

Central Dudley Area Committee - 20th January, 2009

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Matters Raised at the Meeting of the Committee held on 5th November, 2008 other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment

Purpose

1. To note progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 5th November 2008, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Background

2. The issues set out in paragraphs 3 to 10 (inclusive) below were raised at the meeting of this Committee held on 5th November, 2008, progress on which is as follows:-
3. Property at Kenilworth Court

At the November meeting of the Committee held on 5th November, 2008, a neighbour nuisance issue regarding a property at this location was received from a member of the public. The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services has since confirmed that the persons causing the nuisance have left the property and that the case has therefore been closed.

4. Old Park Farm Estate

At the November meeting, concern was expressed by a ward member about cars driving across the green on the Old Park Farm Estate.

The Head of Housing Management has responded as follows. The design of the estate with narrow streets and limited off road parking results in some residents parking on grass verges on the estate. The feasibility of off road parking has been considered previously by housing officers but the limited options available for creating additional parking spaces are not considered to be value for money as they would have limited effect. Where residents are parking inappropriately the Housing Manager will attempt to identify the responsible person and take appropriate action in partnership with the Police, if necessary.

5 7 Baptist End Road

At the November meeting of the Committee, the fencing off of this fire-damaged property was requested by a ward member. The Director of the Urban Environment has reported that work to secure the property has been carried out by the owner and that the problem of access to a dangerous site has therefore been resolved. Checks, however, are continuing to be made.

6 Location of Former Windmill Nursery (the Looking Glass Centre)

At the November meeting of the Committee, a ward member advocated the use of the former Windmill Hill Nursery premises to house the nursery currently situated at the Dudley Wood Centre. The Interim Director of Children's has responded as set out below.

The Looking Glass Centre is an exemplary setting based at the Dudley Wood Centre. It is designed to support the development of practitioner knowledge in relation to specific aspects of the early years service.

It is intended that the focus will change termly. Initially the centre was launched with the book time book "Harry and the Dinosaurs" which was given to every reception age child in Dudley. Practitioners and headteachers from both maintained provision and private and voluntary sector settings attended the launch.

The spring term focus will be early writing across the curriculum. Settings are booking staff meetings at the centre with their EYA/Development Officer and these are proving very successful.

Network cluster meetings are planned to take place here termly. The Centre supports the Quarry Bank Stay and Play and Childminders from across Dudley. Family Learning, Libraries and Dudley Museums are developing excellent links. It is envisaged that the centre will impact on learning and development outcomes for young children in Dudley.

7 School Proposals for Thorns Campus

At the November meeting of the Committee, a ward member asked for clarification on the position with the Thorns Campus proposals in the light of the decision of the Cabinet on the Building Schools for the future programme. The Interim Director of Children's Services has responded as set out below.

The Thorns Community Learning Village campus project comprises of three phases and phase One is the relocation of Old Park Special School to the Thorns Community College/Thorns Primary School site. This is proceeding and funding has now been identified and committed. Phase 1 also includes enhancement works to vehicular and pedestrian access for the Campus and a multi-use games area. It is anticipated that the new provision for Old Park

Special School on the Campus will be completed September 2011.

Phases 2 and 3 comprise of the remodelling or rebuild of both Thorns Community College and Thorns Primary School to further enhance the Thorns Community Learning Village. BSF is intended to fund the Thorns Community College element and Primary Capital Programme for the Thorns Primary School; as later phases and timescales and extend of work is yet to be determined.

The three schools including Old Park Special School have already forged links with pupils and staff to form the basis of a Learning Village environment and the BSF decision either way will not affect the work already carried out on the Phase 1 project but will eventually enhance the Campus facilities that may be offered in the future.

8 Holly Hall School

At the last meeting of the Committee a ward member asked to be advised of the implications of the Cabinet's decision on Building Schools for the Future on the building scheme proposed for Holly Hall school. The Interim Director of Children's Services has responded as set out below.

Holly Hall School have commissioned external Consultants to prepare a master plan for the overall development of their school estate. This was completed September 2008 and has been split into three phases totalling approximately £10 million including new sports provision and teaching blocks. The decision on BSF means that the proposed works and alternative means of securing capital funding will be explored. This includes a recent submission for capital funding made to DCSF for expansion of canteen facilities and refurbishment of existing facilities totalling £540,000.

9 Hillcrest Community College and Northfield Road Primary School

At the meeting of the Committee held on 5th November, 2008, a ward member Asked to be advised of the implications of the Cabinet's decision on Building Schools for the Future on proposals for the upgrade of facilities at Hillcrest school And the transfer of Northfield Road school to the Hillcrest site. The Interim Director of Children's Services has responded as set out below.

The rebuilding of Northfield Road Primary School will be funded through Primary Capital Programme and this project is a priority for the authority. An option appraisal is due to be carried out shortly in accordance with Council policy to ascertain the most suitable location for the new buildings.

10 Old railway bridge at the corner of St Peter's Road and Windsor Crescent

The fencing of this structure safety reasons was requested by a ward member at the meeting of the Committee held on 5th November, 2008. The Head of Housing Management has responded that a site visit is being arranged with the Relevant directorate and the ward member to review action required.

Finance

11. This report has no direct financial implications.

Law

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

Equality Impact

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

Recommendations

15. That the information above be noted.



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AREA LIAISON OFFICER

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List of Background Papers

Minutes of meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee Working Group held on 5th November, 2008