

## **BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE**

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2009 at 7.00 pm  
at the Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor P Harley (in the Chair)  
Councillor Mrs Greenaway (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors D Blood, Mrs E Blood, Ms Boleyn, Foster, Mrs D Harley, Islam,  
Nottingham, Southall, Tyler and Mrs Wilson.

### **Officers**

The Director of the Urban Environment (Area Liaison Officer) Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) and Manager, Executive Support Team (all Directorate of the Urban Environment), the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit Development Manager (Chief Executives Directorate), Miss J Garwood, Area Team Leader (Early Years Youth and Education Services/Youth and Community Team) (Directorate of Children's Services), The Assistant Director of Housing Services, The Head of Community Renewal, (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Miss H Kidd, Solicitor and Miss K Fellows (both Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources)

together with Sergeant J Holmes, West Midlands Police, Mr C Newton and Ms J Winpenny, West Midlands Fire Service and four members of the public.

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### 48 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ms Harris, Mrs Jordan and Miller.

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### 49 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Ms Boleyn and Tyler declared a personal interest in Agenda Item Number 10 – Ward Issues to be raised by members of the Committee, in so far as a Ward issue relating to the resurfacing of the car park at the Wall Heath Community Centre as both had been nominated to represent the Council on that Community Association.

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### 50 **MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the joint meeting of this Committee and Stourbridge Area Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2009, and the meeting of the Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2009, be approved as correct records and signed.

PETITIONS

- (a) Councillor Ms Boleyn submitted a petition on behalf of the residents of the Charterfields Estate, Kingswinford. The petition was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.
- (b) Councillor Foster submitted a petition on behalf of the residents of Corbyns Close, Pensnett requesting that work in relation to resurfacing/repairs to the road be completed. The petition was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKING GROUP

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the progress to date of the Working Group and development of the Brierley Hill Area Committee Community renewal plan.

In presenting the report the Head of Community Renewal provided an update in relation to the City Strategy, Hawbush Community Gardens, Positive Activities for Young People monies and Street Surveys and Social Responsibility Operations, making particular reference to the first showcase event referred to in the report indicating that this had taken place at the Nine Locks Community Centre on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2009. Follow up visits to those who had not attended the event had resulted in seventy two residents within the Brierley Hill Area Committee area receiving help and support in order to obtain employment.

In relation to Hawbush Community Gardens it was reported that Future Jobs funding had been approved, and would be utilised to fund five Environmental Assistant posts.

It was stated that the Social Responsibility Scheme operations were ongoing, targeting under age drinking within the Highacres and Wall Heath areas and included the confiscation of alcohol from persons who it was considered would supply to young people.

It was reported that following funding obtained from Connexions in order to engage with the local community there had been a 40 to 45 percent decrease in anti-social behaviour within the Wall Heath area.

In relation to the Social Responsibility Scheme Operations an example of a seventeen and half year old who had not attended college for a period of twelve months was referred to. It was stated that following successful intervention the young person was now undertaking a full time apprenticeship with a local company.

It was reported that arising from on street surveys evidencing that young people wished to participate in sporting activities, funding in the sum of £6,000 had been obtained from Positive Activities for Young People would be utilised to provide facilities for those activities.

Arising from the presentation of the report concerns were raised relating to the impact of the current economic climate upon unemployment, the loss of signposting in order to provide help and guidance to young people to obtain employment or apprenticeships within the Brierley Hill Area Committee area.

In responding to concerns relating to the loss of the Youth Worker at the Nine Locks Community Centre the Area Team Leader (Early Years, Youth and Education Services/Youth and Community Team), reported that there were currently two Youth Workers temporarily covering the post at the Nine Locks Community Centre on Monday and Thursday evenings.

The Head of Community Renewal reported that 18 to 24 year olds had been targeted by Future Jobs funding which would be utilised to provide the five environmental posts referred to in her presentation of the report and that work was continuing by the Community Renewal Team in relation to problems with unemployment.

A Member suggested that the Head of Community Renewal contact the Senior Coach, Mr Dillon at the Lions Amateur Boxing Club, in order that he may provide assistance with the provision of further sporting activities that young people wished to participate in.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the progress of the Working Group and development of the Brierley Hill Area Committee Community Renewal Plan, be noted and that the work of the Area Community Renewal Officer in community localities be supported.

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#### PUBLIC FORUM

No issues were raised in relation to this Agenda item.

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#### OPERATION STAY SAFE

The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit Development Manager gave a verbal presentation on Operation Staysafe reporting that this was a joint project involving local Police Officers, the Connexions service and Dudley Council's Directorate of Children's Services. The aim of the Operation was the tackling of anti-social behaviour and reduction of the risk of harm to vulnerable youngsters particularly in respect of misuse of alcohol and staying out late on streets, thus reducing the possibility of young people placing themselves in

situations whereby a risk of harm may result or the potential for being a victim of crime.

It was reported that the Operation involved utilising Child Protection Legislation and the potential use of Police Protection Orders to remove young people judged by agreed criteria to be vulnerable to a designated place of safety. The agreed vulnerable criteria included people in possession of or having consumed alcohol, being judged to be too young to be out on the streets at night, those involved in anti-social behaviour, being in the company of known adult offenders or in possession of a firework.

