

**Central Dudley Area Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

**Report Of The Director Of The Urban Environment**

**Urban Environment - Matters Raised At The  
Central Dudley Area Committee - 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

**Purpose Of Report**

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007 Central Dudley Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

**Background**

2. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities. This diverse range of technical services focus on regenerating the Borough, maintaining our environment to high standards, protecting our communities and promoting leisure and other community services for all.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to matters such as traffic management, leisure and recreation, regeneration and new development. Few enquiries can be answered immediately, with many prompting further investigation, feasibility studies and public consultation, prior to being reported back to Committee.
4. To keep Committee updated, progress reports are included as an appendix and the proposal resulting from the update is set out at the end of each paragraph.

**Finance**

5. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

**Law**

6. Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to provide recreational facilities in its area.
7. The Council is empowered to improve highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.
8. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do anything that is likely to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.

9. Traffic signs are provided under powers contained in Section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to regulations made by the Secretary of State for Transport.
10. Guardrails may be provided under Section 66 of the Highways Act 1990.
11. Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided under powers contained in Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to Regulations made by the Secretary of State.
12. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
13. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
14. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its area to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
15. Part IX of the Highways Act 1980 contains provisions relating to the planting, care and control of trees in or on land adjoining the highways.
16. In the care and maintenance of its trees, the Council will owe the normal duty of care under the common law principles of nuisance and negligence.
17. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.

### **Equality Impact**

18. The proposals take into account the Council's equal opportunities policies. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a diverse range of services that affect all sections of the community.

### **Recommendation**

19. That the proposals contained in Appendix 1 attached be approved.



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**pp John B Millar**  
**Director of the Urban Environment**

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**Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-**

1. Action Notes from 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007 Committee

## Appendix 1

### **DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE HELD 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2007**

#### **1. PETITION - SLEDMERE ESTATE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, residents of Sledmere Estate submitted a petition requesting that the Council take action regarding illegal parking in the area surrounding the Warrens Hall Road entrance to Sledmere Primary School. Parents were concerned about children's safety when vehicles are parked in the area.

**Comments:** A DUE officer met with the main petitioner on site on the 26<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the issues and it was agreed that the Council would consider a possible future safety scheme to address the problem. A letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> July 2007 was sent to the main petitioner.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **2. PETITION - LODGE FARM ESTATE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, residents of Lodge Farm Estate submitted a petition requesting that consideration be given to converting the traffic island outside No. 55 - 69 Lodge Crescent into parking bays to ease parking problems on the estate.

**Comments:** DUE officers have confirmed that no public highway funds are available, or likely to become available, for the conversion of roundabouts into parking areas. Additionally, it would not be safe to encourage unrestricted traffic movements on sections of the public highway where turning movements constantly take place.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **3. PETITION - ABINGDON ROAD/LOMBARD AVENUE/EVESHAM RISE/ HIGH STREET, QUARRY BANK**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, residents of Abingdon Road, Lombard Avenue, Evesham Rise and High Street, Quarry Bank submitted a petition requesting traffic calming measures in those streets to prevent accidents occurring.

**Comments:** This same petition had already been submitted previously to DUE officers several weeks prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> June Committee and a response was sent to the main petitioner dated 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007 to the effect that the Council currently introduces traffic calming measures, only as part of a Local Safety Scheme where the emphasis is very much related to a reduction in the recorded number of personal accidents. The accident records for the roads concerned have been reviewed and as there have been

no personal injury accidents along any of these roads during the course of the last 3 years review period, a Local Safety Scheme cannot be justified. However, these roads will be added to the list of sites to be assessed later this year for possible inclusion in a future programme of works in order that consideration can be given to any changes in the current circumstances.

Speeding issues are strictly an enforcement matter for the Police Authority and whilst speed cameras can provide complimentary support to the initiatives of the Police, their use and deployment would still be subject to an assessment process to establish an order of relative priority for all the sites being considered across the West Midlands as a whole and not just within this Council's own area. There are currently no proposals to introduce speed cameras along either Cradley Road or Saltwells Road.

Further to the letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> May, a meeting took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2007 with an officer from DUE, the main petitioner and a Police representative to discuss the various issues in more detail. At that time the main petitioner stated that there seemed very little else to be added to comments already made, but would still consider raising concerns at appropriate intervals in the future.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **4. GREEN WASTE COLLECTION - CASTLE AND PRIORY AREA**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, a member of the public raised concern in relation to the green waste collection in the Castle and Priory area, commenting that due to the delay in the distribution of green bins and the fact the Council had not carried out collections in the interim period, large volumes of green waste had accumulated.

**Comments:** A further green collection has been made to remove the backlog.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **5. BURTON ROAD/BROADWAY STEPS**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Mrs Aston asked for the steps from Burton Road down to The Broadway to be cleared as they are overgrown and litter has accumulated.

**Comments:** The overgrowth has been cut back and litter cleansed.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 6. **DAMAGED FOOTPATHS - CASTLE AND PRIORY AREA**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Finch raised concern about the damage to the footpaths caused by trees which line the roads in the Castle and Priory area. He asked for the damage to be repaired by pruning and/or resurfacing.

Cllr Finch also requested a copy of the Council policy, should one exist, relating to tree root damage of public footpaths.

**Comments:** Removing the tree roots to make the surfaces safe, would render the trees unstable, therefore Officers from Street Care and Green Care are currently assessing this situation. Investigations into new techniques are to take place which, in the future, may enable excavation and removal of some of the surface roots and replacing them with special materials to retain the integrity of the roots and allow the surface to be porous thereby maintaining the "feeding system" to the roots and enabling the footway to be less of an obstacle course and suitable for resurfacing. Trials of this technique are to take place in The Northway Sedgley. Regrettably the inclines that the roots have created cannot merely be resurfaced because this would cause an "exaggerated risk".

Although there is no specific policy relating to root damage to footpaths, details regarding trees on public footpaths can be found in Dudley's Tree Strategy on the Dudley MBC website within the Environment & Planning web pages.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 7. **KING STREET 'OPENING'**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Ali commented that he had, on several occasions, seen drivers pull out of the opening in the road near to the King Street footbridge and requested that officers investigate the possibility of modifying this area of road in order to prevent a serious accident.

**Comments:** A comprehensive letter was sent to Cllr Ali dated the 11<sup>th</sup> June regarding the gap in the central reserve in King Street, Dudley to the effect that this issue extends back to 1999 and involves opposition by members of the business community to closing the central carriageway gap. After careful consideration by officers from a number of highway engineering specialities, it is the view of officers that the present arrangements for this part of Dudley are the best for all sectors of the business community, under current circumstances. Accordingly, it will not be possible to consider closing the highway gap in King Street for the foreseeable future.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**8. BUNNS LANE TRAFFIC SAFETY**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Ali requested a meeting between traffic officers and relevant Ward Members to discuss the recent traffic accident in Bunns Lane and consider the possibilities for improving traffic safety in the area.

**Comments:** Correspondence has taken place between Members and DUE Officers regarding Bunns Lane and consideration is being given to future actions. A meeting will be arranged involving Members and DUE Officers following receipt and analysis of the results of the Coroner's inquiry into the recent fatal injury accident.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**9. NEW ROWLEY ROAD CENTRAL REFUGE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Ali requested that a central refuge area be created to assist pedestrians in using the crossing near to the bus stop on New Rowley Road.

**Comments:** Consideration will be given during the next financial year to including the section of New Rowley Road, Dudley, near to the bus stops between Oakham Road and Oakham Avenue, in a future year's annual Pedestrian Crossing Programme.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**10. POTHOLE - WATSONS GREEN ROAD**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Waltho requested the repair of a pothole in Watsons Green Road.

**Comments:** A number of potholes in Watsons Green road were repaired on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2007.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**11. ST THOMAS' WARD - GENERAL RUBBISH**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Waltho raised concern about general rubbish in the St Thomas' Ward. He said that efforts have been made to clean up the area in the past, but the problem always returns. Cllr Waltho requested a meeting with relevant officers to discuss the formulation of a strategy to clean up the rubbish and minimise future problems.

**Comments:** Fortnightly sweeps on all St Thomas' Ward estates have been set up week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> July 2007. In addition, officers from DUE and DACHS will work together on enforcement and community focused initiatives.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

12. **BUFFERY PARK FAIR**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr J Davies requested that the park be cleaned up as soon as possible after the current fair there had finished.

**Comments:** The park has been cleaned up.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

13. **BUFFERY PARK PLAYGROUND**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr J Davies raised concern regarding the playground in Buffery Park, where it was reported that people are taking dogs onto the play area and also there are large amounts of broken glass. He requested that officers investigate these reports and take appropriate action.

**Comments:** "No Dogs Allowed" signs have been erected on the play area perimeter fence and the area has been cleaned.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

14. **CINDER BANK ISLAND & CINDER BANK/NORTHFIELD ROAD, NETHERTON**

A member of the public raised a number of issues regarding traffic flow along Cinder Bank, including a request for the results of any traffic counts which had been carried out in the area, clarification as to why a previous proposed scheme to install a traffic island there had been abandoned and a timetable for improved public transport including the 'Bus Showcase' route through Netherton and the extension of the Midland Metro. Written response to be sent to the questioner, copy to Cllr Rahman.

Cllr Rahman raised concern that a solution had not yet been found in relation to the issue of traffic safety at the junction of Northfield Road and Halesowen Road. He requested that consideration be given to remodelling the junction as a priority to prevent an accident.

