

Swindon Borough Council

Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 12 October 2015

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices

At 6.00 p.m.

Conservative Councillors

Oliver Donachie
Richard Hurley
Colin Lovell
Gemma McCracken
Kevin Parry
Maureen Penny
Vera Tomlinson
Steve Weisinger

Labour Councillors

Robert Wright
(Chair)
John Ballman
Des Moffatt
Carol Shelley
Chris Watts

Liberal Democrat Councillors

Stan Pajak

Contact Officers:

Steve Jones (Committee Officer) 01793 463602 stevejones@swindon.gov.uk
Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street,
Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

Access Arrangements - The venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you have any special requirements to enable you to attend the meeting or would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size, please contact the Committee Officer as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

3. Public Question Time

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

4. Minutes (Pages 5 - 10)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2015.

5. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Economy Regeneration and Skills (Pages 11 - 28)

Date of Despatch: 02 October 2015

Public Question Time - Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above or to the Director of Law and Democratic Services, we will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance" available on the Council's Website.

(<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13338&path=0>) or from the Committee Officer named above.

The Scrutiny Committee - Terms of Reference

- To meet at regular intervals to review the policies, process and implications of Cabinet, Cabinet Member and Officer decision making and the way in which Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions are made;
- To consider requests for "Call-in" as defined in the Council's "Call-in" Procedure;
- To refer decisions back to Cabinet (or the decision maker) for reconsideration. It may do this once for any individual decision, after which if there is no agreement the decision will be referred to the full Council for determination;
- To refer Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for investigation without delaying the implementation of the decision concerned;
- To receive a report by the Leader of the Council at its first meeting after each Annual Council Meeting (or at such a meeting as is agreed by the Chair of the Committee and the Leader of the Council) on the service issues for the year ahead, the Leader of the Council's priorities for the coming year and on the Council's performance in the previous year;
- To oversee the arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny within the Council, including determining (i) where matters fall within the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee which of those Committees will assume responsibility for any particular issue, (ii) a system to ensure that referrals from Committees to the Cabinet, either by way of report or for reconsideration are managed efficiently and do not exceed any limits set out in the Council's Constitution, and (ii) in the event of reports to the Cabinet exceeding any limits in this Constitution or if the volume of such reports creates difficulty for the

management of Cabinet business or jeopardises the efficient running of Council business, at the request of the Cabinet to make decisions about the priority of referrals made.

- To carry out any investigation into the business and functions of the Council and to call in any Cabinet Member or senior officer of the Council so that they can offer advice, support or answer any question that will assist the Committee in carrying out its functions.
- To carry out an external scrutiny function, particularly in relation to corporate issues and issues falling into the remit of a number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee as they relate to –

- the review, scrutiny and development of policy recommendations;
- the management of performance,
- the monitoring of progress against corporate priorities and
- the formulation of advice for the Cabinet, Council and other partners and stakeholders.

To have specific responsibility (but not limited to)

- Good governance and the operation of Law and Democratic Services
- The Budget Scrutiny function.

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2015

PRESENT:- Councillors Maureen Penny (Chair), John Ballman, Oliver Donachie, Richard Hurley, Colin Lovell, Gemma McCracken, Des Moffatt, Kevin Parry, Maureen Penny, Stan Pajak, Carol Shelley, Vera Tomlinson and Chris Watts

Councillors David Renard, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet, Brian Mattock Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet, Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care, Toby Elliott, Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning, Emma Faramarzi, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and transport, Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance, People and Performance were in attendance.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Robert Wright (Chair)

16. 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.

17. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

18. Minutes

Resolved : That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th August 2015, be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to Councillor Toby Elliott's name being spelt correctly in Minute 15.

19. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 9th September 2015.

24. *The Vision for Swindon (Minute for Confirmation)*

Resolved – That Minute 24 of the Cabinet be noted.

25. *Budget Management 2015/16*

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance, People and Performance, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Des Moffatt and Stan Pajak on the following matters:

- The preparation of a business plan for the Thamesdown Drive Speed Amelioration project and consideration for an increase in the budget to provide a credible business plan.
- The details for a school safety zone at Holy Cross School.

Resolved – That Minute 25 of the Cabinet be noted.

26. *Capital Monitoring Programme 2015/16*

Resolved – That Minute 26 of the Cabinet be noted.

27. *References from other Bodies*

Resolved – That Minute 27 of the Cabinet be noted.

It was agreed that information requested by individual members during the course of the Committee's consideration of the Cabinet decisions should be forwarded to the Committee Clerk for distribution to Scrutiny Committee members. (Appendix 1 refers)

20. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning

Councillor Toby Elliott, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning, was in attendance and presented a detailed report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Strategic Spatial Planning and development Framework Planning
- The New Eastern Villages
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Local Land Charges (inc. Building Control)
- Localities and Community Development
- Capacity Building (promoting and developing community-based alternatives to traditional public services)
- Parish and Town Councils / Community Council Engagement Strategies
- Community Strategy
- Community Engagement Strategies
- Sports Participation

At the request of the Chair, Councillor Elliott, in his presentation of the report, commented specifically on those elements within his portfolio which he felt had been most successful, those where a different approach might have produced better results and the lessons that might have been learned as a consequence, and the challenges he expected to be faced by the Council relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond, particularly in relation to on-going budgetary constraints.

Following his presentation of the report, Councillor Elliott responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following topics:

- The need to engage all ward members in the forthcoming review of Swindon Borough Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which identifies smaller scale housing opportunities in the Borough.

- The reasons for the inclusion of Wiltshire Council in the commissioning of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to assess housing need, type, size and tenure in the Swindon area.
- The importance of including Parish Councils and Parish Councillors in discussions about the SHMA.
- The reasons for Swindon Circles of Support targeting people aged over 65 based in social housing and their carers and not older people living in their own homes.
- The continued success of Parish Councils delivering services traditionally provided by the Council. In addition, the possibility of other service providers taking over the delivery of services where it had been demonstrated that the level of service was starting to decline.
- The involvement of Swindon Borough Council in the Swindon half marathon.
- Insurance cover issues relating to council-supervised community volunteer “clean-up” days and the need for clear advice to be provided to all Councillors.
- Assurances about infrastructure and traffic flows during the development of the New Eastern Villages, in particular the Acorn Bridge area.
- Information and update about the work of Swindon Circles of Support and the request for the Council to work with US Cities of Service members in Philadelphia to develop a blueprint for impact volunteering to support older people.
- Concerns about the ability of GP’s to meet existing demand in Swindon and the potential impact of new developments on future demand.
- The comparisons between volunteers who help with the delivery of Council services and volunteers for other organisations within Swindon and how the Councils vision for volunteers compliments and impacts other organisations.
- The delivery by some Parish Councils of services previously provided the council and the potential impact on Council staff.
- The current and future role of Parish Councils in the consideration of planning applications by the Borough Council.
- Assessing the benefits of Swindon Circles of Support

Resolved :

- (1) That Councillor Elliott be thanked for attending the meeting to present this performance report and for his full and open responses to members’ questions and observations on the issues raised.
- (2) That it be noted that Councillor Toby Elliott would arrange for the revised advice on insurance cover relating to council-supervised community volunteer ‘Clean-Up’ days to be circulated to all Councillors.
- (3) That, with regard to members’ concerns about the ability of GP’s to meet existing demand in Swindon, and the potential impact of new developments on future demand, it be noted that Councillor Toby Elliott would arrange for the matter to be considered by Councillor Perkins, Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills.
- (4) That, with regard to the current and future role of the Parish Council in the consideration of planning applications by the Borough Council, the cabinet Member to arrange for the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services, Heritage and Libraries and the Committee Services Manager to recirculate advice to

Councillors and Parish Councils about how they are able to engage with the planning process.

- (5) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to members via the Committee Clerk (Appendix 1 refers).

MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION	
<i>Minute No.</i>	Subject
19	Consideration of Cabinet Decisions
	Councillor Russell Holland agreed to provide a written explanation of the details of the school safety zone at Holy Cross School.
20	Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning
	With regard to members' discussion about the potential for the delivery of current council services via alternative providers, Councillor Brian Ford agreed to provide a written response with particular regard to the Streetsmart Service.

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Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 12th October 2015

Author:	Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to question the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills on his portfolio responsibilities and performance.
- 1.2 A key purpose of the Scrutiny function is to hold the Cabinet to account and ensure that Council priorities and performance are being delivered.
- 1.3 Members of the Committee are reminded that all Members of the Cabinet are required to come before the Scrutiny Committee to take part in a Question and Answer session that will focus on the full remit of their portfolio. Scrutiny Committee is therefore encouraged to focus Question and Answer sessions with Cabinet Members on specific topics and/or services in order to avoid duplication.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the report by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning,
- 2.2 Put appropriate questions to the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, and
- 2.3 Decide if any further action is required.

