

## **HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2006, at 6.30 p.m.  
at Howley Grange Primary School, Howley Grange Road, Halesowen

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Body, Burston Crumpton, Mrs Dunn, Mrs Faulkner, Hill, Jackson, James, Ms Nicholls, Mrs Shakespeare, Taylor, K Turner, Mrs Turner and J Woodall

### **Officers**

Area Liaison Officer, Assistant Director for Partnership and Children's Trust (Children's Services), Head of Policy (Executive and Support), Principal Engineer (Transportation Policy), Senior Engineer, Environmental Protection Manager, Town Centre Manager, Regeneration Project Officer (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Quality and Complaints Manager (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Principal Solicitor, Solicitor (Helen Kidd) and Mrs M Johal (Directorate of Law and Property)

Approximately 10 members of the public were in attendance.

---

#### **1            ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

##### **RESOLVED**

That Councillor Jackson be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor Jackson thereupon took the Chair)

---

#### **2            APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

##### **RESOLVED**

That Councillor Burston be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

---

#### **3            APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Ms Partridge.

---

---

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made by the following Members for the reasons indicated:

Councillor Burston declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item No 14 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of him being the Council nominee on Lutley Community Centre.

Councillor Mrs Faulkner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item No 18 (Furnace Lane, Newfield Lane, Newfield Crescent, Halesowen: Proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting Order) in view of her being a resident of Newfield Crescent, Halesowen.

Councillor Taylor declared personal interests in respect of Agenda Item Nos 13 (Responses to Questions raised at the Halesowen Area Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2006) in view of him being a Member of Friends of Leasowes and in Agenda Item No 18 (Furnace Lane, Newfield Lane, Newfield Crescent, Halesowen: Proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting Order) in view of him being a Governor of Halesowen College Corporation.

---

## CHAIRMANS REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Hill to his first meeting of the Halesowen Area Committee and also welcomed Sergeant Richard Forester.

It was also noted that for the first time in 32 years, a member from Halesowen had become the Mayor of Dudley, which was a great honour.

---

## MINUTES

### RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2006, be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the inclusion of an additional paragraph in the preamble to Minute No 95 indicating "That during consideration of this item, the three Ward Members for Cradley and Foxcote left the meeting following comments made by Councillor Crumpton to Councillor K Turner".

Arising from this Councillor K Turner requested that Councillor Crumpton submit an apology to him and withdraw the defamatory and derogatory comments made at the previous meeting and that, unless he did so he would be referring the matter to the Standards Board for England.

---

7                    TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted setting out the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices attached to the report, submitted on the terms of reference and the protocol for Area Committees, be noted.

---

8                    APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of Co-opted Members to the Committee for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

That Co-opted Members be not appointed to the Committee in the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

---

9                    APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of representatives of the Committee to serve on outside organisations for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the organisations indicated:

James Grove Sports Ground Recreational Trust – Councillor Body (four year term from 30 April 2006).

Cradley Community Association – Councillor Crumpton

Lutley Community Association – Councillor Burston

Wollescote Community Association – The Ward Members for the Cradley and Foxcote Ward, namely Councillors Body, Crumpton and Ms Partridge.

---

- (a) A member of the public expressed concern at proposals to alter traffic at the Belle Vale Road junction and commented that it was a dangerous junction, which required more than a pelican crossing.

The Senior Engineer (Transportation and Policy) reported that the design of the scheme had been carried out in accordance with National Standards and had been safety audited. It was further reported that the scheme had been carefully considered and would assist the more vulnerable pedestrians and, at the same time, keep traffic flowing. He further undertook to meet the questioner on site with a view to explaining the current scheme.

- (b) A member of the public gave an update in relation to the position on the development of the A456 roundabout at Grange Hill/Grange Road. It was reported that the scheme would be approved subject to funding being available and that the scheme would also be re-examined to improve the safety of pedestrians.

- (c) It was queried whether Members would be objecting to the proposals to close Cradley High School and it was also commented that the future of the children would be at risk due to overcrowding that would occur at other schools from the impact of transfers.

