

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH 2016

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

Councillor Toby Elliott, Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Richard Hurley, Cathy Martyn and Des Moffatt.

55. 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.

56. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of the following declaration of interest made by Councillor Robbins:

‘Councillor James Robbins declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 5 – EU Referendum as he works for a Member of the European Parliament.’

57. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

58. Localities and Local Plan

The Committee received an update report from the Council's Head of Localities & Community Involvement about emerging ideas on passing services to external bodies /organisations. He commented that Cabinet had approved a range of measures and strategies to support the delivery of the Council's Vision for Swindon within the Council's strategic and financial context to 2020, including (i) Growing Swindon's Economy, (ii) Going Local and (iii) Building Resilience.

The Committee noted that the Cabinet had authorised work to new approaches to the management of community and cultural assets and the development of pilot work in Parishes. It was also noted that the Cabinet had also approved the cessation of the Locality Fund as a source for securing Highways and Streetsmart services.

The Head of Localities & Community Involvement spoke about the effect of these decisions on ward members, their wards and the residents they serve.

Members' views were sought on the following initial proposals:

- That the grants criteria be reviewed to ensure grants are made to community projects that contribute to 'Going Local' and Building Resilience' priorities;
- That the Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning approves grant applications provided they meet the grants criteria and had ward member support. The Localities team to continue to oversee the administration of the Community Grants process.

The Head of Localities & Community Involvement and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning responded to members' questions and observations on the following matters:

- Cabinets view that it is difficult to see how the Borough can be a more attractive place to live without identifying new funding sources or delivery models for local services.
- Parishes having the ability to raise additional revenue by increasing their precept,
 - concerns that Newquay had increased its precept by 90%
 - the indication that the Government will place a cap on the amount a Parish could increase their precept to a maximum of 2%.
- Concern that the Locality Fund had been removed and the process for small community projects being considered by the Council.
- The process of engaging communities when funding has been withdrawn.
- The future support to be offered by the Locality Team to wards
- The future of projects suggested by ward members but not at the stage of being supported by Localities.
- The role of volunteering in Swindon and how to make it more successful.
- The differences between the Strategic Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 payments and how these are managed.
- The work undertaken by ward Councillors to ensure that projects and schemes become a reality.
- The future structure of ward boundaries and the number of Councillors to serve those wards within Swindon.

Resolved – (1) That the Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning be asked to take steps to remind members of the importance of the Community Governance Review and encourage them to submit their views and encourage others to do likewise.

(2) That the Streetsmart and Highways Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to consider including in its work programme for 2016/17 procedures for incorporating small projects suggested by ward Councillors within the Capital Programme.

59. New Eastern Villages

The Committee received a report from the New Eastern Villages (NEV) Programme Lead, about the infrastructure requirements at the NEV and how Swindon Borough Council will manage Section 106 contributions across the development.

The NEV Programme Lead explained that the Swindon Local Plan was adopted in March 2015. Policy NC3 of the Local Plan allocates a new mixed use development of about 8,000 new homes with associated employment, education, retail and leisure uses to the east of the A419. It sets out the overall requirements for the

NEV including Rowborough and South Marston.

The Committee noted the strategic overview and context, key developer interests, the NEV Programme Governance, transport strategy, delivery programme and the challenges to the delivery of the development.

The NEV Programme Lead, the Planning Policy Manager, the Head of Technical Finance and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning responded to members' comments and questions on the following issues:

- The impact of a recent planning application for a Pyrolysis waste to energy plant in the vicinity of the development.
- The importance of implementing the road infrastructure prior to any other development taking place, therefore reducing the effects of associated works in the surrounding area.
- Lessons learnt from other large developments within Swindon, particularly in the north of the town.
- The need for early discussions with all delivery partners, as detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure that the fitting of services retrospectively is avoided.
- The impact of the development across the key linkages within the town.
- The challenges associated with the A420 and the need to secure early decisions about delivery of the southern connector road.
- The need to be aware of restrictive covenants in relation to broadband and the importance of resident's ability to access the market place for this service.
- The movement of distribution centre employees to and from work and the availability of affordable properties within the development.
 - The proportion of affordable housing within the development and the current definition of an affordable home.
- The opportunity presented by the development to widen the A420 along both sides to three lanes.
- The investment of Section 106 contributions within the development.
- Local Plan Policy SD3 and how it relates to the NEV development, in particular S106 contributions and how these will be apportioned across the development.
- The equalisation procedure.
- The expectations for the Park and Ride scheme.
- The minimum expectation for green space between South Marston, Wanbrough, Swindon and the NEV and within the new development.

The Chair thanked the NEV Programme Lead, the Strategic Planning Policy Manager, Head of Technical Finance and Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning for attending the meeting and their presentation of a very informative report and for their detailed responses to members' questions.

Resolved - That the report on the New Eastern Villages be noted.

60.

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 the Committee Officer be thanked for his support and advice to the Committee during the year.