

## **BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE**

Thursday 30 September 2010 at 7.00 pm  
at The Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Southall (in the Chair)  
Councillors D Blood, Mrs Blood, Foster, Mrs Greenaway, Ms Harris, Islam, J  
T Jones, Mrs Jordan, Miller, Mrs Wilson and P Woodall

### **Officers:-**

The Director of the Urban Environment (As Area Liaison Officer), Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Manager, Executive Support Team and Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) (all Directorate of the Urban Environment); Assistant Director Housing Management and Area Community Renewal Officer (Both Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services); Area Team Leader (Directorate of Children's Services) and Ms H Kidd, Solicitor and Mr J Jablonski (Both Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources),

together with Sergeant Richard Evans and Sergeant Rennison, West Midlands Police, Ms J Winpenny, West Midlands Fire Service and 28 members of the public.

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### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Harley, Councillor P Harley and Tyler.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following members declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matters referred to and left the meeting during the consideration of those matters:-

- (i) Councillor Ms Harris in Agenda Item Number 9 – Capital Allocations in so far as it related to the application made by the Hawbush and District Community Association in that she is an appointed member of the Council on that Association.
- (ii) Councillor Islam in Agenda Item Number 9 – Capital Allocations – in so far as it related to the application made by the Hawbush and District Community Association in that he is an appointed member of the Council on that Association.

- (iii) Councillor J Jones in Agenda Item Number 9 – Capital Allocations – in so far as it related to the application made by The Dingle Community Association in that he is an appointed member of the Council on that Association.
- (iv) Councillor Southall in Agenda Item Number 9 – Capital Allocations – in so far as it related to the application made by The Dingle Community Association in that he is an appointed member of the Council on that Association.

Arising from comments made, the Area Liaison Officer undertook to clarify the position regarding the Declarations of Interest to be made by Members who were appointed by the Council to serve on Community Associations.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 July 2010, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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PETITIONS

The following petitions had been received since the last meeting of the Committee:-

- (1) From residents of Whitethorn Road, Wordsley and adjoining streets concerning a tenancy in Whitethorn Road which had been referred to the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services and had now been resolved; and
- (2) From a Mrs Merrick of Polly's Tea Room, The Concord Market, High Street, Brierley Hill, concerning issues relating to Brierley Hill Town Centre and The Concord Market, which had been referred to the Petitions Officer for consideration.

The following petitions were submitted at the meeting:-

- (3) A petition from residents of Rose Avenue, Kingswinford, and surrounding streets requesting that Dudley Council planning department reject planning application P10/1188 – Change of use of premises at 14 Granville Drive from A1 Off licence to A5 – Hot food takeaway. The petition was referred to the Petitions Officer for consideration.

(The Chairman on behalf of himself and Councillor Mrs Wilson reported that as Members of the Council's Development Control Committee they would not be

commenting on this matter at this meeting as they would not wish to be seen as prejudging the application as it may be submitted in due course to the Development Control Committee for determination)

- (4) A petition requesting the Council to clean up the war memorial and tidy up the gardens on Church Hill, Brierley Hill, prior to the Remembrance Day service in November, 2010. The petition was referred to the Petitions Officer for consideration.
- (5) A petition from residents of flats at Chapel Court, Brierley Hill, regarding alleged anti-social behaviour in respect of a particular tenant and his visitors. The petition was referred to the Petitions Officer for consideration.

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### AREA COMMUNITY RENEWAL PLAN

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted updating the Committee on the development and progress to date of the Brierley Hill Area Committee Community Renewal Plan and on the direction for the work programme for the next year.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted be noted and that the Committee continue to support the implementation of the Local Community Renewal Plan.

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### DUDLEY GROUP OF HOSPITALS FOUNDATION TRUST MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Waltho and a Mr Peter Totney, publicly elected Governors of Dudley Group of Hospitals Council of Governors, gave a presentation on becoming a member of the Trust. Documentation in support of this matter had been circulated at the meeting including a form that those present could complete and hand in at the end of the meeting to the elected Governors present should they wish to become a member of the Trust.

Arising from the presentations given, questions were asked by members of the public and members of the Committee with particular reference to the time commitment involved, the terms of reference of the Governors, the make up of the Governors, in particular representation by young people, and the difference that could be made should someone wish to become a member of the Trust. Responses were given to the questions raised and it was noted that for a number of reasons it was particularly difficult to get young people involved.

