

JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (SWLEP)

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (SWLEP)
MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2017 AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNCIL
OFFICES, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM SN15 1ER.**

Present:

Cllr David Renard (Chairman), Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE (Vice Chairman), Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Oliver Donachie, John Mortimer, Cllr Toby Sturgis (Substitute) and Cllr Garry Perkins

25 **Apologies**

It was detailed that the as a result of portfolio changes, Councillor Chuck Berry was now a member for Wiltshire, and Councillor Oliver Donachie was now a member for Swindon. Committee substitutes for Swindon Councillors would be Councillor Garry Perkins, Councillor Toby Elliott and Councillor Brian Ford, Committee substituted for Wiltshire Council would be Councillor Richard Clewer, Councillor Bridget Wayman and Councillor Toby Sturgis.

Apologies were received from Mr Adam Schallamach, Vice-Chairman of the SWLEP, Councillor Chuck Berry and Councillor Russell Holland.

Councillor Holland was substituted by Councillor Perkins, and Councillor Berry was substituted by Councillor Toby Sturgis.

26 **Minutes**

Resolved:

To receive the minutes of the SWLEP Board meeting held on 22 march 2017.

And that subject to the correction to Minute 15 to change 'Paddy Ashley' to 'Paddy Bradley' to approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2017.

27 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

28 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

29 **Public Participation**

Mr Llewellyn, a member of the public in attendance, sought details of why the Minute 37 was to be considered in private, with the reason detailed under Minute 36.

30 **Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Commissioning Group Highlight Reports**

The highlight reports as reviewed by the SWLEP Commissioning Group regarding Local Growth Fund and other projects were received.

During discussion it was noted the full business case for the A350 project had been signed off and construction work had commenced, and that the Corsham Mansion House project had been called in by the Secretary of State following approval by local planning committees. It was also stated the Junction 17 project would be underway in a few weeks from the meeting.

Details were also provided on the Careers and Enterprise Company, which was working with over 40 schools and engaging over 40 advisers with mentoring underway, and that a call for further loan applications for businesses under the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund had been launched.

The Committee also discussed progress with the Higher Futures project, which was looking to widen its scope, with further more detailed discussion under the next agenda item.

Resolved:

To note the updates to SWLEP projects.

31 **Higher Futures Proposal**

The Committee received a copy of a report to the SWLEP on the Higher Futures project, introduced by John Mortimer, Chairman of the SWLEP, and Paddy Bradley, Director of the SWLEP. The project had been set up with a government grant to address the higher level skills gap across Swindon and Wiltshire, to provide impartial advice and brokerage to employers, together with organisation development support and sector knowledge of skills requirements. The SWLEP paper followed a review of proposed outputs of the project and its operating model, proposing an extension of the service to broader and lower level skills as well.

The Committee were informed that the scheme had not been operating as originally envisaged, and that it had been out of sync with development of a growth hub and higher education strategy, with the proposals intended to integrate the new approach. The Board's suggestion would then be sent to central government to amend the original agreement. Since the original agreement the department of Education rather than Department for Business, Industry and Skills was responsible for the scheme.

The Committee was also told that there would still be a focus on the higher end of skills, for example with key performance indicators seeking to double the number of learners embarking on higher or degree apprenticeships by 2019/20.

The Committee discussed the SWLEP paper and proposal, with concerns raised that half the grant funding had already been spent setting up the scheme, and already the scheme was being refocused, with a need for clearer demonstration of effectiveness. There were also concerns that the new focus on broader and lower skills training was a significant departure from the scheme's intended purpose.

In response to queries about the education providers steering those being engaged with to particular courses it was stated that the SWLEP was confident this was not the case. In response to reference to the Ministry of Defence and higher skills training for military leavers not being followed up, it was stated the Ministry had their own schemes in place, and that the government had been challenged over this, though some of the committee felt more could have been achieved rather than changing direction so significantly.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To note the SWLEP Board decision as follows:

- 1) That Higher Futures provides employers with access to a range of impartial skills advice, support and brokerage, the priority being higher level skills following the model set out at section 4 below.**
- 2) That Higher Futures is to become part of the Growth Hub so that it is integrated into the wider framework of support for business.**
- 3) That the Board seeks approval from Government for a new delivery model and revised outputs, namely 2000 learners embarking on level 4+ programmes through Higher Futures by 2020, including doubling the number of learners embarking on higher or degree apprenticeships across the LEP area between 2015/16 and 2019/20 academic years.**

But to request that the SWLEP Board continue to challenge the government to deliver the programme as originally envisaged in relation to military leavers.

32 European Structural Investment Fund 2014-2020 Updates

The Committee received an update on the European Structural Investment Funds, as detailed in the report papers. It was also confirmed that Wiltshire Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Philippe would continue to act as Chair of the ESIF Group and could report to the Committee as required.

Resolved:

To note the update.

33 **Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (SHMA/FEMAA)**

On 14 February 2017 the Committee received an outline of the methodology and headline findings of the final draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (FEMAA). A report was presented to the meeting, updating the Committee on the joint work taking place between Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council to progress the SHMA and FEMAA , and identifying four housing market areas and three 'best fit' functional economic market areas as detailed in the papers.

The Committee discussed the report, noting the Ministerial Statement and government guidance on the status of SHMA evidence, noting that the Core Strategy and Local Plan requirements would remain the applicable housing requirement for each authority. Attention was also drawn to the Housing White Paper published in February 2017, as detailed in the report.

Resolved:

To consider the final draft SHMA and FEMAA, and to recommend to the respective councils that they consider and agree to jointly publish the documents, subject to any part II discussions.

34 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 18 October 2017, and would take place in Swindon.

35 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

36 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following items of business because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Reason for taking the item in private:

Paragraph 3 – information relating to the financial information or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

37 **Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (SHMA/FEMAA)**

The Committee received and considered a confidential report and the draft final Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (FEMAA), commenting upon its findings and the process for its progression.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That the final SHMA and FEMAA would be published in the autumn 2017 subject to consideration by both authorities' Cabinets including approval of a release date.

(Duration of meeting: 9.30 - 11.25 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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