3. Detail

Portfolio Details

- 3.1 The Leader of the Council has assigned the following responsibilities to the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills:
 - 3.1.1 Economic Development
 - 3.1.2 Museums, including Steam
 - 3.1.3 Arts and Culture
 - 3.1.4 Community Heritage
 - 3.1.5 Regeneration

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Duncan Kerr, (01793) 465743 dkerr@swindon.gov.uk.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 12th October 2015

- 3.1.6 FSL Ltd Client Lead Member
- 3.1.7 Strategic (Non-operational) Property Portfolio
- 3.1.8 Changes to the Borough's boundaries to support economic development
- 3.1.9 Adult Learning
- 3.1.10 Tertiary Education
- 3.1.11 Skills
- 3.1.12 Specific Responsibility for Lydiard Park Project
- 3.1.13 Country Parks (securing sustainable uses)
- 3.1.14 Parking Services – charges, enforcement and strategy
- 3.1.15 Community Assets – libraries, Community centres
- 3.1.16 Cemeteries & Crematoria assets
- 3.2 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are encouraged to contact the Cabinet Member and/or Committee and Member Services if they would like any assistance in preparing for this meeting.
- 3.3 Background detail to this report is provided in Appendix 1

What have you done well?

Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership

- 3.4 The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) is focussed on economic development in the area of Swindon and Wiltshire. It is a partnership of the two Unitary Authorities and the business community. The SWLEP is the main source of government funding for infrastructure projects and European funding to improve skills and business development.
- 3.5 Through the SWLEP bidding process to government, the Council has gained in principle agreement to £95m of the £141m (67%) from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) allocated to the entire Swindon and Wiltshire area. This will be used to enable transport projects essential to the delivery of our key housing and employment sites, particularly in Wichelstowe and the New Eastern Villages. The projects supported are:
 - 3.5.1 Improvements to junctions 15 and 16 of the M4,
 - 3.5.2 Western access to Wichelstowe,
 - 3.5.3 White Hart junction,

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Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 12th October 2015

- 3.5.4 A420 junction improvements and Improvements west of the A419 to assist the White Hart junction,
- 3.5.5 A new road connecting the south of the New Eastern Villages to the Commonhead roundabout and a bridge over the A419 to link the New Eastern Villages to the centre of Swindon,
- 3.5.6 A Rapid Transit project to improve journey time reliability for buses through “intelligent” junctions and real-time traffic data,
- 3.5.7 Improvements to bicycle and pedestrian routes into town from the main new housing developments, and
- 3.5.8 Building a new bus exchange in the town centre.

FSL Ltd Client Lead Member / Inward Investment

- 3.6 Swindon Borough Council commissions Forward Swindon Ltd (FSL) to deliver regeneration services in the Borough, including Town Centre regeneration and inward investment activities. In the last financial year, there have been 57 direct investment enquiries, which have been assessed by FSL as significant and high quality and these have been pursued. These have include TNT, Hacklings Transport, The Entertainer, Handy Distribution, Johnan UK, Aldi, Wasdell Packaging, Mango Bean and Torin. This totalled an estimated Investment value of £27.75 million for the nine companies, in terms of jobs, premises and equipment.

Adult/ Community Learning

- 3.7 Swindon's Community Learning function is delivered to support the government's policy for Community Learning detailed in New Challenges, New Chances 2011. This provided a commissioning process enabling the service to achieve a stable network of delivery partners.
- 3.8 A strong partnership with Children and Family Centres and Supported Housing maximised the impact of Community Learning delivery to priority groups and enabled Community Learning to be responsive to 1500 priority learners, which has led to an Ofsted assessment of 'Good'. Outcomes included:
 - 3.8.1 95% of learners achieving all or some of their learning outcomes.
 - 3.8.2 35.8% overall made progress either to a training course at a higher level or to employment with 22% starting work.
 - 3.8.3 50% improved skills as a parent, 25% for employment.
 - 3.8.4 Learners said they had improved their skills. In addition to better literacy and numeracy, 25% improved their IT skills and 25% their spoken English.

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Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 12th October 2015

3.8.5 85% reported improved confidence

Museums – Including Steam

- 3.9 The event programmes at Lydiard and STEAM continue to be high quality and varied. The mix of historical interpretation and commercial events at Lydiard attracts good visitor numbers. These visitor numbers are expected to increase following the development of a strong relationship with the National Railway Museum (NRM), which owns the majority of the exhibits in STEAM. Following complex negotiations, the NRM has kindly agreed to the loan of two prestigious ex-GWR locomotives, which will create renewed interest in the museum.

Strategic (Non-operational) Property Portfolio

- 3.10 The Council undertook a number of changes in 2014/15 involving the strategic use of property assets. An example of this was the transfer of leisure and golf course assets, which completed on 1 November 2014. This involved six leisure centres transferring to GLL – a not for profit company - and two golf courses to Twigmarket. The transfer ensured that these services remain open to the public for up to ten years for the leisure centres and up to 75 years for the golf courses. In addition, the transfer will deliver revenue savings of approaching £1.3m a year and nearly £4.5m of backlog maintenance savings.

Arts and Culture

- 3.11 The Bath Road museum and art gallery has had a successful year, holding a range of well-received exhibitions, including hosting a travelling exhibition of Turner landscapes. The new Swindon Theatres contract covering both the Wyvern Theatre and Art Centre completed its first highly successful year of operation. There were 511 ticketed events over both venues with 133,000 tickets sold with a good mix between professional touring and local hires. Create Studios also had a highly successful year as an independent Community Interest Company securing £124,000 match funding and working with over 1,300 participants.

What would you do differently?

Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership

- 3.12 Enhance the work with members of the SWLEP Board to improve communication with the business community in order to increase their engagement in the development of projects to help achieve the priorities of the SWLEP.

Strategic (Non-operational) Property Portfolio

- 3.13 It will be necessary to progress the opportunity of further asset transfers and make sure the asset base reflects Council priorities, building on the leisure

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Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 12th October 2015

assets transfer. The Cultural and Community Assets Transformation programme in particular is being implemented in 2015/16 and will continue this work.

Community Heritage

- 3.14 Linking regeneration to the town's heritage is important and the restoration of the World War One Memorial in the Old Town Hall, and its relocation to a home where it can be displayed needs to be accelerated.

Parking Services

- 3.15 In the new financial year a review of Whalebridge car park will be undertaken by the council, to ensure that it meets the needs of residents in terms of service and security.

Arts and Culture

- 3.16 The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid for a new Art Gallery and Musuem was not successful, although the HLF Trustees were clear that the case for investment in Swindon had been made and they were keen to receive a further bid. We need to improve the bid by procuring an excellent detailed design for the new building, set the new museum and art gallery within a wider development plan for the area, which is commercially viable and ensure we have a secure source of revenue funding to sustain the provision.

What are the challenges facing the portfolio?

Economic Development and FSL Ltd Client Lead Member

- 3.17 Swindon's economic development is of major importance and is essential to help deliver the vision for Swindon. In challenging financial circumstances, we need to target our resources even further to enhance the regeneration of the town centre and ensure we maintain a healthy and vibrant economy. In 2015-16, FSL will carry out a review of the Town Centre Masterplan and make recommendations to the Council for a sharply focussed delivery plan to support the achievement of the Council's vision for Swindon.
- 3.18 At 0.8% of all businesses, Swindon's economy has twice the level of businesses employing over 250 people compared with the national average. This is coupled with a smaller concentration of businesses employing 0 -9 people at 87% of all businesses, which is 2 percentage points lower than the national average of 89%. This concentration of employment in large companies can provide instability in the local labour market, as one company closure can have serious impacts on the local economy. A coordinated approach to business support and start up services is necessary to help challenge this issue.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Duncan Kerr, (01793) 465743 dkerr@swindon.gov.uk.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 12th October 2015

Adult/ Community Learning

- 3.19 Presently there is a government grant to cover the £450,000 spend on adult and community learning through to July 2016. Currently there is no indication of the level of funding beyond this date. If there were any further reductions, this could potentially affect the present high quality inclusive nature of the service.

Museums Including STEAM

- 3.20 The future offer at Lydiard Park and House and STEAM will be considered in the Cultural and Community Asset Change Programme. Lydiard is a well-loved local resource but its limited commercial offer is not fully developed. In common with many museums, both Lydiard and STEAM require Council subsidies. It is absolutely critical that we work to reduce or remove these subsidies to enable both venues to become more self-sufficient.

Strategic (Non-operational) Property Portfolio

- 3.21 Reducing the costs of the asset base of the council, whilst maintaining/improving operational efficiency is a challenge when ensuring continued levels of service delivery. To overcome this it will be essential to work closely with change programmes and help to mitigate this risk.

Community Assets – Libraries, Community centres

- 3.22 These areas have just transferred to this portfolio and are part of a major change programme. There is a cross-party Cabinet Member Advisory Group that will be assisting in the Cabinet Member in developing proposals that will be reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny in the usual way.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Committee can choose not to operate a Cabinet Portfolio Question and Answer session system.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications as consequence of this report. Any expenditure arising as a result of an item on the Committee's work programme will be met by the Overview & Scrutiny Support budget, subject to the approval of the Committee.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) requires every Local Authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 12th October 2015

account, undertake policy development and review, monitor and improve performance.

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

- 5.3 There are no other direct implications arising as a result of this report. Any further implications will be identified when a topic is reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee and in any recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment is required at this stage as this report proposes no changes to services. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the work programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

Risk Management

- 5.5 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (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 Appendix 1- Additional Information on Portfolio Performance 2014\15

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Appendix 1 Additional Information on Portfolio Performance 2014\15

Cabinet Member Q&A October 2015

1. Local Enterprise Partnership and Growth Deal

1.1 The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) is focussed on economic development in the area of Swindon and Wiltshire. It is a partnership of the two Unitary Authorities and the business community. The SWLEP is the main source of government funding for infrastructure projects and European funding to improve skills and business development.

1.2 Through the SWLEP bidding process to government, Swindon has gained in principle agreement to £95m from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) to enable transport projects essential to the delivery of our key housing and employment sites, particularly in Wichelstowe and the New Eastern Villages. The projects supported are:

- 1.2.1 Improvements to junctions 15 and 16 of the M4
- 1.2.2 Western access to Wichelstowe
- 1.2.3 White Hart junction
- 1.2.4 A420 junction improvements
- 1.2.5 Improvements west of the A419 to assist the White Hart junction
- 1.2.6 A new road connecting the south of the New Eastern Villages to the Commonhead roundabout
- 1.2.7 A bridge over the A419 to link the New Eastern Villages to the centre of Swindon
- 1.2.8 A Rapid Transit project to improve journey time reliability for buses through “intelligent” junctions and real-time traffic data
- 1.2.9 Improvements to bicycle and pedestrian routes into town from the main new housing developments
- 1.2.10 Building a new bus exchange in the town centre.

1.3 The SWLEP established a comprehensive governance framework in order to enhance accountability and transparency of decision-making. There is a Joint Strategic Economic Committee (JSEC), made up of key Cabinet members from both Councils. The JSEC provides public accountability for spending decisions.

1.4 The SWLEP is unusual in having a Joint Scrutiny Task Group, made up of councillors from both Swindon and Wiltshire Councils. The Task Group focussed its initial work on understanding how the SWLEP operates and how a Scrutiny function could add value. This work is now helping the operation of the Group in its second year.

1.5 An area of development is to work with members of the SWLEP Board to improve communication with the business community in order to increase their engagement in the development of projects to help achieve the priorities of the SWLEP.

2. Swindon's Economy

- 2.1 The Swindon Economy is recovering from the recession and is reporting signs of growth. In particular gross value added (GVA), a proxy for productivity per employee in Swindon was £61,938 in 2013; this was 13 percentage points higher than the English average and significantly more than our neighbouring comparator authority areas, with the exception of Milton Keynes where GVA per head was £63,000 per employee. This is a growth of 18% since 2009.
- 2.2 Swindon has had high levels of resident employment, often exceeding 80%, throughout the last decade the English average has fluctuated between 70% and 74% over the last ten years. In the Centre for Cities report 'City Outlook', Swindon had the 3rd highest employment rate out of 64 cities. The employment rate for the working age population maintained a strong level at 76%, over 4 percentage pointshigher than the national average.
- 2.3 There were just over 6,000 businesses in Swindon in 2014, and between 2010 and 2014, the number of businesses in Swindon increased by 16% which is double the English average and more than three times the rate of growth experienced in the South West. Amongst our comparator areas, Swindon experienced the fastest rate of growth in the total number of businesses with the exception of Reading (where the number of businesses increased by 17 % over 2010-14). The Centre for Cities 2015 report identified Swindon as 4th in the UK in terms of growth in the number of businesses.
- 2.4 Following the recession, and in common with our neighbouring authorities, the business death rate exceeded the businesses birth rate in Swindon in 2009 and 2010. However since 2011, the business birth rate in Swindon has exceeded the business death rate. In 2013, business births in Swindon exceeded business deaths by 20 per cent; and this was the highest differential amongst all of our comparator areas with the exception of Milton Keynes.
- 2.5 At 0.8% of all businesses, Swindon's economy has twice the level of business employing over 250 people than the national average. This is coupled with a smaller concentration of business employing 0 -9 people at 87% of all business, which is 2 percentage points lower than the national average of 89%. This concentration of employment in large companies can provide instability in the local labour market, as one company closure can have serious impacts on the local economy. A coordinated approach to business support and start up services is necessary to help challenge this issue.

3. Town Centre Regeneration/ FSL Ltd Client Lead Member

3.1 Swindon Borough Council commissions Forward Swindon Ltd (FSL) to deliver regeneration services in the Borough, including Town Centre regeneration and inward investment activities .

3.2 In terms of town centre regeneration a number of projects are underway. Support has included:

3.2.1 **Havelock Square** - Following concept designs and approval, the procurement process is close to completion and works will commence in this financial year.

3.2.2 **Kimmerfields** - A £4.5m Local Growth Fund application for funding towards the new bus exchange has been successful and negotiations over the NHS premises have been concluded. The demolition of the Carlton street car park has been awarded and due to take place next year.

3.2.3 **Aspen House** - The demolition works have been completed and are now waiting designs to be drawn up for the pocket park. To minimise disruption to council car parks in the future this site will be used as a construction compound for the Havelock Square works whilst designs are finalised and taken to tender.

3.2.4 **Oasis and North star** - Works on the improving the current facilities of the Oasis centre were completed in March in line with contractual obligation. Moirai held a public consultation in preparation of submitting an outline plans to the Borough.

4. Inward Investment

4.1 At year end there have been 57 direct investment enquiries in the financial year of which 41 have been assessed as significant and high quality and these have been pursued.

4.2 During the course of the year there have been 9 large inward investors that have credited Forward Swindon's role directly: TNT, Hacklings Transport, The Entertainer, Handy Distribution, Johnan UK, Aldi, Wasdell Packaging, Mango Bean and Torin. Investment value in total £27.75 million for nine of the companies. in terms of jobs, premises and equipment.

5. Skills

5.1 Adult Learning

- 5.1.1 Swindon's Community Learning function is delivered against the government's policy for Community Learning detailed in New Challenges, New Chances 2011. This provided a commissioning process enabling the service to achieve a stable network of delivery partners.
- 5.1.2 Strong partnerships with Children and Family Centres and Supported Housing were developed. This maximised the impact of Community Learning delivery to these priority groups and enable the service to be responsive to 1500 priority community learners, which has led to an Ofsted assessment of 'Good'.
- 5.1.3 Outcomes have included:
 - 5.1.3.1 95% of learners achieving all or some of their learning outcomes.
 - 5.1.3.2 35.8% overall made progress either to a training course at a higher level or to employment with 22% starting work.
 - 5.1.3.3 50% improved skills as a parent, 25% for employment.
 - 5.1.3.4 Learners said they had improved their skills. In addition to better literacy and numeracy, 25% improved their IT skills and 25% their spoken English.
 - 5.1.3.5 85% reported improved confidence
- 5.1.4 Community Learning has not only provided a high performing service it has also maximised its investment. Pound Plus contributions data indicates that for every £1 of public investment £1.14 is returned in fees, subsidised accommodation, in-kind contributions and the use of volunteers.
- 5.1.5 There is a government grant to cover the £450,000 spend on adult and community learning through to July 2016. Currently there is no indication of the level of funding beyond this date.

5.2 Tertiary Education

5.2.1 Employer and Apprenticeship Growth

- 5.2.1.1 The Apprenticeship Growth Strategy has been drafted for implementation in 15/16, this focuses on growing demand in employers and growing demand in young people. This has been supported by a well performing employer engagement service, with 6 volunteer employer ambassadors committed to supporting the implementation of the Growth plan. Further employers and young people will be engaged through the development and implementation of the apprenticeship growth campaign.
- 5.2.1.2 Strong apprenticeship growth is achievable; the government is making available apprenticeship funding for those that are delivering good quality apprenticeships, and the Skills team is ensuring this by working with providers to ensure the right environment for growth. There is also further work underway through the devolution deals with the LEP and government, about how greater control over apprenticeships can be taken at a local level.

5.2.2 NEET

5.2.2.1 The number of those local young people becoming Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) has remained low with almost all 16 year old students receiving an offer of learning, post 16 (only 16 did not in September 2014).

5.2.2.2 The SBC commissioned Learning Gateway minimised the numbers of young people leaving learning at ages 16 and 17, with a greater proportion of students “in learning” than national from October 2014 to March 2015. The numbers of those “unknown” are below national levels, for both years ages 16 and 17, and a further commission with Electoral Services colleagues has been put in place to reduce the numbers of students aged 18 whose destinations were unknown.

5.2.2.3 A review of careers advice/information and guidance has also been commissioned, which involved all local pre- and post-16 provision, supporting partners to evaluate their current service against nationally recommended standards.

5.2.2.4 There are present challenges with the need to focus on improving progression for young people at 17 years of age, with a greater focus on specific actions by all key partners. The loss of Talent Express as a learning provider reduced the range of practical, local, post-16 options.

5.2.2.5 Most importantly both locally and nationally, longer term outcomes (employed or in learning at 19) remained weak for particular groups of young people including young parents, looked after children and care leavers and those with Youth Offending Team (YOT) involvement.

5.3 Higher Education

5.3.1 A strong partnership has been developed committed to increasing participation in HE, a dedicated chair Mike Welsh, Headteacher of Goddard Park Primary School, is now in place who is a good champion for this area and there is work underway to identify a potential lead Higher Education Institute.(HEI)

5.3.2 A strong project management approach to this work now needs to be maintained to secure a HEI to lead the development of a HE centre. This will ensure a step change to the number of HE places offered in Swindon, and help to provide significant levels of growth.

