

JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (SWLEP)

MINUTES OF THE JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (SWLEP) MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2016 AT COMMITTEE ROOM C - COUNCIL OFFICES, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 1ER.

Present:

Cllr David Renard (Chairman), Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Russell Holland, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philipe, Cllr Toby Sturgis (Substitute) and Cllr Oliver Donachie (Substitute)

Also Present:

Richard Bell, Paddy Bradley, Alistair Cunningham, Ian Durston, John Gilbert, Becky Holloway, Vanessa Joseph, John Mortimer

52 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE (substituted by Cllr Toby Sturgis), Cllr Garry Perkins (substituted by Cllr Oliver Donachie), and Dr Carlton Brand.

53 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared

54 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2016 were presented for consideration and it was

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a true and correct record.

55 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements.

56 Public Participation

There were no questions or statements.

57 **SWLEP Commissioning Board Highlight Reports**

Ian Durston, programme manager, presented the report circulated with the agenda, and described the progress made on the projects under each of the seven funding schemes (Local Growth Fund; Department for Transport – LGF; Department for Transport – Retained; City Deal; Careers and Enterprise Company; Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy; Growing Places Infrastructure Fund). He highlighted the following points: Issues that had delayed work to the Porton Science Park had been resolved and the project was now underway; That the proposed work to junction 15 of the M4 would be funded from a different source, releasing £3.7million back into the LEPs budget to be split between the Wiltshire Ultrafast Broadband programme, Swindon Art Gallery, and Salisbury Plain Heritage Project; That issues relating to the Swindon Bus Exchange had been resolved and the project would restart in February 2017; That match funding from the private sector for work on Chippenham station ticket office and front area had been secured as planned and permission would be sought to start this work prior to the sign off of the wider Chippenham Station Hub project; That there had been changes to the original Career Transition Partnership (CTP) contract with the military, and that this had led to difficulties in accessing the originally proposed number of learners under the scheme; and that an extension was being sought in relation to the commencement of the Kimmerfields project.

In response to questions from the meeting, it was reported that: the RAG rating for the Swindon Bus Exchange project would move to green following formal LEP approval of the new completion date; that the Greenbridge roadworks “amber” rating was due to the original completion date not having been updated; and there was still an ongoing agreement with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to signpost army-leavers to the LEP, that the anticipated close-relationship had not developed as expected, but that ongoing contact with the military would be maintained through the voluntary sector and a position on the management board. With respect to the CTP, it was also suggested that the apprenticeship-levy to be introduced in April 2017 could lead to increased engagement at the higher level.

The chairman thanked Ian Durston for the update, and Paddy Bradley added that in a recent conversation with BEIS it had been noted that the performance management of SWLEP projects was of excellent quality.

Resolved:
To note the report

58 **Local Growth Fund Finance Summary**

The report was presented and it was explained that the budget for 2016-17 would show all allocated funds had been spent, but that any underspend could be retained for the following year. Where necessary, Swindon and Wiltshire Councils would assist by allocating expenditure to other capital projects to ensure full use of the local growth fund allocation.

Resolved:

To approve the report in principle and to receive a more detailed paper in January 2017

59 Local Growth Fund Update

A report was tabled at the meeting and it was explained that the final figures would be made available shortly. The priority placed on skills by the LEP was reflected in the Growth Deal's proposed projects, which included: Salisbury Campus; Lackham Campus; and the Maltings. The agreed funding for projects was due to become available from April 2017, with opportunities for competing for funding for currently un-funded projects in early 2017.

In response to questions it was confirmed that the board had submitted the Growth Deal to DCLG in July 2016 which had proposed 11 projects for funding and that these had been given a priority order. DCLG had not made an assessment of the individual projects but had approved the whole deal based on its capacity for delivering government priorities whether the LEP was in a devolution area, and the overall contribution of the private sector. The presumption would be that the proposed priority projects will remain and should other projects be proposed for funding there would need to be a justification for ranking them higher than the original 11. It was suggested that there may be specific criteria for the new funds available and that it could be sensible to put forward projects which most met those requirements regardless of their current priority order. It was also hoped that there would be more opportunity for businesses to get involved in backing schemes.

Resolved:

To recommend to the LEP that the priority list is retained but to be mindful of new projects coming forward in order to ensure new opportunities are not missed.

60 European Structural Investment Fund Update

A report from Julian Head was presented and the following issues were highlighted: That the government would honour any grants awarded that met government priorities and offered value for money, but that new requirements would be brought in for any new projects; that the fund would continue until the UK's final exit from the European Union rather than simply the invoking of Article 50; and that discussions were taking place around a replacement fund post-EU.

The meeting's attention was drawn to page 86 of the report where it was reported that 74% of the European Social Fund had been allocated to date. Attention was also drawn to the bids made to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Affairs (EAFRD) which focused on areas not covered by the growth deal.

In response to questions, it was reported that the managing agents for the fund were DCLG and DWP for legal purposes but that the LEP was acknowledged as a key advisory forum and the majority of agencies are happy to share their information with the LEP in this capacity.

Resolved:
To note the update

61 Forward Work Plan

Four items for inclusion on future agendas were presented and agreed upon. It was suggested that a summary of each of the funding streams would be helpful for newer members of the group and Paddy Bradley agreed to develop this to send out.

Resolved:
To approve future items for consideration including:

- **Assurance Framework – February/April 2017**
- **Higher Futures Action Plan – June 2017**
- **SHMAA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment Area)/FEMA (Functional Economic Market Area) Updates**

62 Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next scheduled meeting was confirmed as 14 February 2017

63 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 9.30 - 10.40 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Becky Holloway, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718063, e-mail becky.holloway@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115