

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

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010, at 6.00 pm  
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor P Harley (Chairman)  
Councillor Mottram (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Barlow, Caunt, G H Davies, Knowles, Lowe, K Turner and Woodall.

**Officers**

Assistant Director Housing Strategy and Private Sector (Lead Officer to the Committee); Interim Assistant Director ICT and Business Transformation; Borough Archivist and Investment Manager (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services); Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Head of Economic Regeneration Strategy, Head of Economic Regeneration Delivery, Planning Policy Manager and Planning Obligations Officer (all Directorate of the Urban Environment); Head of Human Resources Team Supporting Urban Environment and Principal Human Resources Officer Supporting Urban Environment (Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources); Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer (Chief Executives Directorate) and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources).

Six members of the public were also in attendance.

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**APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Ms Partridge.

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mottram declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in relation to Agenda Item 12 – Update on Dudley Archives and Local History relocation – in that he is a member of the Board of the Black Country Living Museum.

Councillor K Turner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in relation to any references to Castle Hill Development as he is a Trustee of Dudley Zoological Society.

Councillor K Turner also declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda 9 – Healthy Towns Project – in relation to any reference to Groundwork Black Country as he is a Director/Vice Chairman of that body.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public asked for a definitive answer as to when the decision to close Coseley Baths was first mooted.

In response reference was made to the report of the Structural Engineers that had been submitted and the subsequent report to a meeting of the Cabinet. The date therefore was approximately a fortnight before that Cabinet meeting in 2009.

Following the response given members of the public asked further questions as they disputed the response given.

Following further comments regarding the lead up to the closure of the baths a comment was made by a further member of the public that it was considered that the Council needed to rebuild trust with members of the public in relation to this and other matters.

Mr Wilkes, a member of the public, also circulated at the meeting his Fourth Commentary from Coseley Civic Society. He also asked that if any member required a copy of previous commentaries would they contact him direct.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE'S EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2010/11

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the annual equality and diversity action plan for 2010/11 for the Chief Executive's Directorate.

Following a presentation of the content of the report, and copy of the action plan attached as an Appendix to the report, submitted by the Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer members made a number of comments with particular reference to community safety generally and the holding of a specific event for which preparations and planning had been undertaken.

In relation to a comment made regarding the census, referred to at point (2) of Objective CE3 of the Appendix, the Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer undertook to investigate the position regarding a future census and inform Councillor Turner direct.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the Chief Executive's Directorate's equality and diversity action plan for 2010/11, be noted.

#### DUDLEY BOROUGH ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2010/11

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the draft Dudley Borough Economic Strategy that had been updated for 2010/11.

Following a presentation of the content of the report by the Head of Economic Regeneration Strategy a number of comments were made in relation to measures to improve the low skills base in the area and the various economic regeneration activities that would be taken forward from 2010/11 as outlined in paragraph 18 of the report submitted.

In relation to one of those activities – the Future Jobs Fund initiative, to provide training opportunities for 18-24 year olds who had been unemployed for between 6 to 12 months and for unemployed people aged 25 plus from unemployment “hot spots” in the Borough, improvements regarding the number of referrals made were reported on and the Head of Economic Regeneration Strategy indicated that she would be looking to further publicise this initiative by looking at a number of case studies.

In response to a point made about the loss of skills in the Borough reference was made to the increasing emphasis on inward investment one feature of which was the development of the South Black Country Innovation Centre.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, as part of the consultation process on the draft Dudley Borough Economic Strategy 2010/11, be noted and that any further comments on the draft be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration prior to the Cabinet Meeting to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 when the strategy would be submitted to that meeting for approval.

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THE BLACK COUNTRY JOINT CORE STRATEGY UPDATE

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted updating the Committee on the progress made on the Joint Core Strategy that had now reached an advanced stage.

In her presentation of the content of the report the Planning Policy Manager indicated that the Strategy documents had now been submitted to the Secretary of State and that an examination in public was planned for July 2010 when interested parties would be invited to discuss the issues relating to the strategy in public.

Arising from the presentation given a particular question was asked as to who the interested parties would be who would be invited to discuss the issues relating to the strategy in public. In response to this the Planning Policy Manager undertook to e-mail all Members of the Committee details, once available, of those interested parties.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, updating the Committee on progress made on the Joint Core Strategy that had now reached an advanced stage, be noted.

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HEALTHY TOWNS PROJECT

Arising from the undertaken given by the Chairman at the last meeting of the Committee further consideration was given to any further questions raised by members of the committee in relation to the Healthy Towns Project.

In this connection it was noted that further questions raised by Councillor Lowe had received a speedy response from the Assistant Director Culture and Leisure and the Officer was thanked for this.

Members of the Committee then made a number of comments emphasising their concerns regarding the initial lack of involvement of elected Members with this project; the discussions that had arisen from this and the outcomes in particular the updates that were now received by all Members of the Council.

Arising from this it was considered that elected Members should be engaged at the pre-decision stage of such projects in the future. There was also a need for lessons to be learnt including ensuring the full involvement of all partners so that amongst other things opportunities for possible enhanced funding might be realised.

