

Minutes of the Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 1st October, 2014 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 3 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:

Councillor D Tyler (Chair)
Councillor A Finch (Vice Chair)
Councillors S Ali, J Cowell, W Duckworth, N Gregory, C Hale, I Kettle, P Miller,
R Scott-Dow and E Taylor.

Officers:

R Sims (Assistant Director, Adult, Community and Housing Services - Housing Strategy and Private Sector), (Lead Officer to the Committee), R Dugdale (Head of Economic Development), J Scott (Principal Executive Support Officer) (Both Directorate of the Urban Environment) and H Shepherd (Democratic Services Officer, Directorate of Corporate Resources).

5 Declarations of interest

No member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

6 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th July, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

7 Public Forum

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

8 Inward investment in Dudley Borough and the Black Country

A report of the Lead Officer to the Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee was submitted to provide Members with a draft work programme to support the scrutiny of inward investment activities in the Dudley Borough and the Black Country.

Arising from the presentation of the report and in response to a question raised by a member, the Head of Economic Development agreed to circulate to Members of the Committee the annual reports and relevant information from the organisations that were proposed to be witnesses, so that Members could obtain an understanding of their business role, achievements and aspirations and that this information be provided prior to the final report being presented at the Scrutiny Committee on 30th March, 2015.

The Chair requested that witnesses with an educational and tourism perspective also be included in the proposed list of witnesses and it was recommended that Lowell Williams, Principal of Dudley College and Peter Suddock, Chief Executive of Dudley Zoological Gardens be invited to a future Scrutiny Committee or asked to provide written representations for consideration.

In referring to the Best Practice area of Scrutiny, the Chair requested that information be provided where inward investment at other authorities had failed and to look at the worst practices so that the Dudley Borough and the Black Country could learn from their mistakes and experiences. Similar information was also requested for the funding category and in relation to funding applications that had been unsuccessful and the reasons why.

Members gave consideration to the opportunities and the possible revival of Dudley Town Centre if a University was to be established within the borough and suggested that this option be explored further. Reference was made to a Notice of Motion that had been made at Council in previous years in relation to this issue and the Chair requested that a copy of the Motion be circulated to Members for information.

Members considered the importance of establishing and developing good teaching centres within the town centre to encourage regeneration and growth which in turn would be linked to the development of additional residential sites to accommodate the staff and students, which would then attract further investments into the town and the borough.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft work programme to support the scrutiny of inward investment activities in the Dudley Borough and the Black Country, as set out in the report submitted and all relevant comments and recommendations made by Members at the meeting, be noted and endorsed.
- (2) That the Head of Economic Development be requested to circulate to Members of the Scrutiny Committee the annual reports and relevant information from the proposed witness organisations, so that Members could ascertain an understanding of their business role, achievements and aspirations and that this information be provided prior to the final report being submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on 30th March, 2015.

- (3) That the Democratic Services Officer be requested to circulate to Members of the Scrutiny Committee a copy of the Notice of Motion considered by Council in relation to the support of the development of a University within the Dudley Borough, for information.

9 **For Information only items**

- (a) Update on the numbers and key demographic characteristics of the Town Centre residents in Dudley

Resolved

That the information contained in the report, circulated to Members prior to the meeting, be noted.

- (b) Review of Environmental Management – Commercial Services

Resolved

- (1) That the information contained in the report, circulated to Members prior to the meeting, be noted
- (2) That an interim report on this item be circulated to Members prior to the final report being submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on 30th March, 2015 and that Members be requested to feedback any comments on the information circulated direct to the relevant Officers.

The meeting ended at 6.50pm.

CHAIR