.

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Appendix

EUROPEAN REFERENDUM TASK GROUP

Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Terms of Reference

Aims and objectives

1. To review the impact of the recent EU referendum and subsequent exit of the UK from the European Union, and how this will impact on the Swindon economy.

The Task Group will:-

1. Review the economic implications of 'Brexit' on the UK economy and on Swindon's economy
2. Consider in detail the discussions already undertaken by Council officers with the Department for International Trade and the Local Government Association.
3. Identify whether any further questions should be raised in relation to the impact of 'Brexit' on Swindon's economy.
4. Consider calling witnesses to seek further information including Officers, local business and other appropriate Agencies, if necessary.
5. Report back the Task Group's findings and recommendations to the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a future date.

Membership

To be confirmed of 3 – 5 members

Task Group Resources

Andy Evans, Interim Director of Economy, Regeneration & Skills
Trudy Godfrey, Growth and Regeneration Team
Sally Burnett, Strategic Commissioner, Routes to Employment

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