

**SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**ON REGENERATION, CULTURE AND**  
**ADULT EDUCATION**

Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2009, at 6.00 pm  
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor C Wilson (Chairman)  
Councillor Mottram (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Barlow, D. Blood, Hanif, P. Harley, Lowe, Perry, Stanley  
and K. Turner

**Officers**

Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Private Sector (Lead Officer to the Committee), Senior Assistant Director, Directorate of Finance ICT and Procurement, Head of Financial Services, Assistant Director, Culture and Community, Head of Economic Regeneration Delivery, Principal Planning Policy Manager, Tourism Development Officer and Principal Planning Obligations Officer (all Directorate of the Urban Environment) and Mr. J. Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property)

**Also in Attendance**

Mr. J. Coyne, Chief Executive, Dudley Infracare LIFT Ltd. (for Agenda Item No. 9)

together with three members of the public

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**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors G.H. Davies and Woodall.

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**SUBSTITUTE MEMBER**

It was reported that Councillor P. Harley had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor Woodall 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, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

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PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public present, to the meeting.

In response to a question asked, it was confirmed that members of the Committee had received a copy of the desk top assessment report from Birmingham Archaeology on the Mount Pleasant School site.

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REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2009/10

A joint report of the Interim Chief Executive, the Director of the Urban Environment, the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, the Interim Director of Law and Property and the Director of Finance was submitted on the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2009/10 and Medium Term Financial Strategy, 2009/10-2011/12.

The Senior Assistant Director of Finance, in his presentation of the report, informed the Committee that the Cabinet at its meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2009, had approved the proposals contained within the report for further consultation, including consultation with Select Committees. The implications for services covered by the Terms of Reference of this Committee commenced at paragraph 31 of the report submitted.

Arising from the presentation given, members asked a number of questions to which responses were given, relating in particular to the use of balances and aspects of the efficiency and other savings indicated in Appendix B to the report submitted. It was noted that the review of leisure facilities referred to in that Appendix was subject to approval by the Cabinet at a future meeting.

Reference was also made to a Review of the Museums Service, paragraph 36(b) of the report submitted, involving the Red House Glass Cone and Broadfield House Glass Museum, on which further feasibility work would be undertaken in the 2009/10 financial year.

## RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the Cabinet's Revenue Budget Strategy proposals for 2009/10 and Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2009/10-2011/12, be noted and that the Cabinet be informed that there were no observations that this Select Committee wished to make on the proposals presented.

- (2) That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to report to a future meeting of this Committee on the Review of the Museums Service indicated in the report submitted; that this report be accordingly included in the Committee's work programme for 2009/10 and that approval also be given to the undertaking of site visits to Broadfield House Glass Museum and the Red House Glass Cone as part of the consideration to be given to this matter.

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CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) it was

RESOLVED

That the next item of business be Agenda Item 9 - LIFT Project in Brierley Hill - Regeneration Dimension

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LIFT PROJECT IN BRIERLEY HILL - REGENERATION DIMENSION

Mr. John Coyne, Chief Executive of Dudley Infracare LIFT Ltd. was in attendance at the meeting and thanked members for the opportunity to address them on the work of his organisation.

In his presentation, he mentioned that this opportunity was part of a six month pro-active communication strategy whereby the organisation would be meeting with key stakeholders, such as the Council and Dudley Primary Care Trust, to further explain the work being undertaken.

Mr. Coyne then gave a brief outline of the organisation that had been established in 2004 as a joint venture concern comprising a public private partnership. LIFT stood for Local Investment Finance Trust and was a joined up approach to provide new infrastructure in the areas of health and social care. Reference was then made to the various projects that had been carried out, most of which, it was indicated had been successful. The projects ranged from a disability centre and the Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre that was currently being worked on.

In respect of the Brierley Hill Social Care Centre, this had commenced in June, 2007 and had involved expenditure of approximately £26.3 million. One of the requirements for contractors working on the project was that labour and materials must be sourced locally and, therefore this was one of the ways the project and the company retained links with the local community. The project should be delivered by February, 2010 and would house services from the Primary Care Trust and a range of other social care services. Such projects were carried out in co-operation with officers from the relevant bodies and the good co-operation existing between officers of this Council and the organisation was emphasised.

In respect of other projects, reference was made to four such projects which could come about in the Colley Gate, Lye, Pensnett and Dudley North areas over the next sixteen months.

Mr. Coyne also emphasised that should stakeholders such as the Council wish to undertake any future projects, they should contact LIFT so that a dialogue could begin as they were always open to consideration and discussion of new projects.

Arising from the brief outline given, Mr. Coyne indicated that he had a copy of a DVD on the work of the company and these were circulated to members at the meeting.

