

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 13th June, 2006 at 6.30 pm
at the Savoy Centre, Netherton

PRESENT:-

Councillor Ahmed, Ali, Mrs. Aston, Bradney, Mrs. Coulter, J. Davies, M. Davis, Finch, Johnson, Rahman, Sparks and Waltho and, following the appointment of co-opted members, Miss V. Little and Mrs J Oakes

OFFICERS:

Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management), Section Engineer, (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Principal Project Officer, Area Manager, Housing- Dudley, (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Area Team Leader, Detached Youth Worker, (Directorate of Children's Services), Mr. K. Edwards, Principal Solicitor and Mrs. J. Rees (Directorate of Law and Property)

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 40 members of the public were also in attendance at the meeting.

1 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Rahman be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year

(Councillor Rahman thereupon took the Chair).

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cotterill, Ms. Craigie and Male; and Miss Edwards.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ahmed declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No 15 a) (Request for vehicle access over land at Wolverhampton Street Car Park) in view of his owning the property next door to 172 Wolverhampton Street.

Councillor M Davis declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of any agenda item related to Social Services in view of his being a Social Services User.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 14th March, 2006, be approved as a correct record and signed.

5 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor J. Davies be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

6 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted, setting out the Terms of Reference and Protocol for Area Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and the appendices to the report submitted, on the Terms of Reference and the Protocol for Area Committees be noted.

7 CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of the co-option of members to serve on the Committee for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

Members of the Committee undertook to consider the co-option of a young person at a later date.

RESOLVED

That the following persons be re-appointed as co-opted members of the Committee for the 2006/07 Municipal Year, representing the organisations indicated:-

Miss. V. Little, Dudley Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust
Ms H. Edwards, Dudley Association of Governing Bodies
Mr. M. Sadiq, Dudley Equality and Diversity Group
Ms J. Oakes, Dudley Town Centre Forum
Mrs. P. Goodyear, DOSTI

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APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of the appointment of Working Groups in the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

In response to a query from the floor, the Chairman explained that the reason all three Ward Members of the St James' Ward were members of the Capital Allocations Working Group was that each belonged to a different Political Party. It was noted that the Working Groups only made recommendations back to the full Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Central Dudley Area Committee Community Plan Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing Municipal year, with its existing Terms of Reference and that the working group comprise all members of the Committee.
- (2) That the Central Dudley Area Committee Capital Allocations Working Group be re-appointment for the ensuing Municipal Year, with its existing Terms of Reference and that the Working Group comprise the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, all three Members of St James's Ward and one member from the other wards with the membership comprising Councillors Rahman, J. Davies, Mrs. Aston, Mrs. Coulter, Ahmed, Ms Craigie, M. Davis and Cotterill/Male.

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APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the nomination of members of the Committee to serve on outside organisations.

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the organisations indicated for the 2006/07 Municipal Year or for the term period indicated.

Social Inclusion

- | | | |
|----|--|--------|
| a) | Castle and Priory Regeneration Group - Councillor Mrs. Aston | Annual |
| b) | Wrens Nest Community Centre - Councillor Mrs. Aston | Annual |
| c) | Withymoor Island Trust - Councillor Bradney | Annual |
| d) | St. Francis Parish Centre - Councillor Finch | Annual |

Community Centres

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| a) | Dudley Wood- Councillor Male | Annual |
| b) | Sledmere - Councillor Ali | Annual |
| c) | Woodside - Councillor Rahman | Annual |
| d) | Priory - Councillor Mrs. Aston | Annual |
| e) | Quarry Bank - Councillor Cotterill | Annual |
| f) | Badley Memorial and Dudley Nursing Charity - Councillor Rahman | 4 year term from 31.07.06 |

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PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBERS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS, 2005/06

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the progress of visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments undertaken by members of the Committee during 2005/06, and on further nominations for participation in the rota of visits for the 2006/2007 Municipal year.

Arising from consideration of this matter, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and the appendices attached to the report submitted, on the progress of elected member visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments during 2005/06, be noted.

