

**DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE – 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2006**

**REPORT OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA LIAISON OFFICER**

**MATTERS RAISED AT THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2006 Brierley Hill Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Council.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The Council provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to a range of services. 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, a progress report is attached.

**FINANCE**

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

**LAW**

6. Provisions relating to Highways including trees thereon are contained in the Highways Act 1980.
7. Provisions relating to the Council's Housing stock are contained in the Housing Act 1985.
8. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

## **EQUALITY IMPACT**

9. This report is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy. There is no direct effect on children or young people.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

10. The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.



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Brierley Hill Area Committee Liaison Officer

Contact Officer: John Millar  
Telephone: 01384 814150  
Email: [john.millar@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:john.millar@dudley.gov.uk)

### **List of Background Papers**

See progress report attached

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**BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE – 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2006**

## **REPORT OF THE AREA LIAISON OFFICER**

### **PUBLIC FORUM ISSUES**

#### **1. PARKING IN THE VICINITY OF RUSSELLS HALL HOSPITAL**

##### **ISSUE**

The proposals to introduce a Prohibition of Waiting Order on certain streets around Russells Hall Hospital will lead to the displacement of vehicles on to other roads.

##### **RESPONSE**

This matter was formally covered within the main body of the report submitted to Area Committee under agenda item 5. In addition, the Area Liaison Officer commented that it will always be difficult to know just how far people will be prepared to park away from the hospital and then walk rather than pay to use the car parking facilities.

The streets most seriously affected by obstructive parking are Bushey Fields Road, Kingswinford Road, Pensnett High Street, Pensnett Road and the Albert Street/Tennyson Street residential area. The proposals that went out to consultation for the introduction of double yellow lines initially focussed on these streets but also included other areas such as Vicarage Road and Elgar Crescent.

Based on the replies from the consultation exercise (that included the issue raised in the public forum), the modified proposals for a reduced scheme concerned restricting the introduction of double yellow lines to those streets where the measures would be welcomed.

This does not prevent consideration being given to further measures at some point in the future. However, the present approach will allow unopposed Prohibition Orders to be progressed, will improve traffic flows, and reduce incidents of parking nuisance on some of the main highway networks in the immediate vicinity of the Russells Hall Hospital.

The effectiveness of these measures can also be monitored as a means identifying whether the current proposals would need to be extended further.

#### **2. KINGSWINFORD ROAD ` SERVICE ROAD`**

##### **ISSUE**

Questioning the status of the 'Service Road' alongside Kingswinford Road, Russells Hall. If it is a Class A road, can residents reverse on to this road from their driveways?

##### **RESPONSE**

Kingswinford Road forms that part of the A4101 that runs between the roundabout at its junctions with Pensnett Road/High Street and the roundabout at its junctions with the Dudley Southern By-Pass/Stourbridge Road/Scotts Green Close.

This road was formerly a 2 lane carriageway with residential properties on the southern side and open land on the northern side. Access to the properties was therefore, previously served directly from Kingswinford Road.

However, as part of the highway improvement scheme to convert Kingswinford Road into a 2 lane dual carriageway in 2003, the scheme also provided for the inclusion of an adjoining

'Service Road' which would then provide access to the existing properties by effectively separating residential traffic from the main traffic flows.

The layout of the dual carriageway and adjoining 'Service Road' was constructed within the existing highway limits at that time and the adjoining open space on the northern side of the existing road. The highway limits adjoining the residential properties on the southern side of the existing road were not affected.

Whereas the extended highway limits arising from the construction of the dual carriageway now also form part of the A4101, no section of the former road layout, which now includes the new 'Service Road', was de-classified so that this is still, technically, part of the A4101.

Section 177 of the Highway Code states 'Do not reverse from a side road into a main road. When using a driveway, reverse in and drive out if you can'.

Clearly, reversing onto a Class A road would fall into the category of a main road and should be avoided if at all possible. However, whilst it would not be considered very good practice, it would not in itself be illegal.

The position at Kingswinford Road is however, somewhat of an anomaly and, with the 'Service Road' effectively being separate from the main traffic flows, there clearly needs to be an appreciation that this is not the same situation as reversing onto a main road.

In summary therefore, provided that the other general guidelines outlined in the Highway Code about good practice when reversing are observed, the situation at Kingswinford Road should not give any particular cause for concern for residents using the Service Road in order to gain access or egress to and from their properties.

### **3. VISIBILITY ALONG KINGSWINFORD ROAD**

#### **ISSUE**

That visibility along Kingswinford Road is obstructed

#### **RESPONSE**

It is probably easier to consider this matter in sections separating the main dual carriageway from the Service Road, in that:

- i) The vertical and horizontal alignment of the dual carriageway section of Kingswinford Road complies with the relevant design guidelines and is considered to be satisfactory with good forward visibility.

Indeed, with no on-street parking on the dual carriageway, this position is not diminished in the same way as may be the case with other streets where on-street parking can often reduce visibility. The present situation does therefore, probably represent a position that is as good as it is possible to achieve.

- ii) There are 3 points of access into the Service Road from Kingswinford Road but, only 2 points of egress from the Service Road onto Kingswinford Road. However, having regard to the recommended guidelines for visibility splays, there would not appear to be any undue concerns at the access or egress points.
- iii) The vertical and horizontal alignment of the Service Road complies with the relevant design guidelines and is considered to be satisfactory.

Parts of the Service Road do however, attract a considerable volume of on-street parking, partly due to residents and partly, it is presumed, due to parking by visitors to the nearby Russells Hall Hospital.

Any on-street parking on the Service Road automatically reduces the available road width to such an extent that two vehicles are unable to pass without one having to give way to the other and this scenario is clearly made worse with long lines of parked vehicles which then also have an impact on the forward visibility that is available for drivers.

The removal of on-street parking along the Service Road would address this problem but, having regard to some residents having no off-street parking facilities, the relatively small number of times that it creates problems and the views expressed during the public consultation exercise which were in opposition to the introduction of a Prohibition of Waiting Order, it is likely that this approach would not be welcomed and it would also inconvenience some of the people that it was trying to help.

Therefore, given that the overall position regarding the introduction of Prohibition of Waiting Orders in the area will not only be monitored in order to assess their effectiveness in dealing with the on-street parking issues on some of the other nearby streets but, also assess the on-going position in the area generally, it is proposed that the current position along the Service Road be noted and reviewed accordingly at that time.

#### **4. WILLOW RISE, WITHYMOOR**

##### **ISSUE**

Nuisance from motorcycles along footpaths off Willow Rise, Withymoor

##### **RESPONSE**

Two residents handed in Question Slips regarding motorcycling nuisance on the footpaths at Willow Rise, Withymoor (near to the Sainsbury's Superstore).

However, on further investigation, it was found that Willow Rise fell inside the Amblecote Ward, which comes under the Stourbridge Area Committee and not the Brierley Hill Area Committee.

Sergeant Madden, who is based at the Brierley Hill Police Station but, who also attend the Area Committee meeting did speak to one of the residents at the end and advised that Willow Drive also fell outside her area and that this particular site came under Stourbridge Police Station.

The Area Liaison Officer for this Area Committee has therefore, subsequently referred this matter to the Stourbridge Area Committee for their attention.

## **5. LITTER**

### **ISSUE**

Concern raised about the accumulation of litter on land between Vicarage Road and Elgar Crescent, Pensnett

### **RESPONSE**

The area at the top of the lane at the junction with Elgar Crescent including the War Memorial is included in the daily street cleaning schedule carried out Monday through to Saturday by DUE's Street Care team. A site inspection arranged following Area Committee revealed no major accumulation of litter. However, an amount of litter had become trapped in an area of enclosed land that forms part of the Barrow Hill Nature Reserve. A litter pick has been undertaken and periodic inspections will be carried out in the future.

## **WARD MEMBER ISSUE**

## **6. CHAPEL STREET HOUSING OFFICE**

### **ISSUE**

Withdrawal of cash handling facilities Chapel Street Housing Office

### **RESPONSE**

The cash receipting facility was withdrawn from Chapel Street Local Housing Office at the beginning of September, because a cash audit and subsequent security review had revealed serious deficiencies in terms of cash security and staff safety.

Concern was raised at the Area Committee meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> September over the implications of the removal of this service and therefore the possible withdrawal of the other services from the office in the future. The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services confirms that there are currently no plans to close the office to the public. Cash receipting was a very minor element of the services provided there.

Concerns were also raised over the elderly residents not being able to make payments in the office. The vast majority of elderly residents on the estate live in the four High Rise Blocks near to Brierley Hill Town Centre, namely Brickiln Court, Brier Court, Chapel Court and Dean Court, 192 flats in total.

During the 2 months prior to the removal of the cash receipting facility, 23 residents from the four blocks listed above, made use of these facilities. All residents who made payments at the office during August have been sent a letter explaining all of the various methods of payment available, and all have been offered a visit from a housing manager should they require more information or help with arranging an alternative way of paying.