

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Tuesday, 26th June, 2007 at 6 pm
in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Cowell (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Turner (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Ms Craigie, Harley, Islam, James, Kettle, Lowe, Stanley and Waltho

Officers

Director of Law and Property (as Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director (Housing Management), Assistant Director (Environmental Management), Assistant Director (Development and Environmental Protection), Assistant Director (Revenues, Benefits and Management Support), Management Support Officer, Head of Engineering, Group Engineer and Mrs M Johal (Directorate of Law and Property).

Also in Attendance

Mr Clive Whatling – Head of Bus Network (Centro)

1 **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Ms While-Cooper.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

3 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 15th May, 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

4

PUBLIC FORUM

School Recycling Facilities

A Member referred to a discussion that had taken place recently with young people and commented that numerous questions had been asked about recycling facilities within schools. He commented that recycling was being encouraged but schools did not have the facilities to recycle and it was queried whether euro-bins or black boxes could be supplied to schools. Another Member reiterated the comments made and further stated that schools did not have recycling targets and in a letter that had recently been received it was queried whether paper could be recycled free of charge.

RESOLVED

That the Select Committee on Environment (Recycling) Working Group be requested to investigate the matter regarding recycling in schools and that a copy of the letter referred to be submitted to them for consideration.

5

CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), it was

RESOLVED

That agenda item No 10 be considered as the next item of business.

6

DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE, ICT AND PROCUREMENT'S EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

A report of the Director of Finance was submitted on the Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement's equality and diversity annual report for 2006/07.

Arising from the presentation of the report a Member referred to Directorate target F3b and commented that a figure of 13 staff attending training had been given but queried what the figure was in percentage terms and asked that the information be supplied in future reports. With regard to F3c relating to staff satisfaction surveys, it was suggested that information from exit interviews be utilised to determine reasons for employees leaving to ascertain whether it was due to disability or other grounds.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement's equality and diversity annual report for 2006/07, be noted.

7

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2007/08

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on a Work Programme for the Select Committee for 2007/08.

RESOLVED

That the following Work Programme of the Committee for 2007/08, be approved:-

June 2007	Quarterly Report on Corporate Performance Management
	Food Service Plan
	Patch Working and Estate Management
September 2007	Annual Report of the Committee to Council
	Cross Border Issues
	Fixed Penalties for Dropping Litter
	Highways and Footpath Maintenance
November 2007	Food Service Plan Progress
	Update of the Council's Capital Strategy
	Update on Green Waste Composting Facility and Outcomes of the Probiotic Compound Trial
	Quarterly Report on Corporate Performance Management
January 2008	Proposed Revenue Budget 2008/09
	Air Quality Management Progress
	Choice Based Lettings

Quarterly Report on Corporate
Performance Management

March 2008

Equality and Diversity Action Plan Report

Outline Work Programme 2007/08

Health Act 2006 – No Smoking in Public
Places Progress

Report from Recycling Working Group

Quarterly Report on Corporate
Performance Management

8

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 2007/08.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Recycling Working Group be re-appointed with the remit to consider recycling feasibility options and to look further at the recycling of plastics and that the membership of the Working Group comprise:-

Councillors Mrs Cowell, Ms Craigie, Harley, Stanley, Mrs Turner and Waltho.

- (2) That the Choice Based Lettings Working Group be re-appointed with the remit to consider successions and joint tenancies and to oversee and monitor progress of the choice based lettings pilot scheme and the banding proposals and that the membership of the Working Group comprise:-

Councillors Mrs Cowell, Ms Craigie, Lowe and Mrs Turner.

9

QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the fourth Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for 2006/07, relating to performance for the period 1st January 2007 to 31st March 2007.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted be noted.

10

PATCH WORKING AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT – HOME CHECKS

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the implementation of Home Checks across the Borough in 2006/2007.

Arising from the presentation of the report it was indicated that a report detailing problems and outcomes from the home checks would be useful information to enable issues to be fully assessed. Members also commented that there was a need to be more proactive, particularly with regard to repeated breaches in tenancy agreements and anti social behaviour, as breaches often impacted on a number of neighbours or a community. It was felt that legal services should act promptly to deal with such matters. In responding the Director of Law and Property (as Lead Officer to the Committee) indicated that the matter was considered as a high priority amongst the legal team and that they did act quickly and advised and supported Officers appropriately but it was pointed out that if the matter went to Court evidence was required which could take some time to collate.

During the ensuing discussion the state of some gardens was referred to and it was felt that assistance should be given to the elderly and people with disabilities who could no longer cope with the maintenance of their gardens. It was also indicated that land locked areas where tenants and residents had redefined their boundaries without permission and gardens in void properties were also a matter of concern. In responding the Assistant Director of Housing (Housing Management) assured Members that the issue with gardens was currently under review.

The Assistant Director of Housing (Housing Management) asked that the work of the Area Housing Panels be recognised in respect of monitoring the housing service.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report now submitted on the implementation of 'Home Checks' across the Borough in 2006/2007, be noted.
- (2) That the monitoring and scrutiny role of the Area Housing Panels be noted.

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2007/2008

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Food Service Plan for 2007/2008.

Arising from the presentation of the report a Member indicated that it would be useful if all establishments servicing food were listed on the Web and if they had not been assessed, a note displayed to that effect, as this would prevent inaccurate information being portrayed.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the Food Service Plan of the Directorate of the Urban Environment 2007/2008, be endorsed and referred to Council.

BUS SERVICE REVIEW

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress made in improving Dudley's bus services.

Arising from the presentation of the report a Member complained about the unreliable and worn out buses that were supplied from Pensnett Garage. Complaints were also made that various scheduled buses did not turn up on time and that sometimes two or three buses would come together. It was requested that this matter should be addressed and taken seriously.

Another Member concurred with the comments made and further referred to paragraph 10 of the report and expressed concern that bus shelters attracted vandalism and anti-social behaviour. It was requested that bus stop poles should be used instead.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the initiatives as set out in the report now submitted, and in particular associated with network improvements to increase patronage, be supported.
- (2) That Member Review Panels be set up to review bus routing proposals be supported.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm.