

JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (SWINDON AND WILTSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP)

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2015 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 2, SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL, EUCLID STREET, SWINDON, SN1 2JH.

Present:

Cllr David Renard (Chairman), Cllr Jane Scott OBE (Vice Chairman), Cllr Brian Mattock, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philipe, Cllr Garry Perkins and Mr Neil Holt

Also Present:

Dr Carlton Brand (Corporate Director, Wiltshire Council), Alistair Cunningham (Associate Director, Economy and Planning, Wiltshire Council, and Director of the LEP)

12 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor John Thomson, Mr Barry Dennington, Mrs Nicky Alberry, Mrs Isobel Brown, Mr Paddy Bradley and Mr Robin Townsend.

13 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2015 as a true and correct record.

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

15 Chairman's Announcements

In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference it was announced the chairmanship of the Committee was rotated from Cllr Jane Scott OBE to Cllr David Renard for the forthcoming year.

16 Public Participation

There were no questions or statements submitted.

17 **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Commissioning Group Updates**

Alistair Cunningham, Director of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP), presented a written update on behalf of the SWLEP Secretariat on the work of the Commissioning Group, providing business case study updates on Local Growth Fund (LGF) projects, summaries of the activity of working groups and development of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) to be approved by the SWLEP Board ahead of a potential call by the Government for the third round of LGF bids.

It was stated that in an update to the papers the A429 Malmesbury project now had a status of Green on the RedAmberGreen scale as detailed in the report, following resolution of an issue with the owner of land adjacent to a roundabout key to the project, and positive discussions had taken place with the Department for Transport regarding the New Eastern Villages project.

The Committee was also informed details on terms of the land use and technical necessities had been agreed regarding the Porton Science Park, with further work awaiting completion of the European Funding bids.

In response to queries updates were provided on the 2016/17 programme in relation to the Chippenham Station Hub, and in relation to the M4 Junction 15/16 proposals, further details were required on funding and in the case of J16 a full business case had been postponed until the autumn in part in response to the need to further look at the modelling for the project.

Work had also been expanded on the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) refresh, to include looking at how to coordinate a consistent Further Education offer.

The Committee also analysed the work of the sub-groups of the SWLEP, and felt that notwithstanding the intention to not produce too many sub-groups and that there had been an early focus on transport infrastructure projects due to funding being available in those areas, several key priorities were not included among the list of strategic areas, Health and Social Care, a highly important industry across the county, being an example, as well as a lack of focus on rural economic skills. There was also a concern that governance of the SWLEP and between it and the councils was not joined up, and there was a lack of awareness of council policy when determining work and priorities.

Finally, the Committee requested that the positive impact of the SWLEP and its schemes be improved, in particular that the council communications team assist in organising events at the turf cutting/topping out of SWLEP funded schemes.

Resolved:

To request the SWLEP Board renew its priorities to include where possible a focus on matters such as the rural economy, housing, health and social care, and to highlight links to each council's Corporate Plan when determining projects and priorities.

18 **Planning Updates**

Alistair Cunningham (Associate Director, Economic Development and Planning, Wiltshire Council), presented a general update on Planning matters in relation to the work of the JSEC and the SWLEP.

It was stated that the Core Strategies of Swindon and Wiltshire had now both been adopted, with the next work being on those areas it had been agreed with the respective Inspectors to begin early reviews, and officers were planning the scope of the reviews along with the necessary evidence bases for them, with a working party preparing a work programme for the review. It was estimated the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) would take approximately a year to complete once initiated.

The Committee sought details of how the Authorities would collaborate in those areas this would be beneficial, and it was stated that both Authorities had members on a joint strategic planning group which would help steer the progress of the review, to be undertaken by an independent provider, before seeking approval from JSEC.

Resolved:

To receive a proposal on the working procedures for a Joint Strategic Planning Group at the next meeting.

19 **European Funding Updates**

Alistair Cunningham (Associate Director, Economic Development and Planning, Wiltshire Council), presented a general update on matters in relation to European funding.

It was stated Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Phillipe (WC) had chaired a meeting of the SWLEP European Structural and Investment Funds Committee on 17 June to discuss the Forward Work Plan for the SWLEP, Business Industry and Skills, National Product Calls focussed on enhancing SME businesses in terms of growth potential and international trade performance; Health and Life Sciences Call progress update; SME growth; Foreign and Direct Investment; Innovation Services Call; and an update from the Management Authority (DCLG) on European Structural Fund (ESF) Opt Ins.

Concerns had been raised about the inflexibility of an offer from Innovate UK to assist Local Enterprise Partnerships with match funding for European funds, which did not tailor to the specific needs or requests of the local areas. The Committee endorsed the approach of the SWLEP Secretariat to note that more flexible delivery of assistance appropriate for the region and the businesses therein was necessary and would welcome a willingness to negotiate to this end.

The Committee sought details of the progress in securing funds, noting the process had been ongoing for some time, and it was stated the European

Funding was not yet signed off for release, however it was a significant sum once it would arrive, should bids be successful.

The Committee also requested written updates for each project, and that links to council priorities for both Authorities also be shown where possible.

Resolved:

To receive a written update at the next meeting as detailed above.

20 Risk Management Updates

The Committee agreed a full written update was necessary to adequately report any risk management analysis on the delivery of programmes, and requested a full update at the next meeting to include comment on new governance arrangements for the SWLEP, noting Board meetings would shortly be taking place in public for the first time.

Resolved:

To receive a written update at the next meeting as detailed above.

21 Forward Work Plan

The Committee considered the Forward Work Plan and requested updates on Joint Planning Working Group arrangements and updates on governance of the SWLEP and Scrutiny arrangements.

Resolved

To update the Forward Work Plan as detailed above.

22 Date of the Next Meeting

In a correction to the agenda, the date of the next meeting was confirmed as 30 September 2015.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.30 pm)

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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