

SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY

Monday, 21st February 2005, at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 3, The Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Blood (Chairman)
Councillor Cotterill (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Burston, Mrs Coulter, Ms Craigie, Mrs Dunn, Ms Foster, Male,
Mrs Turner, A Turner and Vickers

Officers

Mr J Polychronakis – Director of Law and Property
Mr P Tart - Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services - Directorate
of Law and Property
Ms P Sharratt - Assistant Director, Social Services
Mr G Tilby – Area Manager, Commissioning and Review, Directorate of
Social Services
Ms S Menghini – Assistant Director of Education, Access and Inclusion,
Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning
Mr A Hudson – School Support Service Manager, Directorate of Education
and Lifelong Learning
Ms C Peek – Assistant Director Directorate of Education and Lifelong
Learning
Mr J McCabe – Pupil Access Manager, Directorate of Education and
Lifelong Learning
Principal Lawyer – Directorate of Law and Property
Inspector A Cook – Community Safety Team
Ms D Channings – Assistant Director of Housing
Mrs J Holland (Democratic Services – Directorate of Law and Property)

Also In attendance

Ms J Savage – Crown Prosecution Service

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th January, 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendment to the first sentence of the last paragraph of the preamble to minute 29 as follows:

Deletion of the words “Mr Tart” and substitution of the words “Superintendent Green” therefor.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mottram, Mr K Mayou (Lead Officer) and Ms D Hewitt (Community Safety Manager).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Blood declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in agenda item 12, Data relating to Exclusions, Attendance, Admissions and Children in Public Care in Dudley Schools for the 20032/04 Academic Year, in his capacity as Governor of Belle Vue Primary School.

Councillor Burston declared a Personal Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in agenda item 12, Data relating to Exclusions, Attendance, Admissions and Children in Public Care in Dudley Schools for the 20032/04 Academic Year, in his capacity as a Governor of Caslon Primary School and Earls High School.

Councillor Mrs Coulter declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in agenda item 12, Data relating to Exclusions, Attendance, Admissions and Children in Public Care in Dudley Schools for the 20032/04 Academic Year, in her capacity as a Governor of Netherton C of E School.

Councillor Cotterill declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in agenda item 12, Data relating to Exclusions, Attendance, Admissions and Children in Public Care in Dudley Schools for the 20032/04 Academic Year, in his capacity as a Governor of Quarry Bank Primary School.

Councillor Mrs Dunn declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in agenda item 12, Data relating to Exclusions, Attendance, Admissions and Children in Public Care in Dudley Schools for the 20032/04 Academic Year, in her capacity as a Governor of Rufford Primary and Huntingtree Primary Schools.

Councillor Mrs Turner declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in agenda item 12, Data relating to Exclusions, Attendance, Admissions and Children in Public Care in Dudley Schools for the 20032/04 Academic Year, in her capacity as a Governor of Olive Hill Primary School.

Councillor D Vickers declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in agenda item 12, Data relating to Exclusions, Attendance, Admissions and Children in Public Care in Dudley Schools for the 20032/04 Academic Year, in his capacity as a Governor of Rufford Primary

36 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE FOR THIS MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

It was reported that Councillor Mrs Coulter had been appointed to serve as a substitute for Councillor Mottram for this meeting of the Committee only.

37 UPDATE ON ALCOHOL BANS

Mr P Tart (Assistant Director, Directorate of Law and Property) updated the Committee regarding the position on alcohol bans. He informed the Committee that he had attended a meeting with Chief Superintendent Green, Chief Superintendent Dickerson, Mr M Farooq, the Director of Law and Property and Councillor Blood. The police did not support a Borough-wide alcohol ban as they considered there was insufficient evidence to support such a ban.

Mr Tart reminded the Committee that the new liquor licensing laws would come into full effect in November 2005, following which the Council would become responsible for the administration of liquor licensing.

Councillor Blood stated that he was disappointed that the police had not accepted the views of the Select Committee and the majority of Dudley Councillors who had expressed their support for a Borough-wide alcohol ban. He stated that the matter would be considered during the 2005/2006 Municipal Year when the impact of the Licensing Act was known.

It was noted, however, that an alcohol ban for Dudley Town Centre would be considered by the Licensing and Safety Committee on the 22nd February, 2005.

