

Report to Council - 24th July 2006

Report of the former Select Committee on Culture and Recreation

Annual Report of the former Select Committee on Culture and Recreation

Purpose of Report

1. To receive and note the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Culture and Recreation for 2005/06, as set out below.

Background

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires Select Committees to report annually to the full Council on their work and to make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.
3. In deciding its work programme for 2005/06 the Committee chose to concentrate on a manageable list of important issues to ensure that they could be properly scrutinised whilst at the same time giving the Committee some flexibility to add some additional items that arose during the course of the year.
4. Work Programme for the year 2005/2006
 - Scrutiny of Directorate of Urban Environment Equality & Diversity annual report and action plan.
 - Comprehensive Performance Assessment – Cultural Services Inspection and performance reports.
 - Scrutiny of implementation of Options Plus Scheme.
 - Scrutiny of Insurance Arrangements for Community groups using Council facilities.
 - Scrutiny of proposed revenue budget for Cultural Services and Capital Strategy.
 - Scrutiny of Leisure Centres financial performance.
 - Scrutiny of implementation of playing pitch strategy.

5. Key Issues Arising

The following areas were given special consideration by the Committee:-

- Additional time to view services in action in order to improve member's knowledge of the services, which the committee could be scrutinising.
- Implementation of the Dudley Borough Blue Plaque scheme (16/03/05 Lead Member authorised by Cabinet to implement the policy).
- Initial disappointing take up of the revised Options Plus Scheme.
- Initial response of the council's insurer for alternative arrangements for community groups.
- Lack of use of school/sports and leisure facilities by the community and sporting groups.
- Leisure Centre performance.
- Recognition that public surveys confirm spending on Cultural services is not a priority and emphasis is on the role of leisure and culture in health improvement, community safety and improving the environment.

6. Recommendations Made and Impact

- Suggested additional actions and eligibility criteria to increase the take up of Options plus – recommendations accepted and increased take up achieved.
- Requested further work be undertaken with the Council's insurers. – An outline proposal achieved and further detailed work to be undertaken.
- Requested Lifelong Learning Select Committee include in their work plan the issue of more school sports and leisure facilities being made available to users from the community.
- Representatives from the community representatives panel were invited to the committee when the equality and diversity action plan was considered. This strengthened the scrutiny.

7. Issues not reviewed.

Scrutiny of health and safety issues in borough parks and nature reserves is the only issue identified in the work plan at the start of the year which were not reviewed. All of the work this year was scrutiny, there were no policy development activities.

8. Opportunities for Improvement.

- The public participation session has been offered at each meeting of the committee, but has not been used this year. It was used extensively the previous year.
- Focusing on a small number of issues to scrutinise enabled constructive suggestions for change to be made, which were listened to and accepted.

9. Potential areas of Focus for 2006/07

- Leisure Centre performance including the impact of ring fencing income to implement the Leisure Centre Strategy eg: is it the best service we can provide with the resources we have got? (Scrutiny)
- Review Implementation of the Cultural Strategy (Scrutiny)
- Evaluation of impact of Liveability Grant and consequences of the funding finishing (Scrutiny).
- Review of impact of the “Physical Activity Task Group” partnership network (Scrutiny)
- DUE Equality & Diversity Action plan and annual report (Scrutiny).
- Quarterly Performance results (Scrutiny).
- Children’s play provision/a Play Strategy (Policy Development)
- “Towards an Excellent Service” – a national self assessment tool for sports and recreation (Scrutiny).
- Proposals for publicising smart cards (Scrutiny).
- Insurance arrangements for community groups using Council owned facilities (Scrutiny).

Finance

10. There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

Law

11. The requirement for Select Committees to make an annual report to the Council is contained in Article 6 of the Constitution.

12. The relevant statutory provisions regarding the Council’s Constitution are contained in Part II of the Local Government Act 2000 together with regulations, orders and statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Equality Impact

13. This report complies fully with the Council’s policies on equal opportunities and diversity.

14. This report will have no specific effect on children and young people. There is no requirement for consultation with children and young people or the involvement of children and young people in producing the report or the development of proposals.

Recommendation

- 15 That the Annual Report of the former Select Committee for Culture and Recreation for 2005/06, as set out above, be received and noted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Southall', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Councillor Geoffrey Southall, Chairman of Select Committee