

## **SELECT COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND RECREATION**

Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2006, at 6.00 p.m. in Committee Room 3,  
The Council House, Dudley

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Southall (Chairman)  
Councillor Simms (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Attwood, Crumpton, Mrs Jordan, Knowles, Tyler, C Woodall  
and J Woodall

### **OFFICERS**

Assistant Director of Law & Property (Corporate Estate Services – Lead Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment and the Principal Recreation Officer (Culture and Community Services - Directorate of the Urban Environment), Director of Finance, (Directorate of Finance) and Ms K Smith (Directorate of Law and Property).

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### **MINUTES**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, where made by the following Members for the reasons indicated:-

Councillor C Woodall in agenda item 9 – Playing Pitch Strategy, as Chairman of Green Park Playing Fields.

Councillor Simms in agenda item 9 – Playing Pitch Strategy, as Chairman/Manager of Woodsetton Wolves Football Club

Councillor Southall in agenda item 9 – Playing Pitch Strategy, as a council member of the Birmingham County Football Association and member of the Friends of Wordsley Park; and in agenda item 10 – Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report as a member of the Friends of Wordsley Park.

Councillor Attwood in agenda item 10 – Quarterly Corporate Performance Report as a member of the environmental working group of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park.

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kettle and Mrs Pearce.

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27 SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor Knowles had been appointed to serve as substitute for Councillor Kettle and Councillor J Woodall for Councillor Mrs Pearce for this meeting of the Committee only.

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28 REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2006/07

A joint report of the Director of Finance and the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the proposed Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2006/07. The proposed 2006/07 Revenue Budget for Culture and Recreation Activities was £10.762m including an additional £150,000 for improvement to parks.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted.

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29 LIABILITY INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO COMMUNITY GROUPS OR ASSOCIATIONS

A report of the Director of Finance was submitted updating Members on the feasibility of insurance arrangements for community groups and associations using Council facilities.

Following further discussions with the Council's insurers, they are now working up some detailed proposals which may provide a solution.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted and a further response to the Committee next year.

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30 LEISURE CENTRES – PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on a forecast of income projections together with a service improvement planning report for the Leisure Centres for the 2005/06 financial year based upon current information.

The report outlined the financial position in respect of income, demonstrating an under-achievement of just under £250,000 against targets. Factors which had contributed to the under-achievement of income were detailed as follows:-

- Coaching budget under spend
- Changes in vending procurement
- Removal of sun beds

Arising from the report, Members commented on the following

- On the feasibility of Dudley providing free summer swimming coaching sessions, such as had been held in Wolverhampton and that although they would be run at a loss, that could hopefully be offset by the reduction in cost caused by vandalism and reduction in cost of provision of the number of other summer run schemes.
- That rumours regarding the closure of Coseley Swimming Pools were unfounded but understandable considering the apparent external dereliction of the building and the ongoing problem with vandalism
- The closure of the water slide at Coseley was also commented upon and it was stated that it would cost approximately £40,000 to remove the slide and £80,000 to provide a new slide, however a financial appraisal to confirm costs would be undertaken by the Assistant Director of Culture and Community Services Directorate of the Urban Environment, and the income it would need to generate.
- It was noted that income was not as forthcoming from the squash court facilities due to the fall in popularity of the sport and this had prompted the proposed use of the space for other leisure activities. This was currently being examined by Dudley Leisure Centre.
- The need for a comparison of the subsidy provided by West Midlands Councils and formerly Group Councils to be included in the next performance report.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report and Members comments be noted.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the progress made in the implementation of the Playing Pitch Strategy.

Strategic recommendations were identified in the context of levels of playing pitch provision within the Borough and possible solutions to create the level of both supply and quality of facilities. The appendix attached to the report submitted, detailed the strategic planning recommendations together with progress to date.

Key issues identified in the playing pitch strategy were summarised as follows:-

- Accommodating the increased demand for junior/mini soccer pitches
- Encouraging/enabling greater use of school pitches
- Enhancing carrying capacity of existing pitches and where necessary providing changing accommodation
- Development of appropriate new facilities

Priorities for investment were identified as part of the strategy's development and approval and a list of priority areas for new facilities together with an update of progress made were identified

It was noted that only limited progress had been made with regard to the implementation of the Playing Pitch Strategy. Significant Council contribution would need to be made in order to take projects forward for development, either with or without external funding.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted and the following recommendation made

- That the Cabinet be requested to encourage the Select Committee on Life Long Learning, to review the use of sporting and leisure facilities and the difficulties encountered by members of the public to utilise these facilities within schools.

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on the second Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for 2005/06 relating to performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005. The appendix attached to the report submitted detailed information in relation to the Directorate of the Urban Environment and relevant to the remit of the Select Committee on Culture and Recreation.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted on the second Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005, be noted.

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NEW YEARS HONOURS LIST

The Chairman congratulated Councillor C Woodall, on behalf of the Committee, on his award of an MBE in the New Years Honours List, which acknowledged his work within the community.

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm

CHAIRMAN