

## **Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee**


**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 at 6.00pm**

**In Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley**

### **Agenda - Public Session**

**(Meeting open to the public and press)**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee.
3. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 as a correct record.
5. Public Forum
6. Annual Scrutiny Programme 2014/15
  - Process Issues
7. To consider any questions from Members to the Chair where two clear days notice has been given to the Director of Corporate Resources (Council Procedure Rule 11.8)



**Director of Corporate Resources**

**Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2014**

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

Councillors S Ali, J Cowell, W Duckworth, A Finch, N Gregory, C Hale, I Kettle, P Miller, R Scott-Dow, E Taylor and D Tyler.

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- The Democratic Services contact officer for this meeting is Steve Griffiths, Telephone 01384 815235 or E-mail [steve.griffiths@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:steve.griffiths@dudley.gov.uk)

## **URBAN ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 at 6.00 p.m.  
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Tyler (Chair)  
Councillor Hale (Vice Chair)  
Councillors Casey, Duckworth, Hanif, Harley, J Jones, Jordan, Kettle and Westwood

### **Officers**

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

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### 38 **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

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

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### 39 **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER**

It was noted that Councillor Casey had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor Sykes for this meeting of the Committee only.

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### 40 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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### 41 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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### 42 **PUBLIC FORUM**

No matters were raised under this Agenda Item.

## 43 SUPPORT TO LOCAL BUSINESSES – SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted outlining recommendations for Members of the Scrutiny Committee to consider for implementation in 2014/15.

The Head of Economic Development presented the report and referred to table 1 of the report submitted which outlined the proposed recommendations in respect of the three areas' that had been scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee and Working Group.

In response to a question raised, the Head of Economic Development agreed to provide Members with clarity in relation to recommendation 1 of Table 1 to the report submitted, as to whether the evaluation of the local economic impact in respect of the number of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) businesses supported and whether this was businesses run by or aimed at ethnic minorities.

Members commended officers on the excellent report which was easy to understand, streamlined and detailed and the support that had been provided in relation to this item. In particular thanks were expressed to the Economic Development Manager, Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration & Transportation), Head of Economic Development and the TORCh group.

### RESOLVED

- (i) That the following outcomes be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration following the scrutiny of the Support to Local Businesses:-

#### Area 1 – Dudley Business Loan Fund

- (1) That an evaluation of the local economic impact of the Fund on a case-by-case basis be undertaken, taking into consideration the following outputs and outcomes:
  - Jobs created and safeguarded and cost per job
  - New businesses created and safeguarded
  - New businesses surviving more than 12 months
  - Number of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) businesses supported
  - Number of women-led businesses supported
  - Private sector leverage
  - Sales figure (£) safeguarded and new sales created
  - Satisfaction with BCRS in administering the Fund
  - New contracts secured

- (2) That the decision on extending the Loan Fund be deferred until the following actions are completed:
  - Complete recommendation (1) (full evaluation)
  - Benchmark performance of the Loan Fund delivered by BCRS and similar organisations in other local authority areas; and
  - 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
- (3) That a report be submitted to the 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.
- (4) That the performance of the Dudley Business Loan Fund is continued to be monitored on a monthly basis (financial/performance outputs and bad debt) in line with the formal contract signed with BCRS in August 2012.

#### Area 2 – Business to Business

- (1) That the use of a Dudley Borough Business Directory for internal and external use to be accessed via the Dudley Business First and Council websites be implemented and promoted (internally and externally).
- (2) That better use of social media is made, such as LinkedIn, to better promote the Dudley Business First service and opportunities for grant funding directly to local businesses.
- (3) To work closely with Corporate Resources in the review of the Council's Procurement Strategy to ensure, promotion and usage of the Business Directory.
- (4) That the Black Country Bullet project (a virtual car that currently showcases 500+ automotive supplier companies) be further enhanced by including a Request for Quotation facility similar to Sell 2 Wales model. Furthermore, assess the feasibility of replicating this project across other priority sectors, including:
  - Advanced manufacturing (including advanced engineering, logistics, food and drink;
  - Building technologies/construction
  - Transport technologies (including aerospace); and
  - Environment technologies

- (5) That awareness of the Council's Forward Procurement Strategy is better promoted to local businesses via Dudley Business First.

