

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2014

PRESENT:- Councillors Junab Ali, Roderick Bluh, Wayne Crabbe (Vice-Chair), Mark Dempsey, Mary Friend, Mary Martin (Chair), Kevin Parry, Nicky Sewell and Steve Wakefield

7. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. There were no declarations.

8. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2014, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

9. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

10. Transport Policy and Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport and Board Director, Service Delivery about the Local Transport Body and the development of a programme of major transport schemes, including how it would prioritise, consult and use medium/long term shelf plans.

Members were reminded that the report was requested by the former Economic, Environmental and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 1st April 2014.

The report described the role and function of the Local Transport Body and the membership, which included the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council.

Members noted that the Local Transport Body would approve the funding through the Business Cases process and approve the programme and funding allocation as required by the Local Transport Board Assurance framework.

Following the presentation of the report, Councillor Heenan and the Board Director responded to members' specific questions and observation on the following topics:

- An explanation of the improvements to motorway junctions
- The need for 'shovel ready' plans that improve the infrastructure of Swindon
- The number of schemes that did not make the prioritised list agreed by the

Swindon and Wiltshire Local Transport Body

- Request for a report on how the prioritised schemes would contribute to the economic growth of Swindon
- The definition of 'shovel ready' plans and the practical application of achieving those plans
- Details about the representatives on the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Transport Body
- Detailed information about the works proposed for the M4 junction 16 improvements and suggestions how these could be enhanced

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and his support team for their report and responses to questions asked.

Resolved –

1. That the report be noted
2. That the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport be asked to provide a list of schemes to the Committee that were not included in the list of prioritised schemes for consideration by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Transport Body
3. That the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport be asked to provide a report on how the prioritised schemes would contribute to the economic growth of Swindon
4. Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport be asked to provide an all member briefing on the improvements to motorway junctions to the members of this Committee, the Wichelstowe Project team and Consultants
5. That officers respond to suggestions about enhancing the proposed improvements for junction 16 of the M4

11. Swindon 175 Group

The Committee received an update report from Ian Surtees, Income Generation Manager, Museums and Heritage and Alan Greer, Service Manager, Museums and Heritage about the activities under development for the celebrations of Swindon's 175 years of innovation since the towns foundation in 1841.

The Committee were reminded of the arrangements for the celebrations and in particular the relocation of two iconic steam locomotives – King George V and City of Truro. It was noted that agreement had been reached in principle with the National Railway Museum in York for their relocation to Swindon on a medium to long term basis. The locomotives would become the centre piece of the museums new displays. The Managers at Steam spoke about the impact of the new housing development building works, in the vicinity of the Steam building, on the delivery of the locomotives and the knock-on effect on neighbouring residents.

The Managers responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following topics:

- The Project Team and the work of the new Senior Curator
- Work with commercial partners on promoting events, merchandising and complimentary products
- Plans in place to raise finance and meet budgetary targets

- The need for a Planning Officer to be seconded to the Project Team
- The marketing strategy, projected increase in visitor numbers and the overall impact on Swindon
- The need to make the most of the opportunities that present themselves before, during and after the celebrations.
- The possibility of using public art and naming streets to reflect the towns historic railway heritage
- The development of a programme of events at Steam and incorporating the use of Swindon's open spaces at Lydiard Park, Moulden Hill and a possible link to the Swindon/Cricklade railway
- Invitations to members of the Royal Household to attend the celebrations during 2016
- The work of the Swindon 175 Group

The Chair thanked Ian Surtees and Alan Greer for their very informative presentation and wished them well with all the arrangements being made for the celebrations.

Resolved

1. That the report be noted
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports
 - a. the possibility of using street art and the naming of streets to celebrate Swindon's historic railway heritage
 - b. the secondment of a Planning Officer to the Project Team
 - c. the use of Section 106 monies to help fund celebration projects

12. Town Centre Regeneration

The Committee received the update report of Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, about the status of the regeneration of the Town Centre and the Mechanics Institute.

The report detailed the progress of regeneration in Swindon Town Centre over the last year following the endorsement of the Town Centre Masterplan by the Cabinet and Planning Committee. Members noted that the strategic framework for regeneration of Swindon Town Centre was set out in the Masterplan and the schemes which were already taking place.

The Cabinet Member, along with his support team responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following topics:

- Information about Swindon as one of the UK's fastest growing towns.
- First impressions when entering the town and the need for improvements to the gateways of the town
- Current employment figures and how Swindon performed better than other towns during the recession years due to investment in business
- Car parking usage at the Kimmerfields development and the expectations of Muse developments to attract new companies to relocate to Swindon
- Information about the Corn Exchange designer outlet
- Latest position regarding the pedestrian links between the Designer Outlet,

- town centre and the Oasis
- Support for zero emission developments in Swindon to encourage additional business in the town
- The work being undertaken with the Mechanics Institute Preservation Trust, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund in relation to a sustainable restoration of the Mechanics Institute building

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and his support team for their report and responses to questions asked.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

13. Work Programme 2014/15

The Committee received the report of the Scrutiny Officer setting out details of the Committee's current work programme.

The Committee was informed that the Overview and Scrutiny meeting to be held on 20 April 2015 had been arranged very close to the date of the next election. As members would be campaigning at this time it was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny meeting should be rearranged for March 2015.

The Chair reported that the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 15 September 2014 received a report from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Volunteering on his portfolio, which included Capacity Building. Members were reminded that one of the items on this Committee's work programme was a report on Capacity Building. The Chair advised that in order to avoid a duplication of workloads that members may wish to consider refocusing the item to concentrate on a more detailed piece of work in relation to Localities. It was suggested that the Committee could scrutinise how budgets were devolved to localities, with examples of best practice from other local authorities being presented.

Resolved –

1. That the Work Programme be noted
2. That the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering be asked to undertake a review of how budgets are devolved by the Council and to seek out examples best practice within local government.
3. That the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering report on (2) above at the Committees meeting to be held in March 2015.
4. That an update from the Swindon 175 Group be received at the Committee's meeting in June 2015
5. That the meeting scheduled for 20 April 2015 be rearranged for a date in March 2015.