

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 7th November, 2006 at 6.30 pm
at Sledmere Primary School, Dudley

PRESENT: -

Councillor Rahman (Chairman)

Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Mrs. Aston, Cotterill, Ms Craigie, J. Davies, M. Davis, Finch, Johnston, Sparks and Waltho; Ms H Edwards.

OFFICERS:

Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management), Section Engineer, (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Principal Project Officer, Area Manager, Housing- Dudley, (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Area Youth Worker, Detached Youth Worker -St Thomas' Ward (Directorate of Children's Services), Principal Solicitor, Mr R Jewkes and Mrs. J. Rees (Directorate of Law and Property)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

David Harper, Cherene Benjamin and Tom Knock, on behalf of the St Thomas' Youth Forum, together with approximately 20 members of the public.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bradney, Mrs Coulter and Male and Miss V. Little

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Aston declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No. 9 (Neighbourhood Management Activities in Central Area), in view of her Chairmanship of the Safe and Secure Group and Vice Chairmanship of the North Dudley Regeneration Board Steering Group.

Councillor Ms Craigie declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No. 7 (Ward Issues – Proposal against the Priory Estate Demolition) in view of her being Secretary of the Dudley Residential Leaseholders Association.

Councillor M Davis declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of any agenda item relating to Social Services, in view of his being a service user.

Councillor Alan Finch declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No. 9 (Neighbourhood Management Activities in Central Area), in view of his membership of the Safe and Secure Group and the North Dudley Regeneration Board Steering Group.

Councillor Johnston declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No. 9 (Neighbourhood Management Activities in Central Area), in view of his membership of the Residents' Steering Group for North Priory Regeneration, membership of the North Dudley Regeneration Board Steering Group, membership of the Safe and Secure Group and membership of the Board of Directors of Castle and Crystal Credit Union.

Councillor Rahman declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 9 (Neighbourhood Management Activities in Central Area), in view of his membership of the Lodge Farm Network, and in Agenda Item No. 10 (Capital Allocations – Applications by The Friends of Netherton Park Group and the Arley and Compton Tenants Association) in view of his Membership of the respective Groups.

Councillors Cotterill and Sparks declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 10 (Capital Allocations – Applications by The Friends of Stevens Park) in view of their Membership of the Group.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5th September, 2006, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendment:

Deletion of the name 'Inspector Moore' and insertion of the name 'Inspector Bramwell' in line 8 of paragraph (10) of Minute No. 26 (Public Forum)

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COMMENTS ON THE MINUTES

Councillor M Davies commented that to date he had not received a written response to his query referred to in paragraph (6) of Minute No. 26 (Public Forum) relating to parking issues at Russells Hall Hospital. He also commented that the new lower charges for car parking at Russells Hall Hospital had not yet been introduced.

PETITIONS

The following petitions had been or were submitted by the persons indicated and referred to the officers shown for attention:

- (a) A petition received from a Ms Robinson, on behalf of the Dudley Deaf Sports and Social Club, requesting that more social workers and interpreters be made available to meet the needs of all the deaf people who live in the Dudley Borough Area. The petition had been referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, who had sent a written response advising that the Council had a commitment to continual improvement of services. She also advised that a number of staff in various locations across the Borough had undertaken BSL training, in addition to the social worker, who worked as part of a team in the Older People and People with a Physical or Sensory Impairment Division of the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services. The Director had asked colleagues in the Directorate Commissioning Team, Leisure and Cultural Services and the Regeneration co-ordinator to contact the group direct to discuss whether there were services available which could help the group and also to discuss whether there were alternative avenues of funding, such as the Lottery, which the Group could approach.
- (b) Councillor Cotterill, on behalf of residents of Belle Vue Road, Quarry Bank, requesting that the barrier at the end of their road be erected again, so as to prevent vehicles using the road as a short cut. The petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration and attention.
- (c) Councillor M Davis, on behalf of residents in Ashenhurst Road, regarding alleged unabated noise and anti social behaviour. The petition was referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Anti Social Behaviour Team for consideration and attention.
- (d) Councillor Ali, on behalf of residents of Lister Road, requesting traffic calming measures in the vicinity of Lister Road, to prevent vehicles travelling at high speeds. The petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration and attention.
- (e) Councillor Ms Craigie, on behalf of residents of Butterfield Court, requesting the eviction of the occupants of a flat at Butterfield Court, on account of alleged anti social behaviour emanating from the property. The petition was referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Anti Social Behaviour Team for consideration and attention.

