

HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday 12th September, 2006, at 6.30 p.m.
at Earls High School, Furnace Lane, Halesowen

PRESENT

Councillor Jackson (Chairman)
Councillor Burston (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Body, Crumpton, Mrs Faulkner, Hill, James, Ms Nicholls, Mrs Shakespeare, Taylor, K Turner and Mrs Turner

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), Principal Recreation Officer, Senior Engineer, Town Centre Manager, (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Principal Solicitor and Mrs M Johal (Directorate of Law and Property)

Also in Attendance

Superintendent Johnson
Sergeant Mark Bellingham
PC Rennison and Humphreys

Approximately 80 members of the public were in attendance.

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CHAIRMANS REMARKS

The Chairman referred to the Mayor, Councillor J Woodall and extended the Committee's best wishes for a speedy recovery following his recent accident. He also extended sympathy to the Leader of the Council at his sad loss.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that as there was a Special Meeting of the Area Committee to be held on 26th September, 2006 to discuss the closure of Cradley High and Halesowen (Church of England) Schools questions in this regard would not be considered at this meeting.

Arising from queries from members of the public, the Area Liaison Officer assured members of the public that there would be sufficient time and ample opportunity for comments made at the Special Area Committee meeting to be fed into the consultation process. An assurance was also given that translation of the consultation documents into various languages, particularly Arabic, would also be pursued.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Dunn and J Woodall.

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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 Body declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item No 10 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of him being a Trustee of Beechtree Miners Welfare Association.

Councillor Burston declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item No 14 (Leisure Provision in Halesowen) in view of him being a Member of Friends of Huntingtree Park.

Councillor Crumpton declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item No 10 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of him being a Trustee of Beechtree Miners Welfare Association.

Councillor Ms Partridge declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item No 10 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of her being a Trustee of Beechtree Miners Welfare Association.

Councillor Taylor declared personal interests in respect of Agenda Item No 14 (Leisure Provision in Halesowen) in view of him being a Member of Friends of Leasowes and a Governor at Olive Hill Primary School.

Councillor Mrs Turner declared personal interests in respect of Agenda Item No 14 (Leisure Provision in Halesowen) in view of her being a Member of Friends of Huntingtree Park and a Governor at Olive Hill Primary School.

Councillor K Turner declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item No 14 (Leisure Provision in Halesowen) in view of him being a Member of Friends of Huntingtree Park.

It was also agreed that, although they had declared personal and prejudicial interests in respect of Agenda Item No 10, Councillors Body, Crumpton and Ms Partridge should remain during consideration of the item, as the decision to approve a grant of £875 to the Beechtree and Wollescote Welfare Club had already been taken.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th June, 2006, be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the deletion of the words "Councillor Crumpton" and substitution of the words "a Ward Member" therefore in Minute no 6.

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PETITION

A petition was submitted by Councillor Mrs Faulkner on behalf of residents of Halesowen, in support of a pedestrian crossing in Long Lane (Shell Corner to Vicarage Road, Halesowen) and referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for attention.

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YOUTH ISSUES

A representative of the Youth briefly updated the Committee on recent youth activities including details of an exhibition that had been held at Halesowen Library. It was also reported that a public meeting would be held on 21st September, 2006 and the police would also be attending. A fashion show was also due to be held on 28th September, 2006 at Benjamin's Night Club and it was pointed out that young children had made the costumes themselves.

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PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) The Area Liaison Officer reported that a member of the public had submitted a written question complaining about the floor in the Cornbow Shopping Centre and requesting that it be made safer. Signs indicating that the floor was wet were not always given which had caused her to slip and hurt her hip and she was concerned about older people who were more fragile.

The Area Liaison Officer undertook to write to the operators of the Cornbow Shopping Centre.

- (b) A member of the public queried the timescales for the regeneration of Halesowen Town Centre and further commented that the citizens of Halesowen were fed up with the closure of shops.

The Head of Policy (Executive and Support) indicated that there was an item later on the Agenda that sought people's views as part of the consultation process and he undertook to include the comments made. He further undertook to provide a detailed report to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee outlining the timescales involved, together with proposals for Vale Retail, proposals surrounding the new bus station and the position of Asda with regard to a compulsory purchase order.

- (c) Reference was made to a recent meeting held with the police in relation to Partners and Communities Together (PACT) where it had been agreed that Huntingtree Park and the surrounding area should be considered as "priority cover". It was queried whether "priority cover" would be implemented, particularly due to the recent increase in vandalism in those areas. It was further commented that the Police were not proactive and did not intervene when disturbances occurred. A Member further referred to a recent incident involving glass bottles being taken from a recycling bottle bank, which were then used as missiles resulted in glass being strewn all over the place.

In responding the Police advised that they were currently looking into the matter and were liaising with the Council and Members and that proactive and concerted efforts were being made to tackle the problems and that arrests had been made. The Officer undertook to report to the next meeting on responses to the individual incidents as reported by Members and members of the public.

- (d) Reference was made to a recent planning application considered by the Development Control Committee on the 4th September, 2006 relating to the erection of a Mosque on Malt Mill Lane. It was commented that the Committee should strongly object to the application due to the traffic problems that would be created.

At this juncture Councillor Mrs Turner withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item due to being a Member of the Development Control Committee and re-joined the meeting following its consideration.

A Member commented that the application would further exacerbate existing traffic problems on Malt Mill Lane and she reported that the three Ward Councillors had submitted their objections to the Development Control Committee. The Committee had at its meeting, deferred the application pending a traffic survey being conducted.

- (e) Reference was made to several requests and a petition that had previously been submitted in relation to allowing residents safe car parking space on Butchers Lane and it was queried why the matter was not being pursued.

The Senior Engineer reported that the matter had been fully investigated over the previous four years. The conclusion had been that a suitable scheme does not exist. He further stated that all motorists had to take responsibility for deciding whether and where to park on the public highway.

A Member commented that residents had been pursuing the matter for a long period of time and they should be given the opportunity to be able to open their car doors safely. A parking bay would allow them to park their cars and it was suggested that a lorry or some other form of vehicle be used to conduct a survey to determine the extent of the problem.

The Senior Engineer reported that the Council could not deliberately place an impediment on the highway, which would be likely to cause an accident. He informed the Committee that it would not be possible to design a parking assistance scheme that would pass the stringent safety audit requirements.

A Member commented that high volumes of traffic were an issue in the Cradley area and regeneration should include the whole area and it was further commented that it was not unreasonable to park a vehicle to conduct a traffic survey at a space that was specifically allocated for parking.

- (f) Reference was made to the proposals that were to be considered by the Council's Cabinet on 13th September, 2006 in relation to the need for regeneration activity in District and local centres. Cradley and Windmill Hill had been assessed as high priority areas for action.
- (g) A member of the public sought the views of the Area Committee regarding Birmingham City Council Quinton representatives failing to call meetings of the Quinton Meadows Consultation Committee and who were now attempting unconstitutionally to put an end to the Committee.

The Chairman advised that he had not received any information for over twelve months and that he did not have any further information on the reasons regarding the ending of the Committee.

Superintendent Johnson introduced the report and PC Kim Humphreys gave a presentation on the implications of neighbourhood policing in the area. Background information had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting and leaflets and information for the benefit of Members and members of the public was also circulated at the meeting. Information on each of the neighbourhoods and the Officers responsible for each area was also disseminated.

A question and answer session then followed and the Police undertook to investigate matters as mentioned by Members of the Committee and members of the public and also to pass on the thanks to various Police Officers as had been indicated.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the background information and in the presentation be noted and supported.

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WARD ISSUES

(a) Councillor James

Referred to Minute No 17 of the meeting of this Committee, held on 28th June, 2006 in relation to Furnace, Lane, Newfield Lane, Newfield Crescent – Proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting Order and requested that, subject to restrictive timing from 8am – 5 pm and the introduction of a ban on loading by introducing double yellow lines, the matter be recommended for approval.

At this juncture Councillor Mrs Shakespeare withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item due to the fact that she lives in Newfield Crescent and re-joined the meeting following its consideration.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended, subject to the change in restrictive timing from 8am – 5pm and the introduction of a ban on loading, to consider a Decision Sheet proposing the introduction of an amended Traffic Regulation Order, as shown on drawing numbers TMD/CP/391 and TMD/CP/439A, attached to the report (Furnace Lane, Newfield Lane, Newfield Crescent, Halesowen – Proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting Order), submitted to the meeting of this Committee held on 28th June, 2006.

(b) Councillor Mrs Shakespeare

Sought clarification on whether there were proposals for Margaret Vine Court to have a new door entry system installed. If a new door entry system was being installed it would be unacceptable as residents would have to come down to allow people in. However, if the existing entry door was being replaced then confirmation and an assurance in writing should be sent to residents informing them of this.

(c) Councillor K Turner

- (i) Sought assurances that road works on the A458 junction would be completed by the due date.
- (ii) Referred to access difficulties being experienced by Drews Holloway South residents due to the narrowness of the junction and requested that consideration be given to widening and extending the junction.
- (iii) Queried the reason for the last green bulk collection being on 18th August, 2006 and requested that a further additional collection, particularly for pensioners, be slotted in as residents collected vast amounts of green bulk during the months of September and October.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment commented that every street level property had been offered a recycling box and this had now also been extended to flats. Wheelie bins for green waste had also commenced as part of a three-year programme, which offered fortnightly collections. Where the location was not suitable for green bins residents were given bags. It was further reported that green bulky waste had commenced with one collection and had now extended to three collections per year. However, the Cabinet Member undertook to investigate the matter in relation to the last collection being on 18th August, 2006 for green bulky waste.

A Member referred to the sacks that were being given to residents and commented that they were not suitable because they were too big and residents were experiencing difficulties, as they had to carry bulky sacks and it was even more difficult where properties had steps.

(d) Councillor Body

- (i) Referred to the Wollescote area and reported that only one road had had their wheelie bins and queried when the other residents in the Ward would be receiving their wheelie bins.
- (ii) Referred to a document relating to Secondary Schools Admissions for 2007/08 and queried why Cradley High School had been omitted.
- (iii) Commented that residents had travelled a long way from Cradley and Foxcote to attend this meeting to have their say, which had been denied.

(e) Councillor Ms Partridge

- (i) Requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting clarifying the position on the Lye and Wollescote Cemetery as residents were under the impression that the Chapel was going to be demolished and replaced with new housing.

The Head of Policy (Executive and Support) reported that consultation was currently taking place on plans to reuse the building and, as the building was a Grade 2 listed building, demolition would not be an option. He further reported that a report on the issue was being submitted to Stourbridge Area Committee at its next meeting and undertook to submit the same report to the next ordinary meeting of this Committee.

- (ii) Commented that Tanhouse Residents Association had raised £600 at its annual fun day and requested that a letter of congratulations be written to them on behalf of the Committee.

(f) Councillor Crumpton

- (i) Congratulated Cradley allotments and referred to a show due to take place on Saturday.
- (ii) Congratulated staff and pupils of Cradley High School on achieving the second best school and exam results with 73% getting A-C's in their GCSE's.

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RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED AT THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH JUNE 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.

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DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on requests for funding from the Delegated Capital Budget.

The Area Liaison Officer reported that an additional request had been received from the Halesowen Chamber of Trade and Commerce requesting funding for Christmas Lights.

RESOLVED

- (1) That approval be given to a grant of £3,000 to the Hurst Green Parents and Teachers Association for seating and shelter on the new playground.
- (2) That the action of the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, in approving a grant of £875 to the Beechtree and Wollescote Welfare Club, towards the cost of repairing the Club's roof, be noted.
- (3) That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body, be authorised, under delegated powers, to consider the request for funding for Christmas Lights received from the Halesowen Chamber of Trade and Commerce, subject to further information being provided, and that the outcome of their consideration be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

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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.

A Member commented that, as the applications had not been submitted to the Ward Councillors for consultation, they should be deferred.

