

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGENERATION, CULTURE AND  
ADULT EDUCATION**

Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2006, at 6 p.m.  
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor K Turner (Chairman)  
Councillor Crumpton (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors J R Davies, Ms Foster, Jackson, Jones, Rahman, Southall,  
Tyler and C Wilson

**Officers**

Assistant Director of Housing (Strategy and Private Sector) (as Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director Economic Regeneration, Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples Commissioner, Acting Assistant Director Libraries, Archives and Adult Education, Acting Head of Libraries and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property).

**Also in Attendance**

Councillors G H Davies and Mottram and three members of the public.

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**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman welcomed members and the members of the public present to the meeting and commented that he wished to send a note to the Mayor wishing him a speedy recovery and return to his duties following a recent accident and a note to the Leader of the Council expressing the condolences of the Committee at his recent sad loss.

**RESOLVED**

That the action proposed by the Chairman be endorsed.

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct the following Members declared personal interest in the matters stated as follows:-

- (a) Councillor Crumpton – In any matter on the agenda relating to Friends of Parks in view of his membership of Wollescote Friends of the Park.
- (b) Councillor J Davies – In agenda item No. 10 – Quarterly Corporate Performance Report in that he attends parks meetings as a local Councillor and any references in the agenda to friends of parks groups and also in respect of agenda

item No. 8 – Work Programme of the Committee and its Working Groups for 2006/2007 – relating to proposed consideration of the work of Dudley and District Citizens Advice Bureau in that he is involved in Sandwell Citizens Advice Bureau.

- (c) Councillor Rahman – In agenda item No. 10 – Quarterly Corporate Performance Report – as he is a member of the Friends of Park (Netherton) attending as a local Councillor.
- (d) Councillor Southall – In agenda item No. 10 - Quarterly Corporate Performance Report – in that he attends meetings of the Friends of Wordsley park.
- (e) Councillor K Turner - In agenda item No. 10 – Quarterly Corporate Performance Report – relating to any references to Dudley Zoo as he is a Trustee of Dudley Zoo and in respect of any reference to the friends of the park.
- (f) Councillor Tyler – In respect of agenda item No. 10 – Quarterly Corporate Performance Report – as he is a Trustee of Dudley Zoo and in any other item relating to Castle Hill development.

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## MINUTES

### RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2006, be approved as a correct record and signed.

It was noted that, arising from the change in the membership of the Committee, Councillor Ms Foster would replace Councillor Ms Harris as a member of the Economic Regeneration Working Group and Councillor Jones would replace Councillor Knowles as a member of the Culture and Recreation Working Group of the Committee.

A note on Regeneration Matters Proposed Pairings relating to the pairing of members in respect of issues to be considered was also made available at the meeting.

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## PUBLIC FORUM

In view of the content of the next item on the agenda – Presentation – Libraries, Archives and Adult Education Division, it was

### RESOLVED

That the Ward Members and members of the public present wishing to speak on the issue of the transfer of the Archives from Coseley to Kingswinford be given the opportunity to do so arising from the presentation to be given.

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## PRESENTATION – LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND ADULT EDUCATION DIVISION

The Acting Assistant Director, Libraries, Archives and Adult Education Division gave a presentation on the work of her division comprising Libraries, Archives and Local History service and Adult and Community Learning. Achievements in 2005/2006 and challenges for the division were also outlined. A copy of the presentation had been included in the agenda for this meeting of the Committee. Arising from the presentation given members asked a number of questions to which responses were given.

Particular comments made in respect of Libraries were:-

- (a) That it was noted that there was a report to the meeting of the Cabinet to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2006, on “Providing a Modern Library Service in Dudley MBC – A Strategy for the Future” – and it was suggested that the Select Committee would like to take the opportunity to comment on future implementation proposals in respect of key areas of the Strategy.
- (b) That the possibility of consulting with Amblecote residents following the opening of the joint use Library at Brook School be looked into so to encourage usage by adults.
- (c) That the division be congratulated on the achievement of 92% of babies receiving their Bookstart Packs since October 2006.
- (d) That further consideration be given to enabling members of the public to look at books for themselves or the provision of signposting to staff who could assist, given the withdrawal of the previous system in the light of the remodelling of the Library Service.
- (e) That if any proposals were made in the future to close Libraries these would be the subject of public consultation.

Regarding Adult and Community Learning, particular comments made were:-

- (a) That the Acting Assistant Director Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning provide a briefing note to Councillor Crumpton on the issue of the reduction of funding available for adult learning from the Learning and Skills Council in particular with regard to the implications of the withdrawal of such funding; the services

that could not be delivered as a result and alternative sources of funding that might be available.

- (b) The impact on the elderly of the withdrawal of funding for Personal Development Courses should receive further consideration given the impact of any fee increases on the take up of such courses and the beneficial health aspects to the elderly of attending such courses.

Regarding the Archives and Local History Service particular comments were made by members of the Committee and the Ward Members and members of the public present on the decision taken to move archives from Coseley to Kingswinford.

Particular comments made related to:-

- (a) The questioning of the decision to move the archives from Coseley to Kingswinford given the present condition of the site at Kingswinford and the lack of information regarding the current status of that site, the cost of refurbishing the Coseley site to meet BS5454 standard and the lack of any information regarding any feasibility study in respect of the move.
- (b) The perceived effects on Coseley of the move given that Coseley was already recognised as a deprived area.
- (c) Information that was in the local press regarding the cost of refurbishing the Coseley site which have not otherwise been made available.
- (d) The submission of an outline planning application for development of the site of the archive service in Mount Pleasant Street, Roseville.
- (e) The request that in the light of the concerns expressed this Select Committee give further consideration to the move of the archives from Coseley to Kingswinford especially as the basis for such a move, that any move would be cost neutral, would appear to have changed..
- (f) The report in the press that the move from Coseley to Kingswinford would start before the end of this year.

