

Delivery of Town Centre Regeneration

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

Author: Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Corporate Director, Resources and Growth

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the contents of the attached Review, produced in response to a request from Members to deliver a report for consideration before the end of the financial year (Cabinet Minute 111(3), 2016/17 refers).
- 1.2 This report concerns activity which will deliver town centre regeneration, central to the Vision for Swindon and Priority One, to “Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing low carbon economy”, also Priority Three, to “ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture”.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the independent Review of Swindon Town Centre Regeneration Delivery Model as set out in Appendix One.
- 2.2 Agree that Forward Swindon Ltd (FSL) remain as the delivery vehicle, with a reviewed Board membership and with a strong client function fulfilled by the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth in line with Council’s priorities.
- 2.3 Authorise the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Director of Law and Democratic Services, to take such steps as are required to review the current Board membership.
- 2.4 Authorise the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Commercialisation and for Regeneration, to develop a budget proposal for 2018/19 to fund FSL and work towards FSL being self-funding.

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 In late October 2017, V4 Services Ltd was appointed by the Council following an open tender process to deliver a review of the town centre regeneration delivery model, with the following prescribed methodology and content:

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- 3.1.1 Desktop review of current arrangements, roles and remit, current commitments, risk allocation and transfer, current programme activity.
- 3.1.2 Interviews conducted with Councillors, Council officers, FSL, MPs, contractors and other partners/stakeholders.
- 3.1.3 Delivery of a report setting out an assessment of current model, options analysis, recommendations for future models.

Independent Review's Recommendations

- 3.2 The report was delivered in November 2017 and was considered by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet colleagues, which resulted in the recommendations above. The full report is attached at Appendix One and its executive summary is given below:
 - 3.2.1 The masterplan remains a relevant guiding document for the regeneration of the town centre.
 - 3.2.2 Some projects identified within that masterplan are now in delivery and others appear to be on the point of starting.
 - 3.2.3 Few of the large projects appear as being close to delivery and may need a new approach to make them viable. Multi-phase projects require close monitoring to ensure viability before future phases are commenced.
 - 3.2.4 There is a need to show how major projects not in the Delivery Plan fit to create the wider regeneration of Swindon.
 - 3.2.5 There is the potential to achieve the Town Centre Regeneration Objective with less revenue funding for FSL (or its replacement) and the potential exists to move the function onto a self-funding basis in the medium term.
 - 3.2.6 Steps need to be taken to bring the Company's functions more clearly under Council Control. This can be achieved either through merging the functions of FSL into the Council's new Company structure and/or through changing the FSL board to ensure a local authority majority.
 - 3.2.7 A more thorough and robust approach has been taken recently in terms of strengthening the Council's client side management function and those efforts should be further supported.
 - 3.2.8 Swindon Council, as a major investor in the town centre, needs to ensure it has the right level of resources to provide strategic direction to the development of the projects and proactively manage its risk as an investor.

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- 3.3 In addition to this, Members are invited to recall the tightened remit for FSL agreed at Cabinet in March 2017 (Cabinet Minute 111, 2016/17 refers).
- 3.4 The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, having consulted Cabinet colleagues and relevant officers, considered the options set out in paragraph 3.2.6. He has concluded that the current vehicle of FSL Ltd should be continued to be used. The membership of the Board will be reviewed to ensure a stronger presence from SBC. This review will be carried out by the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth. The Director of Law and Democratic Services will then submit a report to Council or Special Committee recommending any consequential appointments.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Further options are set out in the report at Appendix One. However, Members may feel that making FSL a subsidiary of one of the Council's other companies would duplicate effort without necessarily strengthening delivery.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 In 2017/18, FSL has been funded through a combination of base budget (£345k), HCA rental income (£84k) and reserves (£750k) which together total £1.179m. The use of reserves was agreed to the end of 2017/18 and base budget funding available for 2018/19 therefore reduces to £429k. Any additional budget requirement to support on-going discussions will form part of the 2018/19 Budget report due to Cabinet in February 2018.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the proposals within this report are compatible with Convention Rights.
- 5.3 The Director of Law and Democratic Services will oversee the preparation of the necessary legal documentation to give effect to the recommendations.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 This report has no specific implications other than referred to in the report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 No Diversity Impact Assessment is required in relation to this report as the recommendations would not affect any particular service users.

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Risk Management

- 5.6 Risk is assessed as an ongoing activity by the Town Centre Regeneration Director's Board and as part of the Corporate Scorecard and Risk Register process. There are specific risks about retention and recruitment of Board Members and FSL staff that the client Corporate Director will need to take into account if Cabinet and Council agree to proceed with the recommendations.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Review of Swindon Town Centre Regeneration Delivery Model