Members asked a number of questions which were responded to and, although some members of the Committee had visited the project in the past, Mr. Coyne invited members to visit the project should they so wish. A number of members indicated that they would find such a visit worthwhile.

#### RESOLVED

That Mr. Coyne, Chief Executive, Dudley Infracare LIFT Ltd. be thanked for his presentation on the work of his organisation, as indicated above, and that the Lead Officer to the Committee be requested to facilitate site visits to the Brierley Hill LIFT Project for members who would wish to visit in the future.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on information on planning gain that had either been received or spent during the financial year 2007/08 together with information on Section 106 Legal Agreements that had been signed during 2007/08. Appendix 1 to the report submitted set out those Section 106 Agreements signed in 2007/08; Appendix 2 to the report set out those Planning Obligations received and spent on open space, sport and recreation during 2007/08; Appendix 3 indicated on site affordable housing provision completed in 2007/08 and off-site affordable housing financial contributions in 2007/08 in relation to affordable housing planning obligations and Appendix 4 set out transport contributions received and spent in 2007/08.

The Principal Planning Policy Manager, Annette Roberts, presented the content of the report and its Appendices and in so doing, was welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman and other members following a long absence through illness.

Arising from the presentation given, members asked a number of questions relating to specific issues of detail, set out in the Appendices to the report, and received responses to the matters raised.

Members, however, also raised concerns about the process, as reported on at the meeting, as to how monies received were allocated and cited a number of examples, as set out in the Appendices to the report submitted, of monies being expended of which they were unaware.

The need for the involvement of ward members in the process was, therefore, emphasised and in support of this a motion, as set out below in the resolution, was seconded and carried. Further points were also made in relation to the probability that there were other bodies in the community who were in need of resources, but who, to date, had not been able to access them.

Regarding the details shown in respect of affordable housing, information was requested on the types of dwellings referred to in the planning applications set out in Appendix 3 to the report submitted. In response, it was reported that the nine dwellings on land at Wrens Nest Road, Dudley, comprised bungalows and houses and that the Principal Planning Manager would arrange for information on the housing types on the former Gas Works Site, High Street, Stourbridge, to be sent to the member requesting that information.

Reference was also made to a definition of affordable housing, which referred to housing that was not solely provided on the basis of market forces, but had some public investment. Following further consideration, it was also reported that the scale of such housing had risen from seven dwellings in 2000 to 150 next year. It was also noted that, as indicated at a previous meeting of the Committee, the trend had now shifted from flats/apartments to houses.

In response to comments made regarding the vicinity in which monies could be expended, it was commented upon that monies expended would be spent within the vicinity of the development giving rise to that money.

Overall, members considered that the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted was comprehensive and transparent and the officers involved were thanked for the information received that had given rise to the various comments made at the meeting.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, be noted and that this Committee recommends that a report be tabled at the next Select Committee with a view to providing options as to how the communication and consultation of local Councillors be improved concerning Section 106 monies.

#### REPORT ON THE VISITOR ECONOMY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress and achievements over the past eighteen months in respect of the development of the Borough's visitor economy and future planned developments within the Borough.

The Tourism Development Officer gave a presentation on the content of the report submitted and responded to questions asked by members.

In relation to the information submitted on the Stourbridge Glass Quarter and references to the Red House Glass Cone and Broadfield House Glass Museum, the two members of Kingswinford South Ward present, in which the Museum was located, expressed their concerns and opposition over any closure of Broadfield House and/or removal of its contents to another site. The comments made were endorsed by several other members.

In relation to the Glass Quarter Supplementary Planning Document consultation to be undertaken during January, 2009, as referred to in paragraph 43 of the report submitted, an assurance was given that all members of the Committee would receive documentation to that consultation.

## 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; the work of the Tourism Development Team and the continued vision to develop Dudley as a world class visitor destination, be noted.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture be recommended to support the aspiration for a Black Country Geopark; and
- (3) That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture be recommended that the Council adopts the Place-Making Charter.

## QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on performance in the second quarter of 2008/09, July to September, 2008 in relation to the activities relating to the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

Arising from consideration of the content of the report summary, circulated with the report submitted, particular reference was made to references R.2Bi, ii and iii relating to the development of Town Centre Action Plans for Brierley Hill, Halesowen and Stourbridge and in this connection the Lead Officer undertook to arrange for information to be circulated to members on the position regarding these items.

The Lead Officer also indicated that he would arrange for members to receive details regarding the improved performance reflecting an increase in the number of planning applications being determined as indicated by performance indicators NI157a and c.

## RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on performance in the second quarter of 2008/09, July to September, 2008 in relation to the activities relating to the Terms of Reference of this Committee, be noted.
- (2) That the Lead Officer be requested to facilitate the delivery of information to members in respect of the items referred to above.

The meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN