
Central Dudley Area Committee - 2nd October 2012

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Urban Environment - Matters raised at the Central Dudley Area Committee - 12th June 2012

Purpose Of Report

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 12th June 2012 Central Dudley Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Background

2. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities. This diverse range of technical services focus on regenerating the Borough, maintaining our environment to high standards, protecting our communities and promoting leisure and other community services for all.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both Members and the general public, relating to matters such as traffic management, leisure and recreation, regeneration and new development. Few enquiries can be answered immediately, with many prompting further investigation, feasibility studies and public consultation, prior to being reported back to Committee.
4. To keep Committee updated, progress reports are included as an appendix and the proposal resulting from the update is set out at the end of each paragraph.

Finance

5. Where there are financial implications of the actions listed below that impact on Council responsibilities, these will be financed from existing Council resources.

Law

6. Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to provide recreational facilities in its area.
7. The Council is empowered to improve highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.
8. Traffic signs are provided under powers contained in Section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to regulations made by the Secretary of State for Transport.

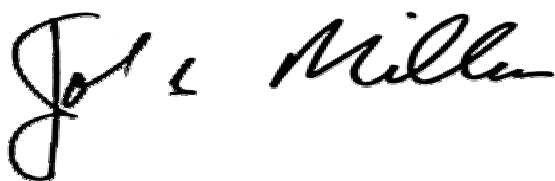
9. Guardrails may be provided under Section 66 of the Highways Act 1990.
10. Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided under powers contained in Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to Regulations made by the Secretary of State.
11. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
12. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
13. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its area to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
14. Part IX of the Highways Act 1980 contains provisions relating to the planting, care and control of trees in or on land adjoining the highways.
15. In the care and maintenance of its trees, the Council will owe the normal duty of care under the common law principles of nuisance and negligence.
16. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.

Equality Impact

17. The proposals take into account the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a diverse range of services that affect all sections of the community.

Recommendation

18. That the proposals contained in Appendix 1 attached be approved.



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Director of the Urban Environment

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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

1. Action Notes from 12th June 2012 Committee.

Appendix 1

DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON 12th JUNE 2012

1. PETITION - REQUEST FOR THE RE-OPENING OF NETHERTON TOILETS

Background: A petition was received from residents of Netherton and surrounding areas requesting that the public toilets in Netherton be re-opened and asking to be advised of the consultation procedures that had been followed in the decision to close them.

Comments: A letter has been sent to the first named petitioner giving details of the background and process associated with making the difficult decision to close public conveniences and achieve required Council savings. Many of the conveniences closed were in relatively poor condition, in need of repair and prone to regular acts of vandalism and levels of graffiti, increasing costs to maintain in reasonable order.

Whilst there is no provision within the current budget to replace or reopen public conveniences in locations across the Borough where closures have taken place, it has been decided that the provision of public conveniences in the Borough should be reviewed in addition to work taking place to promote new and/or revised provision as part of regeneration initiatives and new developments across the Borough.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

2. CINDER BANK TRAFFIC AND AIR POLLUTION

Background: A member of the public submitted a question in relation to traffic problems and air pollution affecting Cinder Bank and surrounding areas.

Comments: A letter was sent to the questioner on the 8th August 2012 stating that the potholes will be investigated and appropriate action taken by Highways Maintenance. It was noted that traffic flows in Cinder Bank are regularly monitored and the questioner's observation concerning possible traffic pollution will be borne in mind as long-term highway and traffic proposals for Cinder Bank are reviewed.

DUE officers confirm that it is necessary to have collated 12 months data before air quality can be ascertained at the location and results can be compared to the National Air Quality Objectives. However, officers confirm that to date the measured nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Cinder Bank are projected to be below the National Objective should monitoring results continue to be received as expected.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

3. HALESOWEN ROAD AND BAPTIST END ROAD - POTHOLES

Background: A member of the public drew attention to the large number of potholes on Halesowen Road and Baptist End Road.

Comments: Highway inspectors will visit the Halesowen Road area to ascertain the extent of carriageway damage and issue instructions to undertake appropriate remedial work.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

4. UNITED FOOTWEAR BUILDING - DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE

Background: A member of the public submitted correspondence relating to the United Footwear building (the former Co-operative Society Store) at the top of Dudley Town Centre and alleged that no responses had been received and queried the Council policy on response times.

Comments: A letter was sent to the questioner dated, 5th July 2012 to the effect that grant funding for this work is now progressing again and it was anticipated that work could commence on site later on this year. It has since been confirmed that the deadline has been extended for submission of tenders to 21st September. It will then take three or four weeks for the tenders to be analysed and a grant application to be made, assessed and offered, before a contract can be awarded and work can start on site.

With regard to concerns over the scaffolding, that is the subject of a Highway Permit and those involved will be contacted to ensure that there is no danger to the public.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

5. FIR STREET - POTHOLES

Background: Cllr Arshad referred to the number of potholes on Fir Street and requested that they be investigated and repaired.

Comments: Highway inspectors will visit Fir Street to ascertain the extent of carriageway damage and issue instructions to undertake appropriate remedial work.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

6. ABANDONED PUBLIC HOUSES - ST THOMAS' WARD

Background: Cllr Ali referred to the poor state of repair of the three abandoned public houses in St Thomas's Ward and requested that arrangements be made to contact the owners and request that these be cleaned up.

Comments: An email was sent to Cllr Ali on the 11th July in relation to the Hill Tavern, Watsons Green Road and Freebodies Inn, St John's Road. They are both currently

secured with no refuse or sufficient dilapidation to require the owners to act. Both properties recently went up for sale by auction but unfortunately neither sold. The agents for both buildings are the same company and they have assured us that weekly checks will be made of both properties until they are sold so that any security issues which may arise can be dealt with. At the current time, there is no further action that we would be able to take with these properties.

The White Lion in St Peter's Road recently sold to new owners who are not yet registered with the land registry so we are currently unable to identify the owner, although further information has come to light in the last few days which may lead officers to the owner. The main issue on site is fly tipping. In the last week, offenders have been apprehended for the recent fly tipping on site and enforcement action has been started against these persons. It is hoped that we will be in a position to serve legal notices for the removal of refuse from the site very shortly. The building is reasonably secure in that all ground floor doors and windows are now boarded with the exception of one small window. Officers will continue to pursue this case until there is a satisfactory outcome.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

7. BURNT TREE ISLAND - SIGNAL TIMINGS

Background: Cllr Ali expressed concern with the signal timings of the lighting system on Burnt Tree Island. Although he acknowledged that the equipment to change the timings of the lighting system had not yet been purchased, he requested that investigations be carried out to alleviate the issue.

Comments: All necessary equipment has been purchased, DUE engineers are awaiting BT to reinstate faulty ducting that will enable the BT line to link with the signal controller and consequently Urban Traffic Control.

A recent study has revealed that the current method operation still significantly outperforms the previous roundabout in terms of vehicular delay.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

8. NEW ROWLEY ROAD

Background: Cllr Ali drew attention to the fact that there was no safe crossing facility along the New Rowley Road.

Comments: Investigations will be conducted during 2013-14 along the length of the most urban sections of New Rowley Road, with a view to assessing the possible introduction of a pedestrian crossing facility as part of a future year's annual Pedestrian Crossing Programme.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

9. **OAKHAM ROAD - TRAFFIC ISSUES**

Background: Cllr Ali stated that previously reported traffic issues affecting Oakham Road have remained unchanged.

Comments: Proposals for a Local Safety Scheme have been submitted to Cllr Ali. A site meeting will take place with Cllr Ali in the near future.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

10. **VICTORIA ROAD - BOLLARDS**

Background: In referring to a petition raised previously, Cllr Cotterill requested that the bollards in Victoria Road be removed.

Comments: Consideration will be given in a future year to the possible removal of large landscaped 'build outs' in the carriageway in Victoria Road, Quarry Bank.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

11. **WOODSIDE PARK - REAR PATH**

Background: Cllr Duckworth drew attention to the poor state of the path to the rear of Woodside Park and requested that consideration be given to replacing the cracked slabs as he noted that wheelchair users and people with pushchairs regularly use the path.

Comments: Highways are costing up the repair using a new tarmac surface. Possible sources of funding for this work will be sought.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

12. **CINDER BANK ISLAND - DUDLEY SOUTHERN BYPASS - REQUEST FOR TRAFFIC LIGHTS**

Background: In referring to Cinder Bank Island and the Southern By-pass, Cllr Duckworth requested that consideration be given to installing a traffic light system.