The Assistant Director for Partnership and Children's Trust (Children's Services) reported that a six-week consultation exercise regarding the proposals to close Cradley High School would commence from 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2006. The first three weeks would be undertaken before schools closed for summer and the remaining three weeks would be undertaken in September when the schools re-opened. It was further reported that there had been a decline in the numbers of pupils attending the school, which impacted on the financial resources and consequently impacted on education. It was further pointed out that only 81 pupils would be joining Cradley High School in September 2006 compared to the published admission number of 150. In relation to overcrowding of schools, the Assistant Director for Partnership and Children's Trust (Children's Services) advised that the consultation document would include suggestions to address the problem of transferring the pupils and that the closure was not imminent and consultation would be undertaken with other schools.

During the ensuing debate it was commented that it would be unfair for Members to comment on the issue prior to consultation being undertaken and prior to a decision being made.

## (a) Councillor Crumpton

- (i) Reported that he had been informed that he could not see the report that had been submitted from the consultants in relation to Fish 4 Dogs and queried the reason. He further reported that the public did not have confidence that the matter was being dealt with appropriately and residents were of the opinion that a permit would be issued.

In responding the Environmental Protection Manager reported that information from the company on the operation and effectiveness of the abatement equipment that was installed was received by 22 May, 2006, the date required by legal notice. The information was forwarded to the consultant who reviewed the information and produced a report for the Council and Officers were currently considering the contents of the report. It was pointed out that the consultants had concluded that the abatement system that had been installed, subject to good maintenance procedure being adopted together with an adequate stack, should prevent offensive odours over the installation boundary and therefore the odour should not give reasonable cause for annoyance to local residents at their property. However, local residents should be aware in that there would be odour associated with the operation carried out at Fish 4 Dogs due to the nature of the business, but the company had to take steps to ensure that the odour was not judged to be offensive by authorised Officers of the Council and that it did not give reasonable cause for annoyance to local residents while they were going about their normal business. This information only related to emissions from the stack and Officers were aware of odour from the premises through open doors and any other operations outside the premises. Officers would therefore be making visits over the next few weeks during and outside office hours in order to determine the extent and source of odour. Following the exercise and consideration of the full facts a report would be produced on the options available to the Council in respect of determining the permit application.

The Environmental Protection Manager further gave an update in relation to G Clancey Ltd and reported that the Environmental Protection Services continued to receive complaints from surrounding residents concerning odour and noise emissions. Officers had undertaken a monitoring exercise, which had confirmed justification of the complaints. The Council wrote to the Environment Agency on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2006 to express displeasure at the current situation and the length of time taken to determine the permit application that had been made by G Clancey's on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2005. The response from the Agency indicated that the process at Clancey's was complex but assured the Council that they would determine the permit application as quickly as possible, however with no indication on a timescale. Officers had again written to the Environment Agency on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 expressing the Council's concerns over the delays and asking for a timetable for the determination of the permit application. The Council had also requested legal advice from a barrister on several points of law concerning the operation of the foundry particularly in relation to the operation of the sand reclamation plant and the status of the permit application. It was further reported that Officers were aware of the issue of the damaged odour scrubbing unit, which was investigated but not repaired as expected during the June shutdown. The Council were now assessing the options available to formally require the company to carry out the necessary repairs to the fume scrubbing unit in the shortest practicable time period. In relation to the large accumulation of waste sand at the installation site, an assurance had been given by Clancey's that no more sand was being added to the stock pile and that all waste sand was now being disposed of at a landfill site and that a certain quantity was being removed from the stockpile for disposal on a daily basis. A sample of the waste sand had been taken for analysis to ensure that it did not pose any hazard for the environment and the results were still awaited.

- (ii) Expressed concern at the lack of communication to Members in relation to the proposals to close Cradley High School. The first that he had heard about the closure was on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 when a representative from the media had contacted him by telephone asking him what he thought about the announcement to close the School. He further reported that at a meeting of the Cabinet held on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2006, Councillor Ms Partridge had, as part of the Building Schools for the Future report, queried how consultation would take place following the poor consultation that had revolved around the primary schools. An assurance had been given at that meeting that full consultation would take place. However, the Council had released the statement to the press before teachers had been given the opportunity to break the news to parents and pupils.

The Assistant Director for Partnership and Children's Trust (Children's Services) undertook to refer the comments made to the relevant Officer.

(b) Councillor K Turner

- (i) Commented that Sunday Worshippers at St Margaret's Church had been intimidated and disturbed by the police demanding that parked vehicles be removed from the road or that they would be issued with tickets. He reported that signage on the road indicated no parking from Monday – Friday between 8am – 5pm and asked that clarification be given on whether parking on the road was permitted during other times.

Sergeant Forester undertook to provide a response.

