

JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (SWLEP)
MINUTES OF THE JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (SWLEP)
MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2017 AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNCIL
OFFICES, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM SN15 1ER.

Present:

Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE (Chairman), Cllr David Renard (Vice Chairman), Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe, Cllr Garry Perkins, Cllr Oliver Donachie (Substitute - Part II), John Mortimer and Adam Schallamach

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Russell Holland, who was substituted by Councillor Oliver Donachie.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 and the minutes of the SWLEP Board meeting held on 24 November 2016 were presented, and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016.

To receive and note the minutes of the SWLEP Board.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

4 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements.

5 Public Participation

A letter had been received from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). Details were provided to the committee and a response would be provided from the Chairman of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, as attached.

6 SWLEP Commissioning Board Highlight Reports

The Committee received highlight reports and updates regarding all Local Growth Fund and other Local Enterprise Partnership projects as detailed in the agenda papers.

The Committee sought additional details regarding progression of the projects, such as the Compulsory Purchase Order process concluding for the Swindon Bus Exchange project and whether the status of the project would be changed from Red for the next meeting, and also plans for proposals for the Chippenham Station Hub to be presented to the SWLEP Board with a view to a business case being considered in May 2017. Other issues discussed included ongoing discussions for a joint venture agreement to progressed with the Wichelstowe project, and that a paper would be produced for a working group regarding the output for the Higher Futures project.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To note the updates.

7 Outcomes of Local Growth Deal Round 3

The Committee was informed an announcement was expected from central government in the weeks following the meeting on the Local Growth Fund Round 3 allocations, and that fuller updates would be provided to member as soon as was practicable.

8 Summary of Funding Streams, to include LGF 1 and 2 profiling

A report was received on the current financial status across all streams of Local Growth Funding along with explanations for variances between the actual spend and the baseline grant issued to the SWLEP.

At its meeting in January 2017 the SWLEP had received the report along with plans to manage the spending for future years. There had been an underspend in 2015/16, and it was calculated there would be an overspend in 2016/17 to equalise the position. Full details on how this would be achieved were contained in the report and discussed.

Resolved:

To endorse the approach of the SWLEP Board at its meeting on 25 January 2017 to manage the Local Growth Fund profiling.

9 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Programme 2014-2020

A report was received as detailed in the agenda papers on the latest developments in respect of the European Structural and Investment Funds Programme following a recent hiatus to calls after the EU Referendum, with local specifications for the next rounds of European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) calls in development. The advisory sub-committee to government would be meeting in April 2017.

The Committee sought additional details from the reports, including update on the Rural Growth Programme and its successfully attended Rural Business Grants event

on 8 February to help rural businesses apply for grants. The Chairman of the SWLEP was in attendance and provided an update on the focus of investment for infrastructure, food and drink manufacturing, business development and other key areas.

The Committee also welcomed the opportunity for it and the SWLEP to contact businesses that are supported to monitor the successes that occur. Other topics discussed included the LEADER programme, technical assistance and the difficulties of some businesses to meet specifications for some programmes.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To note the update.

10 **Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (FEMAA)/ Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update**

An update report on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (FEMAA) was received as detailed in the agenda supplement following a meeting of the Joint Working Group on 7 February 2017.

The two local authorities are working together on a joint evidence base to identify the level of housing and jobs that need to be planned for from 2016 through to 2036 to inform the review of both authorities' local development plans. It was also stated the recent government housing white paper would need to be assessed to see if it had impact on the current plans for both authorities.

Work to date on the SHMA had identified four housing market areas, centred on Trowbridge, Salisbury, Chippenham and Swindon. The FEMAA identified three functional economic market areas broadly corresponding to the Strategic Economic Plan of the SWLEP, along the Swindon/M4 corridor, A350/West Wiltshire towns and Salisbury/Amesbury/A30. It included projected future employment growth based on professional economic forecasts, identifying requirements per year for employment land. The housing and economic areas cross the boundaries of both authorities showing the need for further joint working in developing planning policies.

The recommendation was for the Committee to endorse the approach to joint working, which would inform development of the Councils Local Development Schemes before the they were formally considered in Summer 2017.

The Committee considered the options detailed in the report, including a single joint plan, a strategic only joint plan or the alignment of separate authority plans based on a joint evidence base and non-statutory joint framework, noting legal and policy requirements. It was confirmed each authority would still be responsible for its own plan under the recommended approach. Details were also sought on the findings in respect of employment areas and accessing land, the level of cooperation with neighbouring authorities, and the role of the SWLEP itself.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To:

- (i) Note and endorse the approach to joint working as outlined in the report;**
- (ii) Agree that the Joint Working Group consider proposed changes to the Council's respective LDSs to ensure a coordinated approach in order to make recommendations to the Council's respective Cabinets;**
- (iii) Agree that the Joint Working Group consider the extended scope of the joint non-statutory framework and the appropriate joint approach to the Regulation 18 consultations; and**
- (iv) Agree that the final SHMA and FEMAA should be considered at JSEC in June 2017.**

11 SWLEP Assurance Framework

The Assurance Framework sets out various governance arrangements for the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Revised government guidance was published in November 2016, compliance with which is condition of Local Growth Fund 3 funding. A SWLEP working group had already been reviewing the assurance framework, and further revised them in order to comply with the new guidance. Among other changes it was proposed to increase the maximum size of the board to enable a more flexible business led approach. The section 151 officers and heads of legal services for both local authorities, the commissioning group of the SWLEP and the SWLEP Board all approved the proposed changes as detailed in the report.

The Committee noted the proposed changes and following discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To endorse the decisions made by the SWLEP Board with regard to the revised assurance framework; and,

To note the quick guide to the assurance framework document.

12 Forward Work Plan and Date of Next Meeting

The forward plan was received and noted.

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for 6 April 2017, but members would be canvassed to see if another date would be more appropriate for all participants.

13 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 9.00 - 10.05 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718504, e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

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JSEC meeting on 14 February 2017 9am at Monkton Park, Committee Room A

CPRE ask that the Minutes of the SWELP Board be not received for the following reasons:

1. The Draft revised Assurance Framework, para 87, which allows for candidate schemes to be identified through SWELP running a formal call for schemes against the priorities in its strategic economic plan.
2. Hitherto schemes have been identified through the Planning processes conducted by the Councils involving public consultation. Where is the democratic process?
3. Planning is about social, environmental and economic issues, not just economic issues. Economic issues must be weighed against social and environmental through a consultative process.
4. Such a major change should not be brought about without full participation of all the Councillors in both Councils and wide public consultation.

Anne Henshaw

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The aim of holding open calls for organisations, including the two unitary authorities, to come forward with projects they wish to develop is to diversify the range and nature of the projects funded by the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP. The priorities of the strategic economic plan will form an essential element of the assessment criteria for projects. The two unitary authorities play an important role in constructing the strategic economic plan as their key priorities are included within it. In addition, the Assurance Framework ensures that in response to the initial open call, each project should include "an outline of how the scheme relates to...the other relevant key plans and strategies such as Local Plans and Transport Plans" (paragraph 87, SWLEP Assurance Framework).

The Assurance Framework requires projects to include "an outline of what consultation has taken place and what degree of consensus has been achieved" (para 87).

The assessment procedures used by the SWLEP follow The Green Book Guidance issued by HM Treasury.

There is an independent assessment of all submitted projects at this stage and one element of the assessment is "Is the scheme likely to be publically acceptable and supported by key partners/stakeholders (and any evidence)?" (para 88). The proposed projects move from an initial expression of interest, through strategic outline business case and assessment to outline business case and assessment and then final business case and assessment. At all stages, consultation is built into the process and any statutory consultation processes and timescales are followed. The detail is included in paras 94 to 134 of the Assurance Framework.

As the proposed projects develop, the assessment criteria include social, environmental and economic issues as these are included in The Green Book Guidance.

The use of open calls is not a major change which denies the democratic process. The key transport and economic priorities of both Councils are included in the SWLEP's strategic economic plan; the assessment criteria for projects uses the accepted wide base included in The Green Book; likely acceptability to the public and evidence of consensus are included in the criteria for assessment and all statutory consultation requirements are built into the project selection process.

John Mortimer
Chairman, SWLEP
14 February 2017