Cllr Rahman requested a site visit with traffic officers to view traffic problems at Cinder Bank Island. He was concerned that the area is often gridlocked at peak times with the congestion resulting in serious air pollution in the area.



**Comments:** Following investigations, a letter was sent on 31<sup>st</sup> July to the member of the public requesting the traffic flow information and bus and Midland Metro provision referring him to Dudley MBC's website and the West Midlands Local Transport Plan website for transportation information. Reference was made to Centro's website where Bus Showcase information can be found. There are no Bus Showcase proposals for Cinder Bank for the foreseeable future.

DUE Officers have met with Cllr Rahman on site to discuss issues involving Halesowen Road's junction with Northfield Road. It is necessary to consider the design and construction of a major junction improvement scheme. The scope of such a scheme is likely to require funding far in excess of current budgets.

DUE Traffic Officers have met Councillor Ali, Councillor Rahman and Mr Ian Pearson MP on site on various occasions to discuss the issues relating to traffic movements and air quality in the above sections of Netherton. A report has been prepared for presentation to tonight's meeting.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### 15. **WOODSIDE/HOLLY HALL - LITTER**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Rahman commented that although progress had been made in improving the litter situation in Woodside and Holly Hall, more effort is required to clean up these areas and asked for enforcement to be carried out.

**Comments:** DACHS have worked closely with the DUE Street Cleansing section on a number of community litter picks in the area, with support of local community representatives and key stakeholders. They are aware of the criteria and guidance that the Council give to persons and groups who participate in a community litter pick. In particular, the need to be fully aware of Health and Safety issues and Insurance etc.

Cllr Rahman's request has been discussed with DACHS who are also trying to obtain funding from Central Government through 'Respect', who are keen to provide support to clean up problematic areas. DACHS contact details have been forwarded to Cllr Rahman accordingly.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### 16. **SPRING PARKLANDS - NEW NAME PLATES**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Ahmed asked for new street name plates to be erected in Spring Parklands.

**Comments:** The street name plates for Spring Parklands have been ordered. The manufacturer is currently closed down for three weeks for refurbishment. On their re-opening a delivery date will be sought, following which installation will be programmed.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

17. **RUSSELLS HALL ESTATE - TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Ahmed requested a review of the current traffic calming measures on Russells Hall Estate.

**Comments:** A review of the current traffic calming measures throughout the Russells Hall Estate is taking place. The high financial cost of removing traffic calming is difficult to justify when communities in other parts of the Borough have no such facilities and have requested similar measures to be considered.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

18. **WELLINGTON ROAD - ZEBRA CROSSING**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Ahmed raised concerns about the zebra crossing on Wellington Road. He stated that many drivers refuse to stop at the crossing and requested that traffic officers consider converting the crossing to a traffic light operated crossing to ensure drivers stop for pedestrians.

**Comments:** The two zebra crossings in Wellington Road - one near to the Sikh Gurdwara and the other south of Dock Lane, will be considered during the next financial year for possible conversion to pelican crossings as part of a future annual Pedestrian Crossing Programme.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

19. **OVERFIELD ROAD - PEDESTRIAN CROSSING**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Craigie requested the installation of a pedestrian crossing in Overfield Road.

**Comments:** This request will be considered, with other similar requests, for possible inclusion in a future year's annual pedestrian crossing programme.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

20. **SCOTTS GREEN CLOSE ANTI-SKID PATCHING**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Craigie expressed concern at plans to lay anti-skid patching in Scotts Green Close. She suggested that this is unnecessary in light of the road humps and 20 mph speed limit in the area and requested that a new pedestrian crossing be installed in the area instead.

**Comments:** The introduction of anti-skid carriageway surfacing in the main section of Scotts Green Close will not be pursued.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 21. **DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE - TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Craigie expressed concern regarding traffic management in Dudley Town Centre. She stated that she had personally seen cars parking illegally on double yellow lines and in disabled parking spaces.

She requested that Stone Street be converted back into a public car park and that an urgent overall assessment of traffic management in the town centre be undertaken.

**Comments:** Following the introduction of Council-controlled on-street parking enforcement, which is programmed for next year, consideration can be given to particular problems in town centres to assist shoppers whilst reducing instances of obstructive parking.

There are no plans to convert the landscaped square around Stone Street into a public car park. It is hoped that the open square has become a force for regeneration. It has already been used for "Children's' Olympics", rock and fossil festivals, the Dudley Pageant, Armistice Day and VE Day ceremonies, Police community days, marching band festivities and the Mayor's Christmas concert.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 22. **CORBYN ROAD TREES**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 12th June 2007, Cllr Roberts requested that trees in Corbyn Road be trimmed back urgently as they are causing inconvenience to residents.

**Comments:** The trees in Corbyn Rd have been condition assessed and works orders have been raised on a 6 month target time-frame.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.