

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

Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2006, at 6 p.m.  
in Committee Room 3 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

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

Officers

Assistant Director of Housing (Strategy and Private Sector) (as Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director of Culture and Community Services, Acting Assistant Director Libraries, Archives and Lifelong Learning, Senior Assistant Director of Finance, Head of Policy, Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer (Chief Executive's), Personnel Manager, Principal Personnel Officer, (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Management Support Officer (Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement) and Mrs M Johal (Directorate of Law and Property).

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APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that an apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Ms Foster.

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DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Ms Harris declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item No 5 (Terms of Reference, Rules of Procedure of the Committee and Scrutiny Protocols for Select Committees) in respect of references to health in view of her being the Chair of Dudley Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

- (a) That the minutes of the Special Meeting of the former Select Committee on Economic Regeneration held on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2006 be approved as a correct record.
- (b) That the minutes of the meeting of the former Select Committee on Culture and Recreation held on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 be approved as a correct record.

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**TERMS OF REFERENCE, RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY PROTOCOLS FOR SELECT COMMITTEES**

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A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted setting out the terms of reference, procedure rules applicable to this Committee and the scrutiny protocols for Select Committees.

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2, paragraph 14 and commented that discussion had previously been undertaken with the Vice-Chairman and they were of the view that appropriate professionals, in the form of Elected Members and other bodies, should be invited as regular attendees to meetings of Working Groups to provide expert advice in their specialised fields.

In response to a query the Chairman confirmed that "Public Forum" would be included as a standard agenda item and also that, if the press were not present during a meeting, a press release detailing main discussion points would be released. Mention was also made that efforts would be made to pursue the previous route of the former Select Committee on Culture and Recreation in the form of a dedicated Web Page.

**RESOLVED**

That the information contained in the report, and in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 attached to the report on the terms of reference, rules of procedure of the Committee and scrutiny protocols for Select Committees, be noted.

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE'S EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2005/06**

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A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the Chief Executive's Directorate's equality and diversity annual report for 2005/06.

Arising from the presentation of the report a Member commented in relation to the workforce profile and remarked that there was a large percentage of staff on scale point 34 and above. It was indicated that it would be useful to have a further split above that level to enable a further differentiation to be made. Information relating to the duties and responsibilities at Principal Officer level together with a comparison to staff in the private sector or other equivalent was also requested.

Further comments made included the need to incorporate, in future reports, details of progress that had been made, whether there had been any changes, achievements to date and comparisons on how well the Local Authority were doing in relation to the voluntary sector.

In responding the Head of Policy advised that the report on the annual review of equality and diversity contained far more detail and information, however he undertook to pursue the comments made.

The Lead Officer to the Committee acknowledged that templates were used for all Directorates, however it was suggested that information and data for the previous three years should also be submitted to enable a proper comparison to be made.

A Member made reference to the recent London bombings and the failed communication system and urged that the process should be managed appropriately and regularly reviewed to improve potential responses in major emergencies.

RESOLVED

That the Chief Executive's Directorate's equality and diversity annual report for 2005/06 be noted.

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DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE, ICT AND PROCUREMENT EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2005/06

A report of the Director of Finance was submitted on the Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement's equality and diversity annual report for 2005/06.

Arising from the presentation of the report a Member queried the impact on the Local Authority following the reorganisation of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). In responding the Senior Assistant Director of Finance reported that it had been noted that the responses received from DWP had varied on a day-to-day basis. Workloads were onerous creating significant problems but efforts were made to maintain close liaison and dialogue with DWP. However, it was felt that DWP needed to work harder to interface with Local Authority's but in any event customers were still receiving the required information. In response to a further query on whether there was a mechanism in place to enable feedback being provided to the Government on the impact and the current position of Local Authority's, the Senior Assistant Director of Finance advised that there was a Benefits Officers Group, however he was not aware whether there was a regional or local mechanism in place to ensure that issues were fed back to the Government. He undertook to investigate the matter and respond back to the Member concerned.

RESOLVED

That the Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement's equality and diversity annual report for 2005/06 be noted.

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## DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT'S EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2005/06

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Directorate of the Urban Environment's equality and diversity annual report for 2005/06.

Arising from the presentation of the report it was commented that it would be useful to have details of advertisement methods used by the Local Authority to recruit staff from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. It was pointed out that British Home Stores, as part of their recruitment process, targeted areas of high unemployment and also specifically at BME groups. They did not advertise all their vacancies through the press and used leafleting as a major advertising media. In responding the Principal Personnel Officer reported that the Directorate of the Urban Environment had also been proactive and Officers had visited communities and advertisements had been placed in local shops and supermarkets. The Lead Officer to the Committee further commented that although other Directorates did not have precisely the same problems to the Directorate of the Urban Environment in recruiting BME groups they should not be complacent and various advertising methods should be used.

Following further comments reference was made to figures above scale point 34 and it was requested that detailed facts and figures separating them further should be made available and in a clearer format for Members to have a better understanding. It was also suggested that Officers should take the opportunity to advertise vacancies by participating in community events and to also advertise the Council's website to alert the public that vacancies were advertised on the website.

### RESOLVED

That the Directorate of the Urban Environment's equality and diversity annual report for 2005/06 be noted.

## QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the third Quarterly Corporate Performance Management report for 2005/06, relating to performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005.

Members commented on their experiences and frustration in getting through to Dudley Council Plus and were often left waiting in telephone queues for a good few minutes. It was also commented that if the Officer became aware that the caller was a Councillor then they were treated preferentially, however this should not be the case and all service users should be treated equally. Some Members were circumventing the system and ringing Officers direct due to the inadequate service, which resulted in calls not being logged and tracked.

#### RESOLVED

That the Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005, be noted.

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#### WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2006/07

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the Work Programme for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

Some Members expressed concern that the Committee would be unable to appropriately scrutinise issues effectively due to the number of items on the workload. However, it was also felt that all items should be considered, as they were all important and vital issues. Concern was also expressed that the work programme did not include any aspect of adult education. It was felt that the former Select Committee on Economic Regeneration and the former Select Committee on Culture and Recreation had been amalgamated with other areas. This would require workload realignment and reprioritisation. This would result in additional meetings to ensure that the respective areas could be appropriately considered as part of the Committees scrutiny and policy role.

The Chairman reported that he had had discussions with the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Community Education Division) and it had been agreed that a presentation would be submitted to the September Committee meeting in relation to adult education. This would enable Members to have an overview of the adult education agenda with the opportunity to look at a working group or short life groups in relation to any specific issues of concern or development. He also indicated that until Select Committee Chairmen met to assign ICT Strategy to the appropriate Select Committee it would remain as part of this Committee's work programme.

The Chairman circulated a paper listing pairings for Members to independently investigate specific issues as Champions with a view to reporting back to the Committee in due course.

The Senior Assistant Director of Finance indicated that the Council's Budget should be included as part of the standing items for the Committee to consider.

It was also indicated that the Select Committee on the Environment would receive reports on equality and diversity for the Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement in the future.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the Work Programme of the Committee for 2006/07 be approved to include the following items:
- Innovation, Incubation and Enterprise Centre
  - Disability Access Strategy
  - Section 106 Agreements
  - Visitor Economy in Dudley and the Council's Role
  - ICT Strategy
  - Economic Strategy
  - Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Groups
  - Leisure Centre Performance (including the impact of ring fencing income to implement the Leisure Centre Strategy eg: is it the best service we can provide with the resources we have got)?
  - Review Implementation of the Cultural Strategy
  - Evaluation of impact of Liveability Grant and Consequences of the Funding Finishing
  - Review of Impact of the "Physical Activity Task Group" Partnership Network
  - Children's Play Provision/A Play Strategy (Policy Development)
  - "Towards an Excellent Service" – A National Self Assessment Tool for Sports and Recreation
  - Proposals for Publicising Smart Cards
  - Insurance Arrangements for Community Groups using Council owned Facilities
  - Three Year Best Value Survey and IPAQ (International Physical Activity Questionnaire) Survey
  - Council's Budget
  - Update of the Council's Capital Strategy
  - Equality and Diversity Reports for the Directorates of the Urban Environment and Chief Executive's
  - Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Reports
  - Annual Review of Equality and Diversity 2006
- (2) That, Officers, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, be requested to compile a timetable of the Work Programme for the ensuing year.

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APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the appointment of Working Groups of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education (Economic Regeneration) Working Group be appointed for the 2006/07 Municipal Year with its terms of reference as indicated in the report and membership comprising Councillors Ms Harris, J R Davies, Rahman (Chairman) and Wilson.
- (2) That the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education (Culture and Recreation) Working Group be appointed for the 2006/07 Municipal Year with its terms of reference as indicated in the report and membership comprising Councillors Hill, Jackson, Knowles, Southall and Tyler (Chairman).
- (3) That the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillor J R Davies undertake independent work in relation to the work of equality and diversity within the terms of reference as indicated in the report.

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CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman requested that a letter be sent to Councillor Ms Craigie and to Graham Debney extending the Committees best wishes on a speedy recovery following their recent illnesses.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.

CHAIRMAN