

SELECT COMMITTEE
ON REGENERATION, CULTURE AND
ADULT EDUCATION

Monday, 10th September, 2007 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 3 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor C Wilson (Chairman)
Councillor Mottram (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Jackson, Jones, Southall, Tomkinson, K Turner and
Woodall

Officers

Assistant Director Housing Strategy and Private Sector (Lead Officer to the Committee), Director of Law and Property (for part of the meeting only), Senior Assistant Director Directorate of Finance ICT and Procurement, Assistant Director Economic Regeneration, Head of Design and Projects and Economic Regeneration Officer (all Directorate of the Urban Environment), Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer (Chief Executive Directorate) and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property)

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COUNCILLOR SOUTHALL

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Southall to the meeting following his recent absence from Council duties due to illness. Councillor Southall thanked the Chairman for the sentiment expressed.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Crumpton, Rahman and Tyler.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor K Turner declared personal interests in the following matters referred to on the agenda, as follows: -

- (a) Progress report on Regeneration of Dudley Town Centre (Agenda item number 8); and
- (b) Report on the Visitor Economy (Agenda item number 11)

In view of references to Dudley Zoo as he is a Trustee of that body.

21 DEATH OF MR. DON RICHARDSON

At this juncture those present at the meeting stood in silent tribute to the memory of Mr Don Richardson, a local businessman involved in the regeneration of the Black Country, who had recently died.

22 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23rd July, 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

23 PUBLIC FORUM

No matter was raised under this agenda item.

24 REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY – ANNOUNCEMENT

The Assistant Director Economic Regeneration announced that on Friday of last week the Department for Communities and Local Government had sent out a letter supporting amendments made to the Regional Spatial Strategy. Two of the major effects of this were that the potential for Brierley Hill to become a fourth strategic centre for the Black Country had been recognised and that of Dudley Town Centre to become a centre for tourism and culture and be a place of regional significance for tourism had been endorsed. Along with other proposals these would have a major impact on the regeneration and renaissance of the area.

The government proposals would now go out for consultation until 9th November, 2007 with final approval by the Secretary of State expected in the new year.

25 CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), it was

RESOLVED

That the next item of business be Agenda item number 12 – Quarterly Corporate Performance report.

QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on performance in the fourth quarter of 2006/07, January to March, 2007, in relation to the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on performance in the fourth quarter of 2006/07, January to March, 2007, in relation to activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee be noted.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY 2007

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on the Annual Review of Equality and Diversity for 2007. A copy of the sixth such review was attached as an Appendix to the report submitted.

Arising from the presentation of the report and questions raised by members the possibility of the provision of a hand rail to the main entrance of the Council House, Dudley was queried.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the sixth Annual Review of Equality and Diversity 2007, be noted and that the report be referred to the Cabinet for approval.
 - 2) That the Director of Law and Property be requested to arrange for the investigation of the feasibility of the provision of a hand rail to the main entrance of the Council House, Dudley.
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DISABLED EMPLOYEES AND THE PERSONAL DATA AUDIT

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted, arising from a request made at the last ordinary meeting of the Committee, on how "disability" was defined and on the results of the personal data audit.

Arising from the consideration given to the content of the report submitted particular comments were made on the table in paragraph 7 of the report relating to the number of personal data audit returns that had been fully entered on to the PSE system by August, 2007 and the proportion of disabled employees in schools which remained low and out of phase with the rest of the Council's workplace. The possible reasons for this and steps that could be taken to remedy this were also raised.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on how "disability" was defined and on the results of the personal data audit, be noted and that the Lead Officer be requested to contact the Director of Children's Services regarding the low proportion of disabled employees in schools with a view to taking measures so as to increase the number of returns from schools, for example by raising the issue at the Schools Forum, and explaining the purpose of and need for such data, so as to hopefully bring schools in line with the rest of the Council's workforce.

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PROGRESS REPORT ON REGENERATION OF DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress to date in relation to the Regeneration of Dudley Town Centre.

Arising from the presentation given by the Head of Design and Projects on the content of the report submitted members asked a number of questions and a specific request was made for information in respect of the current position regarding the 9 opportunity areas for development work in Dudley Town Centre.

In response to this request the Assistant Director Economic Regeneration informed the Committee that a report was due to be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 31st October, 2007 on the opportunity areas. He also commented on proposals in respect of Tower Street and King Street/Mill Street and elaborated on the position in respect of the Cavandish Quarter with particular reference to Cavandish House. With respect to Cavandish House members considered that there was a need to expedite the position in respect of this property.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on progress to date in relation to the regeneration of Dudley Town Centre, be noted and that the Cabinet member for Economic Regeneration be requested to take whatever measures where available to try and expedite the current position in respect of Cavandish House.

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PROGRESS REPORT ON REGENERATING THE SIXTEEN LOCAL AND DISTRICT CENTRES

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress in the regeneration of the Borough's sixteen local and district centres.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the significant progress made in regenerating the district and local centres since additional resources were allocated in 2005/06, be noted.

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UPDATE ON THE SOUTH BLACK COUNTRY INNOVATION CAMPUS

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress made on the development of the South Black Country Innovation Campus formally known to the Select Committee as the Innovation, Incubation and Enterprise Centre.

RESOLVED

That, subject to clarification by the Lead Officer with the Director of Law and Property on the inclusion of the Chairman of this Committee in the membership of the Steering Group referred to in paragraph 3.5 of the report submitted, the following matters be noted: -

- (a) The decision of the South Black Country Innovation Campus Steering Group that the preferred location should be Castlegate, Dudley.
- (b) The development of partnerships with public and private sector organisations which would further the development of the South Black Country Innovation Campus.
- (c) The joint working arrangements with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council to develop the South Black Country Innovation Campus project.

- (d) The use of the money secured through the South Black Country Regeneration Zone to develop a full business plan by the end of October, 2007.
- (e) The composition and membership of the South Black Country Innovation Campus Steering Group.
- (f) The development to date and the preparation of applications to Advantage West Midlands and the new European Programme for investment in the South Black Country Innovation Campus; and
- (g) The work that would be ongoing to identify and investigate potential resources required for the development of the South Black Country Innovation Campus.

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REPORT ON THE VISITOR ECONOMY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress and achievements to date in respect of the development of the Borough's visitor economy, future developments within the Borough and on the extent of the future role that the Council should play in taking forward the growth of the Borough's visitor economy.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the information contained in the report submitted, on the progress and achievements to date in respect of the development of the Borough's visitor economy and on the work of the Tourism Development Team, be noted.
- 2) That the Cabinet member for Economic Regeneration be requested to note the future developments and the areas for future consideration in developing the direction for the visitor economy in order to maximise the benefits for the Borough; and
- 3) That the Cabinet member for Economic Regeneration be requested to consider the role that the Council should have in taking forward the development of the visitor economy both in the Borough and the Black Country.

The Meeting ended at 8.35pm

CHAIRMAN

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