

GROWING THE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2019

PRESENT:- Councillors Emma Faramarzi (Chair), Nick Burns-Howell, Mark Dempsey, Paul Dixon, Jenny Jefferies, James Robbins, Roger Smith, Rahul Tarar and Robert Wright.

In attendance: Councillors Oliver Donachie (Cabinet Member for Economy and Place) and Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for the Town Centre).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Imtiyaz Shaikh.

8. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

9. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

10. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2019, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

11. Tour of Carriage Works and engagement with tenants

Prior to a tour of the Carriage Works the Committee welcomed Mr Shane Moore (Founder and CEO of VanHeroes) who had agreed to provide some insight into working at the Carriage Works and the business environment for a small business. The Committee considered an oral report by the Head of Town Development who commented on:

- The opening of Unit 3 of the Workshed in July 2018 which was followed by Unit 5.
- That all but one unit/offices in the Workshed was currently occupied.
- The sympathetic development of the premises to retain as much character of the building as possible whilst promoting a dynamic environment for businesses in the digital sector.
- The benefits to small businesses in being able to cluster together with likeminded business people.
- The interaction and collaboration of businesses based within the Workshed.
- The value of the Workshed in promoting start-up businesses with the town and in providing an environment to help them grow.
- The development of businesses based within the Workshed.
- Plans for the further development of the Carriage Works, including work currently being undertaken to Unit 11 which had planning and listed building consents in place.
- The future use of the Carriage Works by the Royal Agricultural College for post graduate courses and the University of Cultural Heritage Institute who

would be offering community courses.

- The creation of larger offices in Units 7 and 9 of the Carriage Works.
- The Council's future marketing strategy and marketing pack for the Carriage Works.

The Chair welcomed Mr Shane Moore, Founder and CEO of VanHeroes, who provided the Committee with some insight to small businesses occupying the Carriage Works, his business and experience of Swindon commenting on:

- His business which provided a van and moving service which could be available to customers within an hour of the confirmed booking.
- The use of the company app to provide the booking service, which provided a customised quote for jobs, received payment and forwarded the appropriate job details to a network of drivers.
- The company which had been a tenant in the Workshed for nearly a year and had initially been supported by Nationwide and which had their own office for six months.
- The benefits of working with an established community of entrepreneurs of a roughly similar size and sharing common experiences.
- That the Carriage Works offered an environment for up-sizing businesses but that more work or time was needed to make it more accessible to young entrepreneurs wishing to start their own company.
- The cost for small businesses, especially those still establishing themselves, of renting offices at the Carriage Works and the need to weigh this cost against the positive environment and value offered from interacting with other tenants.
- That the cost of car-parking at the site was a burden for start-up businesses.
- Support available for tenants and the benefits that would accrue from being offered proactive support and for such support to be available during evenings and weekends.
- The positive energy produced by having a number of start-ups businesses located in the same building and interacting with each other.

Mr Moore and officers answered Members questions in respect of:

- Support and advice available to young businesses, including from the LEP and Growth Hub, and ways in which this might be accessed easier.
- How small businesses requiring proactive support could be better identified.
- The need for small businesses to receive independent financial advice in the months following their creation.
- Car parking issues associated with the site which was operated by Wiltshire Council on behalf of Swindon Borough Council.
- Resources available within the Council for the provision of support and advice to tenants of the Carriage Works as well as start-up businesses in the wider community.
- The benefits that could accrue from the establishment of a mentoring network within Swindon.
- External funding opportunities for mentoring or advice for start-up businesses.
- The economic and social benefits of supporting start-ups and small businesses within the Borough.

Resolved – (1) That Mr Shane Moore be thanked for his attendance and presentation to the Committee.

(2) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the identification of potential Mentors for new start-up businesses within Swindon.

12. Business Retention and Expansion and Honda Task Group - Update

The Committee considered (a) a report of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Place on Business Retention and Expansion and (b) an update by the Cabinet Member for Economy and Place and Julia Stuckey (Business and Economy Manager) updating the Committee on the work of the Honda CMAG meeting held on 12th September 2019.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

13. Park and Ride

The Committee considered a joint report of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and the Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development and Street Works Management updating Members on current Park and Ride schemes in the Borough and the future development of Park and Ride. Mr Shah, Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development and Street Works Management, commented upon:

- The retention of the current Park and Ride Sites within the Local Plan Review.
- The need for an evidence based approach for any further development of Park and Ride operations which would include evidence for the need for additional sites as well as factors such as existing capacity of town centre parking facilities.
- The emergence of the Town Centre Movement Strategy and Urban Traffic Management System and how these would help inform future Park and Ride policies.
- The forthcoming review of the Council's Local Transport Plan.

Following his presentation the Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development and Street Works Management answered Members questions in respect of:

- Future plans for a Park and Ride site in North Swindon.
- The role of Rapid Transit Routes and Park and Ride routes in reducing travel time for residents visiting the town centre.
- Current work on gathering and updating traffic data prior to any decision in respect of changes to Park and Ride facilities in Swindon.
- Borough wide Traffic Modelling to inform traffic related decisions moving forward.
- Traffic issues directly affecting Rodbourne arising from visitors to the Outlet Centre and timescales for Park and Ride mitigation for the North Star Development which would also assist in relieving traffic pressure in Rodbourne.
- The need to ensure any park and ride or other types of mitigation work was based upon the most up-to-date evidence and projections and provided value

for money.

- The key crossing points to allow traffic moving across the railway line when moving from North to South Swindon.
- The process and timescales for reviewing the Council's Local Transport Plan.
- The Council's long term traffic management strategy to develop traffic movement in a strategic and systematic manner.
- The need to ensure Park and Ride was an attractive alternative option for commuters and reasons for its historical usage levels.
- Technological advances that might help reduce traffic issues in parts of the Borough.
- Work currently being undertaken by officers to address traffic issues in the Rodbourne Road area.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

14. Appointment of Representative to Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee Sub-Group

The Committee considered a request from the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a nomination to serve on a sub-group of that Committee investigating ways to improve post 16 Education, Employment and Training outcomes for young people in Swindon.

Resolved - That Councillor Jim Robbins be nominated to represent this Committee on the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Sub-Group investigating ways to improve post 16 Education, Employment and Training outcomes for young people in Swindon.

15. Work Programme

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Legal Officer setting out the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That, further to Minute 11(2) a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the identification of potential Mentors for new start-up businesses within Swindon.