### Area 3 – Dudley Business First Initiative

- (1) That a Marketing and Communications Plan be prepared 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).
- (2) That awareness of funding opportunities via the Dudley Business First website is raised, specifically for businesses or business start-ups who are:-
  - Seeking grant funding or loans **below** the £10,000 threshold;
  - Within the non-manufacturing sector (in particular, health and retails sectors; and
  - Dependents of veterans, reservists and serving Armed Forces personnel
- (3) That the search engine optimisation (SEO) of Dudley Business First is increased 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.
- (4) That the marketing material for local and Black Country-wide funding events clearly states the eligibility criteria to ensure appropriate audience is targeted and engaged.
- (5) That the existing engagement with regional universities (Aston, Birmingham and Wolverhampton) is developed 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:
  - Consultancy, licensing and intellectual property;
  - Research and Development (R&D); and
  - Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTPs)
- (6) That the Dudley Business Investment Zone is promoted to potential tenants and develop a 'soft landing offer' which can complement business rate relief.

- (ii) That the Head of Economic Development provide clarity in relation to recommendation 1 of Table 1 to the report submitted, as to whether the evaluation of the local economic impact in respect of the number of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) businesses supported would be for was businesses run by or aimed at ethnic minorities.

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44 CHAIR'S COMMENTS

As this was the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in the 2013/14 municipal year, the Chair expressed his thanks to the Vice-Chair, Lead Officer to the Scrutiny Committee, Scrutiny Committee Members and Officers, for the support and active role that everyone had played during the scrutiny process and recommended that the Council's Scrutiny Committees adopt the practices of this committee as a template for future meetings.

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The meeting ended at 6.10 pm.

CHAIR

**Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2014**

**Report of the Lead Officer and the Director of Corporate Resources**

**Annual Scrutiny Programme 2014/15**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To note the items proposed and suggested for inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for detailed consideration by this Scrutiny Committee during 2014/15.

**Background**

2. As in 2013/14, meetings of this Scrutiny Committee have been scheduled, on the dates below, primarily to carry out the reviews that are allocated to them and to undertake detailed scrutiny of the Council's revenue budget proposals in November -
  - Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2014 – 6pm
  - Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 – 6pm
  - Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 – 6pm
  - Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 – 6pm
3. The Committee will formally endorse the Annual Scrutiny Plan at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2014. The items proposed for detailed consideration by this Scrutiny Committee during 2014/15 are:
  - Economic Development (including inward investment)
  - Environmental Management, Commercial Services

A brief summary of each topic will be provided by the relevant Assistant Director at the meeting.

4. Appendix 1 provides more detailed information on the topics set out in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2014/15, as referred to in paragraph 3 above.

**Finance**

5. The costs of operating the revised scrutiny arrangements will be contained within existing budgetary allocations.



## Law

6. 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.
7. The Police and Justice Act 2006 gives the Council powers to scrutinise the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables local authorities to scrutinise other partners. Much of this legislation has now been consolidated in the Localism Act 2011.

## Equality Impact

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

## Recommendation

9. That the proposed items contained in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2014/15, as referred to in paragraph 3 and Appendix 1, be endorsed.



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**Ron Sims**  
**Lead Officer**



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**Philip Tart**  
**Director of Corporate Resources**

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## List of Background Papers

