

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 24 MARCH 2014

PRESENT:- Councillors David Renard (Chair), Mark Dempsey, Fionuala Foley, Jim Grant, Garry Perkins, Brian Mattock (Vice-Chair), Des Moffatt and Mike Bawden.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stan Pajak.

23. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

24. Minutes

Resolved –That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

25. Public Question Time

No public questions were asked under Standing Order 28.

26. Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan and Swindon's Future Infrastructure Needs - Reference from Cabinet

The Special Committee considered (a) a report by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, originally submitted to the Cabinet on 19th March 2014, concerning (i) the proposed areas for investment of the Swindon element of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan to be submitted to the Government by 31st March 2014 as a bid for "Growth Deal" funding, and (ii) Swindon's future infrastructure needs and the use of the proposed Infrastructure Fund and New Homes Bonus funding to respond to those needs, (b) an oral report on the decision of the Cabinet on this matter (Minute 106 of the Cabinet refers), and (c) a tabled supplementary report submitted by the Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment setting out a summary of the "Swindon only" elements of the Strategic Economic Plan 2015-21 Competitive Bid to Government.

The Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment presented the reports and explained the background to the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan and the competitive bid to be submitted to the Government. He updated the Committee on the progress of the bid and the views of the Local Enterprise Partnership partners. He advised that the supplementary report set out a summary of the Swindon only elements of the bid and that these proposals had been identified in previous Council reports, plans and strategies.

Members commented and asked questions regarding the Swindon proposals and how these related to other schemes and Council priorities.

Councillor Jim Grant reiterated the views he had expressed at the Cabinet meeting in respect of the proposals for the establishment and use of a Council Infrastructure Fund and his view that there should have been greater cross-party involvement in the preparation of the Swindon elements of the bidding document. He suggested that the Leader of the Council might wish to consider establishing a new Cabinet Member Advisory Group to oversee the implementation of the Swindon elements of the Strategic Economic Plan, once the outcome of the bidding process was known.

Resolved – (1) That the Special Committee, on behalf of Council, approves the Swindon proposed areas of Investment as set out in paragraphs 3.11 to 3.13 of the joint report, as items for inclusion in the Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan to be submitted by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership to Government on 31st March 2014.

(2) That, further to the decision in (1) above, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to agree amendments to items related to Swindon in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) prior to its final submission and if required following feedback from partners and Government.

(3) That the Special Committee, on behalf of Council, agrees, in principle, the proposals related to the use of New Homes Bonus and the Infrastructure Fund as set out in paragraphs 3.17 to 3.21 of the joint report.

(4) That the Leader of the Council be requested to establish a cross-party Cabinet Member Advisory Group to consider scheme proposals and to oversee the implementation of the Swindon elements of the Strategic Economic Plan once the outcome to the competitive bid to Government is known.