- (2) That Councillors Ali, Mrs. Aston, Mrs. Coulter, J. Davies, M. Davis, Johnson and Rahman be appointed as the nominees of this Committee to undertake rota visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments in the municipal year 2006/07.
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PETITIONS

The following petitions were submitted by the persons indicated and referred to the officers shown for attention.

- 1 Councillor Mrs Aston, on behalf of local residents, requesting
- (a) The lowering of kerbs around the footpath on Mulberry Green, Dudley
 - (b) The removal of the kerb around the grass area to allow for the widening of the road on Mulberry Green, Dudley and
 - (c) The removal of the green and conversion of it into parking bays for residents and visitors of residents only.
- The Petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment and the Director of Adult, Community and Housing services for their consideration and attention.
- 2 Councillor M Davis, on behalf of local residents, requesting the removal of a touring caravan parked on the main roadway, causing an obstruction and eye sore at Kenilworth Court, Dudley. The petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for his consideration and attention.
- 3 Councillor M Davis, on behalf of local residents, requesting the removal of overgrown shrubbery and trees at the rear of properties on Corbyn Road, Ketley Hill Road and Hawkesley Road, Dudley, to help combat anti social behaviour. Councillor M Davis said that the shrubbery had been pruned previously, but was in need of pruning again to prevent youths hiding within the shrubbery.
- The petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment and the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services.
- 4 Councillor M Davis, on behalf of local residents, requesting the removal of the traffic chicanes from the Russells Hall estate and the introduction of alternative traffic calming measures to be introduced.

The petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for his consideration and attention.

- 5 Councillor M Davis commented that he had not received a response to a petition he had submitted previously to the Directorate of the Urban Environment regarding concerns by local residents at the lack of parking facilities at Russells Hall Hospital and the need for measures to be taken to combat this problem. The Assistant Director of the Urban Environment undertook to investigate the concerns and send a written response to Councillor M Davis and the Chairman.

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YOUTH ISSUES

On behalf of Youth Forum, Tim Thomson spoke on the recent social event for young people at Star City; of a proposed meeting with Councillors, which would be scheduled for the very near future and of the residential camp in Bromsgrove in July, which would address the Constitution of the Youth forum as well as outdoor activities. Councillors Ali, J Davies and Rahman thanked Tim for his very informative presentation, which indicated a busy schedule for the Youth Forum.

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PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman advised that questions would be taken from the floor and should there be any time remaining when questions had been addressed. Questions and answers were then given as follows:-

- (1) In response to concerns expressed by members of the public regarding the proposed erection of a 50 ft high telecommunications Mast at Corbett Industrial Estate, Cinderbank, Netherton, the Chairman advised that the Council had a duty to consider all planning applications received. He undertook to write to the Chairman of the Development Control Committee advising of the Committee's concern regarding the possible erection of this telecommunications Mast.
- (2) A number of residents raised concerns regarding the burning capacity at the Lister Road Depot, and queried whether Dudley took in burning material from neighbouring authorities. In response the Assistant Director, Environmental Management advised that the incinerator worked at full capacity full time to ensure economic efficiency. He confirmed that waste for burning was transported from neighbouring Authorities and had been for some considerable time, to ensure efficient burning capacity of the plant. He was not aware of any plans to extend the waste disposal site. He also advised that the system was monitored on a regular basis by the Environment Agency.

- (3) In response to comments by a member of the public regarding the reported proposal for charging residents per volume weight for waste collection, the Assistant Director, Environmental Management advised that his understanding was that this not legislation, but rather a suggestion in its infancy for a proposal by the government to make changes to the current system for Council Tax charges.
- (4) In response to other concerns expressed by members of the public relating to pollution, traffic issues, and a requested meeting for residents of Cinderbank, the Chairman advised that it was intended to hold a public meeting for all the residents of Netherton, at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 5th July at the Netherton Arts Centre. He hoped that at this meeting issues such as Traffic Plans, fly tipping, Air Pollution, Air Quality and other issues would be addressed.
- (5) A member of the public raised concern regarding the long delay in road works at the intersection of Halesowen Road and Raybolds Fold, Netherton. In response, the Assistant Director, Environmental Management, advised that the delay in the work had been as a direct result of damage to a high voltage cable, which had not been identified before work commenced. It was anticipated that the work would not be completed for a further month. It was suggested that it would be preferable for the cable to be laid and connected on the same day to prevent further vandalism to the cable.
- (6) In response to a member of the public's query regarding having to leave his home after living there some considerable time, the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services advised that whilst it was not appropriate to discuss individual issues at the meeting, she was aware that sometimes there were sensitive difficult issues regarding rights to succession, which needed to balance the needs of all sectors of the community, and which had to be referred to the Cabinet Member for consideration. The Area Manager Housing undertook to speak with the questioner outside of the meeting to address the query.
- (7) A number of residents raised concerns regarding the fence at the end of their properties near to the castle grounds, which the Area Housing Manager undertook to speak with the residents outside of the meeting to resolve the situation.

- (8) A member of the public expressed concerns regarding Council Policy for the allocation of Council owned properties on the Russells Hall Estate to young unmarried couples close to more mature tenants. In response the Housing Manager advised that many low rise blocks in Russell's Hall were designated for persons over a certain age, however these designations were being reviewed for some blocks to address the shortage of accommodation for young single people in the area. The Housing Manager advised that in doing so the Council were mindful not to house persons with vast age differences close to each other. He undertook to speak with the questioner outside of the meeting to discuss the issues in more detail.
- (9) On behalf of a local resident Councillor Bradney read out a letter expressing concerns that despite the original planning agreement for the trees on the former Blowers Timber Estate, Halesowen Road, at the rear of Cole Street, Dudley, Property Developer had been given planning permission which had allowed them to remove trees despite two Tree Preservation Orders, and without consultation with residents or consideration to nesting birds, bats and other wild life in the bank area. The removal of the trees had taken away existing residents' privacy. Councillor Ali commented that there had been similar incidents in his Ward, where Developers had been allowed to carry out work, which individuals would not have received permission form. The Chairman and Area Liaison Officer undertook to write to the Chairman of the Development Control Committee raising the concerns as set out in the letter submitted.

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WARD ISSUES

Mrs. Aston raised

- (1) Concerns regarding mini motorbikes being ridden at the Castle Woods at the back of Gervase Drive and Forest Road.
- (2) Concerns regarding the Washington Arms, which was currently in a derelict state and where recently a car had been burnt out.

Councillor Johnson raised

- (1) Concerns regarding the state of the green at Sycamore Green that is the grass being in urgent need of mowing, and the edges need attention. When the grass was cut there was a need for it to be collected to prevent the blocking up of the drains.
- (2) Concerns regarding mini motor bike riders causing disturbance to residents in the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings particularly in the Pine Green, Elm Green and Gervase Drive area.

- (3) Concern that the local Police appear to patrol during the daytime in pairs, when children are at school.

Councillor Finch raised

- (1) The need for security measures at the Washington Public House, to prevent further vandalism and danger to youngsters with a request that Punch Taverns be asked for an update as to their intentions for the building and what security measures they had taken.
- (2) The rubbish left uncollected for considerable lengths of time by workmen undertaking repairs on the Castle and Priory Estates.
- (3) The need for a new drain cleaner. The Assistant Director Environmental Management advised that there were now two drain cleaners and he was hopeful that the flash flooding would be addressed.

Councillor Rahman advised that the date for the requested public meeting to discuss issues regarding traffic, pollution and all associated issues was to be held on 5th July at 6.30 pm at Netherton Arts Centre. He was hopeful that the meeting could be concluded before the start of the world cup football match scheduled for that evening. He also raised:

- (1) Concerns regarding the O2 application for a telecommunications mast and advised that if people wished to object they needed to do so before 27th June.
- (2) Requested a copy of the policy on Netherton Shopping Centre. The Assistant Director Environmental Management undertook to send a copy to the Chairman.
- (3) The need for signage to publicise the exact location of the new Netherton Business Centre.
- (4) The need for the trees in close proximity to the Welcome to Netherton signage to be pruned, as they are currently blocking the signage.
- (5) The need to write to Kings Oak advising them that the Committee, and members of the public are unhappy with the situation regarding the trees which have been removed at the development.
- (6) Support and appreciation for the proposed St Thomas' Community Games event.
- (7) The need for a football ground for the Central Dudley Area and the previous request for an update report on this matter to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee

- (8) Promotion of the Netherton Fun Day on 22nd July at Netherton Park, to which all were welcome.

