

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Thursday, 7th December, 2006 at 7.00 p.m.
at the Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Bank Street, Brierley Hill

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Wilson (Chairman)
Councillor Tyler (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Blood, Ms Boleyn, Ms Foster, Harley, Ms Harris, Islam, Mrs Jordan, Miller, Nottingham, Southall and Tomkinson.

Officers

Mr J Millar, (Director of the Urban Environment, as Area Liaison Officer), Mr N Ford (Manager of Executive Support Team), Mr A Webb (Head of Sport and Recreation) and Mr I Withey (Principal Engineer – Traffic and Transportation) – all Directorate of the Urban Environment, Ms S Evans (Area Housing Manager, Brierley Hill), Mr T Sidaway (Priority Neighbourhood Manager, Brierley Hill), and Ms Kidd and Mr Sanders (both Directorate of Law and Property)

In attendance

Five members of the public and twelve members of the Brierley Hill Youth Forum

36

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Burt and Mrs Pearce.

37

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Blood declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in agenda item number 9 (Capital Allocations) in so far as the item related to the application by Grounds Force at Belle View Primary School in view of his membership of Grounds Force.

Councillor Ms Harris, Mr Millar and Mr Sanders declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in so far as the item related to the application by the Bowls Club of Dudley MBC Employees Club, in view of their membership of the Employees Club.

Councillor Mrs Wilson declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct, in respect of agenda item number 10 (Matters raised at the Brierley Hill Area Committee on 28th September, 2006) in so far as the item related to the withdrawal of the cash collection facility at Chapel Street flats and in relation to agenda item number 4 (Receipt of Petitions) (see minute 39 below) regarding the petition received calling for the reinstatement of the cash office at Chapel Street flats, both declarations made in view of her residency at Chapel Street flats.

38 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th September 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed.

39 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

A petition from tenants and residents of Brickiln Court, Chapel Court and Dean Court, on the Chapel Street Estate, calling for the immediate reinstatement of the cash collection facility removed from the Chapel Street Housing Estate Office was submitted and referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services for consideration and attention.

40 YOUTH ISSUES

(A) BRIERLEY HILL YOUTH FORUM

An oral presentation was given by members of the Brierley Hill Youth Forum on the background and aims of the Forum, its history since its formation some 18 months previously, its composition and membership and the various projects with which it had been involved. These had included consultations in respect of issues relating to Hawbush Community Gardens and representatives of the Forum had attended every community meeting to put across young people's ideas.

The Forum aimed generally to raise the profile of young people in Brierley Hill through consultation events and activity programmes and, in respect of the later, particular reference was made in the presentation to bids for financial support made to the Dudley Play Strategy for the purpose of a multi use games area in Chapel Street. The bid had been put through to the second stage of bidding and had been classed as the best project being put forward. The Forum had also made bids to the Youth Opportunities Fund for two projects, these being to see a pantomime and to go skiing at the Snow Dome. The outcome had been that 15 young people were going to the Snow Dome in February 2007.

Other initiatives with which the Forum were engaged were indicated in the presentation.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the members of the Brierley Hill Youth Forum in attendance be thanked for their presentation and congratulated on their work within the community.
- (2) That arrangements be made for a presentation to be made to the Committee by the Brierley Hill Community Forum
- (3) That a copy of the presentation be circulated to all members of the Committee.

(B) BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE (YOUNG PEOPLES WORKING GROUP)

Reference was made to the fact this Working Group had not met in the current municipal year.

RESOLVED

That this matter be referred to the Area Liaison Officer for consideration and report.

A local resident asked whether provision had been made for a school and a doctor's surgery on the development at the former Wordsley Hospital site. The questioner indicated that the original outline plans had included a shop, a school and health provision. It was agreed that the issue be referred to the Dudley Primary Care Trust for a response and that their reply be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

A question was asked alleging that Brierley Hill had become the most unlawful and dirtiest town in the West Midlands and seeking a response as to the cause.

In relation to the environmental health aspects, the Area Liaison Officer, in his capacity as Director of the Urban Environment, indicated that street cleansing was being increased, together with enforcement activity against the dropping of litter. In addition, the Council was looking at new powers, which, if adopted, would empower Environmental Health and Community Police officers to issue on the spot fines for litter dropping. The Council was also continuing to reach the public by way of education in schools and other agencies and additional resources for street cleansing were being provided.

In relation to traffic, the Area Liaison Officer reported on the decision of the Council to assume responsibility for traffic enforcement. As a result of this, additional traffic wardens would be engaged within a period of 18 months and thus the problem of unlawful parking should reduce.

On the issue of unlawfulness, in the absence of a police officer at the meeting, the Area Liaison Officer was unable to reply but indicated that the Principal Engineer (Traffic and Transportation) would write to the police on the general issue raised and report the response to a future meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the questions asked and the responses given be received and noted.
- (2) That the Police Community Support Officers for Brierley Hill be requested to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss progress on matters relating to the community policing of Brierley Hill

SELECT COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted in response to a request by the Committee on the possible appointment of co-opted members to Select Committees.

The report indicated that co-option had been considered at a meeting of Select Committee Chairmen on 26th October 2006.

In view of the fact that the Select Committee on Children's Services already had a number of co-optees and that every Select Committee had the power to invite any person it wished to address the Committee, the Select Committee Chairmen had considered co-option unnecessary and had asked that this view be reported back to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the view of Select Committee Chairs be noted and that no further action be taken.

43

APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on applications received in respect of land and property owned by the Council.

