

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 2 MAY 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Emma Bushell, Claire Ellis (Vice-Chair), Emma Faramarzi, Nick Martin, Cathy Martyn, Gemma McCracken, Des Moffatt, Kevin Parry, James Robbins, Chris Watts and Steve Weisinger

Councillors David Renard (Leader of the Council), Oliver Donachie (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness), Toby Elliott (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability), Fionuala Foley (Cabinet Member for Children's Services), Mary Martin (Cabinet Member for Communities), Garry Perkins (Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills) and Keith Williams (StreetSmart, Highways and Transport)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Dempsey and Vera Tomlinson

82. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. The following declarations were made during the meeting:

1. Councillor Gemma McCracken made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item 5 "Consideration of Cabinet decisions", (Draft Economic Strategy for Swindon to 2026), on the grounds that her husband is a tenant of a commercial unit in the Town Centre.
2. Councillor Toby Elliott made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 5 "Consideration of Cabinet Decisions", (Draft Airports National Policy Statements), on the grounds of his employment by Network Rail.

83. Public Question Time

Mr Jan Piechowicz, a local resident, submitted questions about the Council policies that regulate how Council Officers respond to questions asked by the public. The Director of Law and Democratic Services agreed to meet with Mr Piechowicz to discuss the matter further.

84. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 20th March 2017 and 28th March 2017, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

85.

Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 26th April 2017.

117. Budget Management Update 2016/17

Councillors David Renard, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Cabinet and Oliver Donachie, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Des Moffatt on the Revenue forecast out-turn 2016/17 and savings within the Housing Revenue Account.

Resolved – That Minute 117 of the Cabinet be noted.

118. Housing Revenue Account Acquisitions Programme 2017/18

Councillors Oliver Donachie, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness and Toby Elliott, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Cathy Martyn, Des Moffatt, James Robbins and Chris Watts on the following matters:

- The inclusion of former council housing stock within the process of improvement works to meet the Decent Homes Standard.
- Building new homes with Right to Buy receipts
- The standard of existing homes compared to new builds.
- The consideration given to building on Council owned land prior to the purchase of new plots.
- Timescales for the building programme.
- Demand for Social Housing and availability of dwellings.
- Impact on the homeless following a reduction in funding from the Government.
- The availability of affordable housing for people employed by large distribution centres in the New Eastern Villages.
- The introduction of the Benefit Cap and its impact on family's ability to purchase affordable housing.
- The potential for the delivery of 30% affordable housing within the New Eastern Villages development.
- The expected rent returns from the proposals.

Resolved – That Minute 118 of the Cabinet be noted.

119. Education Transport

Resolved – That Minute 119 of the Cabinet be noted.

120. Swindon Challenge

Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Cathy Martyn, Gemma McCracken, James Robbins and Chris Watts on the following matters:

- The number of Ofsted inspection reports in Swindon schools rated as good or better against the national average and comparisons with the Swindon GCSE outcomes against national outcomes.
- Celebrating positive achievements in education through Swindon Challenge.
- Looked after Children and GCSE outcomes.
- Actions undertaken to ensure strong leadership of academies.
- The controls to improve outcomes for young people and improve school performance offered by the Swindon Challenge.
- The management structures of Multi Academy Trusts.
- The movement of pupils between underperforming and higher performing schools.
- Swindon Challenge key initiative of making Swindon 'A Learning Town'.

Resolved – That Minute 120 of the Cabinet be noted.

121. Karen Reeve, Director of Children's Services

Resolved – That Minute 121 of the Cabinet be endorsed.

122. Swindon Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2017/18

Councillor Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, Highways, and Transport, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Emma Faramarzi, Cathy Martyn, Des Moffatt and James Robbins on the following matters:

- A decision on the B4005 Wroughton – Three Tuns roundabout to west of Wanshot Close Maintenance Scheme.
- Definition of 'Thematic', in relation to the supplementary documents supporting the current Local Transport Plan.
- Importance of Councillor engagement with officers in relation to Local Transport Plan schemes.
- Delays in delivering projects supported by Locality funds.

Resolved – That Minute 122 of the Cabinet be noted.

123. Draft Airports National Policy Statement

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillor Des Moffatt on the following matters:

- Aspirations for a low carbon economy and the justification for additional flight paths in the vicinity of Swindon following proposals for the expansion of Heathrow Airport.
- Air quality and the size of particulates.

Resolved – That Minute 123 of the Cabinet be noted.

124. Draft Economic Strategy for Swindon to 2026

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Gemma McCracken, Des Moffatt and James Robbins on the following matters:

- Implementation of successful economic strategies.
- Managing processes to accelerate growth in Swindon's economy.
- Achieving maximum impact and engagement with the public consultation.
- Engagement with business and education sectors.
- Measuring the current and future success of Swindon's economy.
- Funding for town centre regeneration.

Resolved – That Minute 124 of the Cabinet be noted.

125. Libraries Strategy – Alternative Delivery Models

Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Gemma McCracken, Des Moffatt and James Robbins on the following matters:

- Consultation about the intention to establish a Public Service Mutual for the delivery of Library services.
- Consultation outcomes and future delivery models.
- The transfer and control of assets.
- Process for approving the successful delivery option.
- Future Scrutiny of the preferred delivery partner.

Resolved – That Minute 125 of the Cabinet be noted.

126. Swindon Libraries – Children's Library Membership

Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, responded to a question put by Councillor Gemma McCracken on the following matters:

- Marketing of the Library Service to parents by the Register Office.

Resolved – That Minute 126 of the Cabinet be noted.

127. References from Other Council Bodies – Health and Wellbeing Board

Councillor David Renard, Leader of the Council, and Chair of the Cabinet, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Claire Ellis, Gemma McCracken on the following matters:

- Enforcement of no smoking at Swindon Bus Station.
- Extension of deadlines for the Place of Safety Consultation.
- Successful approach by Health Watch to Dementia.

- The number of Swindon resident's accessing the Place of Safety.

Resolved – That Minute 127 of the Cabinet be noted.

128. Wichelstowe Parcels 2 and 3

Councillor Toby Elliott, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, responded to a question put by Councillor Cathy Martyn about the marketing of the site.

Resolved – That Minute 128 of the Cabinet be noted.

86. Work Programme

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 20th June 2016.

The Chair informed the Committee that he had attended a meeting of the Corporate Governance Working Group which considered a report on the development of the Council's Scrutiny process and the introduction of a government style 'Green Paper' approach. The Committee were informed that this approach would allow Members the opportunity to be involved in the oversight and development of matters of interest detailed in the Cabinet Forward Plan, prior to Cabinet consideration. The Leader of the Council encouraged all Chairs of Scrutiny and Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider the Cabinet Forward Plan to identify matters that might be of particular relevance to Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Resolved – That the work programme 2016/17 and comments by the Chair and Leader of the Council be noted.

87. 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.

88. Chair's Announcement

The Chair thanked all members for their help and support during the year.