It was stated that 41 young people had been transported to the safe centre since July, 2009. Two young people had been brought back to the centre but there had been no re-offending or young people being taken into care.

It was reported that there were onward referrals to the youth service and Positive Activities for Young People at Schools.

On feedback received from the north of the Borough it had been evidenced that young people were more apprehensive in relation to "Social Services" being involved and approaching their parents or guardians than their own contact with the Police. This had resulted in a reduction in anti-social behaviour by up to 90 percent in key hot-spot areas on Friday nights, which in turn had impacted upon the Police response times to other crimes.

It was further reported that positive feedback had also been received from parents and grandparents as a result of which consideration would be given to rolling out the Operation across the Borough in 2010.

Arising from the presentation, Members expressed their appreciation of the service provided by Operation Stay Safe.

#### RESOLVED

That the information reported on at the meeting and Members comments be noted.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on applications for funding from this year's Capital budget. The Area Liaison Officer, in informing the Committee of the recommendations made also referred to a deferred application made by Community Transport Dudley and a verbal presentation of two representatives of Making People Happy, who had been invited to attend the meeting of the Working Group following their successful application for a Capital Allocation. It was stated that particular reference was made to their work with vulnerable groups such as the elderly and the disabled and that the Capital Allocation had been utilised to purchase equipment in order to support that work including the purchase of a games console that assisted with learning, exercise and movement.

It was reported that Making People Happy were based at the Merry Hill Centre.

RESOLVED

1. That approval be given to the application received from Steppup Puppets in the sum of £4,286 to purchase various items of equipment including a sound system, microphones, projector and camcorder.
2. That, pending further investigations by the Director of the Urban Environment regarding the feasibility of utilising the Council's Fleet Management Disposal process, approval in principle only be given to the making of a grant of £3,000, that is the £1,000 requested from this Committee and a further £2,000 in the light of refusals made by two other area committees, to help purchase a second hand minibus to provide transport solutions on behalf of vulnerable groups in the Borough made by Community Transport Dudley.

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56                    MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE ON 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2009.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at its meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2009.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted.

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57                    WARD ISSUES

Written responses to the Ward issues raised by Councillor Mrs Jordan, in advance of the meeting were circulated to Members and the public present at the meeting prior to the start of the meeting. The questions received and responses given were as follows:-

- a) In relation to a request as to what was happening with the problems of boy racers at Fens Pool Avenue, as local residents were having problems.

Response – The Council made a Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting traffic except for access approximately 12 months ago to enable the Police to take enforcement action. Consideration was also given to putting in place a gate across the entrance to the Industrial Estate. However, this was never implemented because the longer term issue of maintenance would become the responsibility of the tenants on the Industrial Estate who would not support this.

Highways and parking issues were a local priority for Brierley Hill Police and managing 'boy racer' issues sat alongside. Inspector Bradbury had been in discussion with Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership who had produced a feasibility study for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour on business parks.

The Police hoped to look at opportunities to further engage with business parks and look for solutions to problems such as Fens Pool Avenue.

The Area Liaison Officer also indicated that there had been two reported incidents on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October and Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, one reported incident on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October and one on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September, with work continuing in order to deal with the problems.

- b) In relation to the street light outage in Fairgreen Gardens, the light had never been connected when the development was built and it was understood that Network Services were to be contacted however Councillor Mrs Jordan was still awaiting to hear whether this had taken place.

Response – Fairgreen Gardens was an unadopted road and street lighting was the responsibility of the Developer – Black Country Housing Association.

However as this had been a long standing issue, the Developer placed an Order with the Council in order to expedite the matter with Central Networks.

An electrical connection was made and the street lighting column was now working.

- c) Councillor Mrs D Harley thanked the Area Liaison Officer for the hard work in order that the resurfacing work at Wall Heath Community Centre could be dealt with and requested whether it would be possible for the Council to deal with the poor lighting outside the Centre.

Response – In order for the resurfacing work to be completed it will need approval to utilise Section 106 planning monies. The ward members will be consulted shortly to gain their approval following which the proposal will need to be signed off by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture. It was proposed that the resurfacing work would also encompass drainage work and white line painting on the car park.

In responding to a question from Councillor Tyler it was confirmed that subject to the above, Section 106 monies would finance work to both the driveway and the car park at the Wall Heath Community Centre.

## RESOLVED

That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to arrange for the various organisations in the location of the Wall Heath Community Centre to be contacted so as to advise them in relation to making an application for a capital allocation for initial consideration by this Committee's Capital Allocation Working Group in order to finance the replacement of the poor lighting.

- d) Councillor Islam thanked officers for improvements/repairs that had been carried out to the two wooden benches situated by the Brier Flower in the vicinity of High Street/Bank Street, Brierley Hill.

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### 58 CLOSING REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman wished all Members of the Committee, all Officers and members of the public a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. He thanked the catering staff at the Brier School for the high standard of buffets provided at Area Committees.

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### 59 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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### 60 DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The dates and venues of future meetings of the Area Committee were received and noted.

The meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.

CHAIRMAN