

# **URBAN ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2014**

**AT 6:00PM  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2  
THE COUNCIL HOUSE  
DUDLEY**

**If you (or anyone you know) is attending the meeting and requires assistance to access the venue and/or its facilities, could you please contact Democratic Services in advance and we will do our best to help you**

**HELEN SHEPHERD  
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## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

### **MEETINGS IN DUDLEY COUNCIL HOUSE**

Welcome to Dudley Council House

In the event of the alarm sounding, please leave the building by the nearest exit. There are Officers who will assist you in the event of this happening, please follow their instructions.

There is to be no smoking on the premises in line with national legislation. It is an offence to smoke in or on these premises.

Please turn off your mobile phones and mobile communication devices during the meeting.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Your ref:

Our ref:

Please ask for:  
Miss H Shepherd

Telephone No.  
(01384) 815271

12<sup>th</sup> March, 2014

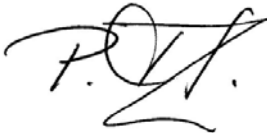
Dear Councillor

**Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee**  
**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 – 6.00pm**

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee to be held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley to consider the business set out in the agenda below.

The agenda and public reports are available on the Council's Website [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk) and follow the links to 'Councillors in Dudley' and the Committee Management Information System.

Yours sincerely



Director of Corporate Resources

**A G E N D A**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

2. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Declarations of Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.



4. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2014.

5. PUBLIC FORUM

To receive questions from members of the public.

6. SUPPORT TO LOCAL BUSINESSES – SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (PAGES 1 - 4)

To consider a report of the Director of the Urban Environment.

7. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE 11.8 (IF ANY) AND QUESTIONS ON INFORMATION ITEMS AVAILABLE ON THE COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

Members are asked to e-mail Helen Shepherd, at the address shown on the agenda cover, at least three working days before the meeting details of any questions they would wish to raise ON THE INFORMATION ITEMS.

This will enable responses to the questions to be circulated prior to the meeting.

Questions on information items raised at the meeting will receive a written response following the meeting.

Information items to this meeting:-

- (i) Directorate of Urban Environment's Equality Action Plan for 2014/2015

**To: All Members of the Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillors Ali, Duckworth, Hale, Hanif, Harley, J Jones, Jordan, Kettle, Sykes, Tyler and Mrs Westwood.

## **URBAN ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2014 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 Jones, Jordan, Kettle, Sykes and Westwood

### **Officers**

Assistant Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (Housing Strategy and Private Sector) (Lead Officer to the Committee); Head of Traffic and Transportation, Principal Executive Support Officer (Both Directorate of the Urban Environment) and the Assistant Democratic Services Officer (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

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### 34 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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### 35 **MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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### 36 **PUBLIC FORUM**

No matters were raised under this Agenda Item.

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### 37 **TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS – THE PROCESS**

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on an overview of the findings of the 'virtual' review of the Traffic Regulation Order process.

The Head of Traffic and Transportation presented the report and gave a short presentation relating to what a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was; the reasons for the establishment of the virtual scrutiny process; initial sift of requests received and the scoring criteria process; the proposed member consultation and the development of an annual programme and how this would be implemented.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted, members asked questions and made comments and the Head of Traffic and Transportation responded as follows:-

- Creating none fee paying car parks would not necessarily alleviate all car parking problems, particularly in town centres, as these car parks could become popular and would deter people from parking on paid car parks. All free car parking spaces could be taken up by people who worked within that town and shoppers visiting would not then see any benefit.
- The scoring of TRO requests would be carried out by Transportation Officers against agreed criteria, prior to being circulated to Ward Members and the public, for consultation.
- A Member suggested that consideration be given to providing car parking permits to local residents that live within close proximity to a car park that is under-used to try and alleviate some of the on-street parking issues in these areas.
- It was hoped that the new process would speed up the implementation of orders and it was suggested that if Members were aware of a change in circumstances at a proposed TRO site, that Officers be informed.
- TRO requests would be accepted from the public by phone, in writing or via a Ward Member. All requests would be subject to a technical check and if determined feasible, would be put forward for further consideration.
- Members emphasised the importance of Ward Member involvement in the process and requested that they be notified following the scoring criteria process and before public consultation. All Members agreed that early intervention was necessary.
- Alternative ways of advertising future TRO's were discussed and it was suggested that a possible option would be for inclusion on Community Forum agenda's, when applicable, and to explore utilising social media.
- It was confirmed that TRO enforcement staff move around the whole borough and focus on active areas such as town centres. However if a particular issue is raised and needed to be addressed, enforcement officers would be flexible and move to that particular area to help resolve an issue.

- It was stated that a review of all TRO's had taken place in 2007 when the Council undertook the responsibility of the enforcement of all on-street parking restrictions in the borough. Additional orders had since been implemented, but there was no pro-active way to review these orders other than upon request.
- Excessive signage within the Borough was in the process of being reviewed. It was confirmed that there is a statutory requirement for signage to be displayed and if not displayed correctly the order may not be enforced.
- Council officers, due to legal restrictions, are unable to question people that park on-street, so officers have difficulty in ascertaining the identify and reason why people parked within a residential street and rely upon the person who submitted the TRO request to provide as much detail as possible.

The Chair on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee commended Officers on an excellent report and for all the hard work that had been put into the virtual scrutiny process which was considered to have worked well.

#### RESOLVED

- (i) That the information contained in the report submitted and presented at the meeting, in relation to the virtual review of the Traffic Regulation Order Process be noted.
- (ii) That the following outcomes, as updated in relation to notification of Ward Members, in the light of comments made at the meeting, be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Transport following the scrutiny of the Traffic Regulation Order process:-
  - (a) All new requests for Traffic Regulation Orders be directed through an Annual Programme, with the exception of developmental, temporary, emergency/urgent or experimental orders which are dealt with by separate processes.
  - (b) All new requests be subject to an initial sift to review feasibility resulting in a response being issued to the applicant.
  - (c) That pre-defined scoring criteria be used to prioritise requests and that Ward Members be notified following the scoring criteria process and before public consultation.

- (d) That a Cross Party Members Working Group be appointed to consider proposals following public consultation, with the membership to be on the basis of political proportionality, to be determined in due course.
  - (e) That requests that fail to achieve one-third of the maximum potential points (ie 17 out of 51 points), be deemed outside the scoring range and would not be subject to any further consideration.
  - (f) That website contents be updated to reflect revised working arrangements.
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The meeting ended at 7.00pm.

CHAIR



**Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee - Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

**Report of the Lead Officer for the Directorate of the Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee**

**Support to Local Businesses - Summary of Recommendations**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To outline a suite of recommendations for Members of the DUE Scrutiny Committee to consider for implementation in 2014/15.

**Background**

2. In line with the Scrutiny Scoping Documents agreed by Members on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013, the Scrutiny Committee and relevant Working Group has been guided by the overarching objective of scrutinising the **effectiveness** and **local economic impact** of the following three areas, namely:-
  - Area 1 – *Dudley Business Loan Fund* – scrutinised at the Scrutiny Committee Working Group held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013 following a presentation by Black Country Reinvestment Society (BCRS);
  - Area 2 – *Business to Business* scrutinised at the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and led by the recommendations and considerations presented by the Council's TORCh Group (Action Learning Set 6); and
  - Area 3 – *Dudley Business First (DBF) initiative* – scrutinised by the DUE Scrutiny Committee Working Group held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and informed by performance information relating to the Dudley Business First offer, recent achievements and website performance.
3. Table 1 below outlines the recommendations to be considered by Scrutiny Committee following the scrutiny process undertaken between August 2013 and January 2014.

