
Environment Scrutiny Committee – 7th September, 2011

Report of the Lead Officer to the Committee

Annual Report of the Select Committee on Environment for 2010/11

Purpose of Report

1. To submit to the Committee and Council the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Environment for 2010/2011.

Background

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires that Committees report annually to the full Council on the work carried out over the previous municipal year making both recommendations for key areas of future work and any amended working methods, if appropriate, for the forthcoming year.
3. In deciding its work programme for 2010/11, the Committee chose to concentrate on a manageable list of important issues to ensure that they could be properly scrutinised, whilst at the same time giving the Committee some flexibility to add some additional items that arose during the course of the year.
4. Accordingly, items included in the planned work programme for the Committee in 2010/11 were as follows:-
 - (a) Food Service Plan;
 - (b) Local Authority Void Property Review;
 - (c) Animal Health and Welfare Functions of the Council.
 - (d) Rogue Traders and Doorstep Crime;
 - (e) Age Restricted Products Enforcement;
 - (f) Progress Report Food Service Plan 2010/11
 - (g) An Update on Air Quality Management within the Dudley Metropolitan Borough.
 - (h) Recycling Working Group;
 - (i) Flood Risk Management;
 - (j) Tenancy and Estate Management;
 - (k) Progress Report Food Service Plan 2010/11

5. The Committee's Work Programme for the 2010/11 municipal year also included the following standard reports:-
- Quarterly Reports on Corporate Performance Management;
 - Update on the Council's Capital Strategy;
 - Revenue Budget Strategy for 2011/12;
 - The Equality and Diversity Report 2009/10 of the Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement.

Food Service Plan 2010/11

6. Reports were submitted and noted on the Food Service Plan for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12. Copies of the Food Service Plan Summaries were also submitted together with a progress report on the delivery of the service within the Food Service Plan 2010/11 at the half-year stage. Particular reference was made to the improvement in relation to the figures for compliance of premises in Dudley.

Housing Matters

- 7(a) A report was submitted on a proposed Local Authority Void Property Review to scope the remit and agree a process of scrutiny.

Arising from the above further reports were submitted and noted to meetings of the Committee in relation to the Council Housing Void Property Review, detailing the remit of the Housing Working Group and the end to end lettings review of the whole void and letting process and on the position with high cost voids and the actions proposed to deal with these.

- 7(b) A report updating Members on Tenancy and Estate Management in Housing Services was considered and noted.
- 7(c) A report was submitted and noted on High Cost Voids advising Members of progress made and actions taken in relation to the same.
- 7(d) A report was submitted, considered and noted in relation to homelessness activity during 2010/11 with Members considering the implications.

Animal Health and Welfare Functions of the Council

8. A report was submitted and noted on animal health and welfare responsibilities of the local authority and of the scope of the work being undertaken to meet those responsibilities.

Rogue Traders and Doorstep Crime

9. A report was submitted and noted containing detailed information in relation to the role of Dudley Trading Standards Services in combating the problems of Doorstep Crime and investigating rogue traders. Arising from the presentation of the report, Members of the Committee expressed support and praise for the Fix a Home scheme, that included 120 traders that offered a wide range of property and garden maintenance services.

Age Restricted Products Enforcement

10. The Committee considered and noted a report submitted on the enforcement and advice activity carried out by the Trading Standards service concerning age-restricted products including, alcohol, tobacco, spray paints and knives, and to provide an annual Report on tobacco enforcement and aerosol spray paints activity as required by specified legislation. This included the forthcoming tobacco control legislation which was currently subject to consultation.

Air Quality Management Within Dudley Metropolitan Borough

11. A report was submitted and noted updating Members on the current situation with air quality within the Borough, addressing areas of work to do with air quality monitoring; areas identified as having air quality issues; Air Quality Action Plan progress and monitoring and statutory requirements for 2011. Members supported continuing monitoring in 2011/12 together with continued work to reduce air pollution in accordance with the aims of the Air Quality Action Plan. Members also supported the proposal that the final version of the Air Quality Action Plan be reported to Cabinet for adoption.

Recycling Working Group.

12. The Committee considered a report on the current work of the Recycling Working Group. Members also noted details in relation to participating streets in respect of the plastic bottle and cardboard recycling trial which were appended to the report.

Flood Risk Management

13. Members considered and noted the increased roles and responsibilities of the Council in respect of flood risk management and surface water flooding, as well as the Council's responsibility to develop and produce a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Report and a Surface Water Management Plan. Members also supported the approach taken in assessing the risks of flooding in the Borough and the approach of Council Officers in the development of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment.
14. At the meeting held on 16th June, the following items were proposed for inclusion in the work programme for the 2011/12 municipal year:-
 - Matters for information, e-mailed to Members that they may wish to ask questions about.
 - Work Programme for 2011/12.
 - The Homelessness Service – Annual Report 2010/11.
 - Air Quality Action Plan.
 - Food Service Plan.
 - High Cost Voids.

- Annual Report of the Select Committee to Council.
- Outcome of Recycling Trial and Recycling Proposals.
- Rogue Traders and Doorstep Crime.
- Age Restricted Products.
- Outline Work Programme 2012/13.
- Tenancy and Estate Management.

Conclusion

15. The areas forming the bulk of the Committee's work continue to concentrate upon issues relating to housing, promoting environmental well-being and consumer issues.

Finance

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

Law

17. The requirement for the Committee to submit an annual report to the Council is contained in Article 6 of the Constitution as read with Part II of the Local Government Act, 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Equality Impact

18. This report complies fully with the Council's policies on equal opportunities and diversity.
19. This report has no specific effect on children and young people. There is no requirement for consultation with children and young people in producing the report or the development of proposals.

Recommendation

20. That the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Environment for 2010/11 as set out above, be received, noted and referred to Council.



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PHILIP TART
LEAD OFFICER TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Contact Officer: Kim Fellows, Directorate of Corporate Resources
 Telephone: 01384 – 815241 (ext. 5241)
 Email: kim.fellows@dudley.gov.uk