

## **CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 at 6.30 p.m.  
at Dudley Concert Hall, St James's Road, Dudley

### **PRESENT: -**

Councillor Ahmed (Chairman)  
Councillor K Finch (Vice Chairman)

Councillors Ali, Mrs Aston, Cotterill, M Davis, A Finch, J Martin, Waltho and Ms Wood; Mr Lawley, Ms Little, Mrs Oakes and Mr Thomas

### **OFFICERS:**

The Assistant Director of Housing (as Acting Lead Officer to the Committee); Assistant Director (Environmental Management), Directorate of the Urban Environment; the Head of Housing Management – North, the Head of Community Renewal and the Social Regeneration Officer – all Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services; the Head of the Youth Service and the Area Youth Team Leader for the Central Dudley Area – both Directorate of Children's Services; the Senior Solicitor and Ms K Farrington – both Directorate of Corporate Resources

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Sector Inspector Richard Jones, West Midlands Police – for Agenda Item No. 5

Mr Chris Wood, West Midlands Fire Service – for Agenda Item No. 6

Mr Phil Higgins, West Midlands Ambulance Service – for Agenda Item No. 11

24 Members of the public

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### 61. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors J R Davies, Roberts, Sparks, Ms While-Cooper and Mr Robinson.

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62                    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Davis declared a personal and prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in Agenda Item No. 14a(7) (Capital Allocations) in view of his chairmanship of the Royal British Legion, Dudley Branch.

Councillor Ali declared a personal and prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in Agenda Item No 14a(6) (Capital Allocations), in view of him being a Director of the St Thomas's Community Network.

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63                    MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendment:-

That the words "Abberton Road" be replaced by "Abbotsford Drive" in the second line of paragraph (w) in minute no 52 (Ward Issues) on page CDAC/36.

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64.                    CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) was: -

RESOLVED

That the remaining items of business be considered in the following order: -

Agenda Item Nos. 13, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19.

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65.                    PETITION – APPLICATION IN RESPECT OF PROVISION OF STREET LIGHTING – GREEN MAN ENTRY, DUDLEY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted responding to a request made in a petition relating to the lighting of the Green Man Entry, Dudley.

The Petition Organiser and Ward Members addressed the Committee concerning the subject of the petition and asked the officers to consider potential measures to address the petitioners concerns, which related to criminality issues arising from the darkness of the passage.

## RESOLVED

That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to consider the matter further as a priority issue taking account of the comments made at the meeting.

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### 66. YOUTH SERVICE

The Area Youth Team Leader gave an oral update on new projects being undertaken by the Youth Service for young people to participate in. She referred in particular to the start of a new programme in the current year, in partnership with Dudley College, offering counselling courses as part of the College's enrichment learning scheme; a programme with Cherry Tree Learning Centre, which involved working with a group of young people within the studio at Russells Hall Youth Centre on various activities and partnership working with the young people from the Russells Hall Youth Club and Midland Heart in discussing project ideas with a view to identifying and securing grants aimed at regenerating local youth centres and amenities for the local area for young people to benefit from.

She also referred to the work undertaken by young women from the St Andrews Youth Partnership and Communities Together in producing a toolkit that could be used to highlight issues affecting young people.

During the presentation, the Area Youth Team Leader updated the Committee on future projects, which included, working in partnership with Netherton Park Healthy Hub in order to open the Hub with a view to offering young people in the area another venue to access as a youth club and working in partnership with the Friends of the Park in Buffery Park to offer youth provision from the Sons of Rest building.

She also indicated that the programme of activities to be undertaken in the Borough during the February half term was currently being collated and that she would circulate the completed programme to Members direct.

In concluding, the Area Youth Team Leader indicated that her contribution to the Area Committee would be handed over to Arshad Parvez, Youth Worker for Dudley Youth Service while she was on maternity leave.

Concerns were raised by Members in relation to the effect the budget reductions would have on the Youth Service. In response, both the Head of the Youth Service and the Area Youth Team Leader indicated that they had no knowledge at the present time where the budget reductions would be made, however they were committed to protecting the services they provided at the level expected.

## RESOLVED

That the information, as circulated at the meeting and reported orally, be noted.

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67. POLICE ISSUES

Sector Inspector Richard Jones of West Midlands Police reported on current police issues in the area of the Committee.

Particular reference was made to the success of Operation Advent, which had been carried out over the Advent period and aimed at drug control. Drug seizures to the value of sum £400,000 have been made together with a significant number of arrests. In the report, the Sector Inspector answered the question asked at the previous meeting on the type of penalties usually applied to offences involving the growth and supply of Cannabis.

A further initiative the Sector Inspector reported on was Operation Intrusive, an operation taking place between January to the end of March. The aim was to relieve crime and disorder in areas, in which an increase in crime level had been identified.

RESOLVED

That Sector Inspector Richard Jones be thanked for his presentation and that the information reported on be received and noted.

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68. FIRE SERVICE ISSUES

Mr Wood of the West Midlands Fire Service reported orally on the number and nature of incidents in the Central Dudley Area with particular reference to accidental fires, arson fires and aspects in relation to void buildings. He stated that in relation to overall incidents, arson figures appeared to have reduced. He also indicated that a large number of home safety checks had been carried out which had resulted in 351 smoke alarms being fitted.

RESOLVED

That Mr Wood be thanked for his presentation and that the information reported on be received and noted.

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69. PETITIONS

A petition from residents had been submitted objecting to proposals to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order in Blackacre Road, Dudley. It was noted that the petition would be referred to the Petitions Officer for consideration in the first instance and then to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for a report to a future Area Committee.

A petition had also been received from residents in relation to tenancy issues. It was noted that the petition would be referred to the Petitions Officer for consideration in the first instance and then to the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services for a report to a future Area Committee.

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70.

PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) A Member of the public drew attention to health and safety issues on Woodside Park. She stated that the Park was in really bad condition and a danger to the public. In responding, the Assistant Manager (Environmental Management) undertook to investigate the matter and contact the questioner prior to the next meeting of the Committee.
- (b) A member of the public drew attention to the lack of parking provision in Arch Hill Street, Netherton and surrounding areas and requested that officers work with the Tenants and Residents Association to investigate the possibility of introducing a car park in the area. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) indicated that, together with the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, investigations would be carried out to identify possible solutions.
- (c) A member of the public requested an explanation on the costs involved in distributing refuse sacks and queried the nature of savings made since introducing the new system. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) indicated that a reduction of 13 crew members had been made and that people were now recycling more and less waste was being put in the incinerator, which was also a saving to the local authority.
- (d) A member of the public asked what had been the impact on recycling since the introduction of the three refuse sack limit. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) indicated that an increase in recycling had been identified, although the amount of recycling varied across the Borough. He stated that trial of plastic recycling in certain areas had seen an increase by 50%. He also stated that a written response would be submitted to the questioner.
- (e) A member of the public submitted a written question alleging that the one-way system in Parkway Road had caused absolute mayhem creating more danger than it was supposed to be avoiding and making residents' life a misery. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) indicated that investigations with appropriate officers would take place in order to alleviate the problems residents were facing. It was noted that the Ward Members were in support of the questioner.

- (f) A member of the public drew attention to anti-social behaviour problems he had experienced and alleged a lack of support from the local authority in providing alternative housing for his family or investigating solutions to deal with the issue raised. In responding, the Head of Housing Management – North indicated that he would speak to the questioner following the meeting.
- (g) A member of the public drew attention to a lack of free nursery provision in the Russells Hall area. In responding the Acting Area Liaison Officer indicated that a written response would be sent to the questioner.
- (h) A member of the public drew attention to stray horses roaming the Russells Hall Estate and causing havoc. She also drew attention to the health and safety of the horses in a field in the cold weather with no food and water. She stated that she had called the RSPCA, Police and officers of the Local Authority on numerous occasions, however, no action had been taken. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) indicated that dealing with stray horses was a difficult problem to address, however, he assured the questioner that officers were aware of the problems and they were working with the Police to identify possible solutions to resolve the matter.
- (i) Two questions from two different members of the public were submitted in relation to a planning application giving notice of the proposed erection of 22 No. Dwellings and 14 Bed Sheltered Accommodation in the Middlepark Road area. The questioners requested further information on this matter. In responding, the Chairman indicated that a contact name and number had been provided on the notice and if residents required further information, they should contact the named officer in the first instance.
- (j) A note from a member of the public criticising the role and mode of operation of Members of the Council was received and noted. In responding, the Chairman assured the public that all Councillors did and would continue to do their best to help their constituents.
- (k) A note from another member of the public alleging that Members of the Committee would not answer specific questions but rather gave their interpretations of the questions asked to suit their convenience and advocating the avoidance of unnecessary and time-wasting discursions into political dogma was received and noted.

