

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors Emma Bushell, Wayne Crabbe, Oliver Donachie (Chair), Mary Friend, Richard Hurley, Cathy Martyn, Des Moffatt, Kevin Parry, James Robbins, Joe Tray and Chris Watts

49. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. Councillor Kevin Parry made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 5 in his capacity as an employee of Honda referred to during consideration of the report.

50. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2015, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

51. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

52. EU Referendum

The Committee received a report and presentation from Paddy Bradley, Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development and Trudy Godfrey, Interim Strategic Commissioner, Growth and Regeneration about the Swindon Economic Strategy and the EU Referendum.

The Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development explained that the report considered how Britain's membership of the European Union (EU) might impact upon the Swindon Economic Strategy 2012-16 by examining import and export flows between the UK and EU by sector. The Swindon Economic Strategy would be revised during 2016 and extended to cover the timeframe 2016-2036, giving the Council an opportunity to consider how EU membership was likely to influence national and local economic growth rates.

The Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development and the Interim Strategic Commissioner, Growth and Regeneration responded to a number of comments and questions from the Committee, as follows:

- The timescale of the referendum and how this could affect businesses in Swindon.
- The formal exit mechanisms in place if the UK decides to withdraw from the EU, the length of time this would take and the influence that the UK would have during withdrawal negotiations with existing member states.
- The effect of a UK withdrawal from the EU and the EU funds received, including the European Structural Investment Fund and support for Small and

Medium size Enterprises.

- The UK export markets and comparisons between those inside and outside of the EU.
- The differences between the UK as a net contributor to the EU and the EU payments to the UK.
- The impact of bi-lateral trade agreements with EU countries.
- The effect of leaving the EU on jobs in Swindon and the difficulty in achieving the forecast 20,000 jobs growth target in the Economic Strategy 2012-26.
- Concern about the current uncertainty of the outcome of the EU Referendum, its influence on inward investment to the UK, particularly Swindon and potential impact on EU businesses relocating to the UK.
- The importance of opening conversations with companies in Swindon through the work being undertaken in reviewing the Economic Strategy.
- The process for reshaping the Economic Strategy and the impact of the EU Referendum.
- The work by Forward Swindon to secure continued inward investment in Swindon.
- Possible need to review EU legislation in the UK and the direct impact on procurement within Swindon Borough Council, in the event of the UK withdrawing from the EU.
- The need for Officers to prepare for the possibility of the UK staying in or withdrawing from the EU, by December 2016.
- The need to consider the road infrastructure in Swindon.

Resolved :

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Economy and regeneration, in collaboration with the Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development takes European Union membership and the views of the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee into account when reviewing the Swindon Economic Strategy 2016-2026 by December 2016. In particular,
 - a. The Committee recognise the opportunities and difficulties that arise from being in the EU and withdrawing from the EU, but are concerned about the uncertainty of businesses and inward investment due to the referendum.
- (2) That the Director of Law and Democratic Services be asked to report on the impact to Swindon Borough Council procurement processes in the event of the UK withdrawing from the EU.
- (3) That the Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development write to the Department for Communities and Local Government about the impact of the UK withdrawing from the EU on local government grants already in place.
- (4) That the Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development prepare an update on the Economic Strategy and impact of the EU Referendum at a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (5) That the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider the effects on the Council's contractual relations following a potential withdrawal of the EU by the UK.
- (6) That the infrastructure of the town be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

53. Work Programme 2015/16

The Committee received the report of the Committee Officer setting out details of the Committee's Work Programme for 2015/16.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Work Programme 2015/16 be noted.
- (2) That consideration of the town wide infrastructure be added to the Work Programme for 2016/17.
- (3) That background information in relation to the Eastern Villages be circulated in advance of the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee

54. Date of Next Meeting

To note that the date of the next meeting is scheduled for 6:00pm on Wednesday, 9th March 2016.