

**SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC REGENERATION**

Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2006, at 6 pm  
At Dudley Council Plus, Board Room, Dudley

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor K Turner (Chairman)  
Councillors Body, Mrs Cowell, J Davies, Jackson, Knowles and Rogers

**Officers**

Assistant Director (Housing Strategy and Private Sector) (as Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration), General Manager Planning and Development, Planning Policy Manager (Directorate of the Urban Environment) and Mrs M Johal (Directorate of Law and Property).

62 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ms Harris, Mottram, Mrs Patrick and Wilson.

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63 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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64 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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65 **FEEDBACK FROM ECONOMIC REGENERATION WORKING GROUP ON PLANNING OBLIGATIONS**

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on the recommendations from the Working Group and to identify the way forward to sustain the progress made.

Arising from the presentation of the report, the General Manager Planning and Development confirmed that the post of Planning Obligations Officer was due to be advertised shortly and owing to the important nature of the role, it had been agreed that it would be at Principal Officer level.

In response to comments made in paragraph 6 of the report in relation to developers being forced out of the Borough if Section 106 obligations were seen as a development tax, the General Manager Planning and Development advised that work would be undertaken and co-ordinated with other Local Authorities to ensure that Dudley offered a competitive development environment.

The General Manager Planning and Development referred to paragraph 8.2 of the report and explained that it would not be possible to submit a full report on the concerns expressed by Members to the Committee until September 2006. He acknowledged that matters were not progressing as fast as Members would like but in order to ensure that detailed and accurate information was available, a significant amount of time had to be allocated to ensure appropriate research could be undertaken. However, he undertook to provide an interim report in June or July on progress to the Committee or its Working Group, if required.

In response to queries from Members, the General Manager Planning and Development confirmed that efforts were made to utilise Section 106 money for its specific purpose. It was further reported that the Head of Design and Projects and the Head of Arts Heritage and Parks were responsible in ensuring that allocations for open space were spent accordingly and for its specific purpose, and in that regard, held regular monthly meetings.

The General Manager Planning and Development reported that he worked closely with the Audit Manager to ensure that the process and money involved in Section 106 Agreements complied with requirements. However, he undertook to speak to the Corporate Working Group to ascertain the position with previous Section 106 money that may not have been fully spent.

During further discussion it was suggested that the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration be requested to attend a future meeting of the Committee to enable Members to relay their concerns. It was also suggested that the full report to be submitted to the Committee in September 2006 should include information from the previous five years detailing all Section 106 money that had been received, its specific purpose, what it had been spent on and details of any money that had not been spent. An update on the monthly meetings held by the Head of Design and Projects and the Head of Arts Heritage and Parks was also requested.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the work carried out by the Economic Regeneration Working Group and Officers be supported and that the re-energised approval to Planning Obligations Section 106 work in the authority be welcomed.

- (2) That the concerns raised in respect of the specific site and outcome information of Section 106 Agreements still being outstanding be noted.
  - (3) That the issue of Section 106 Agreements be included and prioritised in the Work Programme of the Committee or its successor in the 2006/07 Municipal Year.
  - (4) That, given the importance of Section 106 Agreements to the Council, it be recommended that given current proposals to Select Committees in the future, working group structures be put in place to carry this issue forward to ensure full and proper scrutiny.
  - (5) That consideration be given to reviewing the outstanding agreements in date order rather than the present proposals.
  - (6) That the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration be requested to attend a future meeting of the Committee to enable Members to express to him their strong support for the progress made so far on Section 106 Agreements and also to relay their concerns.
  - (7) That a full report be submitted to the Committee or its successor Committee in September 2006 to include information from the previous five years detailing all Section 106 money that had been received, its specific purpose, what it had been spent on and details of any money that had not been spent.
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### INNOVATION AND INCUBATION CENTRE

The Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration) displayed a model of the potential centre together with some artist's impressions.

He verbally reported on progress to date and gave an assurance of wholehearted commitment from Officers to the project and further thanked the Committee for their support and role in ensuring that the project came to fruition in Dudley.

#### RESOLVED

That the verbal report on progress on the Innovation and Incubation Centre be noted.

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### CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their dedicated support throughout the year.

He also requested that a letter of thanks be sent by the Lead Officer, on behalf of the Committee, to Councillor Mrs Patrick for her valued contribution and participation throughout the year and also extending best wishes and good luck in her new career.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

CHAIRMAN