- (ii) Reiterated concerns in relation to the Belle Vale junction and commented that it was a danger zone. Confusion was also being caused as a bus stop had been erected and the temporary bus stop removed, however, people were not aware of where the bus stopped.
- (iii) Queried the position of Beecher Road Estate becoming a one-way road during road works and also referred to a previous request to introduce 20mph on Fatherless Barn Estate and also the introduction of 20mph outside every school in the Borough and queried the outcome.

In responding the Senior Engineer advised that during the commencement of road works Beecher Road Estate would be temporarily converted into a cul-de-sac in the interests of public safety. In respect of introducing a 20mph zone for Fatherless Barn Estate and outside every school in the Borough, the Senior Engineer advised that such a scheme had to be complemented by traffic calming measures. Due to the large area of Fatherless Barn Estate road humps or other traffic calming measures would not be appropriate. However, he reported that Officers were still considering the options available.

(c) Councillor Mrs Turner

- (i) Reported that she had met the Assistant Director of Culture and Community Services in relation to a multi use games area to include a bowling green and tennis court. A report and update was due to be submitted in June, however a response had not been received.

- (ii) Expressed concerns at the delivery vehicles parked outside Parsons on Mucklow Hill that caused traffic delays and dangerous conditions. Councillor Mrs Faulkner concurred with the comments made and also indicated that she had encountered traffic that evening due to a parked lorry on Mucklow Hill.

The Senior Engineer reported that a number of complaints had been received and the police were dealing with obstruction. However, he gave an assurance that if the matter did not improve then the Council would take action.

Police Sergeant Forester also undertook to refer the matter of obstruction of the public highway to the Police.

- (iii) Complained that vehicles were using the Pool Road bus lane to overtake.

(d) Councillor Mrs Dunn

Reiterated the concerns made about the lack of communication to Members in relation to the closure of the Cradley High School. It was further suggested that a Special Meeting of the Committee be arranged to discuss the issue of the closures of the Cradley High School and the Halesowen Church of England School.

(e) Councillor Mrs Faulkner

- (i) Updated the Committee on progress on the Shell Corner Partnership and reported that the Chairman, Officer and the Committee had been elected. The Group was a community group run by the community and could gain charity ownership.
- (ii) Informed the Committee that the potential Friends of Hurst Green Park Group would meet on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2006 at Halesbury Special School at 7pm.

(f) Councillor Mrs Shakespeare

Referred to an increasing number of complaints received in relation to older teenagers congregating in Halesowen North and reference was also made to drugs being taken and it was queried what powers the police had to deal with the issue.

In responding Sergeant Forester reported that there were various ways to deal with the situation including dispersal orders and anti social behaviour orders. However, he commented that the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing from September would alleviate the situation due to the placement of designated officers.



---

12

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED AT THE MEETING HELD ON  
22<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2006

---

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted informing the Committee of the written responses made to questions asked at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report now submitted, be noted.

---

13

DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted recommending grants from the Committee's Capital Budget Allocation and associated matters.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and a representative from the Opposition Group, be authorised to consider and agree, where appropriate, requests for funding from community and voluntary groups, and that the criteria against which all bids/allocations should be considered as set out in Appendix A to the report submitted.
- (2) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to take appropriate action to promote the availability of funding for 2006/07, as indicated in paragraph 6 of the report now submitted.
- (3) That approval be given to a grant of £3,000 to the Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership for funding towards the provision of an emergency signal controller unit.
- (4) That approval be given to a grant of £2,726 to Lutley Community Association for funding towards additional emergency lighting within the Centre.
- (5) That approval be given to a grant of £1,400 to the Victim Support Witness Centre for funding towards furniture for the video link room at Halesowen Magistrates Court, subject to a similar approval by the Central Dudley Area Committee.

- (6) That approval be given to a grant of £3,850 to the Dudley Lifeskills Partnership to purchase equipment required by the Partnership to be used in the various lifelong learning workshops.
- (7) That the action of the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body, in approving a grant of £5,500 for funding towards purchasing planters, first year plants and watering equipment to launch the inaugural year of Halesowen in Bloom, be noted.
- (8) That the action of the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body, in approving a grant of £356 to the Drop in Centre, Andrew Road, for decorating supplies, be noted.
- (9) That approval be given to an allocation of £15,000 being earmarked for environmental and other improvements at Shell Corner, subject to the formulation of more detailed proposals, including a potential funding package and a further report to this Committee.
- (10) That approval be given, in principle, to a grant of £5,000 to Halesowen Orchestra to purchase a grand piano for use by the Orchestra and other local groups, which would be situated in the Cornbow Hall, subject to further consideration of operational issues identified.

#### APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on requests relating to land and property controlled by the Council.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Personnel, Legal and Property be recommended to approve the application to change the user clause to sell alcohol at 21 Queensway, Halesowen, as shown on the plan attached to the report, subject to the applicant obtaining any necessary licences appropriate and on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Director of Law and Property.

- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure be recommended to approve the request received to purchase the Council's freehold interest in Maybrook House, Queensway, Halesowen, as shown on the plan attached to the report, on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Director of Law and Property, including the leasing back of the lower ground floor as a public car park.
  - (3) That the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture be recommended to approve the application for vehicular access to the rear of 23 Brandon Road, Halesowen, as shown on the plan attached to the report, subject to the barrier being relocated, the access way surfaced and any other security issues required being funded by the applicant, on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Director of Law and Property.
- 

15

PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS 2005/06

---

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted about the progress of visits to Adult and Children's social care establishments undertaken by Members during 2005/06, actions taken in response to Member visits and their comments and identifying issues arising from the rota visits.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and appendices to the report now submitted, be noted.
  - (2) That Members be requested to submit nominations for the 2006/07 Municipal Year direct to the Quality and Complaints Manager, Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services.
- 

16

OBJECTIONS TO DISABLED PARKING PLACES

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on a proposed change to the reporting procedure for objections to disabled parking places.

RESOLVED

That, in view of the Cabinet Member for Transportation having delegated powers under the terms of the constitution to deal with Traffic Regulation Orders which receive objections, the proposed change in procedure so as to remove those applications for disabled parking places which receive objections from the Area Committee arena and to deal with them by way of Decision Sheet, following full and proper consultation with the relevant Ward Members, be supported.

---

17

**FURNACE LANE, NEWFIELD LANE, NEWFIELD CRESCENT,  
HALESOWEN – PROPOSED PROHIBITION AND RESTRICTION OF  
WAITING ORDER**

---

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in this matter, Councillor Mrs Faulkner withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item and re-joined the meeting following its consideration).

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the introduction of additional waiting prohibitions and restrictions in Furnace Lane, Newfield Lane and Newfield Crescent, Halesowen.

During consideration of this item Members expressed concern at the unclear instructions and markings on waiting restrictions. It was also commented that several coaches parked on Furnace Hill causing obstruction and people could not see where they were going whilst overtaking. It was further reported that the police were not enforcing their powers and were ignoring the problem and it was queried that if the 30 minutes waiting was introduced who would be responsible for monitoring and enforcement. A Member further commented that the Governors of the College should be requested to make parking space available for the coaches.

Members suggested that further consideration should be given to the matter and that the introduction of no waiting during the College opening hours would be appropriate, however the 30 minutes limited waiting should be reconsidered. It was also commented that an appropriate Order should be introduced, as a “no waiting order” did not include commercial vehicles.

**RESOLVED**

That consideration of the making of an amended Traffic Regulation Order, as shown on drawing numbers TMD/CP/391 and TMD/CP/439A, attached to the report, be deferred so that further consideration be given to this matter in the light of the comments made by Members and that a further report be submitted to a future meeting.

---

## HALESOWEN TOWN CENTRE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

### RESOLVED

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the preparation and progress of a consultation exercise to support the future development of Halesowen Town Centre.

- (1) That the consultation exercise and timetable from July 2006 to March 2007, as outlined in the report, be endorsed.
- (2) That approval be given to the formation of a Working Group comprising the Chairman and one Member from each of the Wards comprising the Area Committee to steer the consultation exercise as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report and that nominations for membership of the Working Group be submitted to the Area Liaison Officer.

---

## TOWN CENTRES MANAGEMENT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the service provided by the Town Centre Management Service in relation to Halesowen Town Centre.

### RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report now submitted, be noted.
- (2) That further reports be submitted to future meetings of the Committee on the activities of the Town Centre Development Service.

---

## DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

### RESOLVED

That the dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee be noted as follows:-

12<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 – Earls High School  
22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2006 – Colley Lane Primary School  
24<sup>th</sup> January, 2007 – Olive Hill Primary School  
14<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 – Lutley Community Centre

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.

CHAIRMAN