Regarding the land referred to at item 8(b) on the agenda, a letter from Dreamland Bedding Centre, which had been circulated to Members by e-mail the previous day and was now tabled at the meeting, expressing concern at the recommendation to refuse their application to purchase the land, was considered. The letter had also made the point that the clearance of the land would avert the problems that had led them to make their application to purchase it.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised to refuse the application sale of the whole corner plot of the land adjacent to 5 Chestnut Grove, Kingswinford, but to approve the sale of the 4 metre strip of land at that location, shown hatched on the plan attached to the report now submitted, to the owner of 5 Chestnut Grove, Kingswinford, for car parking and garden purposes, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
 - (2)(a) That the Cabinet Member for Law and Property be advised that as the site is likely to be affected by Midlands Metro and its disposal at this time would be premature, the application by Dreamland Bedding Limited to purchase or lease the adjacent Council owned land to the rear of their property, as shown on the plan attached to the report now submitted, be refused.
 - (b) That the Director of the Urban Environment be asked to arrange for the immediate clearance of the site and for the continued tidying of the site to be effected through its being placed on a regular maintenance schedule.
 - (c) That in respect of the other environmental aspects of concern to the applicants, including rodent control, the Director of the Urban Environment be asked to arrange for the necessary measures to be taken immediately to eradicate any vermin and for the site to be placed on a regular rodent control schedule.
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CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of applications for funding from the Capital Allocations budget of the Committee for 2006/2007.

At the meeting of the Brierley Hill Area Committee (Capital Allocations) Working Group held immediately prior to the meeting, a supplementary briefing report had been circulated, which contained details of the applications referred to in the report now submitted and also details of further applications received after the report had been prepared. The recommendations of the Working Group were now reported to the Committee orally by the Area Liaison Officer.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application by the Bowls Club of the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Employees' Club for a capital allocation of £2,000 for the renovation of the pavilion and the provision of access for disabled, be approved.
- (2) That the application made by the Dudley Fields Tenants and Residents Association for a capital allocation of £6,000 for a project to resurface the main pathway and improve access and parking on the Fens Pool Nature Reserve, the sum requested representing 10% part funding, thereby allowing the Association to draw down approximately £60,000 funding via the Landfill Tax Claiming Scheme, be approved
- (3) That a capital allocation of £550 be made to Home Start for the purchase of office furniture and equipment and that it be suggested to Home Start that they apply to the Central Dudley Area Committee for the residue of the sum of £1,100 requested for this purpose.
- (4) That the application for a capital allocation of £531 made by the Dudley Stroke Association for the purchase of a computer and printer be approved.

- (5) That, in respect of the application made by Ground Force at Belle Vue Primary School, a capital allocation in the full sum of £3,900 requested be not made but that a capital allocation in the net sum of £2,400, utilising the residue of £538 from a capital allocation made previously to the organisation for the repair and renovation of the school's existing sculptures, be approved for the following items:
- purchase of tools, including a wacker plate
 - visitor seating
 - replacement of a pump from a water feature
 - urgent repairs to one existing sculpture (the whale's tail)
 - treatment of wooden sculptures
- (6) That the application made by the Black Country Boating Festival for a capital allocation be deferred, pending the receipt of further information regarding the address and constitution of the organisers.
- (7) That the application made by St Paul's Community and Learning Centre (Lunch Club) for a capital allocation of £1,900 for the purchase of various items of equipment and furniture, including a microwave oven, hot plate, tables, chairs and various kitchen utensils be approved and that, should the Centre be able to purchase the equipment and furniture for a lesser amount, they be authorised to expend the residue on additional items of a similar nature.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted in response to issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 28 September 2006.

In relation to the site of the former Wordsley Institute, Ms Kidd reported on progress with the litigation currently taking place and stated that the indications were that settlement was close.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and noted, together with the oral update on the situation with regard to the site of the former Wordsley Institute.

46

ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

- (1) Councillor Ms Harris requested a report to be made to the Committee on the current situation with regard to the Brierley Hill Parallel Route and the Brierley Hill Regeneration Action Plan, in the context of the Brierley Hill Strategy Planning document.
 - (2) Councillor Ms Harris reported on the formation of the Merry Hill Community Safety Forum, the first meeting of which would be held at the ATS Centre on Tuesday, 16th January 2007 at 6.30pm to discuss matters of concern. The continuing problem of the use of the roads and car parks at Merry Hill for 'boy racing' purposes would be a particular issue raised. The Police would be represented at the meeting.
 - (3) Councillor Ms Harris requested the clearance of rubbish from the land at Junction Road, Wordplay, situated adjacent to the canal bridge, and asked for the site to be placed on a regular street cleaning maintenance schedule.
 - (4) Councillor Islam reported the concerns of the local Tenants and Residents Association and Brierley Hill Area Forum at the high speed of vehicles, including emergency vehicles, which used Leys Road and Brierley Hill Road.
 - (5) Concern was expressed by Councillor Islam at the lack of a footpath over the bridge in Brierley Hill Road. Councillor Islam asked that the issue be considered and action taken.
 - (6) The provision of traffic lights at the junction of High Oak and Pensnett Road was requested by Councillor Tomkinson.
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47

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates and venues of the remaining scheduled meetings of the Committee in the current municipal year were noted, as follows;

Thursday, 1st February 2007 at Brockmoor Primary School, Belle Isle, Brockmoor, Brierley Hill

Thursday, 29th March 2007 at Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

RESOLVED

That the police be asked to attend the meeting of the Committee to be held on 1st February 2007.

48 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of the remaining scheduled meetings of Select Committees in the current municipal year were received and noted.

49 CHRISTMAS

This being the last meeting of the Committee in 2006, the Chairman wished all present a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

The meeting ended at 7.55pm

CHAIRMAN