

GROWING THE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Cathy Martyn (Chair), Emma Bushell, Wayne Crabbe, Malcolm Davies, Mark Dempsey, Carol Shelley and Gary Sumner.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Des Moffatt and Steve Weisinger.

25. 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.

26. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

27. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

28. Update on Progress on Pledge 18, Apprenticeships, Pledge 19, Higher Education and the Post 16 Review

The Committee received an update report of the Corporate Director of Economy, Regeneration and Skills on the following areas:

- Securing a range of options to access higher education (Pledge 19)
- Increasing the number of businesses employing young people as an apprentice from 15% to 20% (Pledge 19)
- Post 16 Review

The report advised that the work on skills and employment was driven by the Skills and Employment Strategy, which was overseen by the Skills and Employment Board. This Strategy was updated in December 2016 following work with the Board and its sub-groups. The Committee noted that the sub-groups had recently been reviewed and rationalised and there would now be three sub-groups: Skills for Growth, which included Apprenticeships, Skills for Inclusion and Higher Education.

The Corporate Director, Director of Children's Services and their supporting officer team responded in detail to the following questions and issues raised by members:

- Funding for Higher Education by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Plans for a higher education centre and associated funding issues.
- On-going discussions with Oxford Brookes University.
- Aspirations and leadership support for a University in Swindon.

- Information about higher education courses and the institutions delivering them.
- The economic benefits of a university located in a town and city.
- Website for school leavers with information about available further and higher education courses.
- Updates on the work of the Higher Education Sub-Group Task Groups.
- Information about work experience opportunities for students.
- The plans to increase level 4 and above apprenticeships.
- The promotion and plans for Jobfest 2017.
- In-house apprenticeship training.
- The mechanisms in place for schools to encourage 6th Formers to undertake apprenticeships.
- The findings of the Post 16 Review.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director, Director of Children's Services and their supporting officer team for their responses to the questions and issues raised by members.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.
 (2) That the Committee receive an update on the Higher Education Strategy at a future meeting.

29. Update on Swindon's Economic Strategy 2016-36

The Committee received a report by the Corporate Director of Economy, Regeneration and Skills on the progress being made in respect of Swindon's Economic Strategy, and an update on the production of a revised Economic Strategy over the longer timeframe 2016-36.

The Corporate Director referred to the four key themes of the Economic Strategy and explained that there was also a cross cutting objective, 'To make Swindon a more inclusive place, with reduced worklessness and improving health and well-being outcomes'.

The Corporate Director and his support team responded to the following questions and issues raised by the Committee:

- The four themes of the Strategy and their outcomes.
- Housing offer available in Swindon for higher earners.
- Re-consideration of the priorities for the town to encourage economic growth.
- The links between the Economic Strategy and the Local Plan in relation to housing and highways developments.
- The proposed development of the Town Centre.
- The possibility of converting one-way roads to a two-way traffic model in the Town Centre.
- The use of technology to aid traffic flows.
- Transport planning for the Eastern Villages.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director and his support team for their responses to questions and issues raised by members.

- Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Committee receives a presentation on the Local Plan processes and the Economic Strategy at a future meeting.

30. Work Programme

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 reaffirmed their request for detailed updates on Town Centre projects, in particular those for Aspen House, Bridge Street and Fleet Street, in the report being considered at its meeting in March 2017.

Resolved – (1) That the Committee's Work Programme 2016/17 be noted, subject to the following amendments:

- 22nd March 2017 – Swindon Museum and Arts Gallery – to include an update on the cultural quarter.
- 22nd March 2017 – Town Centre Projects update report to include detailed information about Aspen House, Bridge Street and Fleet Street projects.