

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

Thursday 15th March 2007 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 3, Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Blood (Chairman)
Councillor Cotterill (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Mrs Collins, Mrs Dunn, Ms Foster, Harley, Male, C Wilson and Wright.

OFFICERS

Assistant Director for Partnerships and Childrens' Trusts (as Lead Officer), Director of Law and Property (for item 6 only), Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services), Head of Community Safety, Strategic Anti Social Behaviour Coordinator (Community Safety Team), Police Liaison Officer, Marketing and Communications Officer (Chief Executives Directorate) and Mrs Holland (Directorate of Law and Property).

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WELCOME

On behalf of the Committee the Chairman welcomed the Assistant Director for Partnerships and Childrens' Trusts to the meeting in her role of Lead Officer.

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Burston, Finch and the Head of Policy (Chief Executive's Directorate).

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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 11th January, 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendment:

Deleting the second sentence of the second paragraph in the preamble to minute 34 and the substitution of the following, therefore:-

“Upon questioning by the Chairman, the Marketing Officer advised that leaflets would be delivered with the newspaper, although not as inserts”.

43 PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this agenda item.

44 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2007/2008

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted and presented by the Director of Law and Property on the Directorate of Law and Property’s Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2007/08.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and appendix submitted in respect of the Directorate of Law and Property’s Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2007/08, be noted.

45 UPDATE ON CRIME FIGURES FOR THE DUDLEY BOROUGH

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted updating the Committee on the crime figures for the Dudley Borough.

In presenting the report the Police Liaison Officer reported that the Dudley Borough had already achieved its partnership target to reduce overall crime and that the Safe and Sound Strategic Partnership had agreed an additional 5% reduction target; this further 5% reduction target was under threat. Performance in 2006/2007 had started strongly but that in the third quarter some increase in crime had been experienced, particularly the incidence of violent crime. He reported on areas that had been highlighted as “hot spots” for crime, stating that the majority of violent crime happened in the vicinity of licensed premises.

In response to questions from Members, the Police Liaison Officer replied that the extended licensing hours may have had some detrimental impact on the number of incidents of violent crime. He explained that although the Government had initially provided funding towards the policing of extended licensing hours the funding was not available in the current year.

The Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services) informed the Committee that the Council had worked closely with the police in respect of the extended licensing hours and a strategy had been produced for Stourbridge High Street that had required the co-operation of the police, taxi drivers and licensee. The statistics as to the success or failure of the strategy in reducing crime in Stourbridge High Street were still being collated.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and in the Appendix to the report submitted, updating the Committee on the crime figures for the Dudley Borough, be noted.

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THE PROCESS OF ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PUBLICITY

A verbal update was made by the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator on the current position with regard to the process leading up to the publication of Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

In presenting the update the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator explained the process leading to an agreement that had been reached on a process to be followed before publicising an ASBO.

In response to questions from Members he confirmed that, subject to the agreement of Corporate Board, the Officers designated as being responsible for final approval before the publication of an ASBO, were the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services in respect of adults, and the Director of Children's Services in respect of children. A report outlining the proposals would be presented to a future meeting of the Corporate Board.

In response to a question from a Member, the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator explained that the Strategic Board had not been in favour of publicising ASBO's on the CCN network as it was contrary to the terms of reference and additional research was being undertaken looking into best practice, etc. He confirmed that he was confident that after the meeting of the Corporate Board all procedures would be in place ready for the publicising of the next appropriate ASBO.

In response to concerns expressed by some Members of the Committee, the Chairman explained that the Council were adhering to Home Office guidelines when formulating the guidance for publicising ASBO's.

Members expressed concern at the time it had taken to achieve the appropriate permissions in order to publicise ASBO's. They also expressed concern as to who would be responsible for signing the final permission when the designated Council Officer was unavailable.

A short discussion also took place on the acquisition of photographs for use on the leaflets. The Marketing and Communications Officer passed round a sample of the leaflet indicating the spot where the photographs would be inserted.

In response to a question the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator confirmed that no ASBO's eligible for publicity had been issued since October 2006.

The Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services) emphasised that there were no legal obstacles to the publication of ASBO's but that if a Director's permission were to be added to the process, the Committee needed to be assured that this would not cause any delay in publication. It was suggested that other senior officers be authorised to approve publicity in the absence of the Chief Officers.

RESOLVED

1. That the verbal update given by the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator on the current position with regard to the publicising of Anti Social Behaviour Orders, and the comments and responses given, be noted.
2. That further progress reports on anti social behaviour publicity be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

RESPECT AGENDA

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted updating the Committee on the RESPECT Agenda.

In presenting the report the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator emphasised that one of the key headings was leadership. He stated that the issue had been discussed at Corporate Board level and emphasised the importance of it being championed at a senior level; the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Adult, Community and Housing would co-lead the initiative.

The Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator further explained that a pilot scheme would be inaugurated and that there is a RESPECT Steering Group and a RESPECT Delivery Group.

In response to a question the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator explained the various funding streams associated with the initiative.

A general discussion followed during which it was suggested that the two new Police Chief Superintendents for the Dudley area be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee early in the 2007/2008 municipal year.

RESOLVED

1. That the information contained in the report submitted updating the Committee on the progress with regard to the RESPECT Agenda, be noted.
2. That the work programme of the Committee include attendance by the two new Police Chief Superintendents for the Dudley area to discuss the work of the Partners and Communities Together meetings.

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REPORT OF THE CHAIRMEN OF THE WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the recommendations from the following Working Group meetings:

- 4th January 2007 – Regulatory Controls Working Group
- 30th January 2007 – Customer Services and Public Information Working Group
- 6th March 2007 – Regulatory Controls Working Group

RESOLVED

1. That the information contained in the report submitted, on matters discussed at meetings of Working Groups held in January and March, 2007, be noted.
2. That the proposal that further updates on the Drugs Intervention Programme be included in the work programme of the Committee for 2007/2008, be endorsed.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

CHAIRMAN