In response to a specific question as to how the figure of 48% of all park visits recorded in the Borough had occurred at Mary Stevens Park had been arrived at the Head of Sport and Physical Activity would arrange for a response to this point to be provided direct to Councillor Lowe.

#### RESOLVED

That the further comments made, as indicated above, in respect of the Healthy Towns Project, be noted.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted giving information on contributions that had been received and approved under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) during the first six months of the 2009/10 financial year together with information on the Section 106 and Unilateral Undertaking Legal Agreements that were signed during the same six month period.

Arising from the presentation of the content of the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted by the Planning Policy Manager Members commented on the overall content and current position regarding planning obligations welcoming the current position regarding the information provided which was considered to be much improved and more transparent than the position previously. The work undertaken by the Committee in this regard was also cited as a good example of the scrutiny function of the Committee.

Arising from a specific query regarding the amounts recorded in respect of planning applications P08/1660 and P08/1608, referred to on the first page of Appendix 1 to the report submitted, the Planning Policy Manager undertook to arrange for the details to be rechecked and for a response to be sent to Councillor G H Davies.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on contributions that had been received and approved under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the first six months of 2009/10 financial year together with information on the Section 106 and Unilateral Undertaking Legal Agreements that were signed during the same six month period, be noted and commended.

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DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT'S EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN FOR 2010/2011

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the annual equality and diversity action plan for 2010/2011 for the Directorate of the Urban Environment, a copy of which was attached as an Appendix to the report submitted.

Following the presentation of the content of the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted and comments made it was:-

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the Directorate of the Urban Environment's equality and diversity action plan for 2010/2011, be noted.

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UPDATE ON DUDLEY ARCHIVES AND LOCAL HISTORY RELOCATION

A presentation was given by the Borough Archivist on the Proposed Dudley Archive and Local History Centre to be located on the Black Country Living Museum site.

A briefing note had previously been circulated to Members of the Committee and copies of the latest plans for this project including concept designs, architect's impression and schematic layouts were circulated at the meeting.

The Borough Archivist in her presentation commented on the latest plans submitted which indicated a stand alone archive building to be placed on the rough ground next to where coaches currently parked on the site. The implementation plan for the new building was being finalised with a planned completion in 2012.

Arising from the presentation given and comments made it was noted in particular that the new facility would have considerably larger floor space than the current facility and that it would fully comply with BS5454. It was further noted that the Archives Board, which included the Council's partners namely the Black Country Living Museum and Sandwell Libraries and Archives Service, were leading the project and that the Museum supported the proposed location for the facility.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the briefing note, presentation given and as reported at the meeting, on the current position regarding the proposed Dudley Archive and Local History Centre, be noted.

PROGRESS REPORT ON CORPORATE ICT STRATEGY 2008-13

A report of the Interim Director of Finance was submitted on progress with the implementation of the five year Corporate ICT Strategy 2008-2013.

The Interim Assistant Director of ICT and Business Transformation commented on the content of the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted and responded to particular questions raised in relation to funding/budgetary matters, video conferencing, issues regarding the usage and security of wireless provision and savings that could be realised by the use of IT.

In response to a specific point made, the Interim Assistant Director of ICT and Business Transformation undertook to review the current Council policy and respond direct to Councillor Mottram on the issue raised by him regarding the possible sale to Members of IT equipment such as laptops that was subject to replacement.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the progress made with the implementation of the five year Corporate ICT Strategy 2008-2013, be noted and that the proposal to renew the Corporate ICT Strategy in 2010/2011 once a clearer view of Transformation had been formed and as new technologies emerged, be endorsed.

## QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the performance of the Council in relation to the activities relating to the Terms of Reference of this Committee for the third quarter of 2009/10, October to December, 2009.

Arising from consideration of the details submitted the following comments were made, namely:-

- In relation to the ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings 1997-2008, the information that the graph was seeking to convey was queried and in response the Lead Officer undertook to provide a response direct to Councillor Lowe.
- Members queried the usefulness of the information contained in the graph relating to percentage change in the number of people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance December 2007 – December 2009 given the use of percentages especially when the information was more clearly expressed in the following graph relating to actual numbers of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance.
- A Member queried whether the targets particularly those from the page headed "Learning Matters Priority LM4 – Learning Opportunities for Adults" – onwards were sufficiently demanding.
- That the blue traffic light status indicators on the page headed Caring Matters Priority CM1 – Improve People's Health, Wellbeing and Quality of Life – did not contain any targets and that there appeared to be a number of self assessments.

### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and extract from the report, submitted in relation to the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee for the third quarter of 2009/10, October to December, 2009, be noted and that in relation to the comments made, as outlined above, the Lead Officer to the Committee be requested to refer these points to the appropriate Officer(s).



COMMENTS OF THE CHAIRMAN

As this was the last scheduled meeting of the Committee in the current municipal year the Chairman thanked all those involved with the business of the Committee and the Chairman was in turn thanked for the able manner in which he had conducted meetings of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN