

JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT COMMITTEE ROOM C - COUNCIL OFFICES, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 1ER.

Present:

Cllr David Renard (Chairman), Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philipe, Cllr Garry Perkins, Mrs Nicky Alberry and Cllr Toby Sturgis (Substitute)

Also Present:

Dr Carlton Brand (Corporate Director, Wiltshire Council), Alistair Cunningham (Associate Director, Economy and Planning, Wiltshire Council, and Director of the SWLEP)
Richard Bell (Head of Planning, Regulatory Services, Heritage and Libraries Swindon Borough Council), Paddy Bradley (Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development, Swindon Borough Council and Director of the SWLEP), Isobel Brown (Director of the SWLEP)

23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Barry Dennington and Councillors Jane Scott and Brian Mattock.

Councillor Scott was substituted by Councillor Toby Sturgis.

It was also noted that Mr Neil Holt had left his post with the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board, and as such was no longer a member of the Joint Strategic Economic Committee.

24 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2015 were presented and it was,

Resolved:

That subject to an amendment to Minute 17 to remove the final sentence of paragraph 6, 'There was 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', as not reflecting the opinion of the Committee, to APPROVE and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.

25 **Declarations of Interest**

Ms Nicky Alberry declared an interest in agenda items 10 and 11 - Update on Joint Planning and European Funding Updates - by virtue of her position as a director of Business West which provides support to businesses across the region which might be impacted by Planning and Funding matters.

26 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

27 **Public Participation**

Cllr Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division, Wiltshire Council addressed the Committee and sought details of updates in relation to all Chippenham Station projects. In response it was stated currently negotiations with Network Rail and First Great Western Railways regarding the franchise arrangements at the site and revenue reductions were being sought. It was also stated it a resolution would be sought for the first quarter of 2016, or the SWLEP might need to consider other options and projects.

It was noted that the site and scheme was retained by the Department of Transport, and that therefore progress was not entirely within the power of the SWLEP. It was agreed that a Briefing note would be prepared for James Gray MP and Michelle Donelan MP as local MPs, and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Claire Perry MP, detailing the current position and issues that should be raised.

The Chairman further agreed that local councillors as well as MPs should be consulted and kept informed on proposals in the area.

28 **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Commissioning Board Updates**

A written update was presented by the Directors of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP), Isobel Brown, Paddy Bradley and Alistair Cunningham.

It was stated that most of the schemes had continued to progress, and that for all schemes the programme and project management issues were sufficient. Where some schemes had suffered delays was in relation to delivery due to financial considerations, such as with the Chippenham Station scheme as detailed under Minute 27, and the New Eastern Villages schemes, with cost analyses, remodelling and additional funding among other solutions as detailed in the report being investigated.

The Committee then discussed specific schemes in detail. It was raised that in relation to the Digital Corsham scheme the cost of refitting the Mansion House had increased substantially. In response to queries it was stated it was planned for the scheme to receive further council investment in the Mansion House itself, with a commercial solution for phase 2 of the scheme regarding the land behind the Mansion House and the wider digital offer, and that a paper would be taken through Wiltshire Council's

Cabinet Capital Asset Committee and back through the SWLEP Commissioning Group to recommend an option to the SWLEP Board.

In relation to the J15 scheme, which had previously been rated Green on the GreenAmberRed scale and was now listed as AmberRed, it was stated due to rising costs the business case had been revised, and that now matters had progressed from the position in the report and was awaiting confirmation of a Growth Fund proposal from Highways England, and that technical details were now being tackled. Were Highways England to become a scheme developer in the scheme, another element of risk to the project would be removed.

The Committee then considered the report's comments on the refresh of the SWLEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). Details were provided on how the refresh had progressed, and it was stated a draft would be circulated in early October to Board members for comment, ahead of a meeting of the Board on 11 November.

Finally, it was detailed that a bid had been made for an enterprise zone within the SWLEP area, encompassing nine physical sites across Swindon and Wiltshire, but that feedback had not yet been received from the government.

Resolved:

To note the update.

29 Key Performance Indicator Analysis

The Committee was informed that an update had been requested on work on detailed timescale expectations of each scheme, statistics on job creation for delivered schemes, how many projects had been delivered, as well as scorecards on various aspects of each scheme in relation to performance and priorities. It was also intended that how long each stage of a project had taken, to provide a more effective visual illustration of the process and where any delay were occurring.

This work was stated to be ongoing under the direction of the Chairman of the SWLEP, and that it would be available for the Committee at its next meeting.

Resolved:

To receive a full written update at the next meeting.

30 Local Growth Fund (LGF) 3 Prioritisation

A verbal update was provided on how schemes were to be prioritised for the third Local Growth Fund round of funding. Currently schemes were assessed against the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and as such forthcoming schemes were being rechecked against the elements of the emerging SEP, the refresh of which is detailed at Minute 28. This would include prioritisation to include assessment of a focus on skills and talent development, and utilisation of the new process which had been agreed with independent assessors now in place to review all projects.

In response to queries it was stated that as it was intended for the SEP to be approved in principle by the SWLEP Board in November 2015 pending any details arising from consultations on the SEP, full implementation of the prioritisations would wait until it had received that approval, and that the national comprehensive spending review would provide more details on timescales for any future funding.

Resolved:

To note the update.

31 Governance of the SWLEP Update (Including Scrutiny)

The Committee was updated on the Joint Scrutiny Task Group that had been established by Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council to scrutinise the activities of the SWLEP. The group's membership had now been finalised, and it was suggested their first focus should be on the process of scheme prioritisation, to ensure the methodologies and reasoning were appropriate and effective, and a report would be circulated to the Task Group shortly to assist in that work.

The Committee welcomed the presence of the Task Group as one of the few in the country organised to scrutinise the work of a Local Enterprise Partnership, and would await further details as its work proceeded.

Resolved:

To receive further updates on the work of the Task Group as it progressed.

32 Update on Joint Planning

At its inaugural public meeting in April 2015 the Committee resolved to request the SWLEP Board fund additional work leading to the identification of Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA) as part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) project as part of early reviews of both Wiltshire and Swindon Core Strategies as requested by Planning Inspectors when assessing the soundness of those Development Plans. The SHMA and FEMA would determine housing and economic development need for the local authority areas beyond 2026, providing evidence for the review of those Plans.

The Committee noted that Opinion Research Services (ORS) had been appointed to undertake the SHMA/FEMA following SWLEP Board approval and were gathering information to begin that work. In response to queries the Committee was informed preliminary implications from the work should be known toward the end of 2015, and that currently it was predicted 3-4 HMA/FEMAs would be identified, although other numbers were possible.

The Committee agreed further updates should follow once the evidence gathering was concluded and prior to any stakeholder consultation sometime in 2016.

The Committee then discussed the Joint Planning Group which had five members from each group and which reported to the SWLEP and then the Cabinet of each local Authority, and discussed how it should be structured and how it should report, if more

suitable and efficient governance arrangements were possible. It was also discussed that proposals on local devolution would likely have an impact on any joint planning issues.

Resolved:

To receive a full update on the SHMA/FEMAs in 2016.

33 European Funding Updates

A report from the Strategic Economic Programme Manager on the European Strategic Investment Funds (ESIF) was presented. Details were provided by Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Phillipe, Wiltshire Council, who chaired the local ESIF committee, on efforts to set out responsibilities and purposes of all officers and members involved in the processes.

The Committee discussed the progression of the programmes as detailed in the report for support of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and planning to scope and develop specifications for strategic objective delivery in order to secure funding.

It was raised that the interrelation between managing authorities and central government over processes was not ideal, and it was discussed if it would be possible for local authorities to request the bodies be managed by Local Enterprise Partnerships at local level rather than through a national process with less close engagement of local partners, as part of the government's local devolution agenda.

In relation to the renewed priorities that would be present in the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership's revised Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), it was confirmed that any opportunities these might afford to apply for further funding would apply to future tranches of monies, not current funding.

At the conclusion of discussion, I was,

Resolved:

To note the update.

34 Risk Management Updates

The Committee was informed that as updates on Risk Management was in part related to the Local Growth Fund projects as the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) refresh progressed work would be undertaken to ensure those the risks took account of the new priorities, which would enable a proper update at the next meeting.

Resolved:

To receive a full update at the next meeting.

35 **Forward Work Plan**

The Committee noted the Plan was light on details, and given the lack of written updates provided for the current meeting, insisted that more detail be provided and that in future no item would be included on an agenda without an accompanying report, with recommendations for action, unless authorised by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

The Committee also requested reports and item in relation to the City Deal project, the impact of local devolution proposals, a summary of implications arising from the national comprehensive spending review that was to take place in the autumn 2015, and that specific updates be provided on particular projects if their funding arrangements were to substantially change between meetings, for example no longer receiving funding from a source or new funding being obtained.

Resolved:

That subject to the additions detailed above, to approve the Forward Work Plan.

36 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 1 December 2015, and it was requested details of 2016 meetings be circulated as soon as possible to all JSEC and SWLEP members.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.00 pm)

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