A member also commented on examples in other areas where if there had been the level of commitment by persons involved to the same level as in Dudley it was considered that things that had gone wrong would have been spotted earlier. It was important, therefore, for people who wished to become involved to become involved with the Trust.

At the conclusion of questions Councillor Waltho and Mr Totney were thanked for the presentations given and it was reiterated that any completed forms would be collected by Mr Totney and Mr Brookes, the third publicly elected Governor sitting on the Council of Governors elected for the Brierley Hill Area.

PUBLIC FORUM

Consideration was given to the following written/oral questions raised:-

- (a) In response to two written questions regarding the planning application referred to earlier, under minute 25(3), when considering petitions received at the meeting, it was noted that these objections needed to be dealt with by the submission of an objection to the Planning Section of the Directorate of the Urban Environment and the questioners were advised to contact the Planning Section if they were unsure as to how to make an objection to that application.
- (b) In response to a question regarding a proposed car park at the rear of St Mary's Church, Kingswinford, in view of worsening traffic congestion, the Area Liaison Officer undertook to speak to the Planning Officer and Traffic Engineer involved and would ensure that a response was sent to the questioner and that the Chairman and Ward Members concerned would also be copied into that response.
- (c) A member of the public queried whether, when the hospital car park was opened, problems with parking would still be experienced in Elgar Crescent or whether the staff concerned would use the car park.

The Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) informed the Committee that in view of objections raised by residents of Elgar Crescent proposed Traffic Regulation Orders to control parking had not been implemented. He also commented that there would be a review of the position in due course and again consultation would be held on any proposals.

It was also noted that Central Dudley Area Committee would be convening a meeting of a Working Group to consider traffic issues in the Russells Hall Area.

- (d) The same member of the public referred to traffic lights in Rangeways Road, Wordsley, indicating a speed limit of 20 mph whereas the road opposite had a speed limit of 30 mph and so there was no indication to motorists of the change in speed limit. It was

noted that the lights were for use during school hours, however, it was considered that there was still the issue that no warning as to the change in speed limit was given. The Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) reported that he would look into this matter and respond direct to the questioner.

- (e) A questioner reported on issues with regard to parking on double yellow lines and on the footpaths outside premises in Brockmoor High Street and requested that action be taken to prevent and deter such activities. In response Sergeant Evans indicated that he would speak to the Councillor involved and to the Sergeant for that particular area. The Area Liaison Officer also reported that the Council would work with the Police on this matter and that further targeting work would be carried out in the area.
- (f) A member of the public queried the role of Police Community Support Officers with particular regard to traffic management issues in Elgar Crescent, and following an explanation of the actual powers of the Police as regards parking on double yellow lines and in respect of obstruction, the questioner was invited to attend a Police station so that he could be informed as to the powers of Police Community Support Officers.
- (g) A member of the public referred to difficulties experienced with the collection of rubbish in Elgar Crescent and related issues as to when bags should be put out, the non-receipt of bags, the lack of publicity/consultation regarding rubbish bags and instances where the explanatory notice had not been included with the bin bags. He expressed the hope that in future any changes to be made would be communicated to residents well in advance of that change.

In response, the Area Liaison Officer, in his capacity of Director of the Urban Environment, reported that the points made were valid and as regards communication, considered that it would have been preferable to have had the explanatory leaflets put through letterboxes rather than included with the bin bags. It was emphasised, however, that the Council were not trying to disadvantage already vulnerable, elderly and/or other such groups. It was also acknowledged that there was an issue as to which residents had assisted collections and those who did not.

The Area Liaison Officer then went on to explain the reasons for the changes which were to save money, approximately £250,000, and that when the system had settled down it was envisaged that there would be greater re-cycling undertaken leading to a further saving of £250,000. He also indicated that there had been abuse in the past regarding the number of bin bags left out and the use of such bags for items such as trade waste. Although it was considered that three bags per family should be sufficient for most if a larger number of bags were required assistance could be given in this regard.

Therefore, he considered that there were ways to improve

communication; that the Council would get the system right and that the vulnerable and elderly would be assisted but those abusing the system would be targeted. There was every indication, therefore that once the system had settled down significant savings would accrue together with significant recycling undertaken.

In response to a related question the Area Liaison Officer undertook to arrange for the removal of bin bags left in Campbell Street.

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#### BRIERLEY HILL LIBRARY LOCALITY PANEL

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the planned establishment of the Brierley Hill Library Locality Panel as one of five panels across the Borough as part of an ongoing engagement and consultation for Dudley Libraries.

It was noted that the Halesowen panel would be the pilot for this scheme commencing in October, 2010.

#### RESOLVED

That further consideration of the establishment of a Brierley Hill Library Locality Panel be deferred pending the outcome of the pilot scheme in the Halesowen area and that further consideration be given to this matter at the meeting of this Committee to be held on 24th March, 2011.

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#### CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to the application received in respect of the Dingle Community Association Councillor Southall left the meeting during consideration of this matter).

(in view of the absence of the Vice Chairman Councillor D Blood was elected Chairman of the Committee for the consideration of the application by the Dingle Community Association)

(Councillor D Blood in the Chair).

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on applications received for funding from this year's Capital Allocations Budget.

The Area Liaison Officer informed the Committee of the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group arising from a meeting held earlier this day.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That approval be given to the application received from the Dingle Community Association in the sum of £5,000 towards the overall

costs of a project to improve the general amenities in the centre to include a cooker, freezer, hand dryers, microwaves and security lighting.

(At the conclusion of consideration of this application Councillor Southall resumed the Chair).

- (2) That approval be given to the application received from the Hawbush and District Community Association in the sum of £5,000 only for the refurbishment and upgrading of the stage, refurbishing of the toilets and for the purchase of a number of tables.
- (3) That approval be given to the application received from the Kingswinford and District U3A in the sum of £4,899 so as to provide various items of IT equipment for the members of their organisation.
- (4) That the application received from Insight, an organisation based within the Brierley Hill Project, be deferred pending receipt of further information regarding the organisation and the items requested.
- (5) That the application received from Crossroads Care Dudley be refused as it did not meet criteria 1.3 of the required criteria in respect of applications to be met from the Capital Allocations Budget.

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MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 JULY 2010 AND 25 MARCH 2010

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on a number of issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 1 July and 25 March 2010. Details of the matters raised at those meetings were set out in the Appendix to the report submitted.

During consideration of this matter, the Area Liaison Officer undertook to contact the Officer concerned with regard to issue Minute 16(c) of the meeting held on 1 July 2010, in relation to concerns raised in respect of a footway link at Bromley and Pensnett Primary School and arrange for Councillor Foster to receive a response.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted, and as reported at the meeting, be noted.

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WARD ISSUES

Written responses to Ward Issues raised by Councillor Foster in advance of the meeting had been circulated to Members and to the members of the public present at the meeting prior to the start of the Committee.

## Matters Raised by Councillor Foster:

### Issue 1

Brockmoor High Street lights at the junction with Station Road. Could lenses be changed to green arrows pointing left and right so there is no confusion for drivers who often go straight ahead which is no entry?

### Response

Whilst the use of green light arrows at traffic signals can be useful in giving specific directional instructions, they are not permissible in situations to direct traffic in a particular direction whilst other options are still allowed. This would be the case at this junction as traffic approaching the junction from all directions has the option to turn left or right as well as legally proceeding straight ahead.

### Issue 2

Pensnett High Street - speed alert sign - needs traffic sign in place warning of 20 mph speed limit

### Response

With an existing speed camera and associated signing along one part of Pensnett High Street indicating that it is a 30mph speed limit, the use of flashing signs warning that the speed limit is 20mph would not be acceptable and potentially more dangerous as drivers would become confused by the mixed messages being given about the prevailing speed limit.

(It was noted that Issue 2 had now been withdrawn as it had in fact been dealt with earlier in the meeting under the public forum item –at minute 28(d)

### Issue 3

New Orchard Street Council Development - can former tenants/residents displaced by the regeneration of the estate be given first refusal of new housing?

### Response

This will be considered as part of the Lettings Plan for the new development. A priority was given to return to North Priory once the development is complete subject to eligibility for the property types. Residents will be consulted on this issue.

### Issue 4

Uncollected refuse - there has been a lot of confusion caused by earlier collection times for rubbish and 3 bag limit, resulting in streets of uncollected rubbish. Residents are finding it difficult to meet both criteria.

### Response

There has been some confusion in relation to the roll-out of the new black sack service. An early batch of black sack rolls did not contain leaflets in the right place or in certain cases, leaflets were omitted from the roll altogether. Consequently, a number of properties in the Borough received rolls but were unaware of the revised collection protocols. As with the old service, residents with large families may qualify for additional sacks and our Waste Care Team are quite happy to liaise with residents to discuss their waste disposal issues. We are also aware that many residents who put out more than three bags are not making full use of the existing recycling facilities and should be encouraged to make maximum use of their black recycling box. Despite the early teething problems, already the new service is beginning to settle down.

### Issue 5

Change of Use - Tiled House Residential Home - residents are concerned about what the closure of the home, especially if the building is going to be left empty for a while. Also, is there any indication of what either the building or land will be used for?

### Response

The Tiled House residential home still has 12 residents in short term placements. We are looking to relocate these residents as soon as is practically possible. Together with colleagues in Building Services, we are considering all options regarding the future use of the building. Committee/Ward Members will be kept informed of further developments.

### Issue 6

Traffic Congestion Pensnett Road, Brockmoor - Residents are concerned that since the traffic lights were switched on at the corner of John Street and Pensnett Road and Bank Street, the backlog of traffic blocking Pensnett Road has increased significantly. This often results in congestion from Level Street up to High Oak and pollution and noise have also increased.

### Response

We have been experiencing major problems with British Telecom over a considerable period of time with them failing to provide the necessary communications to link all the new traffic signal installations together and then back to the Urban Traffic Control centre at Wolverhampton. Fortunately, this issue has recently been resolved and the traffic signal engineers are now in the process of finalising the upgrade of traffic signals at High Street, Brockmoor / Hickman Road. This will be the final signalised junction in the area to be completed. With the communication issue resolved, we can now validate all the traffic signal timings in the vicinity, including Level Street, John Street, Hickman Road, Bryce Road and High Street, Brockmoor such that they work together to move traffic more efficiently around this part of the network and in particular along B4179 Pensnett Road.

We also have the benefit of the Urban Traffic Control camera, sited at the junction of Pensnett Road and Hickman Road, which is linked back to the Control Centre. With the communications issue now resolved, this will be utilised to carry out ongoing monitoring and adjustments to the signals as required.

Matter Raised by Councillor Foster at the meeting:

Councillor Foster commented further on issue 4 above in relation to uncollected refuse and requested that the bags that had been out the longest be collected as a matter of priority. The Area Liaison Officer undertook to deal with this matter and, as indicated above, reiterated that Campbell Street would be dealt with.

Matters Raised by Councillor Mrs Jordan:

Issue 1

In response to a query as regards people not being at home when bin bags were delivered to them for which they had to sign the Area Liaison Officer reported that a common sense approach would be taken on this matter and that if a person was not at home the bin bags would be left. He would speak to the necessary officers to ensure that this happened.

Issue 2

Councillor Mrs Jordan referred to the number of bags that had been left together with their potential usage and in response the Area Liaison Officer commented on the point raised and also in relation to the quality of bags used both by the Council and those that may be used by residents. He reiterated that it had been a Council decision to supply a roll of bin bags and that at Christmas a further 52 bags would be supplied. The issue as to quality of bags would receive further consideration in the future.

Issue 3

Councillor Mrs Jordan queried the position with regard to the number of bags that could be used at peak times such as holidays and Christmas given that the amount of rubbish was likely to increase at such times. In response the Area Liaison Officer reported that information in respect of Christmas collections was currently being considered and would be available in due course.

Issue 4

Councillor Mrs Jordan referred to the unfair criticism of operatives and other staff involved in the bin bag process and also commented on the position regarding low rise flats which if not dealt with could lead to an increase in fly tipping. In response the Area Liaison Officer reported that fly tipping would be monitored and that if there were any particular issues with regard to flatted accommodation these would be dealt with.

Matter raised by Councillor Islam

Councillor Islam in his capacity as Labour Group Spokesperson for Environment and Culture commented on the efforts made as regards recycling which he supported and considered that there was a need to do more recycling in the future.

He also asked that the Area Liaison Officer take note of the complaints made regarding the new bin bag system and acknowledged the comments made regarding communication and consultation in that he considered that the citizen had been left out of the equation.

However, arising from this he considered that people were now more engaged and that the Council needed to accept what had gone wrong and put the various issues right as quickly as possible.

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SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of future meetings of the Council's Select Committees in the current municipal year were received and noted.

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DATES AND VENUE OF FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following dates for future meetings of this Committee, all to be held at The Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford, commencing at 7pm, were noted:-

Thursday 2 December 2010

Thursday 3 February 2011

Thursday 24 March 2011

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The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

CHAIRMAN