

## **SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Wednesday, 26th November, 2003, at 6.00 p.m.

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Mottram (Chair)  
Councillors Burston, Burt, Cotterill, Finch, Ms Foster, Mrs Millward, Turner and Tyler, together with Mr M Williams (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Ms D Channings (Housing Services), Mr A Cook (Community Safety Team), Mr G Thomas (Head of Policy), Ms S Menghini (Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning), Ms C Peek (Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning), Mr P Tart (Legal and Democratic Services), Mr J McCabe (Pupil Access Services Manager - Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning) and Mrs J Holland (Directorate of Law and Property)

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### **MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th October, 2003, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Turner declared a Personal Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in agenda item 5 (Conditions Applied to Sales of Properties to Secure Tenants) insofar as it related to her involvement with the 'Right to Buy' service.

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### **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Dunn.

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### **CONDITIONS APPLIED TO SALES OF PROPERTIES TO SECURE TENANTS**

Ms Diane Channings (Assistant Director of Housing – Housing Management) gave a brief overview of the report of the Director of Housing now submitted regarding conditions applied to the sale of properties to secure tenants in relation to anti-social behaviour.

The report submitted, focused mainly on solutions covering lower levels of anti-social behaviour problems. In response to questions put by Members of the Committee, Ms Channing confirmed that there were other solutions, other than those outlined in the report when dealing with tenants' anti-social behaviour. The issuing of an anti-social behaviour order was one solution, together with the imposition of a fine when dealing with private landlord tenants.

Ms Channing stated that the higher level of anti-social behaviour could involve the issue of a Court Order and steps being taken for breach of covenant that could lead to the forfeiture of the lease to the property. She cited a case involving a Dudley tenant that had been widely reported, whereby the tenant had been fined £3,000 for indulging in anti-social behaviour.

Mr K Mayou stated that he would arrange for a representative of the Magistrates' Court to attend a future meeting to update the Committee on the current legislation.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report be noted.

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#### REGULATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR LANDLORDS – IMPACT ON COMMUNITY SAFETY

A report of the Director of Housing was submitted with the summary of the content of the draft Housing Bill, in so far as it relates to community safety issues.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director of Housing (Dr Sims) sought support for the setting up of a landlord/tenants accreditation scheme.

In response to a question as to whether the instigation of an accreditation scheme for landlords would assist Dudley in achieving the grant of a Government Selective Licence for certain areas of the Borough, Dr Sims explained that there were few smaller private landlords in Dudley but the exercise could be conducted through the Landlords' Forum to ascertain the exact number.

In response to a question, Dr Sims explained that the Council held powers to take action against problem tenants, but that most of the problem tenants would formally vacate a property prior to legal action being taken.

Dr Sims also stated that “Shelter” had expressed concern about some aspects of the selective licensing scheme indicating that it would increase the risk of people becoming homeless, particularly in the private landlord sector.

#### RESOLVED

That the report be noted and support given to the consultation and further development of a landlord/tenant accreditation scheme.

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#### RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE IN DUDLEY MBC

A report of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning was submitted on recent developments in behaviour and attendance of pupils at schools within the Council. The report was presented by Ms S Menghini (Assistant Director of Education) on behalf of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Ms Menghini stated that Dudley MBC had a statutory and moral responsibility to ensure that pupils attended school and that, to this end, the curriculum needed to be made more appealing to them and parents needed to become involved.

Concerns were also expressed with regard to authorised absence, where a child was taken out of school during term time for family holidays.

Ms Menghini stated that Mr J McCabe (Pupil Access to Services Manager) would be producing a data and strategy document that would be available in the new year and that a consultant on behaviour and attendance had also been appointed, together with family link workers. Mr McCabe commented that a range of measures, tailored specifically for individual schools, would be explored to tackle the issues relating to absence from school.

Following further discussion, it was

#### RESOLVED

That the report and the attached appendices be noted.

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#### UPDATE ON THE STRATEGIES RELATING TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHER PROACTIVE PREVENTION METHODS

Mr Geoff Thomas (Head of Policy) presented a report of the Chief Executive containing an update regarding the requirement of Local Authorities to prevent offending by children and young people under The Crime and Disorder Act 1998. One aspect of the report was the prevention of, primarily the responsibility of the YOT team.

Following a short discussion, it was

RESOLVED

That Mr G Thomas, Mr M Galikowski, Ms S Menghini and Mr J McCabe submit a joint report to a future meeting, setting out all the actions and strategies implemented.

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#### SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted reviewing the work in which the Directorate of the Urban Environment was engaged in order to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

In response to a question, Mr Williams of the Directorate of the Urban Environment stated that new firework legislation was due to come into force and details would be included in an updated report to a future meeting. The report would set out the powers that Local Authorities could use in enforcing the new legislation and he would also consult with Legal and the Fire Service.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm

CHAIR