Following a short discussion, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the update given on the current position in respect of a Borough-wide alcohol ban be noted.
 - (2) That the issue of a Borough-wide alcohol ban be given further consideration by the Committee in the 2005/2006 Municipal Year.
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CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE

Ms J Savage (a solicitor with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)), based at Brierley Hill Police Station), gave a presentation to the Committee on the method of working and work carried out by the CPS. She explained that members of the CPS were based in various police stations across the Borough, an arrangement that had reduced bureaucracy and speeded up the process. However, whilst they now worked in close liaison with the local police they still retained their independent status under the provisions of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. The Government perceived the CPS as being at the centre of the criminal justice system and lot of new initiatives were underway on a multi-agency basis.

Ms Savage also spoke about the need for maintaining reliable witnesses and the gathering of sufficient admissible evidence to allow prosecutions to proceed to a successful conclusion by considering witness protection schemes, anonymity, relationship building and by keeping witnesses updated.

The application of ASBOs (Anti-social Behaviour Orders) and CRASBOs (Criminal Anti-social Behaviour Orders) was discussed and Ms Savage stated that better application of these tools needed to be explored.

Following a short discussion, during which Ms Savage responded to questions put by the Committee and commented that Dudley received a good service from witnesses generally and that violent crime in the Borough had reduced, it was

RESOLVED

That the Committee's thanks be extended to Ms Savage for the interesting and informative comments given in her presentation.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted outlining the Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2005/06 for the Directorate of Law and Property, a copy of which was attached to the report submitted.

In presenting the report and amplifying the key points, Mr J Polychronakis (Director of Law and Property) confirmed that the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy required all Directorates to produce an annual action plan and that the report presented set out the corporate and directorate targets for the Directorate of Law and Property.

Mr Polychronakis pointed out various initiatives contained in the report and emphasised the importance of the disability training extended to private hire and hackney carriage drivers; the trial longer opening hours for Registration and Celebratory Services; the provision of celebrants at civil funerals; and the implementation arrangements for the registration of Civil Partnerships.

Councillor Male welcomed the new initiatives, particularly that in respect of disability training for private hire and hackney carriage drivers. The Committee noted that the Action Plan would be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Personnel, Law and Property for a decision.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and in the Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2005/06 for the Directorate of Law and Property attached to the report submitted be noted.

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ESTABLISHING A CHILDRENS' SAFEGUARDING BOARD

Ms P Sharratt, Assistant Director Social Services and Mr G Tilby, Area Manager, Commissioning and Review Unit, Directorate of Social Services made a presentation to the Committee explaining the provisions of The Children Act 2004.

Mr Tilby presented information and leaflets explaining the "Stop it Now" initiative that was being led by Barnardos on a multi-agency basis for which funding was being sought. Ms Sharratt informed the meeting that Mr Tilby was the Chairman of the local Steering Group and it was anticipated that local safeguarding forums would be formed.

Following a discussion, during which Ms Sharratt and Mr Tilby responded to questions put by the Committee, Mr Tilby explained that there would be a strong focus on teenage pregnancy and a Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator had already been appointed.

RESOLVED

That the Committee's thanks be extended to Ms Sharratt and Mr Tilby for an interesting and informative presentation.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE

A report of the Chairman was submitted seeking approval for the Annual Report of the Select Committee, a copy of which was attached, prior to its submission to the Cabinet and the Council.

Following a brief discussion, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Annual Report of the Select Committee be approved for submission to the Cabinet and the Council.
 - (2) That approval be given to the proposed Work Programme of the Committee for 2005/2006, as detailed in the report.
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EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that the item involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of that Act, in particular the paragraph of Part I of that Schedule indicated below:-

| <u>Description of Item</u> | <u>Relevant Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A</u> |
|---|---|
| Data trends and development relating to exclusions, attendance, admissions and children in public care for the 2003/04 academic year. | 7 |

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DATA TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO EXCLUSIONS, ATTENDANCE, ADMISSIONS AND CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE FOR THE 2003/04 ACADEMIC YEAR

A report of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning was submitted on data relating to exclusions, attendance, admissions and children in public care in Dudley Schools for the 2003/04 academic year.

In presenting the report Ms S Menghini and Mr J McCabe explained the framework leading up to exclusion.

Following a discussion by the Committee, during which Ms Menghini and Mr McCabe responded to questions put by the Committee, it was

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, in relation to data trends and developments relating to exclusions, attendance, admissions and children in public care for the 2003/2004 academic year, be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN