

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 5th December, 2007 at 6.30 pm
Wallbrook Primary School, Coseley

PRESENT

Councillor Simms (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Ameson, Caunt, J Davies, Evans, Fraser Macnamara, Mrs Millward, Mottram, Mrs Ridley, Ryder and Wright, and Mr J Millward.

Officers

The Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services); The Assistant Director, Culture and Community Services, The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety, The Tourism Development Officer (Directorate of the Urban Environment), and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Law and Property).

IN ATTENDANCE

Inspector Lyn Bailey of the West Midlands Police, Mr S Vincent of the West Midlands Fire Service, together with approximately 40 members of the public were in attendance.

42 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

43 **CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**

In opening the meeting, the Chairman reported the recent death of Rajpal Singh, the Youth Worker from the Lower Gornal Youth Academy.

Councillor Mrs Millward gave a tribute to Rajpal, in which she expressed sadness at the loss of a friend who would be sadly missed by all in the area, adding that Rajpal had completed Dudley Youth Service's first Apprenticeship Scheme in conjunction with Brunell University. Councillor Mrs Millward made particular reference to the endeavours Rajpal had made which had resulted in the Lower Gornal Youth Academy achieving the Me2 status recently. This stood as a testament to his commitment to the young people he worked with.

The Committee stood in silent tribute to Rajpal's memory and for the memory of the four firemen who recently lost their lives in warehouse fires in Warwickshire.

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Evans declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No. 9 d (Request to purchase land at Fereday's Croft, Sedgley) in view of his friendship with the applicant.

45 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19th September, 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

46 PETITIONS

It was reported that the following petitions had been submitted and referred to the officers indicated for consideration and attention.

- (a) From residents of Bourne Street, Elmdale Road, Cedar Avenue and Hockley Road, requesting that action be taken to end anti social behaviour nuisance caused to local residents, by groups of teenagers entering on private land surrounding the roads referred to. The petition was referred to the Head of the Community Safety Team for consideration and attention.
 - (b) From Councillor G Davies, on behalf of residents of Redwood Road and Parklands Road, Coseley, requesting the closure of steps between Redwood Road and Parkland Road, on account of acts of anti social behaviour and the nuisance caused to local residents. Councillor Davies advised that he would speak on this issue further during agenda item 12. The petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment and the Head of the Community Safety Team for consideration and attention.
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47 YOUTH ISSUES

In expressing her sadness at the death of Rajpal Singh, and paying tribute to the impact of his work on the lives of young people in the North Dudley Area, the Team Manager of Early Years and Youth Development reported on youth activities in the area since the previous meeting of the Committee, as follows:

- (a) Lower Gornal Youth Academy had celebrated Rajpal's 51st birthday with a balloon releasing ceremony. A Christmas disco was scheduled to take place on Friday 7th December. Specific projects in the New Year would include a youth awareness course for young people interested in Youth Work, with cookery workshops, a Disc Jockey Project and First Aid.
- (b) Coseley Youth Centre had formed a members' committee and was due to start planning events and activities in the near future, including guitar lessons, arts and crafts, and the Castle Award. Two music groups had been established and a performance was planned for 20th December, 2007, which would include a Christmas party.
- (c) Sedgley Youth Centre had delivered a programme of events, including work shops and a trip to Drayton Manor Park during October, 2007. A Christmas disco was being organised at Quarry Club for young people from Sedgley and Gornal. A dance project was due to start in the New Year.
- (d) North Dudley Area Youth Forum would hold its first meeting on 16th January, 2008, from 5.00 –7.00 pm at Sedgley Youth Centre, to bring together young people interested in membership of North Dudley Area Youth Forum. Councillors were requested to support this group.
- (e) Mr Millward expressed his sadness at the death of Rajpal Singh. On behalf of the young people at Lower Gornal Youth Academy, he requested that the Youth Council be requested to amend the name of one of their Youth Awards to that of The Rajpal Parting Award.

RESOLVED

That the Youth Council be requested to amend the name of a Youth Award to that of The Rajpal Parting Award.

- (f) Mr Millward referred to the United Kingdom Youth Parliament elections, which were scheduled to take place in January 2008. A conference for young people was scheduled to take place on 14th December, 2007.

Councillor Mrs Millward requested that the Director of Children's Services be requested to change the date of the conference, in view of the fact that it coincided with Year 11 mock exams, which would be taking place throughout the Borough.

- (g) Mr Millward advised of work being carried out at the Dormston School, under the Smart Frame Appeal, which offered support to students with cleft palate syndrome. The work was being carried out by a sufferer of the syndrome.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the oral reports made regarding youth issues in the North Dudley Area be noted.

- (2) That the Director of Children's Services be requested to amend the date of the Youth Conference, owing to its coinciding with Year 11 exams.
 - (3) That the Dudley Youth Council be requested to consider changing the name of one of the Youth Awards to that of The Rajpal Parting Award.
 - (4) That a letter of support be sent to the sufferer from cleft palate syndrome congratulating him on his work at The Dormston School.
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POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Lyn Bailey reported orally on the work and priorities of the Police neighbourhood groups since the last meeting, including:

- (a) A reported increase in burglaries in the N2 police sector in Gornal. She encouraged residents to be particularly vigilant, as the incidents appeared to be targeting the elderly. Se advised that anyone observing anything suspicious should contact the Police at Sedgley Police Station.
- (b) Concerns of the Police regarding anti social behaviour involving young people congregating in extremely large numbers in local parks and other open spaces around the area. Many of the incidents appeared to be linked to alcohol abuse.

She indicated that the Police were working with owners of licensed premises, in an effort to prevent the sale of alcohol to under aged young people. If licensed premises were found to be selling alcohol to under aged young appropriate action would be taken against them.

- (c) The dates of future Neighbourhood sector meetings were given.
- (d) The Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services) advised that the Council's Licensing and Safety Committee was to consider a proposal for an Order to ban the consumption of alcohol in the Sedgley area, on 17th December, 2007.

Following the oral presentation, the Chairman reported that Inspector Bailey would be moving in the near future. He thanked Inspector Bailey for all her hard work during her time in Dudley and wished her well in her new post.

RESOLVED

That the oral report given, regarding Police issues in the North Dudley Area, be noted.

49 CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure 13 (c) it was

RESOLVED

That this item be deferred until the arrival of the representative of the West Midlands Fire Service.

50 TRANSPORT ISSUES

In the absence of a representative of Centro at the meeting, no transport issues were discussed.

51 PUBLIC FORUM

(a) A member of the public expressed concerns relating to how The Friends Clayton Playing Fields Group had been constituted, and on an apparent lack of public consultation regarding the Group's proposals to redesignate the playing fields near Fountain Lane, into a park. The Assistant Director, Culture and Community Services (Directorate of the Urban Environment) undertook to arrange a meeting with residents and local Councillors to discuss the issue further.

(b) A member of the public queried whether the brambles on both sides of the Old Railway Bridge in Bradleys Lane, Coseley, could be pruned. The brambles were causing a danger to children walking to Wallbrook School along the pathway, as they often had to step into the road to avoid the brambles.

It was pointed out that the land in question was under the ownership of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. A letter would be sent to the Authority requesting that they cut back the brambles on their property.

(c) A member of the public queried how he could obtain information regarding capital allocation funding. In response, the Assistant Director Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services) advised that the Clerk would forward an application form and the requisite information to questioner after the meeting.

