

**REGENERATION, CULTURE AND  
ADULT EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2013  
at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor Tyler (Chair)  
Councillor K. Turner (Vice Chair)  
Councillors Attwood, Blood, Body, Caunt, G. Davies, Hale, Herbert, Ridney and Wright

**Officers**

Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Private Sector (Lead Officer to the Committee); Change Architect (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services); Assistant Director, Culture and Leisure, Assistant Director, Economic Regeneration and Transportation and Head of Economic Development( all Directorate of the Urban Environment) and Mr. J. Jablonski (Directorate of Corporate Resources)

**Also in Attendance**

Councillor Harley

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35. **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence for the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor A. Ahmed.

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36. **SUBSTITUTE MEMBER**

It was reported that Councillor Ridney had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor A. Ahmed for this meeting of the Committee only.

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37. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

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38. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes to the meeting of the Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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39. PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this item.

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40. PROGRESS REPORT - DUDLEY BOROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on an annual progress report on the Dudley Borough Economic Development Strategy, for the period 2012/13.

Following a presentation of the content of the report, and Appendix 1 to the report submitted, by the Head of Economic Development, Members asked a number of questions and made comments in relation to the content of the report and its Appendix and the following particular matters were raised:-

- That in relation to the redevelopment of Dudley Marketplace, it was noted that a full application for ERDF funding had been submitted and that a decision should be known by April, enabling a start on site in June.
- That in respect of the Crown Centre development in Stourbridge, it was noted that there were no proposals for on-street parking and that the car parking would be managed by way of a car park management plan (required by a planning condition for the development) which would need to be implemented prior to the opening of the new store.
- That in response to a question regarding the percentage of total jobs in manufacturing, indicated in Appendix 1 to the report submitted, the Head of Economic Development would inform Members of the Committee by e-mail on whether the percentage shown was a declining figure, when compared with previous years.
- That in connection with a funding project that he was involved in, Councillor Turner requested that the Assistant Director, Economic Regeneration supply him with a list of all businesses in the Borough so that he could make them aware of this funding opportunity.

- That in view of the impending changes to the way in which Scrutiny Committees would operate from May, 2013 it was suggested that the Economic Development Strategy be one of the single topic scrutiny items for consideration by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- That in respect of any tendering process regarding potential occupiers for the former Carvers Café development, Councillor Herbert requested information as to how these properties were advertised and the number of expressions of interest that were received following such advertising.  
The Assistant Director, Economic Regeneration and Transportation would arrange for the information to be sent to her.
- Noted that the existing linkages between the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Directorate of the Urban Environment would be strengthened regarding the optimising of opportunities for local people to develop and improve their skills and obtain jobs in areas and communities that were recognised as being disadvantaged in economic and social terms.
- That the Assistant Director, Economic Regeneration and Transportation forward to Councillor K. Turner, details of the help and encouragement that the Council gave to new businesses.
- That when looking at the statistics for the working age population in Dudley, it was considered that the aim of the Economic Development Strategy should be to provide jobs in the Borough so that the economic and financial advantages were retained within the Borough.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the information contained in the report, and Appendix 1 to the report, submitted on the progress report in respect of the Dudley Borough Economic Development Strategy for the period 2012/13, be noted and that the relevant officers respond direct to the Members concerned regarding comments raised as indicated above; and
2. That Members notify the Assistant Director, Economic Regeneration and Transportation direct regarding any further comments on the process for developing the next Economic Development Strategy commencing in April, 2014.

#### 41. MEASURES TO IMPROVE TOWN CENTRES VITALITY: PORTAS PILOT PROJECT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted updating the Committee on the pilot project set up to improve vitality in the Borough's centres. Appendix 1 to the report contained a summary of the recommendations of the Portas Report and Appendix 2 to the report contained details of the Town Team Action Plan which essentially translates elements of the Portas project as part of a "pilot" approach in Dudley Town Centre.

Arising from a presentation of the content of the report, and its appendices, by the Head of Economic Development, Members asked a number of questions and made comments with particular reference to:-

- That a key feature of any regeneration should be an improvement in the provision of residential housing and in this connection it was reported that there were plans to improve the residential offer in the town centre.
- That the progress in respect of the project and the Town Team Action Plan could be a possible single scrutiny item for consideration at a future meeting of the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- It was noted that the 12<sup>th</sup> recommendation contained in Appendix 1 regarding the restrictive aspects of the "Use Class" system to make it easier to change the uses of key properties on the High Street was one directed at Central Government and not Local Authorities, as they did not have the power to do this.
- Regarding recommendation 21 contained in Appendix 1, it was considered that the use of voluntary purchases, the preferred method of acquiring properties by the Borough, as opposed to the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers should continue to be pursued.
- That Councillor Herbert be provided with further information in relation to recommendation 24 (Neighbourhood Plans) and whether any were being prepared in Dudley. The Assistant Director, Economic Regeneration and Transportation would provide Councillor Herbert with further information.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices 1 and 2 to the report, submitted on the pilot project set up to improve vitality in the Borough's centres, be noted and that the relevant officers action the relevant points detailed above, arising from questions/comments made by Members on this matter.

42. CONSIDERATION OF INDICES OF MULTI DEPRIVATION AND THE PROVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the nature of Adult Learning provision with priority groups and in priority areas. Appendix 1 to the report illustrated the key areas of multiple deprivation in the Borough and Appendix 2 to the report showed a demographic breakdown of the Borough's priority groups in the population and the percentage of people from the priority groups participating in adult learning.

Arising from a presentation of the content of the report, and its Appendices, by the Change Architect, Ms. K. Millin, Members asked a number of questions and made comments with particular reference to:-

- The numbers moving on to volunteer opportunities, where "Live 4 Less" courses were being delivered and the numbers achieving employment through the Work Club initiative. The Change Architect would respond direct to Councillor Herbert with the information requested and to all members of the committee regarding the "Live 4 Less" courses.
- That, in response to a question asked, the Change Architect would arrange for a copy of a map containing the location of the venues at which courses were delivered to be placed in the Members Room.
- That should any Members know of people who would benefit from the work of the Adult and Community Learning Team, they were asked to contact the Head of the Adult and Community Learning Team, whose details were given at the end of the report submitted.
- That information about the First Steps programme be forwarded to Councillor Ridney
- That information regarding existing contacts and ways in which such contacts might be improved between the Adult and Community Learning Team and Tenants and Residents Associations be forwarded to the Chair of the Committee by the Change Architect.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted about the nature of Adult Learning provision with priority groups and in priority areas in the Borough, be noted, together with the issues raised and the progress made to work with priority groups of Dudley Adult Learners.

43. STRAY AND ILLEGALLY GRAZING HORSES - UPDATE

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted updating Members on the implementation of the Stray and Illegally Grazing Horses policy. A copy of the Council's agreed approach to dealing with this issue was set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted.

The Assistant Director, Culture and Recreation in his presentation of the content of the report referred, in particular, to the recent activity undertaken as set out in paragraphs 13 to 20 of the report.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix 1 to the report, submitted on the update on the implementation of the Stray and Illegally Grazing Horses policy, be noted.

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44. COMMENTS MADE BY THE CHAIR

The Chair referred to the forthcoming departure from the Council of Kate Millin, Change Architect, Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, and, on behalf of the Committee, thanked her for all the work she had done on behalf of the Committee.

The Chair also commented that this was the last scheduled meeting of the Committee in the current Municipal Year and thanked all concerned for their work in connection with the Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.43 p.m.

CHAIR