

GROWING THE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors Emma Famarzi (Chair), Paul Dixon, Janine Howarth, Nick Martin, Roger Smith, Caryl Sydney-Smith and Chris Watts.

Also in attendance: Councillor Oliver Donachie (Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Dempsey, Imtiyaz Shaikh and Garry Perkins.

24. 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 Roger Smith made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 6 as his employer worked with Forward Swindon in respect on the Kimmerfields Development.

25. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

26. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2018, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

27. Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Industrial Strategy - Update

The Head of Strategic Growth and Place and Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity made a presentation to the Committee in respect of the Council's approach to Industrial Strategy noting:

- The five foundations of productivity set out in the Industrial Strategy White Paper Overview namely, Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Places.
- The Grand Challenges and Missions of the Industrial Strategy identified by Government, namely, Artificial Intelligence and the Data Economy, the Future of Mobility, Clean Growth, an Ageing Society and Industrial 4.0 Overachieving (key in the delivery) and how these aligned to Swindon's strengths and policies.
- Key areas to build on in Swindon including the automotive sector (low or zero carbon vehicles) and health and life sciences and prevention and treatment of chronic illnesses.
- Clean growth through increasing productivity whilst maintaining emission targets and design of new buildings.
- The delivery of targets through LEPs and officer involvement in the LEP Working Group defining areas of work, engaging with partners and presentations to Government.
- That the Challenges and Missions identified by Government were not related

to any available money or grant funding although the shared prosperity fund was being introduced in 2019.

- The work of the Wiltshire and Swindon LEP in examining evidence base in relation to its Strategic Economic Plan identifying key sectors for the region, and regeneration and growth zones.
- The incorporation of the National Industrial Strategy White Paper (BEIS), Local Industrial Strategies (Local Enterprise Partnerships), South West Local Enterprise Working Group and Local Authorities, business and partners within the creation of a Swindon Industrial Strategy.
- The LEP approach of creating strategies through the development of an evidence base and refreshing Strategic Economic Plans.
- The South West Local Enterprises Partnership's "Big Ideas" including a business led multi campus university, electronic vehicles and battery storage, hydrogen as an alternative source of clean energy, cyber resilience and the use of big data, immunology development and medi tech, defence and aerospace supply chain development and land and air autonomous vehicles.
- Swindon's key sectors including advanced manufacturing (automatic focus), life sciences and health, digital technology to advance manufacturing, and financial and professionals services and work with local businesses to encourage growth and withstand Brexit.
- Swindon's productivity challenges such as the availability of key sector skilled workers, research and Development opportunities in key areas, the timely availability of suitable employment land and the local supply chain.
- Possible solutions to challenges facing Swindon including building Research and development space, innovative models to meet employee training and employer needs, recruitment campaigns with industry, regional partnerships, supply chain zoning and digi-tech cluster development.
- Work to encourage new business creation and relocation and engagement with existing employers to support them.
- The Grant Thornton report findings and measures to address the fall in Swindon health related metrics and the challenges in this area, which was in contrast to the positive results in other measurements which showed Swindon in the 90th percentile and that Swindon was in the top quartile across all categories.
- Increased uses of automotive systems in manufacturing and how this might affect future employment within the town.
- The need to identify future employment skill sets, to maximise the employment opportunities this offered Swindon and to ensure that these could be provided locally through innovative upskilling by retraining and training for young people.
- The need to widen training budgets from traditional silo methods to allow people to continue developing skills throughout their lives in conjunction with employers.
- Ensuring all employers had access to the upskilling training programmes available within the Borough.
- The need for the Council to identify wider levels of work to complement the LEPs High Level strategies.
- Future opportunities in cyber defence and translating and transferring data into systems and how stem skills being developed in Swindon.
- The work of Switch Onto Swindon Group in attracting workers with skillsets for vacancies that cannot currently be filled locally.

- Potential funding streams from Central Government to drive local training programmes.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

28. The Council's Refreshed Vision, Priorities and Pledges - Update

The Head of Strategic Growth and Place and Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity made a presentation to the Committee in respect of the Council's visions and pledges relating to the remit of the Committee and responded to Members' comments and questions in respect of the following issues:

- Pledge 1 which set the ambition for Swindon to compete at the forefront of digital innovation with a commitment to using technology for positive change.
- Pledge 2 which related to Swindon's reputation as a sustainable energy exemplar, by exploring technology that converts energy from waste, facilitating the move to electrified transport, and developing opportunities to invest in renewable energy to reduce the carbon footprint.
- That Swindon produced 51.2% of its energy requirements through green energy during peak production.
- The current Council led consultation on recycling and the future recycling within the town.
- Pledge 3 – refreshing and implementing the Master Plan for Swindon's Town Centre and supporting the Council's vision of a vibrant modern place and working to promote Swindon effectively through improving the town's reputation.
- Pledge 4 – Supporting business by working in partnership to create condition to promote business growth and success.
- Pledge 9 – to increase the number of people starting an apprenticeship in line with the targets in the Apprenticeship Strategy.
- Pledge 10 – to secure a range of options to access Higher Education in Swindon and to drive up pupil attainment.
- Pledge 11- to work with partners to increase the level of skills of Swindon's workforce to support all residents, including the most vulnerable, to access employment.
- Pledge 16 – the delivery of a programme to ensure that residents, visitors and businesses feel that Swindon's town centre is a safe place to live, work, visit and do business.
- The role of Park and Ride in carbon emission reduction.
- Inward investment within the Borough and how this was affected by economic and political issues around the world.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That officers be requested to submit an update report on Park and Ride within the Borough be considered to the January meeting of this Committee.

(Councillor Roger Smith made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of this item as his employer worked with Forward Swindon on the Kimmerfields Development.)

29. Work Programme 2018/2019

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Democratic

Services setting out the Committee's Work Programme, agreed at its meeting on 20th June 2018.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That officers be requested to submit an update report on Park and Ride within the Borough be considered to the March meeting of this Committee.

(3) That the report on "Switch onto Swindon" report be considered at the meeting of this Committee in January 2019.

(4) That a report on apprenticeships be submitted to the January meeting of this Committee.