- (d) A member of the public queried when work on Cotwall End Valley would take place, as six months had lapsed since the granting of funding to carry out the work. The Assistant Director Culture and Community Services, advised that, as a direct result of the unprecedented heavy flooding throughout the country which had necessitated urgent remedial work elsewhere, work on the Cotwall End Valle project had been unavoidably delayed. It was anticipated that the work would now commence in January 2008
 - (e) A member of the public requested an update on proposals for Hopyard Lane to be made a one way street. In response, the Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety, advised that he would speak with the questioner outside of the meeting to arrange a site visit to discuss proposals for the siting of the poles required to advertise the one way system.
 - (f) A member of the public queried why electronic training for council staff on disabilities had still not implemented. This was referred to Chief Executive for a written response.
 - (g) The same member of the public questioned why Himley Hall was used as a venue for meetings and events as it was difficult to reach except by car, and was not on a designated bus route. Events starting at 9.30 am were proving difficulty for the elderly as pus passes were not valid until after 9.30 am. The query was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for a written response.
 - (h) A member of the public complained that the induction loop was not working during the meeting. The Chairman apologised for the omission and undertook to ensure that, if anyone was not able to hear the proceedings, they would be given any necessary assistance.
 - (i) A member of the public queried whether the Committee considered the proposed site adjacent to the Black Country Museum a suitable venue to house the Dudley Archives. Members of the Committee confirmed that they supported the proposed location of the archives.
 - (j) A member of the public queried why the pot holes in Gornal still had not been repaired. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to discuss the issue outside of the meeting, with a view to addressing the problem.
 - (k) In response to a question, the partnership arrangements between Dudley and Sandwell Councils regarding the proposed new archive facilities at the Black Country Museum were clarified.
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FIRE ISSUES

Mr. S Vincent of the West Midlands Fire Service, advised that there had been a number of small home fires recently. He therefore encouraged everyone to take up the Fire Service's offer of a free home safety check. He reminded people to be more vigilant, particularly when using candles during the festive period.

Fly tipping continued to be problem throughout the Borough and Mr Vincent encouraged everyone to report incidents of fly tipping to the Fire Service and/or Police so that remedial action could be taken.

RESOLVED

That the oral presentation regarding fire issues in the North Dudley Area be noted.

BIG LOTTERY BID – A MILLION PEOPLE: BLACK COUNTRY AS AN URBAN PARK

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted updating on the current situation regarding the joint bid by the Black Country authorities for a £50 million lottery Giveaway.

The Committee received a visual presentation from the Tourism Development Officer in relation to the progress of the People's Millions Lottery Giveaway – Black Country Urban Park together with a short DVD outlining the project.

It was reported that since the last meeting of the Committee, the bid had successfully progressed to the final round, which would be contested between four candidates and televised on ITV1 in the first week in December, 2007. The competition would be decided by a national vote, in which all members of the public were entitled to participate, either via the internet from 26th November, or by telephone or text message from 7th December.

It was reported that a change in the rules had resulted in only one vote per telephone number and e-mail address being allowed.

All Members of the Committee gave their wholehearted support to the project and encouraged members of the public to vote before the closing date and time of mid day on Monday 10th December, 2007.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the contents of the report submitted and the visual presentation be noted.
- (2) That members of the public and businesses be encouraged to vote for the Black Country as an Urban Park project.

APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in respect of the application to purchase land adjacent to Fereday's Croft, Sedgley, Councillor Evans withdrew from the meeting whilst the application was considered).

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

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Personnel Law and Property be advised to declare the land adjacent to 20-26 Duke Street, Upper Gornal, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, surplus to requirements and sold leasehold, for garden and parking purposes only, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the application to purchase land adjacent to 2 Grange Road, Coseley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report.
- (3) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure be advised to approve the sale of the land at the Rifle Club, Cinder Road, Lower Gornal, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, and to grant an easement and right of access over the remaining land, as shown on the plan attached to the report, both to be drawn up on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (4) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure be advised to refuse the application to purchase land adjacent to Feredays Croft, Sedgley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report.
- (5) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the application to purchase land adjacent to 52 Brook Street, Lower Gornal, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report, but to allow a licence to occupy the land to be granted to the owner of the adjacent new property, 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.

DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted advising the Committee of applications received for funding from the capital budget allocation of the Committee, as referred to in the report submitted.

In introducing the report of the Area Liaison Officer, the Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services) advised of a typographical error, which had appeared in the Council White Book in relation to minute no. 36 of the meeting of this Committee held on 19th September, had indicated that £2,965, rather than the correct sum of £1,965 had been awarded to the Lower Gornal Youth Academy. The minute as approved by the Area Committee however, had been recorded in the correct sum.

Following consideration of the recommendations of the North Dudley Area Committee Capital Allocations Working Group, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and Ward Councillors, be authorised to determine urgent applications for capital funding.
- (2) That the sums referred to below be allocated to the following organisations for the purposes indicated:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Sedgley Youth Centre	Purchase of equipment to be used at the Youth Centre	£2,213.59
The Turls Hill and Swanbook Valley Residents Association	To be used as a 10% contribution towards a further grant from a Landfill Grant Company as part of a gate and fencing project	£2,500
Friends of Prior Mill Park	Purchase and installation of four bins and two steel picnic benches	£5,000
Dudley MBC (application made by Sedgley Ward Councillors)	Purchase and installation of Christmas Lights for Sedgley Town Centre	£2,400

Gornal Athletic Football Club	Replacement of current security fencing around the Club	£3,000
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- (3) That the issue of the White Book reference to the sum awarded to the Lower Gornal Youth Academy, as reported by The Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services) be noted.

56 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the current status of responses made to questions posed at previous meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED

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

57 WARD ISSUES

- (1) Cllr Mrs Millward expressed
- (a) Concerns regarding traffic flow at Brook Street, Lower Gornal. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate.
 - (b) Concern at an apparent lack of consultation with residents and young people, regarding proposals for a skatepark in the Gornal Ward.

- (2) Councillor G Davies spoke in support of the petition he had previously submitted on behalf of local residents of Redwood Road and Parkland Road, requesting that consideration be given to the closure of steps between Redwood Road and Parkland Road on account of anti social behaviour and nuisance caused to local residents.

Councillor Davies expressed concern that neighbouring Local Authorities closed more alleyways than Dudley. He asked if information could be provided to explain why closures requested by Members of the Council had not been closed.

Some Members of the Committee supported Councillor Davies' request that comparative information be provided to the Committee, in respect of

alleyway closures by Dudley and neighbouring Local Authorities with an explanation as to why Dudley had not actioned previously requested alleyway closures on account of anti social behaviour.

- (3) Cllr Mrs Ridney requested that the roads in and around Roseville Methodist Church, including School Street and Bayer Street be repaired. The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate.
- (4) Councillor Wright raised concerns regarding pupils at Ellowes Hall School dropping litter and in particular chip wrappers and papers in Ruiton Street. The Police were requested to send the Police Community Support Officers to the area in an effort to deter the practise. It was also agreed to write to the Head Teacher to request that he investigate the concerns.
- (5) Councillor Simms advised of a letter he personally had received recently concerning personal information which may have been lost as a result of the recent loss of personal data files held by government. He advised anyone receiving one of these letters to shred it, as there was a lot of information contained within the letter which could be useful to fraudsters.

Councillor Mrs Millward suggested that tearing up confidential information and soaking in hot soapy water was an effective alternative to shredding.

Councillor Ridney requested whether shredders could be made available in libraries for local residents to use. The request would be passed to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services for attention.

- (6) Councillor Caunt advised of proposals for underground service renewal work to be undertaken by Severn Trent Water Authority in Spring 2008 in the Wombourne, Himley Road, Sedgley Gate Street and Tipton Road area.
- (7) Cllr Evans expressed appreciation to the Assistant Director, Environmental Management, for the Christmas decorations recently installed in Sedgley.
- (8) Councillor Mottram advised of the date of the next meeting of the Friends of Jubilee Park at St Chads Church Hall at 7 pm on Monday 10th December.

Information was given regarding the dates for future meetings of all Select Committees, which were to be held at the Council House, Dudley. Members of the public were welcome to attend such meetings.

RESOLVED

That the information given in respect of the dates of future meetings of Select Committees be noted.

59 DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

It was noted that future meetings of the Committee would be held at 6.30 pm on the dates and at the venues indicated, as follows:

30th January 2008 – Lower Gornal Youth Academy, Temple Street, Lower Gornal

9th April 2008 – Cotwall End Primary School, Cotwall End Road, Sedgley DY3 3YG

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.

CHAIRMAN