

Meeting of the Council – 16th July, 2007

Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2006/07

Purpose of Report

1. To submit to the Council the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2006/07.

Background

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires Select Committees to report annually to the full Council on the work carried out over the previous municipal year making both recommendations for key areas of future work programmes and any amended methods of working if appropriate.
3. As in previous years, the work programme for the year was rooted in the Council Plan in terms of both the key issues but also identifying the timetable for reports back.
4. Given the wide ranging coverage of this Select Committee with its remit not only to cover regeneration initiatives in the borough, cultural initiatives and adult education but also its remit for Corporate Human Resources, Equality and Diversity and ICT matters, it is difficult to single out a number of key issues.
5. However, the following areas of ongoing development have been identified:-
 - a) The continuation of the monitoring and development work in relation to Dudley's ICT Strategy
 - b) The scrutiny of the Council's performance with regard to Equality and Diversity issues.
 - c) The remit for the scrutiny of planning policy and development raised the issue of an examination of Section 106 or the planning obligations placed on developers to ensure that they contributed to improvements in the community infrastructure. This covered housing, public open spaces, transportation and community development areas.
 - d) Future of the Archive Service.
 - e) Incubation Innovation Centre.

6. Notwithstanding these important issues, the Committee and Working Groups Work Programme for the 2006/2007 municipal year also included:
- A range of Directorate Equality and Diversity Annual Reports
 - Capital Strategy and Council Budget
 - Presentation on Libraries, Archives and Adult Education Division, with particular emphasis on the Archive Service
 - Quarterly Corporate Performance Report
7. To discharge this wide ranging but focused work programme the Select Committee appointed an Economic Regeneration Working Group and a Culture and Recreation Working Group to pick up those areas which specifically were central to the economic regenerative and cultural issues across the borough.

Planning Obligations – Section 106 Agreements

8. The position of the Council's policy, practice and financial monitoring of Section 106 Planning Obligation Agreements in the Borough was considered at a number of meetings of the Economic Regeneration Working Group. The importance of these Section 106 Agreements to the regeneration of the Borough was evident by the fact that during the year a new post within the Directorate of the Urban Environment was created alongside a project plan which the Select Committee considered had 'clear robust and targeted' timescales. The scale of Section 106 financial obligations was also considered. Given the scale of potential capital investment this could give it remains a key issue for the Select Committee.

Future of the Archive Service

9. Arising from the presentation given on the Libraries, Archives and Adult Education Division of the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, particular emphasis was given to the Archive Service in the light of public interest expressed. Having considered aspects raised by members of the public and on-going issues further consideration will be given to this matter arising from conclusions to be reached on various options to be considered on the future of the Archive Service.

Incubation Innovation Centre

10. The creation of an incubation innovation centre in the Borough to ensure Dudley is at the cutting edge of new added value industrial development remains a priority for the Select Committee despite a set back in the acquisition of land for the proposal. Further efforts to find a site for the centre are on going.

Work of the Working Groups

11. In addition to the detailed consideration that has been given by the Committee through its working groups to issues such as Planning Obligations and the incubation Innovation Centre consideration has also been given by
- a) the Economic Regeneration Working Group to:-
 - (i) Progress on the Local Development Framework
 - (ii) Work of the Orchard Partnership; and
 - (iii) The change to Transformational Government

- b) the Culture and Recreation Working Group to:-
- (i) Insurance for Community Groups in Council owned facilities
 - (ii) Sport development in Dudley
 - (iii) Liveability Project – Improving Parks for People
 - (iv) Quest Improvement Reports – Halesowen and Crystal Leisure Centres

Outline Work Programme for 2007/08

12. The outline work programme for 2007/08 was considered by the Select Committee at its first meeting in the municipal year and includes:-

- Review of Library Service
- Review of Netherton Regeneration Centre
- ICT Strategy
- Planning Obligations
- Visitor Economy in Dudley and the Council's Role
- Planning Applications Statistics in relation to apartments. Percentage of affordable housing targeted across the Borough
- Insurance for Community Groups in Council facilities – progress report
- Future of the Archive Service
- Regeneration of Coseley and other townships in the Borough
- Dudley Sports Village
- Facility Developments at Crystal, Dudley and Halesowen Leisure Centres
- Big Lottery Application – Wrens Nest Visitor Centre
- Incubation Innovation Centre
- Funding Changes – Adult Education

Conclusion

13. The Select Committee with its increased remit of Culture and Adult Education is now even more central in driving forward regeneration in its widest sense. The interweaving of the cultural and sports agenda in relation to regeneration and the important training, learning and development perspective that adult education gives will be a major fill up to ensuring the economic regeneration of the Borough is viewed in its wider community context.
14. The Select Committee at its meeting held on 6th June, 2007 received and noted the report and agreed that it be referred to the Council.

Finance

15. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

Law

16. The requirement for the Committee to submit an annual report to the Council is contained in Article 6 of the Constitution.

17. 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

18. This report complies with the Council's equality and diversity policy and has taken these issues into account whilst scrutinising the areas of work described.
19. The Select Committee has the overarching responsibility for Corporate Equality and Diversity issues and therefore receives both the Council's Annual Review of Equality and Diversity as well as the annual Equality and Diversity reports from the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance, ICT and Procurement.

Recommendation

20. That consideration be given to the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2006/07 as set out above.



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**CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ADULT
EDUCATION**