

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

Thursday, 5th November, 2009 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor C. Wilson (Chairman)
Councillor Cotterill (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Attwood, Burston, Caunt, A. Finch, Foster, Mrs D Harley,
J. Martin, Miller and Ryder.

OFFICERS

Assistant Director of Finance (Revenues, Benefits and Management Support) (Lead Officer to the Committee), Interim Assistant Director of Finance (Financial Services and Corporate Finance), (Directorate of Finance), Head of Community Safety, Head of Strategic Research and Intelligence, Head of Contingency and Disaster Management, the Contingency and Disaster Management Manager and the Drugs and Alcohol Team Manager (All Chief Executives Directorate), Head of Community Renewal (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Trading Standards Manager, (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Senior Solicitor and Miss K Fellows (both Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources).

22. **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.

23. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 10th September, 2009, be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mrs D Harley in the list of apologies for absence.

24. **PUBLIC FORUM**

No matters were raised under this Agenda item.

25. REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the Dudley Borough Challenge Review – 2009/12 Consultation draft 2009 a copy of which had been separately circulated to Members. Details of the headline achievements since the 2005 Community Strategy relating to the terms of reference of this Committee were appended to the Report.

Arising from the presentation of the Report, the Chairman stated that he had been impressed with the list of achievements referred to in Appendix 2 of the report, indicating that these evidenced that the Council were progressing in the right direction.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the review of the Community Strategy, be noted.

26. UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL STRATEGY

A report of the Interim Director of Finance was submitted on the update of the Council's Capital Strategy. A copy of the Strategy for 2010/2015 was attached as an Appendix to the report submitted.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the update of the Council's Capital Strategy be noted and that the Cabinet be informed that there were no issues that this Select Committee wished to be taken into account when the strategy was considered by full Council.

27. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CONTINGENCY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT 2008/09

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the state of preparedness within the Council to respond to those incidents both minor and major which could befall the community of Dudley either from natural, man-made disasters or terrorism within the Borough. Documents and plans held by Contingency and Disaster Management, Council training sessions and exercises for 2008/09 and a list of incidents for the year were appended to the Report submitted.

Arising from the presentation of the report, particular reference was made to the list of incidents referred to in Appendix 2 and the Council's use of their General Mapping Information System in order to provide partners with geographical information to deal with various incidents.

Arising from the presentation of the report, and appendices to the report submitted, Members raised a number of concerns, questions and suggestions in particular relating to:-

- In relation to multi-agency working a suggestion was made that partners who utilise Council facilities should be requested to pay fees for those facilities and also contribute towards the cost of any refurbishment of those facilities should this be required, with particular reference to the refurbishment programmes referred to in the report.
- A question as to whether there were any contingency plans should key workers take industrial action following the outcome of single status in order that the Council could continue to provide core services.

In responding to the questions and comments raised the Head of Contingency and Disaster Management indicated that other partners were financing building and events areas that the Council may utilise for major incidents and events, and that the facilities referred to at Himley Hall would only be used by the partners for major incident events.

It was confirmed that all Council Directorates would be urged as part of their business contingency plans to ensure that arrangements were put in place to facilitate the provision of core services should industrial action result in those services being effected.

It was noted that on Tuesday 1st December 2009 there would be an awareness session held for elected members in relation to the process of managing emergencies and how this would be done through work with partners.

The Chairman stated that the report provided reassurances that the Council were prepared to deal with major emergency incidents.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Chief Executive be requested to report to a future of the Committee on Partners paying fees and contributing to the cost of refurbishment of Council facilities.
- (b) That the information contained in the report, and appendices to the report, submitted on Contingency and Disaster Management 2008/09, be noted.

28. DEVELOPMENT OF DUDLEY'S NEW ALCOHOL STRATEGY

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the development of the new Dudley Borough Alcohol Strategy. A copy of the draft Alcohol Strategy was circulated separately to Members.

Arising from the presentation of the report Members asked a number of questions and raised queries in particular relating to:-

- The Council's powers to deal with alcohol related problems;
- That problems with young people obtaining alcohol from adults would not be alleviated by the restriction of alcohol sales;
- Observations that alcohol related offences were linked to extended opening hours;
- A suggestion that the public should be encouraged to report alcohol related offences in order that evidence could be obtained to satisfy the strict licensing revocation requirements;
- The practical contribution of the Primary Care Trust in preparing the draft Alcohol Strategy;
- A request that the achievements of Operation Staysafe should be reported upon at a future meeting of the Committee.

In responding to questions raised by Members the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager stated that in preparing the Draft Strategy, work had been undertaken in consultation with Trading Standards and Licensing and a contribution was awaited from the Project Manager for Healthy Towns in order that this could be included, and that the Safe and Sound Partnership had contributed to national consultations that had taken place during 2009.

It was further stated that in preparing the Strategy, work would continue to be undertaken with Trading Standards and the Licensing Section.

It was reported that work would also continue with parents through Health Promoting Schools whereby advice would be given upon during parenting evenings.

The Trading Standards Manager reported that the sale of alcohol could be regulated by the Council's Licensing and Safety Committee whereby premises licences could be reviewed and enforcement action could include suspension of a licence for a period of time; stringent conditions being imposed on licences; systems being implemented for the production of identification from those purchasing alcohol and obtaining confirmation from licensed premises that adequate CCTV was in place, in order that evidence would be made available to

Trading Standards when required.

It was confirmed that it was an offence to purchase alcohol for young people believed to be under the age of 18 in accordance with the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003.

It was confirmed that the Licensing and Safety Committee had powers to revoke licences but would require clear unequivocal evidence to impose such a penalty.

In responding to a question in relation to the contribution made by the Primary Care Trust in respect of the preparation of the Draft Alcohol Strategy, the Drugs and Alcohol Team Manager informed Members that Diane McNulty, Public Health Manager at the Primary Care Trust was part of the Alcohol Strategy Group and some of the initiatives outlined in the Strategy were funded through the Primary Care Trust.

In respect of a point raised in relation to Programme Paragon the Head of Community Renewal clarified that Operation Staysafe was being piloted to reduce anti social behaviour making particular reference to operation Tranquillity whereby 400 people participated in a lantern Parade in Priory Park on Halloween, and indicated that more funding was awaited in order to extend the provision.

In responding to a question in relation to Operation Staysafe the Head of Community Safety reported that whether the initiative would be rolled out any further would depend on the impact of the initiative.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the information contained in the report, and the Appendix to the report, submitted on the development of the new Dudley Borough Alcohol Strategy, together with Members' comments on the direction and priorities of the Strategy as reported above, be noted;
- (b) That the final Strategy be referred to the Safe and Sound Board in December, 2009 and to Cabinet in 2010 for approval.

29. THE POLICING PLEDGE

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the origins of the Policing Pledge, the content of the Pledge, and the commitments it made to the people who live and work in Dudley Borough.

Arising from the presentation of the report Members raised concerns, in particular, relating to the public perception of the Police due to their lack of attendance when called to incidents and problems with local neighbourhood police stations being closed for part of the week.

Ward Councillors present praised the work of the Netherton
SCSC/19

Neighbourhood Police and in particular the work of Sergeant Birtwistle.

A Member referred to the Paragon Programme advising that this would be aimed at utilising resources in order to contribute towards priorities including releasing more Police Officers on to the streets in order to make the general public feel safe and providing a structure which would be managed from Lloyd House in Birmingham. It was understood that an event would be held in the new year in order to advise upon the programme to which elected Members would be invited to attend.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted on the Policing Pledge, the content of the Pledge and the commitments it makes to the people who live and work in the Dudley Borough, be noted.

30. THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SCHEME

A joint report of the Director of Adult Community and Housing Services and the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the background to and summary of the Social Responsibility Scheme pilot scheme and roll out and on the benefits of the Social Responsibility Scheme as part of a package of measures to reduce underage drinking, reduce anti-social behaviour, increase reassurances and community safety and improve health and outcomes for young people.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the information contained in the report submitted, on the background to and summary of the Social Responsibility Scheme Pilot Scheme and roll out, be noted.
- (b) That the work of the participating agencies be noted.
- (c) That the benefits of the partnership approach and the co-ordinating and project management role undertaken by the Area Community Renewal Officers enabling agencies to meet the objectives and the needs of local communities and neighbourhoods, be noted.
- (d) That the positive impact of the Community Renewal Strategy on community safety, health and well-being, children and young people and the environment and on strengthening agency processes and informing associated strategies, be noted.
- (e) That the roll out of the Social Responsibility Scheme, in line with the suggested programme with further detail to be determined through the Area Committee Community Renewal working groups locally, be supported and forwarded to the Cabinet Members for the Environment and

31. AREA COMMITTEE COMMUNITY RENEWAL WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted providing an update on the progress of the Area Committee Community Renewal Working Groups and a summary of the broad issues arising from them.

Arising from the presentation of the report a Member, expressed his appreciation for the work of the Community Renewal Officer for the Central Dudley Area Committee area.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and the Appendix to the report, submitted on the progress of the Area Committee Community Renewal Working Groups and a summary of the broad issues arising from them, be noted.

32. 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.

Details of Safe and Sound Board Members were circulated during the meeting.

Following discussion on this issue it was:

RESOLVED

That Inspector Willis be requested to report to a future meeting of the Committee on the achievements of Operation Staysafe.

The meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN