

**Meeting of the Council – 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2008**

**Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2007/08**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To submit to the Council the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2007/08.

**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 for 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 range and 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 have been identified:-
  - (a) Consideration of the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country.
  - (b) Scrutiny of the Council's performance with regard to Equality and Diversity issues.

- (c) The remit for the scrutiny of planning policy and development involved the on-going 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) Dudley Archives and Local History Service relocation.
  - (e) Regeneration issues, including progress reports on the regeneration of Dudley, Brierley Hill, Halesowen and Stourbridge Town Centres and of the sixteen local and district centres with particular consideration being given to the suggested inclusion of Coseley in the top regeneration local action centre priority list.
  - (f) The South Black Country Innovation Campus.
6. Notwithstanding these important issues, the Committee's Work Programme for the 2007/08 Municipal Year, also included:-
- A range of Directorate Equality and Diversity Annual Reports.
  - Capital Strategy and Council Budget
  - Modernisation Programme for the Library Service
  - Quarterly Corporate Performance reports
  - The Black Country, as an Urban Park - Strata and Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve.
7. A Cabinet decision relating to the provision of a modern library service in Dudley M.B.C. - Modernisation Programme, was also called in and consideration was given to the decision at a special meeting of the Committee held on the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2007. The decision taken by Cabinet was supported.
8. A feature of meetings of the Committee in 2007/08 has been the involvement of the public through their use of the public forum item on agendas.

In the main, questions have been posed on the modernisation of the library service and the Dudley Archives and Local History Service relocation.

Members of the public have expressed their appreciation to the Committee for the opportunity to speak on matters raised.

## Planning Obligations - Section 106 Agreements

9. The importance of Section 106 Agreements to the regeneration of the Borough continues to be recognised by the Committee. Further review and scrutiny will be given to this matter in 2008/09.

## Archive Service Relocation

10. Detailed consideration continued to be given to the issue of relocation of the Archive Service in the light of reports received and public interest expressed. Again, further consideration will be given to this matter arising from the feasibility study to be undertaken.

## South Black Country Innovation Campus

11. The creation of an innovation campus in the Borough to ensure Dudley is at the cutting edge of new added value industrial development remains a priority for the Select Committee. Consideration will be given to developments involving a preferred location at Castlegate, Dudley.

## Local Centres/Coseley

12. In addition to the consideration given to the Town Centres in the Borough and the sixteen local and district centres, the Committee supported the suggested inclusion of Coseley in the top regeneration local action centre priority list.

This action was cited as a good example of how the work of Select Committees can potentially make a difference and arise from local community involvement.

## Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country

13. During 2007/08 the Committee received a presentation and was involved in the consultation process on preferred options in respect of the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country. Comments made by the Committee will be considered as part of the consultation process.

## Outline Work Programme for 2008/09

14. Items for the outline work programme for 2008/09, to be considered by the Select Committee at its first meeting in the Municipal Year, will include:-

- Update on the South Black Country Innovation Campus
- Visitor economy
- Improvement potential for Gateway sites

- Leisure Centres attached to schools
- Progress on Dudley Archives and Local History Service relocation
- Modernisation of Library Service
- Planning Obligations
- Market Potential - Flats/Apartments
- ICT Strategy
- Leisure Centre investment update and usage of leisure centres
- The Leasowes Restoration Project
- Development of a new University/University campus in Dudley
- Economic Strategy 2009/10
- Developments in Coseley and the local centres - update

## Conclusion

15. The Select Committee with its remit of Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education continues to be central in driving forward regeneration in its widest sense. The interweaving of these various elements is a major fillip to ensuring that the economic regeneration of the Borough is viewed in its wider community context.

## **Finance**

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

## **Law**

17. The requirement for the Committee to submit an annual report to the Council is contained in Article 6 of the Constitution.
18. The relevant provisions regarding the Council's Constitution are contained in Part II of the Local Government Act, 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

## **Equality Impact**

19. 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.

20. The Select Committee has the over-arching 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 Report from the Chief Executive and the Director of the Urban Environment.

**Recommendation**

21. That the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2007/08 as set out above be approved and adopted.



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