

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Thursday, 18th March, 2010 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor C. Wilson (Chairman)
Councillor Cotterill (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Attwood, Barlow, Caunt, Mrs Coulter, Foster, Mrs D Harley,
J. Martin, Ryder and Woodall.

OFFICERS

Interim Assistant Director of Finance, (Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement), (As Acting Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director Performance and Partnership, (Directorate of Children's Services), Head of Contingency and Disaster Management (Chief Executive's Directorate), Director of Corporate Resources, Support Services Manager, Principal Solicitor and Miss K Fellows (All Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources).

42. **COMMENTS OF THE CHAIRMAN**

This being the last meeting of the municipal year, the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their participation and input throughout the municipal year.

43. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Burston, A Finch and Miller.

44. **SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was reported that Councillor Barlow had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor Burston, Councillor Mrs Coulter for Councillor A Finch and Councillor Woodall for Councillor Miller for this meeting of the Committee only.

45. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of any matter to be considered at the meeting.

46. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 21st January, 2010, be approved as a correct record and signed.

47. PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this Agenda item.

48. CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) it was

RESOLVED

That, the next items of business be agenda item 7 – Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2010/11 and agenda item 8 – Reporting on Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act, 1998.

49. DIRECTORATE OF LAW, PROPERTY AND HUMAN RESOURCES
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2010/11.

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on the annual equality and diversity action plan for 2010/11 for the Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources. A copy of the action plan was attached as an Appendix to the report submitted.

The Director of Corporate Resources in his presentation of the report, made particular reference to the officer of the Licensing Section providing Road Passenger Vehicle Driving courses that resulted in an NVQ Level 2 qualification, which was undertaken by all licensed private hire and hackney carriage drivers; maintaining an access improvement programme for the Council's buildings subject to available resources; and the implementation of an e-learning training package for Equality and Diversity.

Arising from the presentation of the report, Members made a number of comments relating to the NVQ Level 2 course, discussed the possibility of providing a further support group for Council employees, and the

appointment of a designated Cabinet Member for Equality issues and the possibility of further improvements being made for access to Council owned buildings, including the Council Chamber and Priory Hall.

In responding the Director of Corporate Resources advised that:-

- Regular meetings between the Member Champion for Equality, and himself were held on equality issues. A Cabinet Member with responsibility for Equality was being considered;
- There were no current plans to carry out improvements to either the Council Chamber or Priory Hall in order to make them more accessible, as far as he was aware, however this might be looked at in the future;
- That the Council Chamber was utilised for a variety of activities outside Council business and that requests to utilise the facility were expanding;
- That language issues were factored into the Level 2 NVQ training programme;

In responding to a question from Councillor Foster, the Support Services Manager reported that wider Directorate work was undertaken with the Leadership Group Forum and Gender Equality Group and that the Council attended Corporate Leadership Group meetings and continued to be involved with the Group.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the annual equality and diversity action plan for 2010/11 for the Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources, be noted and endorsed.
- (2) That the Director of Corporate Resources be requested to pursue the suggestion made that a Cabinet Member for Equality be appointed.

50. REPORTING ON SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER ACT, 1998.

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted detailing the work in which the Directorate of Children's Services was involved so as to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998.

In responding to questions from Members the Assistant Director, Performance and Partnership stated that parents had a right to educate their children at home and although the Local Authority were obliged to assess the arrangements for tutoring that had been made, the Council had no right of entry in order that assessments could be carried out. The review process was therefore dependent upon the co-operation of the parents.

Concerns were raised in relation to monitoring children who did not attend School and a request was made for information relating to the number of children within the Borough who were failing to attend an educational establishment, those who could not be accounted for who may be truanting or otherwise missing, and action that was being taken to locate and retrieve them.

It was reported that the Council would have knowledge of the vast majority of children who were not in full time education, although there would always remain a small amount of children whose whereabouts were unknown, such as those who had absconded from foster carers or local authority care homes, however the council continued to liaise with other agencies in particular the Police.

Members praised the work of Operation Staysafe and supported the conduct of the Operation.

Councillor Caunt commented on the frustration of the public with continuing anti social behaviour, which was illustrated by the case study that was appended to the report submitted.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the Report, submitted on the work undertaken by the Directorate of Children's Services in response to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, be noted.
- (2) That the Director of Children's Services be requested to email to Members information relating to the amount of children within the Borough who were failing to attend full time education, the number of children missing and the action being taken to locate and retrieve them.

51. FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING CONTINGENCY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT.

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the funding arrangements for partnership working Contingency and Disaster Management. Details of category 1 and 2 responders, plus voluntary agencies were appended to the report submitted.

Arising from the presentation of the report in responding to a question the Head of Contingency and Disaster Management confirmed that the Primary Care Trust had their own facilities for medical emergencies and that some of the emergency services would have business continuity plans in order to deal with staff absences during epidemics.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on funding arrangements for partnership working Contingency and Disaster Management, be noted.
 - (2) That the financial aspects for ensuring that the Council will be able to carry out its planning and respond to major incidents, with best facilities available to the Emergency Management team, to assist in both response and recovery phases of these impacts on the community, as indicated in the report, be supported.
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52. QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT 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.

Arising from the presentation of the report, a Member asked to be advised of the reasons for the origins and allocation of responsibility for the monitoring of performance relating to domestic and abuse crime incidents having been placed within the remit of this Select Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the Report, submitted on the Council's quarterly performance for the third quarter of 2009/10, on the activities relating to the Terms of Reference of this Committee, be noted.
 - (2) That the Chief Executive, be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of this Committee indicating the origin and reason for placing the responsibility for the monitoring of performance on domestic and abuse crime incidents within the remit of this Committee and seek consideration of the matter in the light of the information submitted.
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53. TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO REQUEST THE ATTENDANCE OF ANY SAFE AND SOUND BOARD MEMBER OR THE PROVISION OF ANY INFORMATION AT A FUTURE MEETING IN RELATION TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES WORK PROGRAMME.

Following discussion on this issue it was:

RESOLVED

That the attendance of any Safe and Sound Board Member or the provision of any information at the next meeting be not pursued.

The meeting ended at 6.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN