

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2016**

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Emma Bushell, Mark Dempsey, Emma Faramarzi, Cathy Martyn, Des Moffatt, Kevin Parry, Vera Tomlinson and Chris Watts

Councillor Garry Perkins (Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration, and Skills)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Claire Ellis (Vice-Chair), John Haines, Gemma McCracken and James Robbins

### **30. 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 personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item (5) Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session – Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills as he is employed by Honda and is a Honda Pension Trustees Director.

### **31. Public Question Time**

Mr Brown, a local resident and business owner, asked a question regarding discussions between Network rail, the Council and Tenants on the future of the Carriageworks Estate. Councillor Perkins, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, responded at the meeting and also agreed to provide a written response in 10 working days.

Mr Gavin McCracken, a local resident and business owner, had submitted a question regarding discussions between Network rail, the Council and Tenants on the future of the Carriageworks Estate. As Councillor Perkins, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, had responded to a similar question, as detailed above, at the meeting, Mr McCracken did not ask the question and it was agreed that the written response to Mr Brown would also be provided to Mr McCracken within 10 working days.

Mr Jeremy Waldron, a local resident, had submitted written questions about the funding of a number of highway projects and suggestions about budget savings. As Mr Waldron was not present, the Chair requested that a copy of the written answers be sent to him.

### **32. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **33. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills**

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, was in attendance and presented to the Committee a detailed report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Economic Development
- Museums, including Steam
- Commercialisation of services
- Arts and Culture
- Community Heritage
- Regeneration
- FSL Ltd Client Lead Member
- Strategic (Commercial Property Portfolio)
- Adult Learning
- Tertiary Education
- Skills
- Specific Responsibility for Lydiard Park Project
- Country Parks (securing sustainable uses)
- Strategic Parking assets

At the request of the Chair, Councillor Perkins, in his presentation of the report, commented specifically on those elements within his portfolio which he felt had been most successful, those where a different approach might have produced better results and the lessons that might have been learned as a consequence, and the challenges he expected to be faced by the Council in relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond, particularly in relation to on-going budgetary constraints.

Following his presentation of the report, Councillor Perkins responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- Traffic congestion in the vicinity of the former Even Swindon Infant School site and the former Rodbourne Farm allotment site, and how this would be taken into account during the planning process.
- The Car Parking Strategy, its impact on North Swindon and the remainder of Swindon as a whole, and potential solutions of how to overcome the issues experienced by residents unable to park outside their homes.
- The possibility of implementing long-standing parking schemes for residential areas experiencing parking problems.
- The new bus station and the potential for a taxi rank being incorporated into the design.
- The use of town centre multi-storey car parks for resident parking as a funding solution for parking schemes in other residential areas.
- The legal powers available to the Council to enforce parking solutions and how these could influence the planning process.
- Inward investment to deliver new leisure facilities.
- The University Technical College and its published exam results.

- The support being offered to the development of a regional leisure destination at North Star and the associated traffic implications.
- The Business Engagement and Retention service as a first point of contact for businesses.
- The commercial leadership of the Council and Forward Swindon Limited and how the partnership selects and influences development projects.
- The employment opportunities for those undertaking apprenticeships.
- Inward business investment and the availability of employment land.
- Further information requested about the 10 significant foreign direct investments in Swindon during 2015/16.
- The Swindon Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) bid for a Higher Education Centre and potential outcomes depending on the bids success.
- The timescales for the SWLEP, Wiltshire Council, Gloucestershire Council and Gloucestershire LEP Post 16 Area Review.
- The outcome of proposals for a Centre for Sustainable Technologies in Swindon College.
- The quality of the retail offer in Swindon Town Centre and the need to attract high end retail shops.
- The Council subsidies to the existing and new Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.
- The success and performance of Swindon town centre when compared to other similar sized towns and the income generated by the town centres retail offer.
- The Councils policy on Pop-Up shops and how established businesses are protected.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Perkins be thanked for attending the meeting to present this performance report and for his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That the information requested by Members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to Members via the Committee Officer.

(3) That Forward Swindon Limited prepare a presentation to a future meeting of the Committee on the Town Centre Masterplan, along with the design element documents.

### **34. Scrutiny Committee Annual report 2015/16**

The Committee considered its Annual Report for 2015/16 prepared by the Director of Law and Democratic Services.

The Annual Report highlighted the work of the Scrutiny Committee and its five Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the Municipal Year 2015/16, in their role of supporting the Council's decision-making and policy development processes and the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee explained in his foreword to the report that the Scrutiny Committee recommendations are relied on to ensure Swindon's diverse needs are accounted for in these difficult and transitional times. He referred to the new ways of working with the challenge of ensuring resilience with excellence, the introduction of 'Pre-Scrutiny' and a re-focus on the Cabinets Work Plan. The Committee noted that the public role of the Overview and Scrutiny function was one

area for improvement. In light of this, members felt that there needed to be an element of reflection of how Scrutiny in Swindon could be more effective and the structures currently in place remain fit for purpose.

The Committee thanked the Director of Law and Democratic Services for a very good report that highlighted the work of Scrutiny in Swindon.

Resolved – (i) That the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2015/16 be noted and referred to Full Council for information.

(2) That arrangements are made for a workshop, open to all members of the Council, to consider improvements to the Scrutiny process in Swindon. The workshop to be held prior to a future Scrutiny Committee.

### **35. Work Programme 2016/17**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the topics for inclusion in the 2016/17 Scrutiny Work Programme as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

Resolved – That the draft work programme 2016/17 be noted.

### **36. Status of Requests for Action and/or Information**

The Committee received an updated report advising on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information.

Resolved – That the report on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information be noted.