- (f) Councillor Rahman, on behalf of residents in the Darby End/Court Street area, referring to Agenda item No 8 b) Request to purchase land at Cole Street and Worcester Road, Netherton, requesting that consideration be given to granting access only to the rear of 39 Cole Street, and requesting that Housing Services remove a building on the site, which had been neglected and had become an eyesore, together with the removal of dangerous steel spiked fencing. The petition was referred to the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services for consideration and attention.
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YOUTH ISSUES

The young people present, representing the Youth Forum, gave an oral presentation on their activities in the last couple of months and their plans for the next three months. They also reported on the Young People's Conference, which they attended in July, and on a conference which they attended at Bescot. They had recently been successful in obtaining a grant of £600 for youth opportunities, including visits, and planned to apply for further funding to refurbish the Youth Forum office. The Forum had met with Councillors Ali and Rahman to discuss their objectives and were planning a future meeting with the Councillors.

The Chairman commented on the very meaningful meeting with himself, Councillor Ali and the young people, where an exchange of ideas had taken place. Councillor Ali requested that the e-mail addresses of all Members of the Committee be given to the Youth Forum to facilitate contact.

The Chairman thanked the young people for their presentation and attendance.

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PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman advised that questions would be taken from the floor should there be any time remaining when written questions had been addressed.

Questions and answers were then given as follows: -

- (1) A member of the public raised concerns at the unkempt condition of vacant garages in Lea Bank Road and circulated photographs detailing examples of those concerns. In response, the Area Housing Manager - Dudley advised that a number of derelict garage sites, including the ones referred to, had been identified as being surplus to requirements and consideration would be given to their disposal in the near future.

- (2) A member of the public requested that consideration be given to incorporating speedway in the proposed new Dudley Sports Village Project. In response, the Assistant Director, Environmental Services advised that work was ongoing for the development of the project. The issue of incorporating speedway had been mentioned previously and would be considered. Currently work was in progress to identify a suitable site for the Project.

WARD ISSUES

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Ms Craigie back after her illness.

Councillor Ahmed raised:

- (1) the need for the car park on the Russell's Hall Estate to be resurfaced.
- (2) the need for land in Dudley Road/Edward Street to be secured, to prevent fly tipping.

Councillor M. Davis raised:

- (1) Continued resident concern regarding the safety of chicanes on the Russells Hall Estate.
- (2) Why nothing had been done to improve Walters Row, when it had been promised.
- (3) the need to address the fact that bus stops on the Russells Hall Estate were occupying spaces which could be used for parking by local residents.
- (4) the need for the road at the back of the Spar Supermarket on Russells Hall estate to be resurfaced.
- (5) the need for grass cuttings to be cleared when grass verges were mown, to prevent residents slipping on them when it was wet.
- (6) support for the petition relating to anti social behaviour at a flat in Butterfield Close, submitted by Councillor Ms Craigie.

Councillor Mrs. Aston expressed concerns which had been expressed by residents of the North Priory area that no guarantees had been given in respect of their housing issues. She also expressed concern that Ward Councillors were not included on the Project Regeneration board.

Councillor Finch raised:

- (1) Concern in respect of derelict properties, which were rat infested near the Beech Green shops, on the Old Park Farm Estate
- (2) Concern regarding anti social behaviour at Priory Park, including the playground which was being demolished by vandals. He asked if security measures could be introduced at the Park.

Councillor Johnston raised:

- (1) the need for premises at the former Duncan Edwards Public House site to be secured and cleared. The original fencing which had been stolen and subsequently replaced, had again been vandalised and was in need of securing and replacing.
- (2) The need for gulleys and drains, which had not already been cleared on the Castle and Priory Estate, to be cleared as a matter of urgency. He also requested a list of the drains already cleared.

Councillor Ali raised:

- (1) the need for resurfacing of Beeches Road.
- (2) the need for a fence to be erected on land at the corner of Watsons Green Road and the junction of North Street to prevent fly tipping.
- (3) the need for a crossing at New Rowley Road to enable pedestrians to cross safely, which had previously been raised with the Head of Traffic and Road Safety.
- (4) the need for investigation into the recent re-siting of the BT telegraph pole in the middle of the pavement on Oakham Road, which now made it difficult for people in wheelchairs to pass.
- (5) the need for improved signage around Blackacre Road to prevent traffic travelling through.
- (6) the need for investigation into the high volumes of traffic at the Flood Street island.

Councillor Ms Craigie raised:

- (1) the need for the curbside collection of large items to be reintroduced either free of charge or for the lowering of the current charges for large items such as fridges.
- (2) the urgent need for the introduction of a school crossing at Russells Hall Primary School.
- (3) the need for engagement with young people in St James' Ward and the need for the Neighbourhood Centre in St James's Ward to be more widely advertised.

Councillor Waltho raised:

- (1) the need for improved appropriate speed signage for traffic near the bend of the site of the Old Bush Public House.
- (2) a request that he be supplied with information on where Section 106 monies from Developers were spent.
- (3) concern, as Shadow Lead Member for Housing, that the proposed major development at North Priory was causing such significant unrest among local residents, who had been given no guarantees for the future regarding their homes and allowed no vote on future plans.
- (4) That the following proposal be considered and referred to Cabinet -

“Central Dudley Area Committee reject the Cabinet Report of 1st November regarding the North Priory Housing Project on the grounds that
 - (a) it gives no guarantees whatsoever to valued residents/tenants and does not allow any final vote on this vital issue.
 - (b) refusal to allow proper democratic representation of local councilors on the project board, despite pleas by residents.

In response to the proposal, and comments made thereon, the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services stated that 82½% of residents had been interviewed by an Independent Company and detailed views of residents reported back to the Residents Steering Group and the Shadow Project Board. The project was part of a 5 year plan and therefore in the very early stages. Guarantees cannot easily be given but there is a guarantee that we will work closely with residents at every stage of the process. There was a need to get things right for a positive solution on an estate which had many serious problems. Regular updates were taking place as and when further information and data became available.

RESOLVED

That the proposal, as detailed above, be approved, and that the Cabinet, Cabinet Member for Housing and the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services be advised accordingly.

Councillor J Davies raised:

The need for a perimeter fence to be erected around the bowling green at Buffery Park, to prevent vandalism and damage to the green.

Councillor Rahman raised:-

- (1) the need to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph near Primary and Secondary Schools in the Netherton area.
- (2) the need for a co-ordinator to identify council owned derelict land within the Borough
- (3) the recommendation of the Community Plan Working Group held on 26th October, that the following resolutions be considered and approved:
 - (a) “That Cabinet give consideration to a request of the Central Dudley Area Committee that in respect of all future major regeneration schemes and any other major schemes out for consultation that all Ward Members be included in such consultation at the initial stages”.
 - (b) “That a letter be sent to the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Director of Adult, Housing and Community Services requesting that they consider implementing a policy of zero tolerance for breaches of tenancy agreements.”

RESOLVED

That the resolutions, as detailed above be approved, and that the Cabinet, the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services be advised accordingly.

Councillor Cotterill raised:

- (1) his appreciation, which he wished to be recorded, for the sterling work undertaken during half term by approximately 60 – 70 volunteer young people and members of Groundwork, at Darby End Bowling Green.
- (2) concern, which he also wished to raise at the next meeting of the Council, under Council Procedure Rule II, that an 85 year old gentleman had recently been charged £85 to be let into his home when he had inadvertently locked himself out of his own home.
- (3) the need for gates to be provided on the side of houses, to prevent young children running out into the road.

- (4) the need for the roots of two trees in New Village, Quarry Bank to be removed.

Councillor Sparks raised:

the need for action to be taken to ensure that the owners of land at the top of Quarry Bank High Street, which was an eyesore, maintain the land.

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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 regarding land and property within the Committee's area.

