

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2012**

PRESENT:- Councillors Peter Heaton-Jones (in the Chair), John Ballman, Toby Elliott, Claire Ellis, Richard Hurley, Colin Lovell, Des Moffatt, Maureen Penny, Julian Price, David Wood and Bob Wright.

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture, was in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kevin Small, Brian Ford and James Robbins

### **23. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

### **24. Public Question Time**

No questions were asked under Standing Order 18.

### **25. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012 be confirmed and signed.

### **26. Question and Answer - Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture**

The Committee received a report setting out the details of the portfolio of Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture, and summarising performance in respect of each the following service areas:

- Arts and Culture
- Community Heritage
- Economic Development
- Museums, including STEAM
- Regeneration
- Specific Responsibility for the Lydiard Park Project
- UK Broadband

The report included an assessment of what had been done well over the period of the last 12 months and highlighted the major challenges facing the Regeneration and Culture portfolio in the future. Councillor Perkins was in attendance and responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following issues:

- the Council's work with UK Broadband to provide a wireless Long Term Evolution (LTE) service
  - the accuracy of the Cabinet Member's assertion that Swindon would have the first 4<sup>th</sup> generation (4G) LTE service in the UK and his comments about the speed, capacity and capability of this service
  - the cost and charging arrangements in relation to the service
  - the benefits to the Council of the new LTE service
  - the importance of the honest and successful promotion of the LTE service
- the economic development of Swindon and the lead responsibility for the development of the borough as a tourist destination
  - the development of the leisure park at the Oasis and its importance in promoting Swindon as a leisure destination
- Swindon's Art Collection and progress in identifying a new and permanent town centre location for the collection
- the storage of the archaeological collection and the need to increase storage capacity to meet future demand
- the failure to deliver on some of the promises set out in the "Our Swindon, Our Community, Our Future" strategy document
- the effectiveness of the public consultation in respect of the proposed Commercial Road revitalisation
  - the issue of statements being made in the press regarding the revitalisation proposals in advance of the completion of the consultation exercise
- the future of the Mechanics Institute and the implications of a possible changed ownership of the premises
- the role and objectives of Forward Swindon, its use of consultants to develop strategic plans and the Cabinet Member's assessment of its performance in delivering benefit to the people of Swindon
  - members' perception of Forward Swindon's limited achievement in delivering private sector development funding
  - the function and operation of the Shareholder Panel representing the Council's interest in Forward Swindon Limited
- the planning and development control implications of the Canal project, particularly in the lower Swindon area
  - possible alternative routes for the proposed canal and the impact of uncertainty regarding land availability on developers' willingness to invest in the borough
- the neglect of the town centre between Canal Walk and Fleet Street and the need for urgent investment in this area
- the status of recommendations in the Cabinet Member's report regarding the future resourcing of the Big Arts Day
  - the use of promotional devices and icons to promote future Big Arts Days
- the importance of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 as the main planning policy document for shaping the development and growth of the borough over the next 15 years and ensuring new development is of the highest quality design and sustainable construction, that it mitigates flood risk and provides open space and affordable housing and ensures developers contribute to the supporting infrastructure
  - the general commitment within the Local Plan to preserve the best industrial sites

Resolved – That Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture, be thanked for attending the meeting and for his full and open responses to members' questions on service areas and issues within his portfolio of responsibility.