- (l) A member of the public conveyed his thanks to the Police for the recent operation carried out to alleviate the traffic problems in Blackacre, however, again drew attention to the problems affecting Oakham Road and queried what the Local Authority intended to do to rectify traffic and safety problems occurring. He asked if appropriate officers would investigate the matter further and respond to him in writing. He also queried whether Oakham Road was a classified or unclassified road. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) again assured the questioner that he would look into the matter and respond as a matter of urgency.
  - (m) Due to time restrictions, five written questions were not dealt with, however, the Acting Area Liaison Officer assured the questioners that any outstanding questions would be referred to relevant officers for a written response to be given.
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71. WARD ISSUES

- (a) Councillor Waltho again referred to the parking problems in Warrens Hall Road and requested that this matter be investigated.
- (b) Councillor Waltho referred to two leaflets circulated prior to the meeting in relation to Organ Donation and becoming a Member of The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and urged interested Members and members of the public to complete Membership application forms and return to appropriate addresses.
- (c) Councillor Ali drew attention to traffic safety issues on the corner of North Street, following a recent accident and requested that this matter be investigated.
- (d) Councillor Ms Wood drew attention to a recent article in the "Express and Star" in relation to the Titanic Anchor and to Councillor L Jones's comment in that the Anchor may not return to Netherton. However, she indicated that following investigations, she had received a letter stating that, following the approval of planning permission, the Anchor would be sited in Netherton.
- (e) Councillor J Martin referred to the no left turn from Cradley Road into Halesowen Road and requested that signage be erected or other road improvement be considered to resolve the issue.
- (f) In referring to the junction improvements at Halesowen Road and Northfield Road, Councillor J Martin indicated that driver behaviour was a problem.

- (g) In referring to the site of the former Duncan Edwards public house, Councillor Mrs Aston drew attention to the fence, which had been knocked down and requested that the owners be contacted and requested to erect a replacement.
- (h) Councillor A Finch drew attention to the traffic problems on Priory Road, especially during the mornings and at tea times, and requested that this matter be investigated.
- (i) Councillor K Finch expressed concern regarding the impact the budget reductions would have on voluntary organisations working within the Castle and Priory ward.
- (j) In referring to an article in a magazine in relation to Sheffield City Council and the Post Office working together to alleviate postal problems, Councillor Cotterill suggested that Dudley Council make enquiries and carry out a similar approach to resolve the postal problems occurring in the Borough.
- (k) Councillor M Davis again referred to the traffic problems at Scotts Green Island and requested that this matter be investigated.
- (l) Councillor M Davis made brief reference to discussions held at the Central Dudley Area Committee (Russells Hall Traffic) Working Group, however the Chairman cautioned that any proposals were embryonic at the present time.
- (m) Councillor M Davis referred to the stray horses causing havoc in the Russells Hall area previously raised earlier in the meeting and requested that this matter be investigated.
- (n) Councillor M Davis referred to the problems associated with the one-way system on Parkway Road, mentioned previously in the meeting and requested that this matter be investigated.
- (o) Councillor M Davis referred to the anti-social threats to residents in the Russells Hall area and mentioned this issue needed looking into.
- (p) Councillor M Davis indicated that he would support the inclusion of "matters arising from the minutes" as a standard item on all Central Dudley Area Committee agendas. In responding, the Legal Adviser indicated that by law only the accuracy of minutes could be considered by the Committee. Should any member of the public have any disagreement regarding the accuracy of the minutes, they should contact their Ward Member in order that he/she could raise it at the meeting.
- (q) Mrs Oakes also referred to the stray horses causing havoc in the Russells Hall area and requested that this matter be investigated.

- (r) Mr Lawley reiterated concerns made by Councillor Waltho in relation to the parking and safety problems in Warrens Hall Road and requested that this matter be investigated.
  - (s) Mr Lawley also supported concerns raised previously in the meeting in relation to traffic problems on the Oakham Road and requested that this matter be investigated.
  - (t) Councillor Ahmed drew attention to the current condition of the Duncan Edwards and the Fountain statues at Dudley Market Place and requested that they be cleaned up.
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72. COMMUNITY RENEWAL WORKING GROUP

An oral presentation was given by the Head of Community Renewal on work undertaken at Russell Street/Nelson Street/Edward Street and Alexander Street. A copy of the presentation was circulated at the meeting.

During the presentation the Head of Community Renewal indicated that the areas listed above had been identified with poor housing and suffering from crime and disorder environmental degradation. She updated the Committee on issues of concern from local residents identified in a survey and on action which had taken place to tackle such concerns. She also referred to the future developments in order to secure partner support.

In concluding, the Head of Community Renewal indicated that since the work had been carried out, residents and business representatives had all expressed appreciation at the work undertaken and that there was a general feeling of safety around the area.

Members of the Committee conveyed their thanks for all the proactive work carried out by the Community Renewal Team, however, serious concerns were expressed at the proposals in which the entire budget for the Community Renewal Team would be discontinued.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted to the meeting be received and noted.

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73. WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE – NHS TRUST –  
CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY GROUPS

Mr Phil Higgins, Trust Secretary, gave a brief presentation on the proposals of West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust to become an NHS Foundation Trust. He explained that the Foundation Trust would still very much be part of the National Health Service and that all NHS Trusts would need to become a Foundation Trust by 2013.

