

## **SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT**

Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 at 6 pm  
in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Mrs Cowell (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Turner (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Finch, Harley, Ms. Harris, James, Kettle, Lowe, Stanley,  
Tomkinson and Tyler

### **Officers**

Director of Law and Property (as Lead Officer to the Committee),  
Assistant Directors of Adult, Community and Housing Services  
(Housing Strategy and Private Sector) and (Housing Management),  
Assistant Directors of the Urban Environment (Development and  
Environmental Protection) and (Environmental Management), the Food  
and Occupational Safety Manager (Directorate of the Urban  
Environment) and Mr. J. Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property).

---

1                   **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of  
Councillors Body and Ms. Craigie.

---

2                   **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was reported that Councillors Ms. Harris and Tyler had been  
appointed as substitute members for Councillors Body and Ms. Craigie  
respectively for this meeting of the Committee only.

---

3                   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ms. Harris declared a personal interest, in accordance with  
the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No. 10 -  
Food Service Plan 2006/07- in that she is the Chair of Dudley Beacon  
and Castle Primary Care Trust and in that capacity is responsible for  
Public Health in partnership with the Council and with Dudley Food for  
Health Awards.

---

4                   **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2006, be approved as a correct record and signed.

---

5                    PUBLIC FORUM

There were no issues raised by the public under this Agenda Item.

At this juncture, Councillor Tyler introduced Daniel Horrocks, the Chair of the Schools Council at Kingswinford School who had asked to shadow him as part of his work experience. Councillor Tyler commented on the activities that had been undertaken and in which the Directorates concerned had been most helpful.

Daniel was welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman.

---

6                    TERMS OF REFERENCE, RULES AND PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY PROTOCOLS FOR SELECT COMMITTEES

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted setting out the Terms of Reference, Procedure Rules applicable to this Committee, and the Scrutiny Protocols for Select Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, now submitted on the Terms of Reference, Rules of Procedure of the Committee and Scrutiny Protocols for Select Committees, be noted.

---

7                    APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted, seeking consideration of Working Groups of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the re-appointment of the Recycling Working Group of the Committee with the remit to consider recycling feasibility options and to look further at the recycling of plastics and that the membership of the Working Group comprise:-

Councillors Mrs. Turner (as Chairman), Ms. Craigie, Harley, Stanley and Tomkinson.

---

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2006/07

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on a Work Programme for the Select Committee for 2006/07.

## RESOLVED

That the following Work Programme of the Committee for 2006/07, as updated at the meeting, be approved:-

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| June, 2006 -      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly reports on Corporate Performance Management</li> <li>Annual Report on Equality and Diversity</li> </ul>  |
| September, 2006 - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choice based lettings</li> <li>Black Country Waste Management Study</li> <li>Recycling</li> <li>High Hedges Legislation</li> </ul>   |
| November, 2006 -  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Quality Management</li> <li>Food Service Plan</li> <li>Update of the Council's Capital Strategy</li> <li>Cleaner Neighbourhoods</li> </ul>   |
| January, 2007 -   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of Zonal Housing Repairs and Service Standards for Repairs</li> <li>Review of Patchworking in Relation to Estate Management and Tenant Participation</li> <li>Sustainability Appraisal Toolkit</li> </ul> |
| March, 2007 -     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Green Areas, not subject to a regular maintenance programme</li> <li>Grounds Maintenance on Housing Estates</li> <li>Equality and Diversity Action Plan Reports</li> </ul>                                  |
-

## DECLINE IN BUS PATRONAGE AND USE OF CONCESSIONARY PASSES - REFERENCE FROM FORMER SELECT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC REGENERATION

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on a reference from the former Select Committee on Economic Regeneration regarding the issue of a decline in bus patronage and use of concessionary passes.

The former Select Committee on Economic Regeneration at its meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2006, had considered a report of the Director of the Urban Environment on this matter, copy attached as Appendix A to this report, and in noting the content of that report and supporting the remaining recommendations contained in that report, also resolved:-

“That the issue of decline in bus patronage and use of concessionary passes be referred to the Select Committee on the Environment for investigation”.

### RESOLVED

That, arising from the consideration given to this matter, the issue of a decline in bus patronage and use of concessionary passes be investigated by this Select Committee and that, as a first step in such investigation, the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to invite representatives from CENTRO, West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority and from the bus users federation to a future meeting of the Committee so that a presentation might be given to the Committee by the representatives of the first two bodies mentioned and the views of the bus users heard.

## FOOD SERVICE PLAN, 2006/07

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Directorate of the Urban Environment Food Service Plan, 2006/07. A summary of the Plan was attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted.

The Food and Occupational Safety Manager, in her presentation of the content of the report and Appendix to the report, submitted, commented in particular on the performance in 2005/2006 as set out in paragraph 8 of the report submitted including the successful bid for grant funding from the Food Standards Agency during 2005/06 referred to and issues for consideration during the year 2006/07 referred to at paragraph 5 of the Appendix to the report.

Arising from the presentation given, the Food and Occupational Safety Manager responded to questions asked by the Committee, including a request for further details in respect of the £19,000 grant funding from the Food Standards Agency during 2005/06.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix 1 to the report, submitted on the Directorate of the Urban Environment Food Service Plan 2006/07, be noted and that the Food Service Plan, 2006/07 be referred to the Cabinet and the Council.
- (2) That the Food and Occupational Safety Manager be requested to write to all members of the Committee setting out details as to how the £19,000 grant funding for the Food Standard Agency during 2005/06 was allocated and used.

---

11

ANNUAL REPORT FOR HOUSING SERVICES ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY 2005/06

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the former Housing Services Directorate's Equality and Diversity Annual Report for 2005/06.

The Assistant Director Adult, Community and Housing Services (Strategy and Private Sector) in his presentation of the report commented that this would be the last such report in respect of the former Housing Services Directorate given its amalgamation within the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services.

Arising from the presentation given, members asked a number of questions relating, in particular, to the workforce profile at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2006 as shown in Table 2 of the Annual Report and the apparent difficulty in retaining persons from a Black Minority Ethnic background; reference to the use of Scale Point 34 and above and whether the use of this scale point was applicable across all directorates of the Council; the disproportionate number of female households rehoused as homeless; queries as to the actual number of staff employed in Housing Services and its breakdown; the reasons as to why staff may not declare themselves as disabled and the fact that whilst numbers of agency and contractual staff could be ascertained, there was no breakdown from the overall number of persons from a Black Minority Ethnic breakdown.

In response to questions asked, it was noted that an interim report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the findings from exit surveys undertaken to see whether there were any specific factors relating to the apparent difficulty in retaining persons from a Black Minority Ethnic background; that scale point 34 equated to grade POA which was Principal Officer level and above and that further work on this aspect was being undertaken by the Chief Executives Directorate and that his scale point was applicable to all the directorate reports relating to equality and diversity. In respect of the greater preponderance of female households re-housed as homeless, it was stated that this was mainly due to matrimonial breakdown and further information could be provided on this aspect.

Regarding numbers of staff in housing services, a further breakdown of staff involved could again be made available, including the numbers of full time equivalent staff in future reports. It was further noted that a further audit of employees would be undertaken to enable them to declare whether or not they regarded themselves as meeting the statutory definition of disability.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and appendix to the report, submitted on the Annual Report for Housing Services on Equality and Diversity, 2005/06, be noted.
- (2) That the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the findings arising from exit surveys held with persons of a Black Minority Ethnic background to ascertain whether there were any specific factors which needed to be addressed in the retention of such persons.

---

12

#### QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

---

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the Quarterly Corporate Performance Monitoring Report for the fourth quarter of 2005/06, relating to performance for the activities relevant to the Terms of Reference of this Committee for the period January to March, 2006.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and Appendices to the report, submitted on the Quarterly Corporate Performance Management report relating to the performance for the activities relevant to the Terms of Reference of this Committee for the period January to March, 2006, be noted.

---

13

COMMITTEE VISIT TO LISTER ROAD

Arising from a suggestion made by the Chairman, it was

RESOLVED

That the Lead Officer to the Committee be requested to arrange a visit to the Lister Road Depot, at a time and on a date to be determined, to which all members of the Committee were to be invited.

The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

CHAIRMAN