**Table 1: Recommendations**

<b>Area 1: Dudley Business Loan Fund</b>	
Recommendation 1	<p>To undertake an evaluation of the local economic impact of the Fund on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the following outputs and outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs created and safeguarded and cost per job</li> <li>• New businesses created and safeguarded</li> <li>• New businesses surviving more than 12 months</li> <li>• Number of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) businesses supported</li> <li>• Number of women-led businesses supported</li> <li>• Private sector leverage</li> <li>• Sales figures (£) safeguarded and new sales created</li> <li>• Satisfaction with BCRS in administering the Fund</li> <li>• New contracts secured</li> </ul>
Recommendation 2	<p>To defer the decision on extending the Loan Fund until the following actions are completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Complete Recommendation 1 (full evaluation);</li> <li>(ii) Benchmark performance of the Loan Fund delivered by BCRS and similar organisations in other local authority areas; and</li> <li>(iii) Identify and appraise external funding opportunities to extend the Loan Fund (European and local) and, where appropriate, collaborate with other Black Country local authorities in delivering a Black Country Loan Fund</li> </ul>
Recommendation 3	<p>To report to Cabinet in 2014/15 outlining the performance of the Loan Fund against the agreed targets detailed in the report presented to Cabinet in March 2012</p>
Recommendation 4	<p>To continue to monitor the performance of the Dudley Business Loan Fund on a monthly basis (financial / performance outputs and bad debt) in line with the formal contract signed with BCRS in August 2012.</p>
<b>Area 2: Business to Business</b>	
Recommendation 1	<p>To implement and promote (internally and externally) the use of a Dudley Borough Business Directory for internal and external use to be accessed via the Dudley Business First and Council websites.</p>
Recommendation 2	<p>To make better use of social media, such as LinkedIn, to better promote the Dudley Business First service and opportunities for grant funding directly to local businesses.</p>
Recommendation 3	<p>To work closely with Corporate Resources in the review of the Council's Procurement Strategy to ensure, promotion and usage of the Business Directory.</p>
Recommendation 4	<p>To further enhance the Black Country Bullet project (a virtual car that currently showcases 500+ automotive supplier companies) by including a Request for Quotation facility similar to the Sell 2 Wales model. Furthermore, assess the feasibility of replicating this project</p>

	<p>across other priority sectors, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced manufacturing (including advanced engineering, logistics, food and drink);</li> <li>• Building technologies / construction;</li> <li>• Transport technologies (including aerospace); and</li> <li>• Environment technologies</li> </ul>
Recommendation 5	To better promote awareness of the Council's Forward Procurement Strategy to local businesses via Dudley Business First.
<b>Area 3: Dudley Business First Initiative</b>	
Recommendation 1	To prepare a Marketing and Communications Plan in order to raise awareness of the Dudley Business First service core offer (in particular, provision of business funding advice and undertaking land and property searches).
Recommendation 2	<p>To raise awareness of funding opportunities, via the Dudley Business First website, specifically for businesses or business start-ups who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) seeking grant funding or loans <b>below</b> the £10,000 threshold;</li> <li>(ii) within the non-manufacturing sector (in particular, health and retail sectors); and</li> <li>(iii) dependents of veterans, reservists and serving Armed Forces personnel.</li> </ul>
Recommendation 3	To increase the search engine optimisation (SEO) of Dudley Business First to ensure this is one of the top 5 websites when people are searching for business support in Dudley Borough. Furthermore, to ensure there are direct links from the Council's 'Business' pages (inc. Business Rates) to the Dudley Business First website.
Recommendation 4	To ensure marketing material for local or Black Country-wide funding events clearly states the eligibility criteria to ensure the appropriate audience is targeted and engaged.
Recommendation 5	<p>To build on the existing engagement with regional universities (Aston, Birmingham and Wolverhampton) to ensure local businesses, via the Dudley Business First website, are aware of the opportunities offered by universities in relation to the following three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Consultancy, licensing and intellectual property;</li> <li>(ii) Research and Development (R&amp;D); and</li> <li>(iii) Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)</li> </ul>
Recommendation 6	To promote the Dudley Business Investment Zone to potential tenants and develop a 'soft landing offer' which can complement business rate relief.

## **Finance**

4. The costs associated with implementing the recommendations above will be delivered with existing budgetary allocations for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

## **Law**

5. Scrutiny Committees are established in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and the requirements of the Council's Constitution, which was adopted under the Local Government Act 2000, subsequent legislation and associated Regulations and Guidance.

The Council's revised scrutiny arrangements are set out in Article 6 of the Constitution (Scrutiny Committees) and the associated Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Protocols.

## **Equality Impact**

6. Provision exists within the recommended scrutiny arrangements for overview and scrutiny to be undertaken on the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

## **Recommendation**

7. It is recommended that:-

- Scrutiny Committee request the Cabinet Member for Regeneration approve the recommendations, outlined in Table 1, for implementation in 2014/15.



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**Ron Sims**

**Assistant Director – Lead Officer for the DUE Scrutiny Committee**

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## **List of Background Papers**

- Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee Working Group, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013
- Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee Working Group, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013
- Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee, Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2013
- Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee Working Group, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014