

Central Dudley Area Committee – 22nd January 2008

Report Of The Director Of The Urban Environment

**Urban Environment - Matters Raised At The
Central Dudley Area Committee - 7th November 2007**

Purpose Of Report

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 7th November 2007 Central Dudley Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Background

2. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities. This diverse range of technical services focus on regenerating the Borough, maintaining our environment to high standards, protecting our communities and promoting leisure and other community services for all.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to matters such as traffic management, leisure and recreation, regeneration and new development. 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, progress reports are included as an appendix and the proposal resulting from the update is set out at the end of each paragraph.

Finance

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

Law

6. Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to provide recreational facilities in its area.
7. The Council is empowered to improve highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.
8. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do anything that is likely to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.

9. Traffic signs are provided under powers contained in Section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to regulations made by the Secretary of State for Transport.
10. Guardrails may be provided under Section 66 of the Highways Act 1990.
11. Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided under powers contained in Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to Regulations made by the Secretary of State.
12. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
13. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
14. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its area to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
15. Part IX of the Highways Act 1980 contains provisions relating to the planting, care and control of trees in or on land adjoining the highways.
16. In the care and maintenance of its trees, the Council will owe the normal duty of care under the common law principles of nuisance and negligence.
17. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.

Equality Impact

18. The proposals take into account the Council's equal opportunities policies. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a diverse range of services that affect all sections of the community.

Recommendation

19. That the proposals contained in Appendix 1 attached be noted.



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Director of the Urban Environment

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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

1. Action Notes from 7th November 2007 Committee

Appendix 1

DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE HELD 7TH NOVEMBER 2007

1. NEW ROWLEY ROAD, CENTRAL RESERVATION

Background: Councillor Ali requested a meeting between himself and the relevant officers to discuss the installation of a central reservation on New Rowley Road, in order to assist pedestrians in crossing the road safely.

Comments: DUE Officers will contact Councillor Ali to arrange a site meeting, the outcome of which will be reported back.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

2. CINDER BANK TRAFFIC

Background: Councillor Rahman again expressed concern regarding traffic in Cinder Bank. He commented that the current congestion was leading to dangerous air pollution and requested that the Council undertake work to assess the potential resulting damage to the health of local residents.

Comments: The traffic situation with Cinder Bank is ongoing and proposals are currently being evaluated by consultants. DUE officers will report back to a future Central Dudley Area Committee once the results are received.

With regard to concerns related to air quality, DUE Officers have confirmed that the concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO_x) in the air in Netherton is still being monitored in 13 different locations. The results demonstrate that the concentrations of NO_x are unsatisfactory as they currently breach the National UK objective at 7 of the monitored locations.

The majority of the NO_x has been confirmed as arising from vehicle exhausts. At Cabinet in September 2007 it was agreed that a whole Borough Air Quality Management Order should be declared in response to the poor air quality in several areas of the Borough. The order to confirm the declaration is being prepared by Dudley MBC Legal Services.

Once the order for a Borough AQMA has been made and action plan should be proposed to combat the poor air quality, this will include action in Netherton. The majority of the nitrogen dioxide is from road traffic exhausts, therefore the assistance of Highways Engineers will be sought for suggestions to reduce congestion and ease traffic flow through Netherton which will reduce emissions of pollutants to air and improve air quality.

It will be necessary to aim to improve air quality so that it complies with the Government's national objectives at a majority of monitoring locations, however there are physical and fiscal limitations to the amount of work that can be carried out to

improve air quality. A meeting has been scheduled with Ian Pearson MP and local residents again on 25th January 2008 to discuss action on traffic to improve air quality. Area Committee will be informed of any progress made.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

3. **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN - NETHERTON**

Background: Councillor Rahman requested that a traffic management plan be produced for the Netherton area. He commented that the town had a number of traffic problems and requested that a plan be put in place to establish a schedule of works which could be followed to ensure that the problems are addressed.

Comments: Highway engineers will work closely with Environmental Protection Officers to help address identified congestion and air quality issues in Netherton.

The old Netherton bypass alignment has long since been abandoned and redeveloped. Any contemporary scheme would be prohibitively expensive and unlikely to attract Government funding.

A number of smaller schemes are now being considered and feasibility work is being undertaken.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

4. **FOUR WINDS ROAD/GADS GREEN - LITTER**

Background: Councillor J Davies requested that the Council take action to clear up litter at the junction of Four Winds Road and Gads Green. He reported that he has received complaints from residents that litter has accumulated in that area and is covering roads and the pavement.

Comments: The Street Cleansing Team cleared up the area on the 19th November 2007.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

5. **WINDSOR CRESCENT - SPEEDING**

Background: Councillor J Davies requested that speed bumps be installed in Windsor Crescent as cars are currently entering the road at dangerous speeds when leaving the traffic island.

Comments: Speeding issues are strictly an enforcement matter for the Police Authority and the Council currently carries out complementary traffic calming measures, such as the introduction of speed humps, only as part of a local safety scheme where the emphasis is very much related to a reduction in the recorded number of personal injury accidents.

A review of the accident records for Windsor Crescent shows that there have been 2 personal injury accidents recorded during the course of the last 3 year review period although it appears that since these resulted from a loss of control whilst turning and a driver being dazzled by the sun whilst emerging from a side road, it is unlikely that either of these accidents would have been avoided if traffic calming measures had already been in place.

Therefore, given the relatively low number of recorded incidents and the nature of the accidents that have occurred, a local safety scheme cannot be justified or recommend along Windsor Crescent and therefore this enquiry will not be progressed further at this time.

Being mindful of the concerns raised DUE Traffic Engineers will arrange to:

1. Advise the Police about the speeding issues that have been raised and seek their support in taking any action they deem to be appropriate
2. Erect temporary 30 mph 'Kill Your Speed' signs as a reminder to motorists of the prevailing speed limit and thereby seek to encourage a more responsible driving behaviour.
3. Add Windsor Crescent to the list of sites to be considered for possible inclusion in a future programme of works as this will enable the position to be reviewed again at a later date and thereby take into account any changes in the current position.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

6. BUFFERY ROAD - SPEED CAMERAS

Background: Councillor J Davies requested that speed cameras be installed in Buffery Road to improve safety and prevent accidents.

Comments: Until the 31st March 2007, the identification and implementation of permanent speed camera sites came under the control and management of the 'West Midlands Casualty Reduction Partnership' which established a series of quite specific criteria for identifying potentially suitable sites where the introduction of permanent speed cameras may be appropriate for further consideration.

These criteria still form the basis of current assessments and in addition to the actual speed of traffic using the road, some of the other important elements taken into consideration relate to the current recorded personal injury accident record and whether there are any alternative measures that could be introduced to obviate the need for speed cameras.

DUE Traffic Engineers advise that a recent investigation into the recorded personal injury accidents along Buffery Road during the last 3 year review period shows that it does not meet the current speed camera criteria and that in addition to this point, it should also be remembered that as recently as February this year, the Council did implement measures as part of a local safety scheme at the junction of Buffery

Road/Oakham Road/New Rowley Road as well as generally along the length of Buffery Road itself.

Two permanent mobile speed camera sites and associated signage have previously been established along Buffery Road in order to assist the local divisional police carry out periodic enforcement action with the use of the in-car speed camera equipment that was also purchased by this Council.

The site in the vicinity of Smith Street may not be operational at the present time as the detector loops in the road were damaged during resurfacing works but, the site in the vicinity of School Drive is active and this also has a specially constructed hard standing so that the Police can park off road. Alternatively, the use of the in-car camera equipment does also have the capability of being even more flexible in that it can, in conjunction with the use of pneumatic rubber tubes being laid across the road, be deployed and used at any other chosen location.

The introduction of a permanent speed camera along Buffery Road is unlikely at this time but, the situation at Buffery Road will be kept under review so that any further action can be taken if it is felt to be appropriate.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

7. SPRING ROAD, ENTRANCE TO NETHERTON PARK - DOG FOULING

Background: Councillor J Martin expressed concern regarding dog fouling at the Spring Road entrance to Netherton Park. He requested that the Park Warden pay particular attention to this area in order to keep it clean.

Comments: The fouling outside the park was cleared on the 19th November 2007.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

8. BLACKBROOK ROAD - REMOVAL OF HYPODERMIC NEEDLES

Background: Councillor J Martin expressed concern regarding the length of time it took for hypodermic needles found at the rear of Hillcrest School in Blackbrook Road to be removed. He stated that although he had reported the finding of the needles as soon as he became aware of them, they were not removed for two days. He questioned whether this was the usual amount of time required to remove dangerous items and requested a response explaining the delay.

Comments: Street Cleansing officers have confirmed that the removal of hypodermic needles is treated as an emergency in every case and are collected as soon as any report is received. To avoid any possible delay, the finding of disregarded hypodermic needles should be reported directly to Dudley Council Plus on 01384 812345.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.