

## **URBAN ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.  
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Tyler (Chair)  
Councillor Hale (Vice Chair)  
Councillors Ali, Duckworth, Hanif, Harley, J Martin, Sykes and Mrs Westwood

### **Officers**

Assistant Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (Housing Strategy and Private Sector) (Lead Officer to the Committee); Head Of Construction (Both Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services); Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration & Transportation); Economic Development Manager; Principal Executive Support Officer (All Directorate of the Urban Environment); Divisional Lead – Asset Management (Directorate of Children’s Services); HR Policy and Workforce Development Officer, Operations Unit Manager and the Assistant Democratic Services Officer (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

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### 27 **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

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

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### 28 **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER**

It was reported that Councillor J Martin had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor Jordan for this meeting of the Committee only.

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### 29 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member declared an interest in any matter to be considered at this meeting.

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### 30 **MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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31 PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this Agenda Item.

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32 SUPPORT TO LOCAL BUSINESSES (AREA 2 – BUSINESS TO BUSINESS)

A report was submitted to the meeting and a presentation was given in relation to the findings of the TORCh Group in support of the scrutiny of the Support to Local Businesses (Area 2 – Business to Business).

The presentation from the TORCh representatives consisted of an outline of the TORCh initiative; the Scrutiny remit; findings from the Business Survey; Dudley's current position in relation to Black Country benchmarking; identification of best practise; feedback from local businesses; corporate contracts; role of schools; recommendations and further considerations for the Scrutiny Committee to consider.

Following a detailed presentation, the TORCh representatives referred to their proposed recommendations for the Scrutiny Committee to consider:-

- A 'Dudley Directory for Buyers' – aligned to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- Explore Funding opportunities (internal & external) to deliver Business 2 Business (B2B) activities
- Develop a robust marketing strategy to include Social Media and promote existing support to local businesses, increase brand awareness, promote guidance for suppliers and buyers
- Research on how we encourage & reduce resistance to intercompany trading
- Promote 'buying local' to all categories of schools, with particular reference to Academies
- Review of the Procurement Strategy to include:
  - To reflect all procurement is via B2B Portal
  - To reflect linkages with our partners
  - Ensure a local social value focus
  - Use of a Local 'Buyers Directory'
  - Engagement Protocols with major investment delivery partners
- Facilitate 'Meet the Supplier' events to promote sourcing in Dudley

Other considerations identified and presented to the Scrutiny Committee were as follows:-

- What is the Council's definition of 'Local'?
- What is the 'family' of Dudley Buyers (Council, Health etc):
- Establish level of commitment and identify dedicated resources to develop, maintain and promote B2B initiative
- How do we meet businesses needs by also promoting non-trading, in addition to a local focus?
- Consider sector specific Directories – replicate of BC Bullet which provides a Directory for automotive companies

The Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration & Transportation) gave a brief update in relation to the Black Country City Deal that had been approved and stated that the four Black Country authorities would work collaboratively to address issues that were currently stifling the economy and would invest in economic growth. Two common issues highlighted as a concern for the Black Country were in relation to the lack of readily available development sites and the availability of a skilled workforce.

Following the detailed presentation, Members commended Officers on the excellent report and presentation and asked questions and made comments as follows:-

- Members welcomed, applauded and endorsed the news of the Black Country City Deal and requested that this be incorporated into the work achieved by the TORCh group.
- Members were concerned that local businesses were unaware of the support and information that was available from the Council and considered that the promotion of the Dudley Business First portal, to advantage local businesses, should be made a priority.
- It was considered that the Council needed to be more pro-active with town regeneration plans and when resolving problems that arise from these developments.
- A review of Dudley's Procurement strategy was welcomed and contracts with local suppliers was encouraged.
- It was recommended that the number of websites and business portals be reduced and linked together to prevent confusion to users and the need for multiple registrations.
- A Member raised concerns in relation to the practicality of small businesses being refused funding through Dudley Business First as they were not requesting large enough amounts of funding.
- The need to promote and advertise industrial skilled work in Schools.

The Scrutiny Committee reiterated their support for the Black Country City Deal and expressed their commitment to bringing businesses and employment back into the borough.

RESOLVED

That the contents and recommendations presented by the TORCh Group, in relation to Support to Local Businesses (Area 2 – Business to Business), be noted.

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33 UPDATE ON THE VIRTUAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS PROCESS

A verbal update was provided by the Lead Officer of the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Virtual Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) Process. He referred to a briefing note that would be circulated to all members by the Principal Executive Support Officer in relation to the current virtual TRO process and areas that required improvement, scoring criteria and the proposal for a cross-party working group.

The Lead Officer reiterated that Members feedback was crucial in order to support the scrutiny review in this area and all comments would be welcomed.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the verbal update provided by the Lead Officer in relation to the Virtual Traffic Regulation Orders Process, be noted.
  - (2) That the Principal Executive Support Officer circulate to members of the Scrutiny Committee a briefing note in relation to Improving the Traffic Regulation Order process.
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The meeting ended at 7.20pm.

CHAIR