

COUNCIL

MONDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2014

MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2014

91. Bringing Empty Shops Back Into Use - Motion at Council (Minute for Confirmation)

The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Culture and the Board Director Commissioning submitted a joint report setting out activities being undertaken to develop the economic performance of Swindon Town Centre and responding to issues highlighted in a Motion to the Council on 11th April 2013.

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Culture, referred to the various initiatives that were underway to promote and deliver economic development opportunities and to improve the Swindon Town Centre “offer” to residents, visitors and businesses. He explained some of the difficulties associated with “pop-up shops” as highlighted by the experience of some other local authorities and, in particular, the problem of sustaining new “pop-up” businesses in the longer term.

Councillor Perkins highlighted the success of Swindon Town Centre and the Brunel Centre, in particular, in minimising the number of empty shop units despite the impact of the recession and commented on the recent data indicating an increase in Town Centre “footfall” that was above the national average. He referred to recent comments by the Planning Inspectorate regarding the strength of retail provision in Swindon Town Centre, and explained the work being undertaken by inSwindon to promote themed Town Centre markets to encourage visitors to the area and the wider benefits that this would bring.

Resolved – (1) That inSwindon’s plans to develop a range of themed markets to assist the local economy and improve the experience of residents when shopping in Swindon’s Town Centre be noted and endorsed.

(2) That the Council be recommended to note the contents of the joint report in response to the Motion at Council on 11th April, 2013.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.