Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

16 November 2021

Task Group Update

1. Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Joint Scrutiny Panel

Membership

Wiltshire Councillors:
Cllr Richard Britton (Chairman)
Cllr George Jeans
Cllr Ian Thorn

Swindon Borough Councillors:
Cllr Junab Ali (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Burn-Howell
Cllr Russell Holland

Business Representative
Amanda Newbery
Craig Holmes
Andrew Hogben

Supporting officer: Ceri Williams

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Joint Scrutiny Panel are quite lengthy and therefore not included in full here, however, an extract detailing the purpose of the panel is included below (*paragraph numbering from the terms of reference*):

(9.) This Panel will act as a critical friend, developing an overview of strategies and plans and providing independent scrutiny of the work of the LEP Board. It is an essential element of assuring democratic accountability for the use of public funds.

(10.) The objective is to make constructive recommendations for how future decisions of the LEP can be effectively implemented.

(11.) The Panel will not have the power to delay the SWLEP's decisions but it will be able to make recommendations for improvement to the SWLEP's decision making process and will be able to make its conclusions public.

<u>Recent activity</u>

- The SWLEP panel met on the 21 October. The focus of the meeting was to consider the Business Cyber Centre (BCC) proposals.

- The panel was introduced to the BCC Business Development Manager for the LEP, who provided a programme update. The lease for the centre, based in Greenway Park, Chippenham had been signed in late September 2021. Refurbishment works had already commenced and there was confidence that all of the £3.7m would be contracted by 31 March 2022 (rather than fully spent). As far as possible the tender had been localised, with two firms from the south west successfully winning the tender.

- During questions it was confirmed that the public investment would be protected if LEPs were dissolved (there is currently a government review of LEPs taking place). Creating a cyber cluster with exposure to the MOD was expected to be an enabler for growth as the MOD was compelled to spend 25% of budget on small/medium sized enterprises. The viability of the project was explored, and it was confirmed that it did not need to be 100% occupied to break even, although cashflow forecasts were withheld from the Panel. The panel was reminded that this was the only example of a LEP leading this type of project i.e., it was being led by SWLEP Ltd.

- The Panel was supportive of the proposals relating to the BCC, but felt it difficult to fully endorse as cashflow information had been withheld because of commercial sensitivity felt by SWLEP Ltd.

2.   Evolve Programme Task Group

Supporting officer: Ceri Williams

<u>Purpose</u>

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) is asked to approve the establishment of a new task group to consider the council's Evolve programme.

<u>Background</u>

The Evolve programme will involve the procurement and implementation of a new Cloud-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system for the council. The programme will impact on the work of all staff at the council in respect of HR, finance, procurement and payroll processes. It will look to modernise technology and standardise business processes, improving efficiencies for core activities that are undertaken across the council, supporting their adoption through a comprehensive in-house business change and training effort, and will deliver improved data, insights and reporting capabilities.

<u>Terms of Reference (TOR)</u>

1. The following TOR are proposed to underpin the work of the new task group:

   a) To provide efficient, effective scrutiny engagement on the council's Evolve programme under the direction of OS Management Committee.

   b) To receive periodic updates on the Evolve programme and scrutinise delivery of its key three objectives for the council, covering:
      - Organisational insight
      - Developing a flexible high-performance culture
      - Transforming business processes and digital technology

   c) To meet quarterly as standard, unless there is a temporary need to meet more frequently or at a specific project milestone

   d) To report findings and recommendations as appropriate to OS Management Committee following each task group meeting.

Proposals

1. **To note the update on task group and panel activity provided.**

2. **To establish a new Evolve Programme Task Group and to delegate the appointment of its membership to the Chair and Vice-chair.**

Report authors:

Ceri Williams, Senior Scrutiny Officer, T: 01225 713 704,
E: ceri.williams@wiltshire.gov.uk