Councillor Bradney raised

- (1) The issue of the need for signage to indicate the speed limit on the road from Brierley Hill Police Station to Dudley which he raised some 3 meetings ago and which had not been addressed.
- (2) The need for a zebra crossing somewhere between Holly Hall and Brierley Hill.

Councillor Mrs. Coulter raised the question as to whether a Council Policy for community bonfires had been established, following concerns expressed when problems had arisen at a bonfire last year. The Assistant Director Environmental Management advised that he understood that the problem bonfire had been on Council owned land and he undertook to liaise with his colleagues in the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services on this issue.

Councillor Ali raised

- (1) Concern that he had still not seen a report on Dudley Football Stadium. He appreciated that there might be difficulties in identifying a site, but would be grateful for an update on the current situation. He believed there was a need for a proactive approach to the matter, particularly with the 2012 Olympics coming up.
- (2) A vote of thanks to the Committee for the funding towards the St Thomas' Community Olympics. He advised that the opening ceremony was due to take place on Friday 23rd June at Dudley Castle and events would take place in five primary schools as well as Hillcrest and Castle High Schools. The website for anyone wishing to find out more details was www.dudley.games.org.

Councillor Davies raised

- (1) Concerns regarding the state of the ground at Buffery Park, following a recent visit of a Fairground. He had been advised that the cost of repairing the damage caused would outweigh the hire fee and he questioned whether there was a need for such a facility in a local park.
- (2) Concern at the rubbish dumped on the railway embankment at Dalston Close and Kilburn Place.
- (3) The unkempt state of the derelict shops and land adjacent to the shop site, which was being used to dump rubbish, at Hall Street, the entrance to Dudley town.

- (4) The need for improvements to the walls and land at the Gads Green flats.
- (5) Concern that a car park immediately next to an all weather sports pitch had been resurfaced with small stones, which were spoiling the pitch and the need for a sweeper to clear the pitch.

Councillor Waltho raised

- (1) Concerns regarding the derelict and vandalised public house site in Selbourne Road. He requested that Selbourne Homes be written to requesting what their plans were for the site, in view of the fact that the building had been derelict for over five years.
- (2) A vote of thanks for remedial action taken by the Police Community Support Officers in St Thomas' Green Park following complaints regarding illegal wheeled vehicles, which were causing menace to local residents and which were dealt with promptly.

Councillor M. Davis raised

- (1) Concern at the lack of road maintenance, and the need for resurfacing of Trinity Road, Wolverhampton Road, Russell Street, Swancote Road, Corbyn Road, and Walters Row that some roads in areas under different political control received preferential treatment for maintenance and repairs. The Assistant Director Environmental Management advised that there was no political preferential treatment for road maintenance. Maintenance was carried out following surveys, which followed strict guidelines.
- (2) Concerns regarding tenants, their age differences when being allocated Council owned properties, and the way people with mental health problems appeared to be given preferential treatment for the allocation of Council owned housing on the Russells Hall Estate and the lack of parking facilities for some tenants on the Russells Hall Estate. He also expressed concerns that people attending Busheyfields for mental health and/or drug related problems were given free meals and allowances. The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services advised that there was no Housing Policy which gave preferential treatment to people living in the Busheyfields area for Council owned accommodation. Also there was a responsibility on the Council to provide a stable home for people including those with mental health problems. It was important for their rehabilitation and progress to ensure that people with mental health problems and drug related problems received assistance and a stable home.

- (3) Concerns regarding the nuisance caused by mini motor riders and the apparent lack of support from the police on this matter. The Chairman undertook to write to the police expressing concerns regarding the mini motor bike problems.
- (4) The need to consider whether it was appropriate to use pebbledash surfaces close to play areas.

Councillor Ahmed raised

- (1) Concerns at the lack of car parking facilities and the high parking charges at Russells Hall Hospital. There was a need for a meeting with the Chairman of the Dudley Group of Hospitals to discuss problems with traffic flow and the lack of facilities provided.
- (2) The need for maintenance on the car park at Middlepark Road before a personal injury claim was made.
- (3) Concerns that no action had been taken regarding the Anti Social Behaviour particularly at Duncan Edwards Close.

Councillor Sparks raised

- (1) The need for the partial fence at Woodland Avenue and Ann Road to be repaired to prevent the numerous amounts of fly tipping on the site.
- (2) Concerns that the land at Quarry Bank Park be reinstated following the recent visit of a travelling Fairground. The need for Fairground Operators to be charged the full cost of reinstating parks to their original condition and the need for a detailed report on this matter.

Miss Little (Co-opted Member representing the Primary Care Trust) commented, in response to Councillor M Davis' comments earlier:-

- (1) That all patients, whether day cases or in patients, were given refreshment when attending any hospital for treatment, regardless of their reasons for attending. She supported comments made by the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services in that there were no Policy to give preferential treatment for housing allocation to people with mental health problems. She also advised that mental health illness was a very common problem, and that mental health problems did not equate to bad behaviour. It needed to be acknowledged that considerable work was done with patients with mental health problems and/or drug related problems when they left hospital.

15

APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted regarding land and property within the Committee's area.

The Chairman and some Members of the Committee expressed concern at the information contained within the appendix, in respect of land at 209 and 211 Stourbridge Road, Dudley which also appeared into be contradictory.

In answer to comments from a member of the public regarding this issue, the Chairman explained that it was for the Committee to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member on land issues. If members of the public wished to raise any issues they should do so in the Public Forum part of the meeting.

Upon consideration of the report and comments made it was:-

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Law and Property be advised to approve the Licence for access over Wolverhampton Street Car Park, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (2) That consideration of the request to declare the land at 209 and 211 Stourbridge Road, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, be deferred to allow Members to undertake a site visit and clarify information contained within the report.

16

PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF WAITING ORDER - JEWS LANE AND EVE LANE, UPPER GORNAL

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking consideration on a proposed Prohibition of Waiting Order in Jews Lane, Eve Lane, and Kent Street, Upper Gornal and Burton Road, Dudley, in the light of objections received that the Order relates to highways in the area of the North Dudley Area Committee.

Upon consideration of the report and the comments made, it was

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised that the introduction of the Prohibition of Waiting Order in Jews Lane, Eve Lane and Kent Street Upper Gornal, and Burton Road, Dudley as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted is supported as far as this Committee is concerned.

17 OBJECTIONS TO DISABLED PARKING PLACES

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on proposed changes to the reporting procedures for objections to disabled parking places.

On consideration of this matter, it was

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised of the Committee's agreement to the changes in the procedure for dealing with Traffic Regulation Orders which receive objections, without the need for referral to the Area Committee, whereby the Cabinet Member for Transportation would deal with the objections by way of a Decision Sheet, following full and proper consultation with the relevant Ward Members.

18 CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of the process for allocating expenditure under the Committee's delegated capital budget for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

Councillor Ali commented that all organisations should be encouraged to apply for funding for any capital projects which they might be considering.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the improved process for awarding capital allocations from the Capital Allocations budget as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted be approved for the 2006/07 Municipal year.
 - (2) That the Committee agree to continue to apply the same two sets of criteria used in 2005/2006.
 - (3) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to carry out the recommended actions.
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19 URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT CENTRAL DUDLEY
AREA COMMITTEE - 14TH MARCH, 2006

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on a number of issues relating to that Directorate raised at the meeting of this Committee held on 14th March, 2006.

RESOLVED

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

20

DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the dates and venues of future meetings of this Committee, as follows, be noted:-

5 th September, 2006	Dudley Concert Hall, St. James's Road, Dudley
7 th November, 2006	Priory Primary School, Cedar Road, Dudley *
16 th January, 2007	Saltwells EDC, Bowling Green Road, Dudley *
13 th March, 2006	Sledmere Primary School, School Lane, Dudley *

* venues to be confirmed

The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

CHAIRMAN