Comments: It is anticipated that this matter could be considered in a future year as part of major transportation amendments to the classified highway network.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

13. NORTHFIELD ROAD/ST PETER'S ROAD/WITHYMOOR ROAD/COLE STREET - REQUEST FOR PEDESTRIAN PHASE

Background: Cllr Duckworth requested that consideration be given to introducing a pedestrian phase to the traffic system at the junction of Northfield Road, St Peter's Road, Withymoor Road and Cole Street.

Comments: The subject of this request is currently under investigation, in comparison with all other requests for this type of service.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

14. HALESOWEN ROAD - POTHLES

Background: Cllr Wood drew attention to the potholes on Halesowen Road and surrounding roads and requested investigation/repair.

Comments: Highway inspectors will visit the Halesowen Road area and ascertain the extent of carriageway damage and issue instructions to undertake appropriate remedial work.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

15. ST JAMES'S WARD - MATURE TREES

Background: Cllr Roberts referred to concerns that the mature established trees were causing in St James's Ward and requested that an assessment be carried out.

Comments: Green Care Officers have contacted Cllr Roberts to establish areas of particular concern following which epicormic growth has now been removed from the Lime trees in Himley Road

Five out of twelve trees located on the grassed area in the centre of The Oval, required work and have been lifted, reduced or cut away as required.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

16. RUSSELLS HALL ESTATE TROs - REQUEST FOR ENFORCEMENT

Background: Cllr Roberts expressed gratitude to officers involved in arranging the erection of signage in consequence of the new TROs affecting the Russells Hall Estate, however, she indicated that vehicle owners are disregarding the signs and requested that enforcement be pursued.

Comments: The Council will work closely with Police partners in an attempt to improve local enforcement.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

17. STONE STREET - REQUEST FOR RESTRICTED ACCESS FOR HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES

Background: Mr Rodney drew attention to the health and safety risks on Stone Street, particularly when juggernauts attempt to turn into the Street and requested consideration be given to restricting the times during the day that these types of vehicles can access the Street.

Comments: A 'lorry ban' cannot be considered for a street such as Stone Street, where lorries are visiting the area throughout the day and evening.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

18. CASTLEGATE ISLAND - DROPPING MANHOLE

Background: Mr Rodney drew attention to the dropping manhole cover on Castlegate Island and requested that this matter be investigated.

Comments: The exact location of this manhole remains unclear. Officers will liaise with Mr Rodney for additional information.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph

19. OAKHAM ROAD/TURNERS HILL - UNSAFE PARKING

Background: Mr Lawley referred to the health and safety risks on Oakham Road/Turners Hill raised previously at the Area Committee and reported that no action had yet been taken to stop vehicles parking on the corner.

Comments: We will be completing work at this junction in the near future to widen the footway and install a higher kerb face, which should improve the situation (i.e. vehicles will not bump up the higher kerb face and the footway will allow more room for pedestrians). Officers have visited the site on numerous occasions and have witnessed no particular parking problems at the times of their visits. The situation will be monitored following the works and further action taken if necessary.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph

20. HOCKLEY LANE - REQUEST FOR RESURFACING

Background: Cllr Zada drew attention to the poor state of repair Hockley Lane is currently in and requested that consideration be given to resurfacing the whole Lane.

Comments: Highway Officers have inspected the area and substantial remedial works have consequently been undertaken.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph

21. CINDER BANK - SPEEDING PROBLEMS

Background: Cllr Zada drew attention to the speeding problems on Cinder Bank and requested that this matter be investigated.

Comments: This speeding matter will be referred to the Council's Police partners. A number of Local Safety Schemes have been introduced in Cinder Bank in recent years. Investigations regarding further possible future Local Safety Schemes in Cinder Bank will commence during 2013-14.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph

22. NETHERCREST NURSING HOME - ADJACENT OVERGROWN LAND

Background: Cllr Zada drew attention to the overgrown piece of land adjacent to Nethercrest Nursing Home and requested that officers liaise with Nethercrest Nursing Home to clean up the area.

Comments: Council officers are considering a number of options that may be available, in an attempt to improve the local environment, including enforcement action if appropriate.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph