

JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2015 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 6, SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL CIVIC OFFICES, EUCLID STREET, SWINDON, SN1 2JH.

Present:

Cllr David Renard (Chairman), Cllr Brian Mattock, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe, Cllr Garry Perkins, Mrs Nicky Alberry, Cllr Toby Sturgis (Substitute - Part II) and Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Substitute - Part II)

37 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Barry Dennington, Councillor Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE and Councillor John Thomson.

Councillor Thomson was substituted by Councillor Toby Sturgis.

Councillor Baroness Scott was substituted by Councillor Stuart Wheeler.

38 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2015 were presented for consideration and it was,

Resolved:

To APPROVE and sign as a true and correct record.

39 Declarations of Interest

Ms Nicky Alberry declared an interest in agenda items 8 and 9 - Update on Planning Police Update and European Structural and Investment Funds Update 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.

40 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements.

41 Public Participation

There were no statements or questions submitted.

42 SWLEP Commissioning Board Update

A written update was presented by Directors of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP), Alistair Cunningham and Paddy Bradley. It was stated that it had been agreed project highlight reports would include greater levels of detail, as well as supporting increased scrutiny of Local Growth Fund (LGF) proposals, and clearer tracking of original deadlines and any delays that occurred.

The Committee discussed the progression of the Strategic Economic Plan which had been reviewed during the course of 2015 with details on communication strategies and key messages had been approved, with further details on design and final revisions to be approved shortly. Details were also provided on funding that had been received from the Department for Business, Industry and Skills for a Careers Enterprise Company pilot scheme to run for 12 months to recruit business volunteers for schools and colleges to increase employer engagement with education facilities. It was confirmed the virtual school, responsible for monitoring the status of all Looked After Children, would also be covered by the pilot scheme, which had launched in Wiltshire in November and would launch in Swindon from 2 December.

The Committee then assessed the details of LGF projects currently underway. Increased costs of delivery had been identified in respect of the Green Bridge, New Eastern Villages project (previously Great Stall Bridge), with the feasibility of design changes to be investigated. Further New Eastern Village projects included that at the A420 Gablecross, where remodelling requirements had been clarified, with the completion date moved to June 2016.

In response to queries it was stated the project with the biggest funding gap was in relation to the White Hart Junction project as detailed in the report, with additional funding sources being investigated ahead of a deadline for action of February 2017.

Details were also sought on projects involving Junctions 16 and 17, Digital Corsham, which was now back within budget, and Chippenham Hub Station, with details as in the report.

Questions were raised about LGF monies which had not yet been utilised due to deferred projects, and it was stated new and viable proposals would be brought forward for consideration of any remaining funds.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was

Resolved:

To note the updates and comments of the Committee.

43 **Key Performance Indicator Update Paper**

As requested in previous meetings the Committee for details on Key Performance Indicators of LEP programmes, a report was presented with details on timescale expectations and other details of schemes along with economic indicators for the Wiltshire and Swindon area.

The Committee welcomed the information provided, and emphasised the need for a unified method of reporting performance, and ensure the greatest possible transparency of information while respecting commercial confidentiality. It was confirmed that the Key Performance Indicator details would moving forward be published on the LEP website and updated quarterly.

Resolved:

That the Joint Strategic Economic Committee (JSEC) take note of the format and content of the proposed programme key performance and economic indicator dashboards, approve their continued production, and provide officers with feedback and commentary on the indicators selected and their presentation.

44 **Planning Policy Update**

An updated was provided by Richard Bell, Head of Planning, Regulatory Services, Heritage and Libraries, Swindon Borough Council on development of a Joint Strategic Options strategy to ensure members of both local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership are appropriately involved in cross border planning issues.

It was also stated a proposed methodology to define the boundaries of a Social Market Housing Area (SHMA) and Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) was being prepared and would be ready to be discussed with neighbouring authorities in 2016. The Committee supported the suggestion of a working group, to include councillors from both authorities, oversee the joint working on this issue report to the JSEC with regular updates.

Resolved:

- 1) Note the content of the paper;**
- 2) Agree that a Senior Officer/Councillor Working Group be established comprising three Councillors (relevant Cabinet portfolio holders) from each authority to support the preparation of the 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Functional Economic Market Assessment' and other joint evidence base studies to inform the review of the Councils' Local Plans; and**
- 3) Agree that the Senior Officer/Councillor Working Group, as identified in 2) reports to the Joint Strategic Economic Committee.**

45 **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Update**

A report from the Strategic Economic Programme Manager on the European Strategic Investment Funds (ESIF) was presented. Further details were provided by Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Phillipe, Wiltshire Council, who chaired the local ESIF committee.

The Committee discussed the progression of the programmes and processes as detailed in the report, including a refresh of the ESIF strategy to bring the governance arrangements in line with Local Enterprise Partnership structures and the selection process for ESIF projects being confirmed by Managing Authorities. Some members raised that some future programmes had been removed following the Autumn Statement, and the impact of this required further assessment. It was also stated the final call for Regional Development Funding for the Health and Life Sciences business cluster at Porton had been made and was due for publication by the end of December 2015.

It was confirmed that the Local Enterprise Partnerships were still not accepted by the European institutions as suitable to receive monies directly, and therefore these would continue to be directed nationally through the Department for Communities and Local Government.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To note the update.

46 **City Deal Update**

A written update on progression of the City Deal project was presented, with the project now renamed as Higher Futures. It was explained that currently six employers were involved with others expressing interest, and recruitment, advertising and development of engagement and marketing strategies were all progressing as detailed in the report. It was also confirmed a new LEP Board Member, Simon Patten of BT, was chairing the Higher Futures Subgroup.

The Committee thanked officers for the progress on the project, and would welcome a full update for the next meeting given the significance of the project.

Resolved:

To note the update and request a full briefing at the next meeting.

47 **Autumn Statement Implications**

In response to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 25 November 2015 it was explained that full details of how round 3 of Local Growth Funding would operate, and that the some or all might be restricted to specific regions, the bidding process shortened, or possibly allocation tied to local devolution deals. Full details would be available before the end of 2015, but £12 Billion total across all the funding rounds had been confirmed, meaning a total of £4 Billion currently remained unallocated.

In response to queries on the implications of the statement it was explained that some proposals had already been identified as potential bids once the details of the process was confirmed, and that the application for creation of an Enterprise Zone in Wiltshire and Swindon had not been accepted. Full feedback would follow, but it was stated due to the requirement for multiple sites and sectors, the application may have been considered more complicated than some others.

Resolved:

To note the update.

48 Date of the Next Meeting

It was agreed the proposed date of the next meeting of 28 January was not suitable for a significant number of members, and that a new date would be circulated when arranged.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.20 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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