

Meeting of the Council – 19th July, 2010

Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2009/10

Purpose of Report

1. To submit to the Council the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2009/10.

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's overall objections 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) Scrutiny of the Council's performance with regard to Equality and Diversity issues.
 - (b) The remit for the scrutiny of planning policy and development involved in 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.

- (c) Dudley Archives and Local History Service relocation.
- (d) Review of Museums Service.
- (e) Implementation of Healthy Towns Programme
- (f) Dudley Borough Economic Strategy

6. Notwithstanding these important issues, the Committee's Work Programme for the 2009/10 Municipal Year, also included:-

- Capital Strategy and Council Budget
- Update on modernisation of the Library Service
- Quarterly Corporate Performance reports
- Regeneration issues in relation to Town Centres and the sixteen local and district centres
- The Small Business Engagement Accord
- Review of the Community Strategy
- Dudley Borough Local Economic Assessment
- Role of New Heritage Regeneration Limited
- Progress report on Corporate ICT Strategy 2008-13.

7. A continuing feature of meetings of the Committee in 2009/10 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 Review of the Museum Service and in relation to Coseley Baths.

Members of the public have welcomed the opportunity to speak on matters raised.

8. Planning Obligations - Section 106 Agreements –

The importance of Section 106 Agreements to the regeneration of the Borough continues to be recognised by the Committee. Further review and scrutiny was given to this matter in 2009/10 with Members welcoming the introduction of the new procedure, for Ward Member engagement in relation to the Planning Obligations process, as developed by the Committee.

Regular reports on this matter will continue to be submitted to the Committee.

9. Dudley Archives and Local History Service Relocation

A presentation on the current position in respect of the proposed new facility on the Black Country Living Museum site was received. It was indicated that the new building was being finalised with a planned completion in 2012.

10. Review of Museums Service

In addition to reports submitted, there was extensive public interest in this matter including speakers from the public and responses to questions raised by them. The Committee also undertook site visits to the facilities concerned.

11. Implementation of Healthy Towns Programme

Detailed consideration was given at a number of meetings to this programme in the light of concerns raised by Ward Members at the way in which the proposals had been developed. Arrangements for engaging with Ward Members were subsequently developed so that regular updates are now being given. It was also considered that lessons needed to be learnt from this issue so that there was full Member engagement in such future projects and full involvement of all partners.

12. Dudley Borough Economic Strategy for 2010/11

During 2009/10 the Committee received a presentation and was involved in the consultation process in respect of the Dudley Borough Economic Strategy for 2010/11. Comments made by the Committee will be considered as part of the consultation process.

Work Programme for 2010/11

13. Items for the work programme for 2010/11, to be considered by the Select Committee at its first meeting in this Municipal Year, will include:-

- Report from the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Partnership
- Visitor economy
- Impact of the Small Business Accord
- Progress on Dudley Archives and Local History Service relocation
- Planning Obligations
- ICT Strategy
- Economic Strategy 2011/12
- The Leasowes Restoration Project – further report
- Report from the Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership

Conclusion

14. 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 fill-up to ensuring that the economic regeneration of the Borough is viewed in its wider community context.

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 which contained in Article 6 of the Constitution.
17. The relevant strategy provisions regarding the Council's Constitution are contained in Part II of the Local Government Act, 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Strategy 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 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 Reports from the Chief Executive's Directorate and the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Recommendation

20. That the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education for 2009/10 as set out above, be noted.



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Chairman of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture And Adult Education