5.4 Better understanding the skills needs of employers

5.4.1 The Skills Mapping and Brokerage Service has been commissioned in conjunction with the SWLEP and is being delivered by Business West. The work has led to the completion of an employer skills needs and gaps survey with over 400 employers, and skills workshops with the key sectors of Construction, Digital, High Value Added Manufacturing and Business & Finance.

5.4.2 The programme has delivered a strong level of research and information and it is now important to ensure the next phase responds to the skills needs and gaps identified and focuses on solutions.

- 5.4.3 A strategic joined up approach to employer engagement on skills is essential if this work is going to achieve its aims and objectives, and the present fragmented approach will need to be overcome. Funding for this will come from the European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) from 2016, ensuring this funding meets Swindon's needs and builds on what has been achieved.

6. Museums Including Steam / Specific Responsibility for Lydiard Park Project

- 6.1 The event programmes at Lydiard and STEAM continues to be high quality and varied. The mix of historic interpretation and commercial events at Lydiard attracts good visitor numbers, whilst the Lego and Railway Festival at STEAM continue to be flagship events at the museum. It is important that the success of these festivals are capitalised upon and build similarly popular themed events into the programmes for next year.
- 6.2 Another area that has been particularly successful is the relationship that has been grown with the National Railway Museum (NRM), who own the majority of the exhibits in STEAM. Following complex negotiations, the NRM have kindly agreed to the loan of two prestigious ex-GWR locomotives which will create renewed interest in the museum.
- 6.3 Linking regeneration to the town's heritage is important and the restoration of the World War One Memorial in the Old Town Hall, and its relocation to a home where it can be displayed for all to see needs to be accelerated.
- 6.4 The future offer at Lydiard and STEAM will be considered in the Cultural and Community Asset Change Programme. Lydiard is a well-loved local resource but its limited commercial offer is not fully developed. In common with many museums, both Lydiard and STEAM operate at a loss to the Council and require subsidies. It is absolutely critical that work is undertaken to reduce or remove these subsidies to enable both venues to become more self-sufficient.
- 6.5 STEAM will be central to the 'Swindon 175' celebrations next year, which will mark the 175th anniversary of the opening of the railway works. There are a number of events planned around Swindon175, which require careful co-ordination, management and publicity. A cross-party Member Working Group has been established to oversee this process. Of these events, the movement of 'King George V' and 'City of Truro' to STEAM present a logistical challenge, but one which has been carefully planned. The moves are programmed in for the week commencing 9th November and will necessitate the closure of the museum for a fortnight.

7. Swindon Museum and Art Gallery (SM&AG)

- 7.1 The Bath Road museum and art gallery has had a successful year, holding a range of well-received exhibitions, including hosting a travelling exhibition of Turner landscapes. The building itself retains a number of challenges including poor access for disabled visitors, fixed and dated display space for museum artefacts and limited storage space for the collections

- 7.2 The Council committed up to £5m to a project to relocate the existing art and museum collections from the Bath Road site to a proposed new location in the town centre. To assist the development of this work the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery (SM&AG) bid for and received a grant from the Arts Council England to assess the importance of its collections, develop a deeper understanding of its current and future audiences and undertake community engagement, learning and development.
- 7.3 In addition, SM&AG was successful in its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a two-year project to develop a better understanding of current and future storage needs and rationalise the current storage of artefacts and objects. This work responds directly to the Internal Audit Storage Report and has enabled a two year full time fixed term Collections Manager to be appointed. Considerable progress has been made including removing all museum artefacts from Waterside and re-racking the Art Store.
- 7.4 The relocation project led to a bid to the HLF for £12.5m as part of a £22.5m scheme to build a new, iconic art gallery and museum on the site of the Wyvern Multi-Storey Car Park.
- 7.5 The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid was not successful, although the HLF Trustees were clear that the case for investment in Swindon had been made and they were keen to receive a further bid. We need to improve the bid by procuring an excellent detailed design for the new building, set the new museum and art gallery within a wider development plan for the area which is commercially viable and ensure we have a secure source of revenue funding to sustain the provision. A new bid will be submitted in December 2016. The significant challenge in this area is to meet a much higher level of expectation for bid appraisals.
- 7.6 The new Swindon Theatres contract covering both the Wyvern Theatre and Art Centre completed its first highly successful year of operation. There were 511 ticketed events over both venues with 133,000 tickets sold with a good mix between professional touring and local hires. Create Studios also had a highly successful year as an independent Community Interest Company securing £124,000 match funding and working with over 1,300 participants. The Swindon Festival of Literature celebrated its 21st birthday with another excellent programme that drew in audiences from across the UK. Reach Inclusive Arts continued to seek and secure external funding from a number of sources including Children in Need and secured over £100k match funding for their disability arts participation work. After a successful succession plan and change in leadership and refreshed trustees, Sixth Sense Theatre for Young People are working to increase their value, reach and outcomes. They have broadened their remit to include arts training and accreditation, teaming up with SBC officers to secure £35k of funding for 15-24yrs Not in Education or Employment Training. They are rebranding and re-launching for their 30th anniversary in 2016, celebrating SBC's commitment to the arts and brokering new investment and energies from Arts Council England.

8. Community Assets

8.1 Swindon's libraries are increasingly used by customers requiring digital access for claiming universal credit, job searching and health and wellbeing services. Many of whom are displaced from other providers who are no longer able to continue supporting these people. To deliver this an up to date, fit for purpose IT system is being implemented.

8.2 Wifi is an essential service in providing information to the public whilst visiting Swindon's libraries. A bid has been submitted to The Arts Council to ensure that Wifi coverage is extended to all service points by the end of the year and has already been implemented in West Swindon library

8.3 The Cultural and Community Assets Change Programme is evaluating future library services, and looking at ways in which a more cost effective provision can be geared to specific community requirements. Currently opening hours do not reflect staff resource availability and consequently an increase in unplanned closures has been experienced.

9. Parking Services

9.1 The Parking Services team deal with the management of multi storey and surface fee paying car parks in the town centre and Old Town as well as on-street parking places and waiting restrictions (including residents parking zones) across the whole of the Borough. They also manage the penalty charge appeals system. In addition, they manage the Wroughton Park and Ride site and the Shopmobility service now based at Sanford Street.

9.2 The numbers of Penalty Charge Notices issued by Swindon Borough Council for parking contraventions over the last two years are detailed below. The total Penalty Charge Notices are split between on street (contraventions that occur on the public highway) and off street (usually contraventions that happen in Council owned car parks).

Year	Total Penalty Charge Notices	On Street	Off Street
2013/14	24767	16361	8406
2014/15	20688	14323	6365

9.3 Penalty Charge Notices are issued at two price bands, higher and lower rates. The rate depends on the seriousness of the contravention. For example parking on double yellow lines is deemed as a higher rate contravention while overstaying in a car park is charged at the lower rate. The relative numbers issued were:

Year	Higher Level £70	Lower Level £50
2013/14	12362 (50%)	12405 (50%)
2014/15	12094 (58%)	8594 (42%)

9.4 The funds generated by Penalty Charge Notices only totalled £635,000 for 2014/2015. The costs of providing this service costs more than the income received.

9.5 In the new financial year a review of Whalebridge car park will be undertaken by the council, to ensure that it meets the needs of residents in terms of service and security.

10. Strategic (Non-operational) Property Portfolio

10.1 The Council completed a number of changes in 2014/15 involving the strategic use of property assets. An example of this was the leisure and golf course asset transfers which completed on 1 November 2014. This involved 6 leisure centres transferring to GLL and 2 golf courses to Twigmarket which achieved revenue savings of approaching £1.3m a year and nearly £4.5m of backlog maintenance saving.

10.2 Children and families teams working in out of centre locations, have relocated to Clarence House with moves completed October 2014. This enabled teams to strengthen collaborative working and the refurbished space has allowed all teams to adopt new ways of working. A development brief was approved by planning committee in February 2015, for redevelopment of one of the vacated locations resulting from the relocation, the Limes and Palm Tree Lodge in Green Road Stratton. This will enable the site to be sold for residential development, to maximise the site value.

10.3 There has also been work pursued to support the key approach to increase co-location, partnership working and sharing of knowledge where collaborative working reduces operational cost / subsidies. In December 2014 the town centre police team moved in to the Plus One building on the civic campus, alongside Council teams who work with the police to strengthen joint working. Further Council teams are relocating to Plus One to take advantage of joint working with the police.

10.4 Support has been provided for the voluntary and community use of buildings to improve service outcomes and reduce cost in this way, where it is considered more beneficial than asset disposal. Sanford House was refurbished and let in June 2014 to Voluntary Action Swindon to operate the Adult Information Hub. This has involved a number of groups, such as CAB and Mind who are commissioned by the Council to provide adult services. The co-location of groups providing Council funded services, in a Council owned building managed by a charity, is aimed to improve service outcomes whilst improving service provision at a reduced operating cost.

10.5 Town Centre regeneration is a continuing priority. The demolition of Aspen House and Cheltenham House was completed in January 2015 to initially provide an additional area of public realm in the town centre, and also enhance the opportunity of development based on Granville Street car park.