**Report to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 – Annual Scrutiny Programme 2014/15**

Scrutiny Chairs - DUE Topics for consideration		
Portfolio		Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Area for Scrutiny		Economic Development (including inward investment)
Council Priorities	Cabinet Priority:	Regeneration, skills & employment
	Council Plan:	'To create a thriving local enterprise economy' and 'To increase the number and diversity of businesses attracted to the borough'
Context		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dudley has a good pedigree in terms of successfully encouraging businesses to set up in the borough, e.g. Invest in Dudley Bureau est early 1990s dedicated to encourage inward investment into borough and then working at a sub regional (Black Country) level (working with Black Country Investment)</li> <li>▪ Linkages at a national level with <u>UK Trade &amp; Investment</u> and at a local level <u>Invest Black Country</u> including <u>Black Country LEP</u> and <u>Marketing Birmingham</u></li> <li>▪ Initiatives supporting inward investment include: (1) <u>Dudley Business First initiative</u> providing a single point of contact for inward investment enquiries; (2) <u>Dudley Business Investment Zone</u> (joint partnership with Dudley MBC and private sector); (3) Funding through Dudley Business Loan Fund; Black Country Regional Growth Fund and European funding (4) <u>Commercial Property Search</u> –interactive property finder within the Borough (5) New Heritage Regeneration Ltd</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">UK Competitiveness Index</a> (Dudley's rank is 346 out of 379)</li> </ul>
Rationale		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Links with Birmingham City Council's White Paper (vision for regeneration) – City Region level covering economic development, skills, employment infrastructure investment and strategic planning)</li> <li>▪ Supports the priorities of the Black Country LEP Strategic Economic Plan (2014 - 2021) under the themes of (i) improving business competitiveness (ii) infrastructure and the environment; and (iii) transport infrastructure, by promoting the Black Country as a place to invest</li> <li>▪ Supports the 'Business' theme of the Black Country European Union Strategic Investment Framework (2014 – 2020) by supporting businesses to export, innovate and access finance</li> <li>▪ Links into the wider borough regeneration agenda including inward investment</li> <li>▪ Supports the objectives in the borough's Economic Strategy and in particular the Business &amp; Enterprise theme: 'To encourage the development of a dynamic and diverse business base and job opportunities through support to new and existing businesses in the Borough'</li> </ul>
What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determining the role of inward investment at a local, sub regional, regional, and national level</li> <li>▪ Determining the inward investment value of what's is and what could be on offer (raising Dudley's rank in UK Competitiveness Index)</li> <li>▪ Considering whether Dudley could do more nationally to encourage inward investment locally</li> </ul>

<b>Environment Scrutiny Committee</b>	
<b>Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Environment & Culture Cabinet Member for Transportation
<b>Area for Scrutiny</b>	Environmental Management, Commercial Services
<b>Link to Council Plan</b>	<p><b>Cabinet Priority:</b> Cleaner, greener &amp; environmentally friendly and people being served better.</p> <p>Theme - To provide the most customer friendly and responsive services of any council in the Country, (Activities) Explore and develop new methods of recycling the Borough's waste &amp; Make the most of the Green Belt, Rights of Way and access to the countryside and ensure that free leisure activities like walking and cycling are available to everyone.</p> <p><b>Council Plan:</b> To encourage sustainable waste management practices amongst the Borough's residents and businesses and to provide increased opportunities for recycling; to protect, preserve and develop for appropriate use the unique heritage of the Borough for this and future generations and to preserve and improve the quality and biodiversity of the natural and built environment.</p>
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Environmental Management Division is responsible for a number of services that may have the potential to be expanded and operated on a commercial basis.</li> <li>• Although services like trade waste have operated successfully over a number of years, competing with the private sector, there may be scope for a number of other services to either enter the commercial market or build on existing success, having traded with other Council directorates for a number of years.</li> <li>• It is clear that the current financial constraints imposed on local authorities will not ease in the foreseeable future and therefore any additional revenue will make a welcome contribution, easing the Council's financial burden and securing employment.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help compliment and support existing Council services.</li> <li>• Build on existing commercial expertise within the Environmental Management Division.</li> <li>• Determine constraints of existing legislation and help determine the boundaries of new legislation such as the Localism Act.</li> <li>• Offer potential employment opportunities and further extend the Environmental Management Division's established apprenticeship programme.</li> <li>• Help remove boundaries that often constrain Council services and restrict investment.</li> <li>• Establish a framework that will free Environmental Management from traditional bureaucracy associated with trading Council services.</li> <li>• Help secure employment by seeking out new opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee?</b></p>	<p>Scrutiny Committee to consider scope for a commercial strategy that will help support existing Council services, secure jobs and identify additional revenue streams.</p>