

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Monday 28th March 2011
at the Ellowes Hall School, Stickley Lane,
Lower Gornal, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Caunt (Chairman)
Councillor Evans (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Mrs. Ameson, G Davies, Mottram, Mrs Ridley, Ryder, Simms,
Stanley, Mrs. Westwood and Wright; Miss G Healey

OFFICERS

The Director of Corporate Resources (as Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director Culture and Leisure and the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Area Team Leader - Early Years and Youth Education (Directorate of Children's Services) and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Corporate Resources)

IN ATTENDANCE

Inspector R. Jones (West Midlands Police), Mr C Wood and Miss J Winpenny (West Midlands Fire Service), together with 12 members of the public.

75 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Mrs Millward.

76 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Member declared a personal or prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of any matters to be discussed.

77 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd February, 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed.

78 PETITIONS

It was reported that no petitions had been received since the last meeting.

The following petition was submitted:

By Councillor Simms, on behalf of local residents, requesting consideration be given to the reinstatement of the 583 bus route, to its original route to serve Vicarage Road West and provide the estate's residents, particularly the elderly, with the service they had come to rely on.

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YOUTH ISSUES

A paper by the Area Team Leader indicating the projects and activities involving young people in the area was circulated at the meeting, relating in particular to:

- Plans for the Easter holiday provision in three Youth Centres across the area, in conjunction with the detached team.
- Activities being offered at Coseley Youth Centre, including the recently opened café on Wednesday afternoons, which welcomed a range of age groups to attend. The café was a non profit making facility working in partnership with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's), the Police and the Church.
- The varied activities undertaken by the Lower Gornal Youth Academy.
- The successful programme of events carried out at Sedgley Youth Centre.
- The work proposed by detached youth workers at the Hub on Silver Jubilee Park for the lighter nights during the better weather.

In response to comments from Ward Members regarding the lack of consultation prior to the closure of the Sedgley Youth Centre, the Area Team Leader advised that the decision to close the Youth Centre was taken, following concerns for the safety of staff which did not allow time for consultation.

The Area Team Leader advised that she would forward the request to the Principal Youth Officer, for Ward Members to be consulted should the need arise to close the Youth Centre in future.

Miss Heeley reported on the activities of the young people of the North Dudley Area, including the four recently elected members of the United Kingdom Youth Parliament. She also introduced another young person, Danielle Lewis, who had been nominated by the Youth forum to replace herself as a co-opted Member of the Committee for the next Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

That the information presented to the meeting be noted.

TRANSPORT ISSUES

A briefing note had been circulated to Members, from Mrs. B. Coombes, Area Manager (Black Country) CENTRO, who was unable to attend the meeting, informing in particular on:

- The date of the next meeting of the Dudley Transport Users Forum would be 13th April at 6.00 p.m. at the Council House, 1 Priory Road, Dudley. A website address had been included, to enable further information to be sought.
- Investigations into the Park and Ride Scheme at Coseley station were taking place to ascertain whether or not a feasible project would be a possibility in the future.
- Concerns expressed at the previous meeting of the Committee, regarding services 582 and 544, had been passed on to the service operator, National Express West Midlands. When a response was received this would be forwarded to Councillor Mottram.

Members of the Committee asked that the representative of CENTRO be advised of the following concerns:

- a) The petition referred to in Minute No. 78 above.
- b) The concerns at the reduction in the number of hours that Coseley station was manned, and the station master's replacement with a machine.
- c) Concerns for the safety of female travellers arriving at the station after dark, in the absence of a station master.
- d) The lack of consultation in relation to the withdrawal of the 583 bus route.

RESOLV ED

That the concerns referred to in paragraphs a) to d) above, including the Petition submitted, be forwarded to the Area Manager (Black Country) Centro for consideration and a response.

POLICE ISSUES

Inspector R Jones updated the Committee on Police issues pertinent to the North Dudley Area since the previous meeting of the Committee relating in particular to:

- The recently approved extension to the six month Dispersal Order in Sedgley, which would run until 12th September 2011, and which gave the Police powers to disperse groups comprising more than two youths, suspected of anti social behaviour.

- The extension to the Section 30 Alcohol Free Zone which would cover the Lower Gornal area. Signage for the project was in the process of being prepared.
- Powers to enable the Police to return unescorted under 16 year olds to their home address.

Inspector Jones advised that the Police would liaise with the two local secondary schools and Trading Standards Officers, to try to address nuisance and annoyance to local residents arising from anti social behaviour activities by young people, following end of term celebrations in May. The Police would also work with local licensees to discourage the sale of alcohol to under age drinkers.

Inspector Jones also confirmed that Ladies Walk, the Ridgeway and Catholic Lane were included in the extended Section 30 Alcohol Free Zone.

RESOLVED

That the information presented to the meeting be noted.

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FIRE ISSUES

Mr Chris Wood reported orally on current issues applicable to the fire service relating in particular to:

- The decrease in arson in dwellings, arson in vehicles and reported false alarms.
- An increase in incidents of arson caused by rubbish in the Coseley East Ward, which was being addressed by working with Partners to try to ensure a safer community.

RESOLVED

That the information presented to the meeting be noted.

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PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public, unable to attend the meeting, requested consideration be given to making Chapel Walk, Lower Gornal one way, since the change in prioritisation of the traffic lights on Bull Street was causing Chapel Walk to be used as a rat run and speeding cars were causing a nuisance to residents in this very narrow street.

The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that this matter had been investigated ten years ago and had not been supported by the local community. At the request of Ward Members, he undertook to consult with local residents again on this matter.

DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on standing authorisations and procedures for distributing capital funds delegated to this area committee and on the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group on five applications for funding, which had been considered by the Capital Allocations Working Group. The report also stated the level of unspent capital monies by Ward.

In presenting the report, the Area Liaison Officer referred to two applications received since the report had been circulated namely:

- a) From the Upper Gornal Fun Day Committee for £250 for the purchase of a photocopier, a printer, a shredder and a cupboard to store stationery. The need for the equipment referred to came as a result of the cessation of administration services previously undertaken for the Committee by the Community Renewal Team services. The Committee had indicated that other voluntary groups would be able to have access to the equipment, should they so wish.
- b) From Tipton Road Children's Home for £7,000 towards the cost of a suitably adapted coach from the Sunshine Variety Club to transport young people in wheelchairs and with physical disabilities on activities and holidays, the cost of the vehicle being £12,000. Members of the Committee had indicated their support for this application subject to confirmation from the Tipton Road Centre that the vehicle, when purchased, would be added to the Council's fleet list in order to ensure that the vehicle was suitably maintained and insured in future years.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the standing authorisations/procedures for considering capital allocations, as set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the report submitted, with particular reference to the consideration of applications in the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee, be confirmed.
- (2) That the application by Community Renewal Services for £1,824.80 to enable improvements to the access to the recreation field for the Gornal Community Fun Day be approved.
- (3) That the application by Friends of Sedgley Beacon for office equipment be approved in the sum of £2,373.
- (4) That the application by Redhall Primary School for £4,725 for the purchase and installation of plant and flower tubs for the school to enable young people to care for the environment be approved.

- (5) That the application by Coseley Athletic Cricket Club for the remaining £600 towards an application previously granted for £600 for the purchase of a portable cricket net be refused, until such time as the group is able to provide evidence of an established business plan and timetable of events indicating the schools within the North Dudley Area being worked with.
 - (6) That the application by the Gornal Athletic Football Club for £3,000 to replace items stolen in a recent burglary be approved, subject to confirmation by the Club that the equipment, when purchased, be insured and that a copy of the relevant insurance certificate be sent to the Committee on an annual basis.
 - (7) That the application by Tipton Road Children's Home for £7,000 towards the purchase of a Sunshine Variety Club vehicle be approved.
 - (8) That the application by the Gornal Fun Day Committee for items of equipment totalling £250 be approved.
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WARD ISSUES

1. Councillor Evans requested that the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, give consideration to an application, to be submitted in the near future, by the Area Team Leader - Early Years and Youth Education (Directorate of Children's Services) for £2,000 towards the purchase and installation of CCTV cameras at Sedgley Youth Centre.
2. Councillor Simms requested that rubbish on land adjacent to a Fish and Chip shop in the Upper Gornal area be cleared.

In response, a Member of the Committee advised that the land was privately owned and clearing of the rubbish was a matter for the land owner rather than the Council, but he would arrange for Officers to discuss the concerns with the land owner.

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SELECT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the dates of meetings of the Select Committees in the new municipal year be notified when determined at Annual Council on 19th May 2011.

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DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That the dates and venues of meetings of the Committee in the new municipal year be notified when determined at Annual Council on 19th May 2011.

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm.

CHAIRMAN