

Central Dudley Area Committee – 18th January, 2011

Report of the Acting Area Liaison Officer

Matters raised at the Meeting of the Committee held on 16th November, 2010 other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment

Purpose of Report

1. To note progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 16th November, 2010, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Background

2. The issues set out in paragraphs 3 to 9 (inclusive) below were raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 16th November, 2010, progress on which is as follows:

3. **Me2 Project**

On behalf of a member of the public, a Member of the Committee drew attention to the Me2 project and requested help in arranging funding to maintain the project. The Acting Area Liaison Officer responded as follows:-

Concerns have been passed on to the relevant Cabinet Member responsible for Children's Services. The budgets for next year are currently being worked on so we cannot give any answers on the Me2 project like any other council funded activity at present. However one of my colleagues has also been in touch with a representative from Me2 to offer additional help in finding other sources of funding and will keep in contact in addition to the support being given by my colleagues in Children's Services.

4. **Blackacre Road**

A member of the public drew attention to a newspaper article outlining the impending crackdown by Police on traffic using Blackacre Road as a rat run and requested statistics of the number of people who had received a penalty as a result of using Blackacre Road unlawfully since the last Area Committee. In responding, Sector Inspector Richard Jones indicated that since the 26th November the Police handed out nearly 1000 warning letters to motorists and have issued 47 Fixed Penalty Notices. He stated that the Police have received a number of complaints from motorists who feel that their time could be better spent dealing with more serious matters, however, he further stated that the

Police would continue to monitor the situation in the area, and where they can, will take appropriate action.

5. **Broadmeadow Development**

A member of the public drew attention to and circulated photographs of the recent development of Broadmeadow, Russells Hall and raised a number of issues relating to the extra care scheme. The Acting Area Liaison Officer responded as follows:-

Investigations in relation to the issues raised have now taken place and I would comment as follows:-

- (1) Closeness of development to properties on the Russells Hall Estate – the development was subject to planning permission and regulations. The building of the development complies with planning requirements.
- (2) The mess and disruption during the building – this is a difficult area as any new build will create a mess and disruption. Steps have been taken to minimise this. A compliment regarding the cleanliness of the site was received and Highways have confirmed that the contractor has always acted promptly when a complaint has been received.
- (3) Transfer of residents in care homes – allocation of properties will be based on a need criteria which is yet to be finalised. People in care homes have the same choice options as everyone else and if they choose to apply and satisfy the needs criteria they will be considered. There are no plans for wholesale transfers. It is anticipated that some family accommodation will become available when elderly tenants appreciate the benefits of extra care.

6. **Dudley Council Plus – Bereaved Services**

A member of the public requested that the Local Authority adopt a more appropriate setting than that currently available for dealing with the bereaved, with particular reference to the provision of a more sensitive amenity for registering deaths. She also referred to the practice of the Housing office in contacting bereaved people to discuss issues regarding tenancy with undue immediacy. The Acting Area Liaison Officer has written to the questioner responding to the personal issues raised in relation to the bereavement relevant to her.

The issue regarding the suitability of Dudley Council Plus as a venue to register deaths is difficult as bereavement is such a personal issue. Experience would show that many customers appreciate the convenience of the location and that other services can be accessed at the same time. However, the Manager at Dudley Council Plus has undertaken to see if he can make the registrars waiting area more private and encourage parents to mind their children and respect the fact that people visiting the registrars may be upset due to their circumstances.

The criticism concerning the Housing Service is difficult since everyone has different personal circumstances. In some circumstances timescales are prescribed in law but often people want matters settled quickly for their own

peace of mind, however, the way and sensitivity with which people are treated is recognised as important.

7. **Renaming of North Priory**

A Member of the Committee referred to her disappointment that Ward Councillors had not been consulted in the scheme for the renaming of the Priory North Estate. The Acting Area Liaison Officer responded as follows:-

Bromford approached the schools around June/July to ask if they would like to be involved in the renaming of the North Priory estate. It could not be done before then as there were still concerns as to whether the funding would be available.

The schools advertised that they needed a term's notice to do such a project as they had to build it into the curriculum. They then had the summer break so were not able to consider it until September. By this time Bromford were being pushed to find a name from highways as this impacted on connection of utilities on the site. Originally Bromford were hoping to be able to decide on a temporary name for marking purposes and agree on the permanent name later on.

Furthermore Bromford have been restricted on names, as they have to come from the list provided by the borough archivist. Bromford is liaising with Highways and Keepmoat on street names also from the list.

Bromford also approached the college for a marketing logo and name but only received one entry and that was from one of the tutors so that could not be progressed either.

To enable the schools to still be involved in the scheme, Bromford are now working with them to provide the contents for a time capsule to be buried under one of the properties during the construction period.

8. **Quarry Bank Primary School**

A Member of the Committee drew attention to parking problems at Quarry Bank Primary School as a result of the new building. The Acting Director of Children's Services responded as follows:-

Regarding the issue of car parking, the school have confirmed that staff are sharing cars and some staff are being transported in to help take the pressure off the public car park at the Labour Club. The Head teacher will again be talking to the staff to explain the problem. The school also considered that the welfare and health and safety of their pupils and staff was their prime concern. With regard to the parking of coaches on the zig zags, they had already addressed that with the coach company and the coaches now park a little further down the High Street.

To assist further they have taken a greenhouse down within the confines of the school/children's centre to create a little more car parking and are allocating a few more cars around the front entrance and children's centre.

The owner of the Hairdressers is also discussing, with one of the school governors, what else can be done to help.

With regard to the mud on the road, the contractor confirmed that there was a complaint but it was dealt with straight away with the use of a road sweeper and this road sweeper is on immediate call out facility as and when required.

The school accept that large construction projects can cause problems for some members of the community but they believe that they are doing everything reasonable to minimise these issues.

9. **Former Quarry Bank Library Clock**

A Member of the Committee queried whose responsibility it was to maintain the clock that was part of the old Quarry Bank Library, as he believed that a condition of sale of the Library was that the Local Authority would continue to maintain the clock. In responding, the Acting Area Liaison Officer indicated that in accordance with the sale there was no requirement to maintain the clock either by the purchaser or the Council.

Finance

10. This report has no direct financial implications.

Law

11. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

12. This report complies with the policies of the Council on Equality and Diversity.
13. Children and young people have not been consulted on the preparation of this report, as report seeks only to note progress on issues raised at its previous meetings.

Recommendation

14. That the report be noted.



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DIANE CHANNINGS

ACTING AREA LIAISON OFFICER

Contact Officer: Karen Farrington – Democratic Services Officer
(Democratic Services)
Telephone: 01384 818219
Email: Karen.Farrington@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers Minutes of the meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee held on 16th November, 2010