

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 10th March, 2009 at 6.30 p.m.
at Dudley Concert Hall, St. James's Road, Dudley

PRESENT: -

Councillor J.R. Davies (Chairman)
Councillor K. Finch (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Ali, Mrs. Aston, Cotterill, Mrs. Coulter, J.D. Davies, Davis,
J. Finch, J. Martin, Mrs. Roberts and Sparks; Mrs. Oakes

OFFICERS:

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (as Lead Officer to the Committee); the Assistant Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (Policy Performance and Resources); the Head of Housing Management and the Principal Project Officer (both Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services); the Head of Street and Green Care and the Group Engineer (Transportation), both Directorate of the Urban Environment; the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Early Years, Youth and Education Services); the Head of the Youth Service and the Area Youth Worker for the Central Dudley Area (all Directorate of Children's Services); the Area Community Renewal Officer; Ms. Lafferty (Community Safety Unit); the Principal Solicitor (Mr. Clark); and Mr. Sanders (both Directorate of Law and Property)

Also in attendance:

12 members of the public

71 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Ahmed, Waltho and Ms. While-Cooper, Mrs. Edwards and Inspector Done.

72 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of a personal or prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

73

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 20th January, 2009, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the substitution of the words "Interim Director of Children's Services" for the words "Head of the Youth Service" in the third and fourth lines of the second paragraph of Minute 51 (Youth Issues).

74

YOUTH ISSUES

An oral report was given by the Central Area Youth Team Worker on youth activities in the area of the Committee which had taken place within the last few months. Individual youth workers assisted in the presentation.

Particular reference was made to the St. Andrew's Summer Scheme, in which youth workers had acted as mentors for children and young people during a number of activities organised over the summer. Reference was also made to the setting up of the St. Andrew's Youth Partnerships and Communities together, for which the group had been runners up in the work in their relevant category of the Dudley Youth Awards. Other activities reported on included the work of the group with older members of the community, the laying of a wreath at the Cenotaph and the involvement of the group in providing mentoring support on a pantomime trip for young members and on the START project.

In responding to questions from members, the Area Youth Worker reported the opening times of youth facilities in the area of the Committee and identified the nature of activities offered at each venue on each day. It was noted that the youth service was in the process of compiling a new Area Plan for the Council and that this should be available by the next meeting of the Committee in June.

RESOLVED

That the oral report now given, be noted.

75

PETITIONS

The following petitions were presented by Councillor Davis and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for consideration:

- From residents and friends of families at The Grange Residential Home requesting the location of a pedestrian crossing near to The Grange in order to enable residents to cross safely to a bus stop for the service to Dudley;

- From residents of Aintree Way, Blenheim Way and surrounding area, objecting to the siting of a bus stop at Aintree Way on the grounds of invasion of privacy and addition to traffic problems.

76

ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED

That pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), Agenda Item No. 11 (Community Renewal Working Group) be considered as the next item of business.

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COMMUNITY RENEWAL WORKING GROUP

The Assistant Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (Policy Performance and Resources) reported orally on the work undertaken at a meeting of the Working Group held on the 5th March, 2009 at which priorities for inclusion in the Community Renewal Plan had been agreed provisionally for inclusion in the Community Renewal Plan for the Central Dudley Area. The Assistant Director indicated the intention that the draft Plan was to be submitted for approval to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the oral report now given, be noted.

78

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group, at its meeting held on the 29th January, 2009, with regard to applications made for funding from the Delegated Capital Budget of the Committee for the 2008/09 financial year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That capital grants be awarded to the organisations below in the sums and for the purposes indicated:

CASTLE AND PRIORY WARD

Limes Road Club

The sum of £499 for the purchase of a replacement laptop computer

Community Speed Watch, c/o West Midlands Police

The sum of £5,000 towards the cost of two hand-held speed meters, high visibility jackets and portable road signs.

Wrens Nest Community Centre

The sum of £3,223.45 for the purchase of a replacement industrial sized dishwasher.

NETHERTON, WOODSIDE AND ST. ANDREW'S WARD

Age Concern, Dudley

The sum of £3,420.87 for the purchase of replacement furniture, mainly tables and chairs, for the Netherton Centre of the body.

ST. THOMAS'S WARD

Hindu Cultural Association

The sum of £7,200 towards the installation of central heating on the 2nd floor of the Association's building.

347 (Dudley) Squadron Air Training Corps

The sum of £5,000 as a contribution towards the purchase of a replacement minibus.

QUARRY BANK AND DUDLEY WOOD WARD

First Quarry Bank Scout Group

The sum of £3,000 as a contribution towards replacement flooring in the Scout Hut.

- (2) That the grant to the Community Speed Watch be made only on the proviso that the sum is match funded by Division J1 (Dudley North) of the West Midlands Police.
- (3) That the grant to the Hindu Cultural Association be made only on the proviso that the Association can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Area Liaison Officer that the necessary building repairs, particularly to the roof of the building, have been completed as the building structure must be in a stable condition before heating can be installed.
- (4) That the application by Dynamic Time Out be put into abeyance and not considered further until such time as the Youth Service can advise the Committee on the issue referred to in the report now submitted.

- (5) That the application by Barnardo's Time for Me Project and Families of Highgate be refused for the reasons indicated in the report now submitted.
 - (6) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to carry out the recommended actions within the agreed control procedures.
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PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) The support of the community was requested by Mrs. Oakes for the reinstatement of a pillar box in Dudley Market Place, outside Boots the Chemist.
 - (b) A request was received from a member of the public for action to be taken on road safety grounds regarding the junction of Baptist End Road and Halesowen Road, Netherton. The member of the public drew attention to the number of children who had to cross the road at the junction on their way to and from school and the large number of vehicles parked between 8.00 a.m. and 1.30 p.m., which created difficulties for people crossing from Arch Hill Street and Cinder Bank and vice versa.
 - (c) A local resident complained about litter and unkempt green areas at Russells Hall, and dog fouling on the estate. She also drew attention to the fact that the jumbrella at the public house had not yet been removed. The same member of the public also drew attention to a bad pothole at the junction of Ashenhurst Road and Russells Hall Road.
 - (d) The same member of the public as referred to in (c) above, drew attention to a number of rat holes in the Russells Hall area. She was particularly concerned that, with the construction of a new road for new build housing, rats would emerge from the holes and cause problems. She strongly advocated the implementation of rodent treatment before the construction of the road took place.
 - (e) Two members of the public asked about the position of the Council on the Mosque Project, should the High Court Judgment be in favour of the Appellants. One member of the public expressed dissatisfaction that certain Ward Members were not reflecting the views of the St. Thomas's community on the Mosque issue.
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WARD ISSUES

- (a) Councillor Ali expressed concern at the allocation of funding from the Healthy Towns Initiative to more affluent areas of the Borough, given the level of deprivation in Central Dudley. Councillor Ali also expressed the view that an equal share of grant should have been allocated to all wards in the Borough.
- (b) Councillor Ali requested action to be taken to secure a direct bus service to Merry Hill from Blowers Green.
- (c) Councillor Ali asked for consideration to be given to the reinstatement of the school crossing warden at St. John's Road. Councillor Ali indicated that he had been informed that pupil numbers at the school had decreased but that, in his consideration, they had remained constant.
- (d) Councillor Ali requested traffic calming and speed restriction measures to be taken at Bunns Lane, in view of the recent fatal accident along the road and the remodelling of Burnt Tree Island. Councillor Ali also asked if flashing warning lights could be installed.
- (e) Councillor J. Martin drew attention to enquiries from residents of the Netherton, Woodside and St. Andrew's Ward about litter and street cleansing, particularly in the central shopping area in Netherton and Woodside.
- (f) Councillor J. Martin requested the inclusion of Darby End in a highways maintenance programme in order to divert vehicular rat running, particularly in the Thistle Green Road area.
- (g) Councillor J.D. Davies requested action to be taken on traffic congestion at Russells Hall Hospital Island, where traffic often was bumper to bumper in the direction of Dudley from Kingswinford and difficult to negotiate at peak times. Councillor Davies suggested the installation of a yellow box.
- (h) Councillor K. Finch advocated greater enforcement measures to be taken regarding litter dropping, with more penalty fines issued. Councillor Finch also expressed the view that the Council should do more to provide receptacles for the public to deposit litter in.
- (i) Councillor K. Finch drew particular attention to litter problems around the shops in Old Park Road, Priory Road and Summer Road and advocated the installation of more receptacles, together with signage regarding the dropping of litter. Councillor Finch also asked for regular cleansing to be undertaken in areas particularly badly affected by litter dropping.

- (j) Councillor J.R. Davies requested the cleansing of a gulley in Banklands Road where the road met the football pitch.
 - (k) Councillor Sparks requested that Councillors be notified of collection dates for recycling, garden waste etc. in their wards.
 - (l) In endorsing comments made by Councillor Ali in relation to the Healthy Towns Initiative, Councillor Sparks expressed the view that the grant from the initiative should have been disbursed to deprived areas, rather than allocated throughout the Borough.
 - (m) Councillor Mrs. Roberts requested action to be taken regarding horses which were grazing unlawfully on the grass verges at Himley Road and Russells Hall. In so doing, Councillor Mrs. Roberts drew attention to the safety elements involved.
 - (n) Councillor Mrs. Roberts indicated that the clearance of ivy at the junction of Earls Fold and Dibdale Lane, which she had requested at the previous meeting, had not been undertaken. Councillor Mrs. Roberts asked for the requisite action to be taken forthwith.
 - (o) Councillor Davis requested the installation of a school crossing patrol in the vicinity of Russells Hall School.
 - (p) Councillor Davis drew attention to the fact that buses were not slowing down at the chicanes on the Russells Hall Estate and requested action in that connection.
 - (q) Councillor Davis requested the installation of dog bins in the vicinity of Russells Hall School, at the bottom of Merryfield Road.
 - (r) Councillor Davis drew attention to the traffic situation in Duncan Edwards Way, during the current road works, which he considered to be totally unacceptable.
 - (s) Councillor Davis requested that Green Care consideration be given to the unkempt area between houses on Middlepark Road.
 - (t) Councillor Davis drew attention to the condition of green verges at the car park at Milking Bank and requested that appropriate action be taken.
 - (u) Councillor Davis drew attention to the need for streets at Milking Bank to be cleansed.
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CLOSED CHURCHYARDS

Further to the request for information on the matter at the previous meeting of the Committee, a report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted setting out the current position with regard to the Council's responsibilities in the adoption and maintenance of closed churchyards. The report covered the following issues:-

- The legal process involved in adopting closed churchyards.
- The guidance procedures regarding the adoption and management of closed churchyards in the Borough.
- The additional costs incurred by the Council in maintaining closed churchyards and its direct impact on service budgets.
- The work that was taking place in liaison with the Parochial Church Council regarding the management of trees and memorials.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

82

HEALTHY TOWNS INITIATIVE

This item was withdrawn.

83

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN NETHERTON WORKING GROUP

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment providing feedback on the findings of the Traffic Management in Netherton Working Group to date was submitted.

In presenting the report, the Group Engineer (Transportation) indicated that the issues referred to in the report were being worked on within the Directorate and that a report containing recommendations for consideration by the Committee would be submitted to the next meeting after initial consideration at a further meeting of the working group to be held in April.

Regarding the issue raised earlier at the meeting in relation to Arch Hill Street, the Group Engineer indicated that the pedestrianisation of the street would also be considered.

RESOLVED

That the position on the work of the working group, as now reported, together with the intention to consider pedestrianisation of Arch Hill Street, be noted.

84 MATTERS RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 20TH JANUARY, 2009

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee held on the 20th January, 2009, in relation to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

In the discussion on the report, the issues of Bunns Lane, the relocation of Dudley Town Football Club, and the Christmas and New Year waste collections were raised by members. In relation to Bunns Lane, Councillor Ali suggested traffic calming measures, rather than signals, might be a more appropriate option.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and noted.

85 MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 20TH JANUARY, 2009 IN RELATION TO MATTERS RELATING TO DIRECTORATES OTHER THAN THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted indicating progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee held on the 20th January, 2009, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and noted.

86 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

Dates of forthcoming meetings of Select Committees were noted.

87 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

It was noted that future meeting dates for the Committee would be determined at the annual meeting of the Council in May.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

CHAIRMAN