

Meeting of the Council – 14th July 2008

Annual Report of the Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services for 2007/08

Purpose of Report

1. To submit to the Council the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services for 2007/2008.

Background

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires that Select Committees 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 and any amended working methods, if appropriate, for the forthcoming year.
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. The Select Committee, in discharging its overview and scrutiny functions as they relate to crime and disorder functions of the Council under the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 and other relevant legislation, has a wide and far-reaching remit. It is therefore difficult to single out a number of key issues since Borough-wide community safety issues, social inclusion, community development, neighbourhood management and Dudley Council Plus all fall within the purview of the Select Committee.
5. The following areas of on-going development have been identified: -
 - a) Crime and Disorder Reduction (CDRP) Reform especially in view of the recent publication of the Flanagan Report on the Independent Review of Policing.
 - b) The Marketing Strategy for Community Safety
 - c) The Adult Drug Treatment Plan, Drug Intervention Programme and Children and Young Persons Substance Misuse Plan
 - d) Update on Anti-Social Behaviour Unit Development
 - e) Update on the Domestic Abuse Strategy
 - f) Update on Neighbourhood Policing and Police and Communities Together meetings
 - g) Update on the operation of Dudley Council Plus
 - h) The Race Hate Strategy
 - i) Home Security Initiative

6. The Select Committee's Work Programme for the 2007/08 municipal year also included:
- Quarterly Corporate Performance Reports
 - Capital Strategy and the Council's Revenue Budget
 - A selection of annual reports such as the Annual Equality and Diversity Report of the Directorate of Law and Property, the Obesity Strategy Annual Monitoring Report and the Annual Report of the Head of Contingency and Disaster Management
 - Driver Watch
 - Domestic Abuse Strategy
 - Neighbourhood Management
 - Legislation relating to crime and anti-social behaviour on public highways

Obesity Strategy Annual Monitoring Report

7. The Select Committee considered the obesity strategy annual monitoring report and noted the measures the Council was taking to combat obesity by encouraging exercise and supporting planning applications aimed at designing out residential developments that may encourage a less active lifestyle.

Neighbourhood Policing and Police and Community Together (PACT) Meetings

8. Arising from the presentation given, the Select Committee noted significant public satisfaction at the role played by Police Community Support Officers working with and in communities to address issues of crime in general as well as alcohol and drug related offences.

Neighbourhood Management

9. Arising from the presentation given, the Select Committee raised concerns about the future of the service in view of proposals to review the service particularly in light of reduced funding. Following a special meeting on the matter and consideration of the findings of the Silverlock review of the service, the Select Committee resolved that the Cabinet be recommended to accept the refocus of the service. Acceptance would be subject to strong representations being made to central government and the Dudley Community Partnership at the removal of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources. The Select Committee also resolved that alternative sources be identified to continue the work of the Neighbourhood Management service in tackling identified levels of deprivation within the Borough.

Domestic Abuse Strategy

10. Consideration was given to the Domestic Abuse Strategy focussed on prevention and early detection, protection and justice and support for victims of domestic abuse. An update report will enable the Select Committee to review progress in implementing the strategy and combating domestic abuse.

Driver Watch

11. The Select Committee considered a verbal report on this local initiative involving drivers observing crime and potential crime in areas they drive through while working and passing the information to the police for action. The Council's Directorates were recommended to pilot driver watch schemes involving Council drivers. This matter will be revisited by the Select Committee to examine outcomes from the pilots.

Outline of the Work Programme for 2008/2009

12. The work programme for 2008/09 will include the following matters: -
 - Crime and Disorder Reduction Reform
 - Marketing Strategy for Community Safety
 - Directorate of Law and Property – Equality and Diversity Annual Report
 - Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Reports
 - Alternative Measures for Anti social Behaviour
 - Annual Report of the Committee to Council
 - Lye Beat Sweep
 - The Respect Agenda
 - Race Hate Strategy
 - Adult Drug Treatment Plan, Drug Intervention Programme and Children and Young Persons Substance Misuse Plan
 - Home Security Initiative
 - Update on Anti social Behaviour Unit Development
 - Update on Neighbourhood Policing and Police and Communities Together Meetings
 - Outline and achievements of the new Community Renewal Strategy and Service
 - The Leaps and Bounds Project

Conclusion

13. Areas forming the bulk of the Committee's work continue to reflect the expressions made by local people, namely, issues concerning community safety with particular emphasis on the Domestic Violence, Anti social behaviour and measures to build safer and stronger communities through community-lead programmes to combat crime in the whole or parts of the Borough as well as the operations of Dudley Council Plus, the Council's public face.

Finance

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

Law

- 15. The requirement to submit an annual report to the Council is contained in Article 6 of the Constitution as read with Part II of the Local Government Act 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, requires Local Authorities to consider the impact of community safety on each of its decisions.

Equality Impact

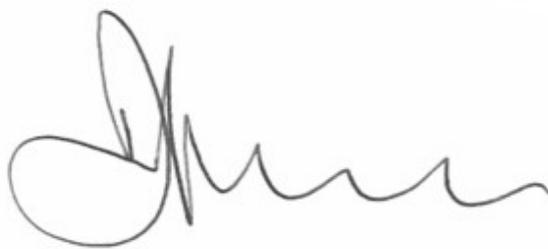
- 16. Reports to be submitted during 2008/2009 could have a direct bearing on children and young people who become involved in anti social behaviour whilst issues such as social cohesion and community development will also have an impact on them.

The Youth Parliament and other bodies representing children and young people will continue to be consulted on issues submitted for consideration that might have a direct impact on children and young people.

This report complies with the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

Recommendations

- 17. That the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services for 2007/08 as set out above, be approved and adopted.



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**CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES**