

## **GROWING THE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2018**

PRESENT:- Councillors Emma Famarzi (Chair), Mark Dempsey, Paul Dixon, Imtiyaz Shaikh, Caryl Sydney-Smith and Chris Watts.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Garry Perkins and Roger Smith.

### **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 Oliver Donachie made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 5 (Presentation - Digital Portfolio and Digital Billboards) in his capacity as a Council appointed representative serving on the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Enterprise Partnership.

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

No public questions were received during the meeting.

### **32. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **33. Presentation - Digital Portfolio and Digital Billboards**

The Head of Strategic Growth and Place and the Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity made a joint presentation to the Committee updating Members on issues relating to the Council's Digital Pledge, Digital Bill Boards, Smart Energy Technology and Digital Skills.

Following the presentation the Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity and officers responded to Members' questions and comments in respect of the following issues arising:

- The diversity of the digital pledge which covered much of the work of the Economy and Skills Directorate.
- The role of the Business technology team in supporting digital technologies in Swindon through business retention and the expansion of inward investment.
- The Council's engagement with businesses including digital interventions and the identification of skills sets within the town to strengthen the town's business offer.
- The Council's strategic approach, based on research and market intelligence, which had identified digital technology as a strategically important sector for Swindon.
- Work to create a digital technology network in Swindon during the first quarter of the Municipal Year 2019/20.

- Support provided to digital technology businesses in Swindon which included funding bids to the European Structural Investment Fund and Wiltshire LEP to attract Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) businesses.
- Work to support Swindon based business through the roll-out of superfast broadband within the Borough, which included £6 million of contracts for hardware refreshes of broadband equipment (which could support 5G provision).
- Support to enable businesses to access Ultrafast Broadband by connecting industrial estates and linking future commercial developments.
- Work to further understand the benefits and impact of 5G in Swindon and how this will shape future working practices and investment across a number of industries.
- Meeting with the network providers and businesses regarding the potential roll-out of 5G in Swindon and the expansion of fibre provision in Swindon.
- The opportunity to attract high skill employers and employees to the Borough through an early roll-out of 5G in Swindon.
- Work to identify internal Council barriers that might prevent technological infrastructure investment.
- The identification of inward investment opportunities in the event of an early 5G roll-out.
- The use of digital billboards to welcome people to Swindon and to provide them with concise information.
- The risk and budget profile for digital billboards, including the identification a private sector partner to help provide infrastructure and expertise.
- Preparation and modelling undertaken in respect of the provision of digital billboards, including best practice of other Local Authorities.
- The identification of potential procurement partners through soft marketing.
- Work to identify suitable sites, including the M4 motorway and rail station, for the siting of digital billboards either through a single or multi-site model prior to seeking authorisation to go out to tender and procure a system.
- The role of digital billboards in bringing visitors and business into Swindon.
- The role of digital billboards in providing public realm messages and updating residents and visitors with up to the minute information.
- The current breakdown of businesses occupying the Carriage Works premises and its role in hosting a wide variety of events.
- The development of a smart energy system at Waterside and the success of the Council in championing and establishing green energy generation and infrastructure within the Borough.
- The promotion of digital skill courses through adult education and schools to prepare residents for current and future employment opportunities.
- Work with partner organisations to promote digital skills currently required within the town and also for projecting future digital skills required by Swindon's workforce.
- The role of adult community learning in increasing social inclusion through a lifelong learning approach.
- Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and businesses to identify the high level digital skills needed by current and future employers in the Borough.
- Work on the Phase 2 bid for Institute of Technology and with national bodies such as the Institute of Coding.

Resolved – (1) That the officers and Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity be

thanked for their interesting and useful presentation.

(2) That the Digital Billboard project team be requested to consider the siting of Digital Bill Boards on the M4 motorway approach to Swindon in any single or multi-site scheme.

(3) That the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage be requested to consider the amendment of Planning Policy IN3 to require developers to install dark fibre infrastructure as part of all new developments.

(Councillor Oliver Donachie made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of this item in his capacity as a Council appointed representative serving on the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Enterprise Partnership.)

### **34. Work Programme 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director of Law setting out the Committee's Work Programme, agreed at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That officers be requested to submit an update report on the Learning Town Website to the March meeting of this Committee.

(3) That an update report on progress with the Wichelstowe development be added to this Committee's 2019/20 Work Programme.