

ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 18 JUNE 2013

PRESENT:- Councillors Mark Dempsey, Junab Ali, Roderick Bluh, Wayne Crabbe, Toby Elliott, Emma Faramarzi (Chair), Mary Friend, Julian Price, Fay Howard, Maureen Penny and Nicky Sewell

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Edwards and Steve Wakefield.

1. 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.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved – That Councillor Toby Elliott be Vice-Chair of the Economic, Environmental and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2013-14 Municipal Year.

3. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2013, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Inward Investment (Minute 35) – The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that the report on Inward Investment had not yet been finalised and that this item would be included as part of the 2013/14 work programme.

175 Task Group (Minute 34) – Councillor Garry Perkins asked for assurance that this task group would continue. The Chair stated that she had spoken to the organisers of this group to offer her support and added that this would also be included within the 2013/14 work programme.

4. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

5. Economic, Environmental and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members of the Committee were provided with an information pack outlining details of the Overview and Scrutiny function of the Council and, in particular, the role of the Economic, Environmental and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that he would be happy to deal with any queries from Members of the Committee.

6.

Work Programme 2013/14

The Committee received a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Officer setting out details of the Annual Overview and Scrutiny work programme consultation exercise and details of suggested topics for the Economic, Environmental and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2013/14. There were seven Cabinet Members whose portfolios were relevant to the work of this Committee and each one had been invited to put forward suggestions for inclusion in the work programme.

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Culture outlined some of the following issues for consideration by the Committee:-

- Economic stability of the town, in particular youth unemployment and employment opportunities in general.
- Master plan of the town and the Local Plan – how this could be implemented to aid economic recovery of the town.
- Scrutiny of the Town Centre and Western Route option for Canal re-instatement. Whilst Members felt that was an important issue, it was agreed that there were more urgent issues for the Committee to consider.

Further suggestions put forward by other Cabinet Members and Members of the Committee included:

- Southern Relief Road/Wichelstowe. Members were advised that a cross-party working group had already been established to consider the Wichelstowe project and that it would not be productive to duplicate the work. Members were agreed, however, that it would be useful to have an input into the overall transport strategy for the town.
- How to support and assist Self-Build in the Borough.
- Review of council approach to Business Rates – this was a very current issue and Members were keen to take this forward.

Other topics that were carried over from the 2012/13 work programme included:-

- Review the delivery of and performance of the Economic Strategy as agreed by the Committee in 2012/13.
- Allotments future self-management – Members agreed in 2012/13 to receive further information before coming to any conclusions.
- Continuation of the Mechanics Advisory Group which was established in 2012/13.
- Continuation of the Swindon 175 Task Group which was also established in 2012/13.
- Completion of the Inward Investment report.

The Committee agreed that the work programme for 2013/14 would include:-

- Receipt and approval of the final report on Inward Investment.
- Unemployment and employment opportunities in the town, particularly focussing on youth unemployment.
- Review of the Transport Strategy.
- Review of the performance of the Economic Strategy.
- A Task Group, comprising Councillors Price, Bluh and Elliott be established to consider Self-Build in the Borough.
- A Task Group, comprising Councillors Faramarzi, Penny, Bluh and Ali be established to consider the Council's approach to Business Rates.

- The Mechanics Advisory Group continues, to include Councillor Bluh in its membership.
- The Swindon 175 Task Group continues, to include Councillor Faramarzi in its membership.
(It was agreed that the current Members of the Mechanics and Swindon 175 task groups would be asked if they wished to continue on these groups before other members were approached to participate).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer agreed to circulate the draft work programme to Members of the Committee and to ask for any further ideas as to how these topics could be progressed.

Resolved – That Members of the Economic, Environmental and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the above work programme for the 2013/14 Municipal year.