Prior to discussion in respect of the outline planning application referred to Councillor Southall, a member of Development Control Committee left the meeting during consideration of this matter in view of the possibility that the outline planning application received would be considered at a future meeting of the Development Control Committee so as not to prejudice his consideration of that matter at any such future meeting.

Arising from all the comments made it was:-

RESOLVED

- (1) That the presentation made on the Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning Division of the Directorate of Adult, Community Housing Services be noted and received and that the Acting Assistant Director, Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning be requested to respond, as appropriate, to the particular comments made above.
- (2) That the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of this Committee on the move of the archives from Coseley to Kingswinford and that such report include information requested on the suitability of the Coseley and Kingswinford sites; details of any report on any feasibility study undertaken together with any estimates available on refurbishing the Coseley site to meet the BS5454 standard and the cost of using the Kingswinford site.
- (3) That the Director of Law and Property be requested to forward to all members of the Committee the minutes and report arising from the earlier call-in of the decision to move the archives to Kingswinford.
- (4) That the Chairman be requested to write to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive asking that, in view of the decision of the Committee to discuss further at their next meeting the issue of the move of the archives from Coseley to Kingswinford, any further consideration of the outline planning application received in respect of the site of the archives service in Coseley be deferred until after the next meeting of this Committee.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY 2006

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on the Annual Review of Equality and Diversity for 2006. A copy of the annual Review Report was attached as an Appendix to the report submitted.

Arising from the presentation given members commented, in particular, on the following aspects:-

- (a) The perceived lack of detail in the report on the issues of Religion and Belief and Sexual Orientation including hate crime with little detail as to what the Council was doing to address those issues. Reference was also made to the decision not to include sexual orientation at this time in the employee audit.

In response the Lead Officer indicated that he would raise the issues made at the meeting of the Corporate Equality and Diversity Group. Similarly the issues of race and hate were now within the purview of the Racial Harassment Officer and this would similarly be raised at a meeting of that group and with that Officer.

- (b) That in respect of comments made about targets it was noted that these were largely contained within the individual Equality and Diversity reports of Directorates to the range of Select Committees and that any issues of performance as against targets were raised at the Corporate Equality and Diversity Group.
- (c) That the issues raised regarding the employment of women in the Directorate of the Urban Environment in non-traditional roles be raised by the Assistant Director Economic Regeneration with the relevant Officers in his Directorate together with issues regarding culture and recruitment especially in relation to the cost of advertising.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the Annual Review of Equality and Diversity for 2006 be received and noted and that the report be referred to the Cabinet for approval.

#### WORK PROGRAMME OF THE COMMITTEE AND ITS WORKING GROUPS FOR 2006/07

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the work programme of the Committee and its working groups for 2006/07 and on recommendations for consideration by the Committee arising from the initial meetings of the Economic Regeneration and Culture and Recreation working groups of the Committee.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the work programme of the Committee and its working groups for 2006/07 as set out in the report submitted be approved.
- (2) That approval be given to the following recommendations of the Committee's working groups as follows:-
  - (a) That discussion on the Visitor Economy in Dudley be deferred until the next municipal year as recommended by the Economic Regeneration Working Group.

- (b) That the issue in respect of children's play provision be referred to the Select Committee on Children Services for their consideration as recommended by the Culture and Recreation Working Group; and
  - (c) That the issue in respect of the Review of the Physical Activity Task Group be referred to the next meeting of Select Committee Chairmen so that they might identify the appropriate Select Committee to undertake the scrutiny on this issue.
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#### ORAL REPORTS OF THE CHAIRMEN OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND CULTURE AND RECREATION WORKING GROUPS ON THE WORK OF THEIR WORKING GROUPS

Councillor Rahman, Chairman of the Economic Regeneration Working Group, and Councillor Tyler, Chairman of the Culture and Recreation Working Group, commented on the work of their respective working groups.

Councillor Tyler also referred to a recent discussion he had had with Caroline Dimbylow, Chief Executive of Dudley and District Citizens Advice Bureau arising from an invitation to attend their offices in connection with Citizens Advice Bureau Advice Week.

Arising from the consideration given to his comments it was suggested that the Lead Officer to the Committee and the Assistant Director, Economic Regeneration contact her regarding the possibility of her making a presentation to a future meeting of the Council's Corporate Board on the work of Dudley and District Citizens Advice Bureau with particular reference to debt management and associated issues.

#### RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted and that the suggestion made in respect of the Chief Executive of Dudley and District Citizens Advice Bureau be endorsed.

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#### QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on performance in the final quarter of 2005/06, January to March, 2006 in relation to the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee.

Arising from the presentation given including the highlighting of certain activities, comments were made in particular regarding the difficulty people had with contacting Dudley Council Plus; the issue that whilst visits to Libraries had met targets the numbers were still below the Public Library Standards for visits; the position regarding Looked After Children and the issue that in some respects no reward had been received under the Local Public Service Agreements in respect of Libraries.

Arising from the comments made the Lead Officer to the Committee undertook to contact the appropriate Officers regarding the points made.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the performance in the final quarter of 2005/06, January to March, 2006, in relation to the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee, be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm.

CHAIRMAN