

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

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008 at 6.00 pm  
in Committee Room 3, Council House, Dudley

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor A. Turner (Chairman)  
Councillor Cotterill (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Ahmed, Burston, Mrs Collins, A. Finch, Ms Foster, Kettle,  
Jones, Nottingham and Ryder.

**OFFICERS**

Assistant Director for Partnership and Children's Trust (Lead Officer to the Committee), Director of Finance, Head of Policy (Chief Executive's Directorate), Crime Reduction Manager (Community Safety Team), Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator (Community Safety Team), Senior Researcher (Chief Executive's Directorate) and Messrs Jablonski and Furidze (Directorate of Law and Property).

**Also in Attendance**

Councillor Mrs Millward – Cabinet Member for Finance and Lead Member for Community Safety

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**APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Harley and the Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services) and the Head of Community Safety (Chief Executive's Directorate).

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**SUBSTITUTE MEMBER**

It was reported that Councillor Kettle had been appointed to serve as substitute member for Councillor Harley, for this meeting of the Committee only.

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this agenda item.

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CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13(c), agenda item number 7 The Respect Agenda was considered as the next item of business.

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THE RESPECT AGENDA

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted updating the Committee on progress with regard to the Respect Agenda.

In presenting the report the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, referred to a copy of a report, a copy of which was attached, submitted to and endorsed by Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007. Five identified priority areas, within that report, namely parenting, substance misuse, community cohesion, positive activities for young people within schools and colleges and positive activities for young people outside schools and colleges, were intended to focus on innovative ways of encouraging people to make positive changes to their patterns of behaviour. The Respect Standards for Housing Management were not included among the five priority areas as these standards were specifically aimed at social landlords and therefore were not a corporate priority within the Respect Agenda.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the reports submitted, updating the Committee on progress with regard to the Respect Agenda, and the comments and responses given at the meeting, be noted.

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## CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP REFORM

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the updated position following the review of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988.

In presenting the report, Alistair Cook, the Crime Reduction Manager, informed the meeting that the awaited final guidance, "Delivering Safer Communities - A guide to effective partnership working" had now been published. The Council had hosted a partnership development day and identified a number of issues to be progressed. The two key outcomes were firstly that the board would develop a process to identify the community priorities by aggregating known consultation databases, and secondly that they would consider the potential for merging agency's intelligence function. One recommendation of the guidance document was that strategic boards should consider their chairing arrangements. The board responded by debating the issue at their meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and they opted for a rotating chair policy. The Crime Reduction Manager also informed the meeting that as the Flanagan report on partnership policing procedures was still awaited this was affecting receipt of proposals in respect of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the community call to action. The Flanagan report was now expected by April 2008.

Arising from the presentation given, Members expressed concern over the rotating chair policy as being potentially divisive and encouraging unaccountability due to the short length of the chair's term of office. An identifiable person with a defined term of office, who could be held to account, was suggested as an alternative option. The impact of the delay in publishing the Flanagan report was also raised as an issue that would hold back the partnership's effectiveness. It was noted that many of the recommendations arising from the Flanagan report could, it was considered, be implemented following publication of the report.

### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, updating the Committee on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Reform, together with the comments and responses given, be noted.

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## REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2008/09

A joint report of the Chief Executive, the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Finance was submitted on the proposed Revenue Budget Strategy for 2008/09 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2008/09 – 2010/11.

The Director of Finance, in his presentation of the report, informed the Committee that Cabinet had, on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008, approved the Revenue Budget Strategy and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In commenting further on the report reference was made to a number of factors affecting the budget identified in paragraphs 3 to 5 of the report. The implications for services covered by the terms of reference of the Select Committee as set out in paragraphs 27 to 34 of the report, were also highlighted.

Particular comments were made and responded to in connection with changed funding arrangements for Police Community Support Officers, Neighbourhood Management and Dudley Council Plus.

In respect of Dudley Council Plus, the Director of Finance, also reported that, from December 2007, he had become responsible for this service and would submit an update report on the operation of Dudley Council Plus to the meeting of the Committee likely to be held in January, 2009.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and appendices submitted, on the Cabinet's Revenue Budget Strategy proposals for 2008/09 and Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2008/09 – 2010/11, together with comments and responses given, be noted and that Cabinet be informed this Select Committee had no observations to make arising out of consideration of the report.
- (2) That the Director of Finance be requested to submit an update report on the operation of Dudley Council Plus to the meeting of this Committee likely to be held in January 2009.

#### DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the first Dudley Borough Domestic Abuse Strategy. A copy of the strategy document was circulated at the meeting.

In presenting the report, Anne Boden, the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator, informed the Committee that due to the prevalence of domestic abuse cases, both male to female and female to male, locally and nationally a strategy based on guidelines within the Home Office's National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan had been drawn up to assist practitioners in tackling domestic abuse and to publicise the issue. The Committee was informed that the strategy focussed on the three key areas of prevention and early detection, protection and justice and support for victims of domestic abuse.

It was also reported that the Dudley Safe and Sound Partnership had approved the strategy, reviewable at six-monthly intervals, to capture changes in the legislation and progress. The Council was accountable to the Partnership and the Crime Reduction Implementation Group for the delivery of the strategy's key outcomes.

Arising from the presentation given of the report submitted Members commented on the practicalities involved for example in assisting those abused and reporting abuse. It was considered that Members would benefit from a workshop on domestic violence so as to effectively assist constituents. Members also questioned whether it would be more beneficial to have all the staff working on domestic violence in one defined location. It was considered that doing so would raise the profile of the service, make it more accessible, and reduce cases of aborted prosecutions due to victims withdrawing their reports or complaints.

A concern was also raised that partnership working appeared not to clearly identify people accountable for defined outcomes. The meeting was informed that the strategy clearly identified persons such as the Chair of the Safe and Sound Board as responsible for certain defined outcomes. All the partners, such as the police and health providers were expected to sign off the strategy and be held accountable for its success.

It was noted that copies of the Strategy would be forwarded to all Members of the Council and that should they have any questions or queries they should contact either Anne Boden or Geoff Thomas.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted, on the Domestic Abuse Strategy for the Borough of Dudley and the comments and responses given, be noted.
- (2) That copies of the Domestic Abuse Strategy be made available by the Community Safety Team to all Members of the Council.
- (3) That a further report be submitted to the meeting of the Committee likely to be held in September 2008, updating the Committee on progress in implementing the strategy and combating domestic abuse.

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted, drawn up from data collated by Council to measure the effects that the local authority and its partners were having upon perceptions of Council services and quality of life. The data was also used to raise the public's awareness of the Local Area Agreement's action and outcomes on tackling anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the results of the 2006 Local Government User Satisfaction Survey and Citizen's Panel, be noted.

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QUARTERLY 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 period July to September 2007.

Arising from consideration of the information submitted, a query was raised about Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). The Head of Policy informed the meeting that there had been a shift in the use of ASBOs to tackle anti-social behaviour and a realisation that ASBOs should only be a last resort. The Council had also adopted more cost-effective housing-based interventions, such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The Head of Policy undertook to consider further the issue of introducing a more meaningful or appropriate measure in place of ASBOs and report back to a future meeting of the Select Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted, on the Council's quarterly performance for the second quarter of 2007/08, on the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee, be noted.
- (2) That the Head of Policy be requested to report to a future meeting of this Committee on the introduction of a more meaningful or appropriate measure in place of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

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The meeting ended at 7.45pm.

CHAIRMAN