

Wiltshire Council

Council

13 May 2014

Item 18 - Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Graham Payne, Trowbridge Drynham Division

To Councillor Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 5

Could you outline the recent successes of the Local Enterprise Partnership together with a report on the strategy to take this organisation forward? What specific benefits have accrued for Trowbridge as a result of LEP activities?

Response

The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (S&WLEP) is one of 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships established by business and local authorities and approved by government. The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership comprises of 8 private sector board members and the 2 Local Authority Leaders, plus a representative from the Higher Education/Further Education sector and the military (43 Wessex Brigade).

To date the S&WLEP has delivered the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund, a £10 million revolving fund that is currently supporting the delivery of 3 Wiltshire projects: Gateway to Growth, a £1 million fund to provide business support including a web based portal and intensive support for growth, focusing on development of; new markets, products and processes, leadership and management capacity. In the first round, 4 local businesses were provided with support, and further rounds are available. Additionally, Wiltshire Council and S&WLEP are working to deliver 'The Enterprise Network', providing incubation space and business support for local businesses.

Currently, S&WLEP is working to develop its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), setting out the schemes and infrastructure necessary to deliver economic growth through Swindon and Wiltshire. From this, the S&WLEP will negotiate with government its allocation of the Local Growth Fund which constitutes a competitive £10bn funding source for strategic infrastructure projects delivered between 2015 and 2021. As part of this, work is ongoing to establish the governance procedures, including the democratic mandate of the two Local Authorities which is being developed from the initial proposition outlined in the bid to establish S&WLEP, submitted in 2011.

While many schemes as mentioned above are LEP-wide, some bring specific benefits to Trowbridge including:

- Gateway To Growth, which has selected Trowbridge based Wessex Chamber of Commerce as its delivery partner

- White Horse Business Centre at Ashton Court Trowbridge, which is one of the centres in The Enterprise Network. Currently 4 businesses are utilising space at the centre, and through the support scheme 96 businesses have been supported across the 4 centres.

In addition, the Strategic Economic Plan, with reference to Trowbridge specifically, sets out the LEPs bid for £8.74million of Local Growth Funding to support essential transport infrastructure across Trowbridge. These projects seek to ensure that the Trowbridge transport network is developed sustainably to accommodate the future growth of the town and will help lever in an additional £8.84million in private sector contributions. In particular, proposed improvements to the West Ashton/Yarnbrook junctions are expected to create around 1470 jobs, opening up land for employment and housing. The SEP also makes provision for strategic improvements to both the local road network, sustainable transport network and the local rail network, supporting the sustainable development of Wiltshire as a whole up to 2026. These projects collectively amount to over £36million of Local Growth Fund matched by over £35million of private sector contribution.

Details of what this will comprise will be available once negotiations are concluded, but the first version of the Strategic Economic Plan is available at:

<http://www.swlep.biz/docs/1>