

Meeting of the Council – 13th July, 2009

Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2008/09

Purpose of Report

1. To submit to the Council the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2008/09.

Background

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires Select Committees to report annually to the full Council on the work carried out over the previous municipal year, making both recommendations for key areas for future work programmes and any amended methods of working, if appropriate.
3. As in previous years, the work programme for the year was rooted in the Council's overall objectives in terms of both the key issues but also identifying the timetable for reports back.
4. Given the wide range and coverage of this Select Committee with its remit not only to cover regeneration initiatives in the borough, cultural initiatives and adult education, but also its remit for Corporate Human Resources, Equality and Diversity and ICT matters, it is difficult to single out a number of key issues.
5. However, the following areas have been identified:-
 - (a) Visitor Economy Update
 - (b) Scrutiny of the Council's performance with regard to Equality and Diversity issues.
 - (c) The remit for the scrutiny of planning policy and development involved the on-going issue of an examination of Section 106 or the planning obligations placed on developers to ensure that they contributed to improvements in the community

infrastructure. This covered housing, public open spaces, transportation and community development areas.

- (d) Dudley Archives and Local History Service relocation.
- (e) Regeneration issues, including progress reports on the sixteen local and district centres with particular consideration being given to the regeneration of Coseley.
- (f) The South Black Country Innovation Centre.

6. Notwithstanding these important issues, the Committee's Work Programme for the 2008/09 Municipal Year, also included:-
- A range of Directorate Equality and Diversity Annual Reports.
 - Capital Strategy and Council Budget
 - Modernisation Programme for the Library Service
 - Quarterly Corporate Performance reports
 - Regeneration issues in relation to planning.
7. Arising from a request made by Halesowen Area Committee scrutiny was undertaken of the Leasowes Restoration Project at the meeting of the Committee held on 8th September, 2008. A number of matters were highlighted for incorporation in the Council's project management arrangements. A follow up report on completion of the project in December, 2008, was also considered in March 2009 and a site visit held.
8. A continuing feature of meetings of the Committee in 2008/09 has been the involvement of the public through their use of the public forum item on agendas.

In the main, questions have been posed on the Dudley Archives and Local History Service relocation and latterly in relation to the proposed review of the museum service.

Members of the public have expressed their appreciation on numerous occasions to the Committee for the opportunity to speak on matters raised.

Planning Obligations - Section 106 Agreements

9. The importance of Section 106 Agreements to the regeneration of the Borough continues to be recognised by the Committee. Further review and scrutiny was given to this matter in 2008/09 and, arising from consideration of a report in January, 2009, proposals were considered, at the committee's meeting in March, 2009, and recommended to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration for implementation in

respect of proposals for engagement and communication with Ward Members in relation to the Planning Obligations process.

This development was seen as a positive indicator of the scrutiny process.

In accordance with a request made at the Council meeting in February, 2009, regular reports on this matter will be submitted to the Committee in 2009/10.

Archive Service Relocation

10. Detailed consideration continued to be given to the issue of relocation of the Archive Service, in the light of reports received and public interest expressed. A site visit was undertaken in February, 2009. Again, further consideration will be given to this matter.

South Black Country Innovation Centre

11. The creation of an innovation centre in the Borough to ensure Dudley is at the cutting edge of new added value industrial development remains a priority for the Select Committee. On-going consideration will be given to this matter.

Local Centres/Coseley/LIFT Projects

12. In addition to the consideration given to the sixteen local and district centres, the Committee considered specific regeneration issues in relation to Coseley. Such issues could possibly involve a LIFT project and a site visit to another area will be held in 2009/10 to further this. Consideration was also given to the various LIFT projects in the borough, including that at Brierley Hill to which a visit may be made for those Members of the Committee who have not previously visited the project.

Dudley Borough Economic Strategy for 2009/10

13. During 2008/09 the Committee received a presentation and was involved in the consultation process in respect of the Dudley Borough Economic Strategy for 2009/10. Comments made by the Committee will be considered as part of the consultation process.

Work Programme for 2009/10

14. Items for the work programme for 2009/10, to be considered by the Select Committee at its first meeting in this Municipal Year, will include:-
 - Update on the South Black Country Innovation Centre
 - Visitor economy

- Review of the Museum Service
- Progress of the New Heritage Regeneration Limited
- Progress on Dudley Archives and Local History Service relocation
- Planning Obligations
- ICT Strategy
- Economic Strategy 2010/11
- Developments in the local centres and in relation to Coseley and Cradley
- Update on Joint Core Strategy Progress

Conclusion

15. The Select Committee with its remit of Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education continues to be central in driving forward regeneration in its widest sense. The interweaving of these various elements is a major fill-up to ensuring that the economic regeneration of the Borough is viewed in its wider community context.

Finance

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

Law

17. The requirement for the Committee to submit an annual report to the Council which contained in Article 6 of the Constitution.
18. The relevant strategy provisions regarding the Council's Constitution are contained in Part II of the Local Government Act, 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Strategy Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Equality Impact

19. This report complies with the Council's equality and diversity policy and has taken these issues into account whilst scrutinising the areas of work described.
20. The Select Committee has the over-arching responsibility for Corporate Equality and Diversity issues and, therefore, receives both the Council's Annual Review of Equality and Diversity, as well as the annual Equality and Diversity Reports from the Chief Executive's Directorate and the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Recommendation

21. That the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2008/09 as set out above, be noted .



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**CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON
REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ADULT EDUCATION**