

GROWING THE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Emma Famarzi (Chair), Wayne Crabbe, Dale Heenan (Vice-Chair), Gemma McCracken, Gary Sumner and Chris Watts

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jane Milner-Barry.

1. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved - That Councillor Heenan be appointed Vice-Chair of the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

2. 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 Gemma McCracken made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item 5 “Work Programme – Draft Economic Strategy”, on the grounds that her husband is a tenant of a commercial unit in the Town Centre.

3. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2017, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4. Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee received the report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out suggested items for inclusion in the Committee’s Work Programme 2017/18.

The Committee considered the proposed draft Work Programme items and made the following amendments:

- To include a standing item at each meeting on the latest position regarding the Governments position on Business Rates.
- To include an update on Kimmerfields at the meeting scheduled for 27th September 2017.
- To undertake a field trip to neighbouring towns and cities to view recent developments and consider how to encourage similar developments in Swindon. Suggestions included Cribbs Causeway in Bristol and the Docks in Gloucester.
- To invite various large businesses based in Swindon to attend the Committee at the meeting scheduled for 8th November.

Resolved - That the proposed draft Work Programme 2017/18 be agreed, subject to the inclusion of suggestions detailed above.

5. Draft Economic Strategy to 2026

The Committee received a copy of the Councils revised Economic Strategy up to 2026.

The Corporate Director, Economy, Regeneration and Skills, explained that Swindon is already one of the UK's fastest growing towns and the revised Strategy sets out a vision to build on this over the next 10 years. The Committee noted that the Strategy was currently out for public consultation until 10th July and a number of good responses had been received from businesses in the town. All responses would be considered and a final report made to Cabinet on 6th September 2017.

The Corporate Director responded to a number of questions and issues raised by Members on the following matters:

- The purpose of the Strategy and how it interacts with the Town Centre Masterplan.
- The deliverability of various elements of the Strategy.
- Importance of the Strategy for the economy, the regeneration of the town centre and future Local Enterprise Partnership bids.
- The need for ambitious targets within the Strategy.
- Attracting large business and well paid jobs to the town.
- Young people attending universities outside of Swindon and then not returning to the town for work purposes.
- Support for small businesses by Switch On Swindon and In Swindon.
- The future of the UTC and how it has been received by other educational establishments.

Resolved – (1) That the Corporate Director, Economy, Regeneration and Skills, comments on the Draft Economic Strategy be noted.

(2) That members be invited to submit any comments they might have on the Draft Economic Strategy directly to the Corporate Director before the deadline of 10th July 2017.