The Area Liaison Officer suggested that the report regarding the sale of the Land at Maple Road, Halesowen be approved due to the implications that it would have for Agenda Item No 13 (Shell Corner Improvements), which detailed a feasibility study for the area.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application to lease the car park adjacent to 116 Colley Gate, Halesowen, as shown on the plan attached to the report, be deferred subject to further consideration.
- (2) That the request to purchase land to the rear of 60 Whittingham Road, Halesowen, as shown on the plan attached to the report, be deferred subject to further consideration.
- (3) That the application for the Restrictive Covenant on the Council owned land at Bromsgrove Street, Halesowen, as shown on the plan attached to the report, be deferred subject to further consideration.

- (4) That the Cabinet Member for the Environment be recommended to approve the sale of Land at Maple Road, Halesowen, as shown on the plan attached to the report, on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Director of Law and Property.
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AREA COMMITTEE CONSULTATION IN RELATION TO THE GAMBLING ACT 2005 AND DRAFT POLICY

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on the draft Statement of Licensing Policy produced in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005.

A Member referred to paragraph 4 of the report in relation to protecting children and commented that the implications of gambling had an effect on children because their parents gambled and it was requested that consideration should be given in totality.

The Principal Solicitor undertook to respond to the Member concerned in relation to the query on whether shops that sold national lottery tickets would need to be licensed.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report and the draft Statement of Principles attached to the report, now submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the comments made by Members be noted and that the Principal Solicitor responds to the Member concerned in relation to whether shops that sold national lottery tickets need to be licensed.
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SHELL CORNER IMPROVEMENTS

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on a preferred option for the development of environmental improvements to shops and parking area behind the two raised planter beds on Long Lane in Shell Corner.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration be recommended to approved the revised scheme, as detailed in the report submitted and that the allocation of £15,000 from the delegated capital budget as a contribution to the overall cost of the scheme, be confirmed.

LEISURE PROVISION IN HALESOWEN

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the results of the Sport England National Benchmarking Service research undertaken at Halesowen Leisure Centre in May 2006 and on the broader range of sporting and cultural provision in the geographic area falling within the remit of the Committee.

A Member referred to the venues listed in Appendix 1 of the report and queried which buildings were disability compliant.

The Principal Recreation Officer undertook to provide the Member concerned with the required information.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted be noted and that the Principal Recreation Officer be requested to respond to the Member concerned with details of the buildings which were disability compliant.

A458 BETWEEN HALESOWEN AND STOURBRIDGE : POSSIBLE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on an extensive public consultation in relation to proposals for the introduction of traffic management measures between Stourbridge Ring Road and the borough's Birmingham/Sandwell boundary in Quinton.

Arising from the presentation of the report, strong objections were made to references to "red routes" and it was requested that such references be deleted. It was further commented that there were double yellow lines on Stourbridge Road, which were ignored and it was requested that the police be more proactive in taking enforcement action. It was considered to be vital that the businesses on the road continued to thrive and the concept of a red route would stifle them.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be informed that, subject to the deletion of all references to Red Routes, particularly in paragraphs 5, 11 and 17 of the report submitted, the commencement of a public consultation exercise regarding the proposals to introduce traffic management measures along the Class 1 A458 route between Quinton and Stourbridge Ring Road, as outlined in the report via Halesowen and Lye, be supported.

37 HALESOWEN TOWN CENTRE CONSULTATION EXERCISE –
PROGRESS REPORT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress of the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise, together with the terms of reference and the project brief.

RESOLVED

That the Terms of Reference for the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise Working Group and the Project Brief, as attached to the report submitted, be approved.

38 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

That the information contained in the report now submitted, be noted and that further reports be submitted to future meetings of the Committee on the activities of the Town Centre Development Service.

39 DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

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

26th September, 2006 – Colley Lane Primary School (Special)
22nd November, 2006 – Colley Lane Primary School
24th January, 2007 – Olive Hill Primary School
14th March, 2007 – Lutley Community Centre

40 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

As a way of giving additional publicity to meetings of the Council's Select Committees, details of Select Committee meetings had been included on the agendas of meetings of Area Committees.

The information given in respect of publicity for future meetings of Select Committees was noted.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm.

CHAIRMAN