RESOLVED

- (a) (i) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised that the garage plot sites, at Saltwells Road, Avenue Road, Cochrane Road, Greenpark Road, Parkfield Road, Spring Road, Rear of 30 – 32 Sycamore Green, Adjacent to 19 Sycamore Road, Tansley Hill Avenue, and Uplands Road, as shown on the plans attached to the report submitted, be declared surplus to requirements for the reasons set out in the report.
- (ii) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised that the garage plot site at Knowle Hill Road, as shown on the plans attached to the report submitted, be retained as public open space, for the reasons set out in the report.
- (b) (i) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the application to purchase land adjacent to 39 Cole Street, Netherton, for the reasons indicated in the report submitted.
- (ii) That a decision on the future of the remaining land adjacent to the Sons of Rest building in Worcester Road, Netherton, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, be deferred, for the reasons set out in the report submitted.
- (c) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to:
- (i) approve the surrender of the lease with the 2nd Dudley Scout Group from the date of vacation of the premises located at Douglas Roach, Dudley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted.

- (ii) defer any decision on the scout hut, at the Douglas Road/Dando Road, Dudley site, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, to allow further investigation and a report back to include information on the running costs of centre and contact with external community groups, the youth service and neighbourhood managers to determine whether there would be interest from any other groups in using the building.
 - (d) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure be recommended to refuse the application made to purchase land at the rear of 34 Harcourt Drive, Lower Gornal, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report.
 - (e) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to approve the sale of land for car parking purposes only, at the rear of Oak Street Trading Estate, Quarry Bank, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
 - (f) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended to refuse the request for a lease, to erect a 48 sheet trivision display on the site away from Cinderbank Island at Peartree Lane, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report.
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NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL AREA

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on activities currently taking place in the Central Area by Neighbourhood Management, working towards changing neighbourhoods in a sustainable way to provide better housing, health, education, environment and job opportunities regardless of where people live.

In presenting the report, the Head of Neighbourhood Management advised that there was a need to amend certain paragraphs contained in the Appendix to the report submitted. She also advised that work in the Woodside area had been omitted from the report. In apologising for the errors made, it was suggested that a revised report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

In responding to queries from Members of the Committee, the Neighbourhood Manager advised that some of their queries would need to be investigated and responded to outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted and that a revised report, to include amendments and omissions referred to above, be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group regarding applications made for funding from the capital budget of the Committee, including applications deferred from the previous meeting of the working group.

The Principal Project Officer, in presenting the report, advised that since the report had been circulated, the Woodside Community Association had withdrawn their application until future plans for the Group became clearer. He also advised that, as a direct result of the withdrawal of this application, the amount of monies remaining for the Netheron Woodside and St Andrew's Ward, would now be £5,800.59.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the applications from Victim Support and the Hellier Street Association be deferred to enable the further information requested to be received.
- (2) That the application made by the African Community for Integration in Britain be refused for the reasons indicated in the report submitted.
- (3) That the following amounts be awarded to the organisations stated:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<u>Castle and Priory Ward</u>		
Youth Empowerment Scheme	Computer equipment	£2,117.80
Senior Citizens Enterprise Woodwork Group	Woodworking tools	£1,023.60

**Netherton Woodside and
St Andrews Ward**

Arley and Compton Tenants Association	Replacement trip rails and landscaping work at Arley Court	£2,600
Friends of Netherton Park (on behalf of the Netherton Police Station)	Two bicycles and equipment for two PCSO's	£2,000

Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood Ward

Bowling Green Tenants and Residents Association	Office furniture and equipment	£483.43
Friends of Stevens Park	Supply and fixing of 2 benches in war memorial rose garden in Stevens park	£1,500

St James's Ward

Friends of Old Park School	Aids for children with profound learning disabilities	£2,342
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**URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT CENTRAL DUDLEY
AREA COMMITTEE – 5th SEPTEMBER, 2006**

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on a number of issues relating to that Directorate raised at the meeting of this Committee held on 5th September, 2006.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and the Appendix to the report, submitted, be noted.

DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

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

16 th January, 2007	Saltwells EDC, Bowling Green Road, Dudley
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13 th March, 2006	Priory Primary School, Cedar Road, Dudley
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The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

CHAIRMAN