

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE – 1st JULY, 2010

REPORT OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA LIAISON OFFICER

MATTERS RAISED AT THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 25th March, 2010 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. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are largely governed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
7. Provisions relating to Highways including trees thereon are contained in the Highways Act 1980.
8. Provisions relating to the Council's Housing stock are contained in the Housing Act 1985.

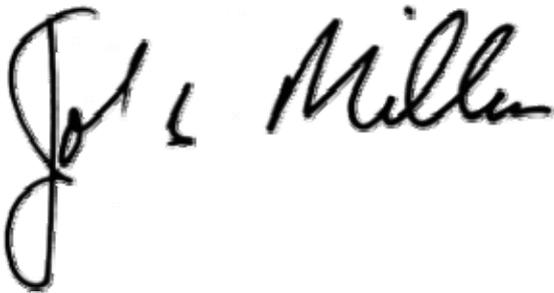
9. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its areas to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
10. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area.

EQUALITY IMPACT

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

RECOMMENDATION

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



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Brierley Hill Area Committee Liaison Officer

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List of Background Papers - See progress report attached

PROGRESS REPORT ON MATTERS RAISED AT THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE ON 25TH MARCH 2010

COMMUNITY RENEWAL/YOUTH ISSUES

ISSUE (Minute 79)

Councillor Islam raised concerns in relation to the decision not to employ a full time Youth Worker at the Centre and the impact this would have upon the young people who attended the Centre.

(Point 3) That the Cabinet Member for Children's Services be advised of the concerns raised by Councillor Islam as outlined above in relation to the decision not to employ a full time Youth Worker at the Nine Locks Community Centre.

RESPONSE

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Walker responded to the issue raised by informing that when the post became vacant, the team managed to run the Centre on two nights a week with the existing team in that area for over twelve months and on reviewing the efficiency, it was clear that the Centre could run without employing a full time member of staff.

PUBLIC FORUM

ISSUE (Minute 80 a)

A written question was submitted in relation to vehicles travelling from the traffic lights in High Street, Brockmoor towards the junction with Pensnett Road and the road signs being inadequate for commercial vehicle drivers to have advance notice of the road closure, causing a hazard when those vehicles were reversing out of the road and the road layout at the traffic lights in High Street, Brockmoor.

RESPONSE

A written response was provided to the questioner.

In addition, DUE's Traffic and Transportation team has ordered two short sections of guardrail, each one to be placed prominently on either side of the residential section of High Street. Attached to the guardrails will be two new high visibility 560mm x 560mm 'No Through Road' blue/red diagram signs. It is expected to have these in situ by the end of July at the latest.

STRAY AND ILLEGALLY GRAZING HORSES

ISSUE (Minute 82)

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Council's policy and practice with regard to illegally grazing and stray horses.

In responding to the concerns raised and suggestions made, the Area Liaison Officer confirmed that he would arrange a multi agency meeting in order to investigate the practicalities of dealing with the problem of illegally grazing and stray horses.

RESPONSE

An initial scoping meeting has taken place involving various council officers and a representative from the horse bailiffs to discuss wide ranging matters relating to stray and illegally grazed horses including their welfare. The meeting looked at current operations within the borough, the concerns of elected members and the public whilst providing an overview of national practice as well as outlining some proposals to develop a suitable and workable protocol / policy document.

A second meeting to include representatives from the Police and the RSPCA plus the traveller liaison officer is being arranged in order to further develop a series of positive proposals. These would then be presented to the Pensnett Ward Members for their

consideration leading to the endorsement of a new protocol/policy agreed by the Cabinet Member

A verbal update on progress will be given during the Area Committee meeting.

WARD ISSUES

ISSUE (Minute 85 [a])

Councillor Southall requested an update on the collapsed boundary wall at King George V Park.

CURRENT POSITION

A decision to approve the demolition of the wall and the installation of a fence to part of the boundary to the Park was authorised by Councillor Anne Millward, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leader of the Council on the 10th June.

Part of the wall to the eastern boundary of King George V Park with Bells Lane is in very poor condition and needs to be demolished as soon as possible. Temporary fencing has been installed to protect people and the public highway.

Unfortunately, because of complex and costly engineering matters, it is both impractical and financially prohibitive to reconstruct the wall. Special foundations would be needed to overcome a number of ground problems, including bridging a major sewer and the proximity of mature trees.

As a result of this, it is proposed to take down the wall and replace it with a fence at a cost of approximately £33,000, since this provides better value for money and will be much quicker to install.

In addition, since the removal of the wall will expose the play area within the Park to the neighbouring properties in Bells Lane, the scheme will include the planting of hedges/shrubs against the fence to screen the park and help attenuate noise.

A budget of £55,000 has been identified from sums received from Section 106 [Town & Country Planning Act 1990] monies and it is proposed to deploy this budget for this work and for other improvements set out in the Master plan for King George V Park.

The work is expected to commence in approximately six weeks time.

ISSUE (Minute 85 [b] Issue 2)

Councillor Ms Jordan raised concerns about unauthorized parking outside 'Pagebet and Fletchers' and obstruction of the footway have also been referred to both the Police and the Council's Parking Enforcement Manager

Following a further request of Councillor Mrs Jordan, the Area Liaison Officer confirmed that he would request the Assistant Director of Environmental Management to request the Council's Parking Enforcement Officers to target the area during evenings and weekends being the most problematic periods.

RESPONSE

As a direct response to the issue raised by Councillor Jordan and working off intelligence received, Parking Enforcement Officers have made a number of targeted evening and weekend site visits to monitor the parking situation. This surveillance activity will be continued and enforcement action taken accordingly.

In addition, since the previous Area Committee meeting, the double yellow lines have been refreshed to enable improved levels of enforcement.

For Members' information, there are two Traffic Regulation Orders that can be enforced:

Zig-zag markings on access/egress to pedestrian crossing.

This is an instant offence and PEO's can issue tickets without further observation, however the zig-zag markings only apply to the kerb line and therefore any vehicle parking wholly on the footway cannot be issued a ticket by within the confines of these markings.

Double yellow lines

These apply from the centre of carriageway to the boundary of the public highway so any vehicle parked here can potentially be issued a ticket by for the parking offence, whether on the highway, footway or partially on both. However, double yellow lines do not prevent:

- Picking up or setting down of passengers
- Loading and unloading (for which the Department for Transport guidelines currently recommend a minimum observation period by a Civil Enforcement Officer of 5 minutes)
- Parking for up to 3 hours for Blue Badge Holders (subject to complying with requirements of the scheme)

ISSUE (Minute 85 [c])

Councillor Ms Harris raised concerns in relation to public convenience facilities in Brierley Hill, requesting improvements to the facilities including lighting and cleaning.

RESPONSE

The only provision remaining in Brierley Hill is located at Cottage Street, a sealed Bradco unit which although not very aesthetic, is relatively clean. A review of the block will be undertaken to look into the feasibility of an automated toilet which may be a low cost alternative.

ISSUE (Minute 85 [d])

Councillor Ms Boleyn referred to the removal of the Notice Board from Kingswinford Library requesting that this be reinstated on the outside of the building

RESPONSE

There are a number of sites at key locations across the borough where the poster/notice board needs to be replaced as a result of vandalism, theft, etc. A replacement programme is underway and the board at Kingswinford Library, given its priority location, will be replaced during the first week in July.