

## **Meeting of the Council – 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2010**

### **Annual Report of the Select Committee on the Environment for 2009/10**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To submit to Council the Annual Report of the Select Committee on the Environment for the 2009/2010 municipal year.

#### **Background**

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires that Select 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. The Select Committee Chairmen have agreed that the annual report for this Select Committee should be submitted to the October meeting of the Council.
3. In deciding its work programme for 2009/10, 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 2009/10 were as follows:-
  - (a) Food Service Plan;
  - (b) Presentation on the work of the Pest Control Team;
  - (c) Drainage Report;
  - (d) Final Evaluation of the North Dudley Gardening Initiative;
  - (e) Use, Abuse and Effectiveness of Speed Cameras;
  - (f) Civil Parking Enforcement and Respective Roles of the Council and the Police in Dealing with cases of obstruction;
  - (g) Food Service Progress;
  - (h) Tenancy and Estate Management – Patch-Working;
  - (i) Air Quality Management progress;
  - (j) Choice Based Lettings – Points to Banding;
  - (k) Recycling Working Group report.

5. The following items were also considered by the Committee during 2009/10:-
  - Review of the Community Strategy on the Dudley Borough Challenge Review 2009/12 together with details of the headline achievements since 2005 relating to the terms of reference of the Committee;
  - Housing Applications from Owner Occupiers and Former Owner Occupiers, informing the Committee of a query raised by an Elected Member, and inviting Members' views on the issue and related issues.
  - Review of Housing Allocations: Progress Report, updating the Committee on the work that was taking place to make the Housing Allocations Scheme simpler and more transparent.
  
6. The Select Committee's Work Programme for the 2009/10 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 2010/11;
  - The Equality and Diversity Report of the Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement.

### **Food Service Plan 2009/10**

7. At our meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2009, we received a report on the Food Service Plan 2009/10, together with a copy of the Food Service Plan Summary, which was attached as an Appendix to the report. Particular reference was made to the high level of programmed inspections of food premises being maintained and the Scores on the Doors scheme, which had been extremely successful.

### **Pest Control**

8. A PowerPoint presentation was also given at our June meeting focusing on the work of the Pest Control Team relating to the composition of the team, the advice provided in order to determine the appropriate treatment in relation to varying insects and rodents including mice and rats and dealing with stray dogs. The service figures for 2008/09 together with the charges that may be implemented and photographs of some premises inspected were displayed.

### **Gardening Initiative**

9. At our meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2009 a report on the full evaluation of the North Dudley Pilot and setting out proposals for making the scheme borough wide and widening its remit was considered and noted.

### **Drainage Responsibilities**

10. A further report was submitted to the September meeting on the respective roles, obligations and responsibilities of the Council, Severn Trent Water Limited, the Environment Agency, British Waterways and riparian owners in respect of drainage matters and updating the Committee on the Floods and Water Management Bill. The work undertaken by the Council's street Maintenance and Engineering Sections in respect of managing drainage in the Borough, Community ownership and the response of the Council to the consultation were supported.

### **Use, Abuse and Effectiveness of Speed Cameras**

11. The Committee also considered at its September meeting a report on the use, abuse and effectiveness of speed cameras together with the Department of Transport National Safety Camera Programme, the four-year evaluation report and the Dudley District Major Road Network and duly noted the report.

### **Civil Parking Enforcement and Respective Roles of the Council and the Police in dealing with cases of Obstruction**

12. A report was also submitted to the September meeting clarifying the powers of the Council in operating Civil Parking Enforcement, making particular reference to obstructive parking and the code of conduct contained in the Highway Code and other legislation, indicating that should the Police determine that a dangerous situation had occurred due to obstructive parking, they could issue their own enforcement notices. Patrol leaflets were circulated at the meeting and specific reference was made to the flow chart contained within the leaflet detailing the parking penalty enforcement process. The report was noted.

### **Tenancy and Estate Management**

13. At our meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2009 a report updating Members on Tenancy and Estate Management in Housing Services was considered and noted together with Tenancy and Estate Management Key Performance Indicators and case studies of positive interventions.

### **An Update on Air Quality Management within Dudley Metropolitan Borough**

14. At our meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 a report was submitted updating Members on the current situation with respect to air quality within the Borough addressing areas of work to do with air quality monitoring; areas identified as having poor air quality; Air quality Management Area and Action Plan progress and future initiatives for 2010. The report was noted and support was given to the continued monitoring in 2010/11 to assist in furthering understanding and making further improvements to the air quality within the Borough.

### **Housing Applications from Owner Occupiers and Former Owner Occupiers**

15. The Committee also considered at its January meeting a report on a query raised by an Elected Member, inviting Members' views on this and related issues. Members recommended that elderly existing council tenants should be prioritised in relation to the allocation of bungalows. Support was given to the general policy that Council properties should not be allocated to people who own or jointly own a property and anyone who transfers ownership of a property should only be considered for flats or maisonettes.

## **Review of Housing Allocations Progress Report**

16. At our meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 a report was received and noted updating the Committee on the work that was taking place to make the Housing Allocations Scheme simpler and more transparent. The areas of work involved with the replacement of the points scheme with a Bandings Scheme were outlined. Details in relation to updating existing applications were referred to. It was noted that work in relation to updating existing applications was due for completion during mid March, 2011, following which those on the waiting lists would be advised of their band, the band start date and the reason for being placed within the band, which would ensure that applicants knew their place upon the waiting list.
17. At our meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2010, the following outline work programme was proposed for the 2010/11 municipal year:-
  - Food Service Plan
  - Work Programme for 2010/11
  - Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Reports;
  - Appointment of Working Groups;
  - Local Authority Housing Void Property Review;
  - Equality and Diversity Action Plan;
  - Annual Report of the Committee to the Council;
  - Animal Welfare;
  - Trading Standards work on Doorstep Crime and Age Restricted Products;
  - Area Housing Panels;
  - Update on the Council's Capital Strategy;
  - Food Service Plan;
  - Recycling Working Group;
  - Air Quality Management Progress;
  - Proposed Revenue Budget 2011/12
  - Outline Work Programme for 2011/12
  - Drainage Report;
  - Tenancy and Estate Management.

## **Conclusion**

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

## **Finance**

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

## **Law**

20. 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**

21. This report complies fully with the Council's policies on equality and diversity.
22. 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**

23. That the Annual Report of the Select Committee on the Environment for 2009/10, as set out above, be noted.



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**Chairman of the Select Committee on the Environment**