Mr Higgins explained the aims of the Trust, which included improving clinical quality and patient safety, introducing NHS pathways, being more efficient and cost effective and maximise expertise in certain areas. The name of the organisation would be changed to Midlands Emergency Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Public consultation was being undertaken from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010 to 6<sup>th</sup> February 2011 and it was indicated that a report would be published on the outcome of the consultation.

Questions asked were then answered by Mr Higgins.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the presentation on the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust consultation with Local Authority Groups, be noted.

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74. PETITION – CAR PARKING IN DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted responding to comments made in a petition concerning the lack of car parking provision in Dudley Town Centre.

The Petition Organisers and Ward Members addressed the Committee concerning the subject of the petition and asked officers to consider potential measures to address the petitioners concerns. The concerns included:-

- The lack of use of Stone Street Square further to its conversion from a car park;
- The insufficient amount of car parking provision within the Town Centre area; and
- An assertion by certain members that members of the public considered Flood Street and other car parks were too far from the Town Centre which discouraged customers from using the town.

Whilst acknowledging the concerns of the Petitioners, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) commented on the regeneration plans for the Town Centre and also emphasised the need to promote public transport.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted and that comments made be referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for further consideration.

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75.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS – RECOMMENDATION OF THE CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS WORKING GROUP

A report of the Acting Area Liaison Officer was submitted on recommendations made by the Capital Allocations Working Group of the Committee with regard to applications for grant from the Delegated Capital Budget of the Committee for 2010/11.

The Working Group also considered a number of options to amend the criteria for Capital Allocations applications relating to the length of time between an organisation receiving a capital grant and being able to submit a further application for capital funds and a flexibility be built into the amended criteria to allow them to consider a further application from a previously successful organisation, as set out in the report submitted to the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That grants to the organisations indicated below for the purposes, and in the sums indicated, be approved:
  - (a) Castle and Priory Ward
    - (i) Subject to an equivalent sum being awarded by the North Dudley Area Committee, the sum of £276.75 to Old Park Tenants and Residents Association to contribute towards the purchase of a laptop, printer and associated software along with anti-virus protection.
  - (b) Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews Ward
    - (i) The award of a grant of £653.38 to Woodside Community Association to contribute towards the provision of a salt/grit spreader to make pathways safe in inclement weather and a janitorial trolley to aid cleaning and clearing up for users.
    - (ii) The award of a grant of £500.55 to New Testament Welfare Association to contribute towards the replacement of flooring within the dining and activity area of the day centre.

- (c) St Thomas's Ward
    - (i) The award of a grant of £3,518.50 to St Thomas's Community Network – Kids United "out of School" Club for the provision of a separate toilet facility for the children using the out of school club, this sum to be met from the capital allocations of St Thomas's Ward (50%), Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's Ward (25%) and St James's Ward (25%).
    - (ii) The award of a grant of £3,000 to the Royal British Legion, Dudley Branch for the purchase of two laptop computers to continue the work of the Royal British Legion branch, electronic bugle and amplifier for use at ceremonies and funerals and ceremonial poles and Standards along with coffin drape, this sum to be met equally from the capital allocations of Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's Ward and St Thomas's Ward.
  - (2) That consideration of the application submitted on behalf of the 1<sup>st</sup> Primrose Hill Guides be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.
  - (3) That subject to resolution (4) below, the Capital Allocations criteria be amended to limit the number of grant applications from the same organisation to one in a twelve-month period.
  - (4) That a condition be included in any amendment to the criterion allowing flexibility for both 'extenuating circumstances' and for instances where the use of capital allocations monies would result in leveraging significant additional funds.
  - (5) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to carry out the recommended actions within the agreed control procedures.
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76. MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2010 RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at the meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2010, with regard to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

In referring to paragraph 1 (Petition – Baptist End Road – Speeding Traffic) of Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the meeting in relation to speeding traffic problems affecting Baptist End Road, a Member of the Committee suggested that appropriate officers and Ward Members arrange a meeting with the Petition Organiser with a view to discussing possible solutions to improve the situation. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) indicated that the matter would be looked into.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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77. MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2010 OTHER THAN THOSE RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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A report of the Acting Area Liaison Officer was submitted on progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2010, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

In referring to paragraph 6 (Dudley Council Plus – Bereaved Services) of the report submitted to the meeting, a Member of the Committee queried whether the measures outlined in the paragraph had been put in place. In responding, the Acting Area Liaison Officer undertook to look into the matter and respond the Member direct.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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78. SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of meetings of Select Committees for the remainder of the current municipal year were noted.

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79. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE

The date and venue of the last meeting scheduled for the Committee for 2010/11 municipal year was noted.

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The meeting ended at 8.35pm.

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CHAIRMAN

CDAC/52